



BEAVERTAIL LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

The Lighthouse Log

Spring 2017

*The quarterly Newsletter
of the BLMA*

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Message From The Editor



It is the second day of Spring and as beautiful as it gets at Beavertail light. The temperature is another story, but I saw 2 teenagers plunge into nearby Mackerel Cove earlier. So, just how far away can tee-shirt weather be? Jamestown year-rounders don't need warm weather to decide its time to get out the sun block. Or risk hypothermia.

We're off the beaten path by nature and "normal" is defined in different terms. But how crazy can you be if you get to savor the best water views on the East Coast? Obviously I say that with some prejudice.

Commercial boat traffic dominates the east & west passages into Narragansett Bay right now but boating fever is building nonetheless. Bermuda-bound yachts and plain old sport fishing boats like my own are getting primed for the season. Just as they hit the bay, we have scheduled a kickoff brunch for 2017 Docents held on May 6th. We expect a great turnout of regulars and a good size crew of newcomers. We have also set the schedule for this year's tower climb dates which will be posted on our web site. It's hard to wait for the good times to roll again when we open, coinciding with Memorial Day weekend as usual.

As mentioned in an earlier issue we are now able to accept plastic in the gift shop! Debit and credit cards can be used in addition to good old cash and checks. Many of you have asked for that availability and it's arrived at long last.

A couple of side notes about Wildlife featured in the last issue: I recently found a frozen bobcat right next to the lighthouse, and apparently minks have returned to our area. Finally, I can't overlook the fact that even if the reported cub sighting never was corroborated, 'Teddy Bear' was indeed spotted in Beavertail Park. He is a bit camera shy but I insisted; he appears in the issue on Page 2.

We are rolling along in the matching fund raising campaign which is now fully underway. A full page article co-authored by Nicole Contino appears on Page 3 with details

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"Teddy"

Photo by Bob Dutson

and specifics. Nicole brings almost boundless energy and enthusiasm to our efforts and I'm still not sure when she finds time to breathe. Apparently she does that on alternate weekends!

We have a state funded Heritage Harbor exhibit with, among other neat stuff, a build-it-yourself Fresnel lens tutorial software package, and we will be blessed with an even more outstanding museum than before. Thanks should go to our resident IT guru Dave Smith with assistance from Alex Brincko and Clarice Willis for designing this project.

Elsewhere in this issue are articles including a second round of ship disasters near Castle Hill in Newport, the future US Coast Guard museum, and Beavertail tidal pools.

As usual I've been more long-winded than originally planned and now I am running out of room. Some can't figure out how I can write at length while I tend to be a man of (comparatively) few words. I can't explain it, but I look forward to seeing everyone on site in 2017!

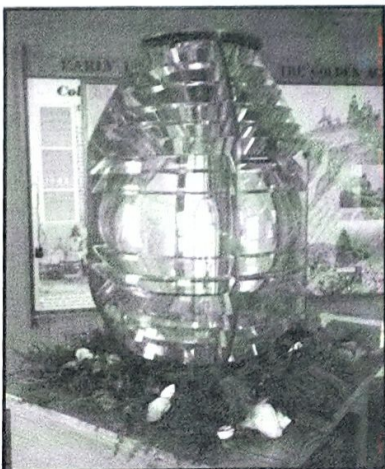
Warm regards,

Bob Dutson

Heritage Harbor Grant

Progress on the Heritage Harbor Grant for developing educational descriptions of lighthouse , lenses, fuels, and light characteristics is on schedule. The exhibit to be mounted inside the Oil Storage Building comprises two 48 in touch screen displays showing both video and selectable slide show modules covering a number of lens related subjects.

In addition to Beavertail's evolution of various light characteristics over the past 260 years, other Rhode Island lighthouses are included to emphasize the historical development of these navigation aids and how they function. Highlighted are descriptions of Fresnel lenses and how their prisms reflect and refract light.



Nine subjects are selectable for viewing, plus a viewer selected segmented video of the construction and operation of Fresnel lenses from Artworks of Florida.

This combined exhibit collection represents the most comprehensive explanation of lighthouse lighting, lenses, characteristics, clock works and explanations of Fresnel lenses in New England .



BLMA FUNDRAISING APPEAL

"Your Gift Today Will Have Twice The Impact"

"The goal of the campaign has clearly resonated with some very generous Jamestowners, to whom we are exceedingly grateful. I am hoping that BLMA members and others recognize that the cumulative impact of moderate donations can be equally powerful, and that we can further broaden our base of donors.

I think that the success we have had so far is a great testament to all the restoration and museum improvements that BLMA has accomplished to date. I am glad that the campaign provides a reason to tell this story to the general public."

~ Jim Buttrick

The entire BLMA board herein wishes to acknowledge the tremendous support received from members and new-found friends alike. The outpouring of generosity from one and all who have responded is beyond what we could ever have hoped for. The gift giving directed to the Fundraising Appeal to date is in fact overwhelming, and words alone cannot express our gratitude. As I write this update of funds received thus far, we are nearing \$200,000. This includes matching contributions from our benefactor Jim Buttrick. His vision and generosity made the whole campaign possible, and your response to our appeal makes it work.

This achievement is hardly an occasion to rest on any laurels however. With Spring weather (finally) returning, and our annual kickoff for museum Docents held Saturday 6, now is the time we commence "Phase 2" of the effort. We will be reaching out directly to various individuals, organizations and notable foundations via letter to request assistance during the remainder of our appeal.

However, we can't possibly know everyone who would be interested in joining our campaign as we approach the second half of 2017. Won't you consider a contribution at this time? Suggested matched gift levels are shown in the graphic below. We ask that you join this historic appeal as we approach Phase 2, and help us fund those sorely needed upgrades and building restorations we must complete at Beavertail. Remember, every dollar donated is doubled when Jim Buttrick matches your generosity!

Suggested matched gifts:

\$50 becomes \$100!

\$250 becomes \$500!

\$_____ Any amount will be doubled!!

Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association Matching Gift Campaign Pledge Form

In consideration of the gifts of others, I/we pledge a gift to the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association Matching Gift Campaign in the amount of _____.

Benefactor Levels of Giving:

- Able Franklin Society** (\$25,000 plus) Abel Franklin was the first keeper of Beavertail Light. This included standing outside and hand-carrying lanterns to warn ships off the rocks.
- Joseph Henry Society** (\$10,000 +) Joseph Henry was one of the most influential American scientists of the 19th century and a 26-year member of the U.S. Lighthouse Board. He conducted research on sound transmission and oversaw testing of fog-signaling device at Beavertail Lighthouse. Professor Henry may be best known as the nation's first director of Smithsonian Institution.
- David Melville Society** (\$5,000 +) David Melville was a Newport pewterer and inventor who created the first gas-powered lighting system to be tested at a U.S. lighthouse: Beavertail, in 1817.
- Demaris Weeden Society** (\$2,500 +) Demaris Weeden Society" who was the first woman Keeper at Beavertail from 1848 to 1857.
- Peter Harrison Society** (\$1,000+) Peter Harrison was a prominent Newport architect who designed the first two light towers of Beavertail Lighthouse. He designed several notable buildings in the colonies, including the Redwood Library, The Market in Newport (now the Museum of Newport History), the Touro Synagogue and King's Chapel in Boston, MA.
- Edward Donahue Society** (\$500+) Edward Donahue served 33 years as the longest keeper at Beavertail Lighthouse.

It is my/our intent to pay this pledge in 2016 or 2017 in payments as follows:

Date _____	Payment Amount _____	Date _____	Payment Amount _____
Date _____	Payment Amount _____	Date _____	Payment Amount _____

- I/We would like our name(s) to be listed as: _____ OR
- I/We would like to make this gift in honor of: _____ OR
- We would like our gift to remain anonymous.

Signature _____ Date _____

Please complete the following for our records:

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Please mail completed forms to: BLMA, PO Box 83, Jamestown, RI 02835
 The BLMA is a charity recognized as tax-exempt by the IRS under Section 501(c) (3). Your donation to BLMA is tax-deductible.

2017 LIGHTHOUSE TOWER OPENING DATES

- Monday, May 29, 12-3
- Saturday, June 17, 1-4
- Sunday, July 2, 1-4
- Saturday, July 15, 1-4
- Saturday, July 29, 1-4
- Saturday, August 12, 1-4
- Saturday, August 26, 1-4
- Saturday, September 9, 12-3
- Saturday, September 23, 12-3
- Sunday, October 8, 12-3



MUSEUM HOURS

The Museum is currently closed.

We will reopen on May 27, 2017 from noon until 3:00pm.

We will be open on Saturdays and Sundays from noon til 3 until June 17, 2017 when we will begin summer hours.

For a complete schedule and **Tower Opening Dates** please see Visitor Information.

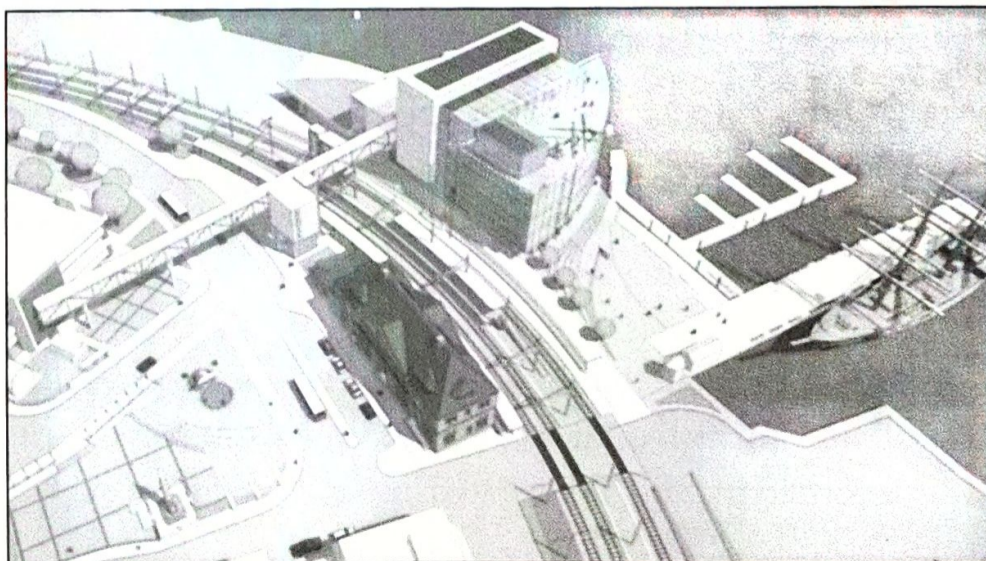
If you would like to schedule a tour of the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum please call (401) 423-3270, or email us at info@BeavertailLight.org.



National Coast Guard Museum

The National Coast Guard Museum is becoming a reality in downtown New London, Connecticut. The new museum, projected to cost \$100 million, is being built at the edge of the Thames River and will cover the 226+ years of history of the service. The Museum will be filled with sophisticated interactive exhibits that show-off the latest air and sea-navigation technology that has carried the U.S. Coast Guard into the 21st Century plus historic exhibits of early nature. According to Dick Grahn, President & CEO of the museum, projected start of construction is Spring of 2018 with project completion in 2021.

The U.S. Lighthouse Society represents 4,000 lighthouse members including BLMA. The society will champion the lighthouses, its keepers and its U.S. service established in 1790 in exhibits within the new museum.



See <http://coastguardmuseum.com/> for more information.

RI'S PERILOUS COAST CASTLE HILL—PART 2



This is a continuation of the discussion about the vessels which have met with total disaster on the rocks and beach at Castle Hill, Newport. Previously discussed were the four earliest wrecks at this site and the discussion will now continue with the fifth of twelve vessels whose final voyage would end on this rocky shore.

On January 7, 1866, the schooner BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, of Bath, ME, was on a southbound voyage from Millbridge, ME to New York City with a cargo of lumber and herring. The sixty-five foot long, 122-ton vessel was under the command of Captain Wallace when bad weather forced him to put into Newport harbor for shelter. But he made the mistake of leaving his safe haven too soon. On the night before her stranding, the FRANKLIN departed from Newport and almost immediately ran into a snowstorm. The captain decided to anchor under Beavertail and wait for better weather but one of the anchor chains parted and since the vessel was badly iced up, the captain decided to head back to Newport. In limited visibility she ran ashore on Collins Beach where she would become a total loss. Some of her cargo of lumber was saved but the remaining cargo was lost with the vessel. It would be six more years before another vessel would be so unfortunate.

The 86-ton schooner ERASTUS BRAINERD was inbound for Dighton, MA with a cargo of scrap iron in the spring of 1872. Owned by Erastus Brainerd and others, the schooner was under the command of U.A. Hall when she found herself fogbound off Castle Hill at night. There still was no lighthouse yet so entering Narragansett Bay safely after dark required an experienced commander and good luck. Luck was not with the captain on that fateful night and his vessel struck hard on Bateman's Point and in twenty minutes was full of water. Captain Hall and his crew took to the ship's boat and landed on the point having lost most of their clothes and their personal items but lived to sail another day. The date was April 8, 1872.

On August 18, 1879 yet another vessel came to grief on the beach at Castle Hill. This one was a tiny fishing sloop named JANE operating out of Newport. Whether she was outbound or inbound is unknown. At just five tons, and twenty-four feet in length, this was the smallest recorded vessel to end her days here. Her owner and master was Captain William H. Smith and his sloop was just thirteen years old when lost, having been built in Noank, CT in 1866. The storm which started two days before the fishing craft was lost was mostly a rain storm but by the time it left New England, on the 19th, the New Haven Register reported that, "at Newport twenty to thirty sailboats are sunk or damaged". The sloop was not mentioned in any local newspaper accounts but in the Custom House records for the port of Newport it was recorded that her license to fish "was surrendered Aug. 23, 1879 at Newport, vessel wrecked near Brenton's Reef August 18, 1879".

RI'S PERILOUS COAST—CASTLE HILL (CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PG) . . .

Seven years later, on January 9, 1886, a British schooner named MATTIE D. came to grief "on the ragged southern extremity of Castle Hill, Newport". This one was an 86-foot vessel of 115 tons that belonged to Liverpool, Nova Scotia. She had sailed from Turks Island, in the West Indies, and was bound for Portsmouth, New Hampshire with 4,430 bushels of salt (the sole export of that island). Owned by F.K. De Mill and under the command of E.J. Morris, the schooner, and its crew of five men found themselves in trouble two days before the actual wreck. They were becalmed when seven miles southeast of Block Island but within an hour the wind was blowing a gale and quickly blew away all of her sails leaving her in a desperate situation. The captain attempted to run for New London but a snowstorm made it impossible to tell where they were or enable them to safely make the journey. In a lull in the storm they found themselves near Block Island and put out both anchors which held for several hours but as the wind shifted the anchor chains parted one at a time. Try as they might, they could not guide the ship to the safe harbor at Dutch Island. At the mercy of wind and sea she ran hard aground on the shore and within two hours after stranding she was smashed to bits. Fortunately for those aboard, the life savers saw their peril and made it to the scene just before the vessel drifted ashore. The captain and crew were rescued in a breeches buoy moments before the schooner and cargo became a complete wreck.

It would be another five years before the next and most noteworthy wreck would take place off Castle Hill. The story of that vessel, the ship LYDIA SKOLFIELD, and the remaining documented losses at Castle Hill will be the subject of the third and final segment of this discussion and will be found in the next edition of the log.

JJ

Beavertail Tidal Pools



"Coast Guard Tender and Lobster Boat in too-close encounter"

Some of my earliest memories of Beavertail involve the hypnotic tidal pools around the point. At low tide, they resemble small mill ponds, smooth and reflective as mirrors, and full of amazing discoveries. To a 6-year old mind, they were the stuff of imagination and fantasy, where adventure awaited. Clouds reflected across the pool's magical surface, and you were taken away, no longer earth-bound. I might have been transported to 'Treasure Island' - was that a shark hiding in the shadows at the far end of the pool? As a more practical application, the larger pools served as a convenient "live-well" for the tautog my father and I caught, sustaining them until we were done fishing. Watching those fish undulate

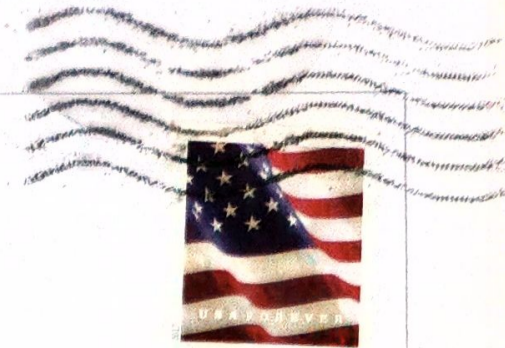
around the pool ever so slowly, like tiny submarines, was fascinating. When fishing was slow, you could always find green crabs, periwinkles, trapped silversides, and some tiny creatures I still don't know the names of. The pools are refreshed every high tide and become fertile ground for exploration. Even for someone who just received his first Medicare card, these pools remain a magnet. They recall to me much younger days whenever I walk along our rock ledges (a lot more carefully than I once did.)

BD



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BMLA is dedicated to preserving America's third oldest light, providing educational experiences reflecting the best current thinking for all learners and engaging in fund raising activities necessary for enhancing visitor experiences.



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www.beavertailight.org

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DRONES AT BEAVERTAIL

Drones, officially known as Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), are ever more popular at Beavertail. We see more of them every year. 'AAA magazine' estimates amateur operation of drones will more than double to 4.3 million by 2020. They are colorful, fun, and useful when operated properly. We've hired a commercial operator to check out conditions on rooftops and make additions to our video library.

However, they are a proven source of serious injury (including eyes) if used carelessly. A quick internet search of injuries involving drones hits you right up alongside the - well, you've probably figured it out already. We don't expect any oversight by Homeland Security or FAA since we don't have a runway. But they are taken seriously.

Drones heavier than 0.55lbs require numbers attached proving FAA registry. No one is suggesting we prohibit or restrict the use of drones at our historic complex but a 'fly-by' of the tower or space battle against the Evil Empire is another story. We exercise good risk management at the museum, so we ask your help in maintaining a safe environment for all. Please operate drones well away from buildings and your friends.

