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The Lighthouse Log

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—A Message from the BLMA President—A Message from the BLMA President

I am pleased, as your new President, to be able to report that all necessary approvals are in hand, and the light tower restoration is about to begin. We have negotiated a contract with ABCORE Restoration, the contractor who has done so much lighthouse restoration work in Narragansett Bay, including our window project funded by the RI Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission in 2004.

Grant supported archeological research on the 1749 foundation has been completed. The latest radar imaging technology was employed. Don't miss the enclosed article by Varoujan Karentz detailing the important new findings.

Our initial fund raising event was a great success. Bill and May Munger graciously made one of their boats and crew available at no cost. The evening was lovely, the food was wonderful and the fund raising goal was achieved. Be sure to see Lanette's article. We need to raise fifty thousand dollars to match the RI Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission grant. As a reminder, BLMA is a 501 (c) (3) corporation and all contributions will be gratefully received and promptly acknowledged.

The 2008 museum season was a huge success. More visitors than ever passed through the Assistant Keeper's house, enjoying docent presentations and the many new items in the gift shop. Our buyer, Dorrie, continues to uncover delightful items enjoyed by new and returning visitors alike. Tours continue to increase as word spreads among tour operators about the quality experience offered. Available year round by a small group of hearty and dedicated tour guides, this activity extends the season for our educational activities.

There are many opportunities for your active involvement with BLMA. Grant writing, fundraising, publicity, communications, education, buildings and grounds and event planning are activities needing your talents. Contact any of the Officers or Board members.

Hope you were able to get out to the holiday open house, at the museum. This annual event affords you and your family the opportunity for gift shopping, the enjoyment of a beautifully decorated museum and socializing.

-Richard Sullivan

1749 Foundation Radar Imaging Project Near Completion,

Two years ago, BLMA submitted an application to the National Trust for Historic Places to conduct surveys of the 1749 longhouse foundation ruin and all the grounds south of the road across from the Light Station buildings. Its purpose was to document the historic ruin in detail and investigate options, to save the artifact from further destructive forces. Funds were not available and the project was postponed. BLMA was asked to submit a new proposal and this past November we were informed that a grant for \$1,000 dollars was approved. However, over \$4000 dollars were needed to undertake the underground non-invasive radar imaging survey combined with a geodetic /photographic documentation investigation.

To raise the additional funds BLMA conducted a 'sold out' evening boat ride on September 4th, per courtesy of Conanicut Marina owners, Mae and Bill Munger. BMLA member, Lanette Macaruso chaired the event with Suzi Andrews creating all the hors d'oeuvres.

"Sight Surveys LCC" (Dan Lynch) of Providence methodically laid out the survey grid and with a portable high frequency pulsed radar system mapped the specified ruin right down to the bedrock. In addition, the grounds in back of the fog signal building were also surveyed to determine if pre 1938 water cisterns are still in existence. One of Lynch's first findings is that the base of the ruin is not circular as originally thought but actually octagonal. (see story elsewhere in this issue) The radar survey project was completed on 23 October and is now under

evaluation by BLMA, Consultant James Wermuth of Newport Preservation and Paul Robertson of the Rhode Island I State Preservation Commission.

In addition to the radar imaging task, Consultant Wermuth is completing the photographic and geodetic documentation which will supplement the imaging project work of Sight Surveys L.C.C. description .

Interim License Agreement George Warner, Vice President

In May 2008 the Coast Guard, working with BLMA, created an interim license agreement. Without the interim agreement, the BLMA would not have been allowed to operate the museum this season. BLMA has received a six-month extension of the license agreement, or until the time the Department of Environmental Management takes over the License.

The interim agreement is a result of the Town of Jamestown deciding not to renew their license with the Coast Guard. Discussions are ongoing between the Department of Environmental Management and the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association regarding a license agreement with DEM holding the license and BLMA managing the property.'



***Docent News
Joan Vessella
Docent
Coordinator.***

The 2008 season a Beavertail Lighthouse Museum was very successful due to our seventy amazing docents! Your enthusiasm proved infectious. Ten new volunteers joined us this year and visitors were requesting docent positions in 2009. Congratulations for all your help at clean ups, attending orientations, and special events, adapting to new sales recording methods and arranging substitutes in your absence. We appreciate each and every one!

We joined together to celebrate the season with a Volunteer Appreciation Dinner which was held at the Jamestown Senior Center on Sunday, September 7, 2008. We were pleased to welcome the sixty seven docents and guests who attended the event. A nautical theme prevailed with lighthouse centerpieces, colorful flags and chocolate lighthouse favors. Ann Deffley and the Traveling Gourmet catered a delicious meal. All volunteers were thanked for their dedication to Beavertail Lighthouse Museum and encouraged to join us for another wonderful season in 2009.

THE ABC's of BLMA FUNDRAISING

Fundraising Planning Committee

Chair Lanette Spranzo Macaruso

***Committee Members: Guy Archambault,
Tony Antine, Varoujan Karentz, Richard
Sullivan, and George Warner***

Nothing succeeds like success, and so we've decided that the BLMA's September 4th boat ride, although modest in its goal, demonstrates three basic rules for success. We hope to follow these rules – and other useful ones - in planning future, and more ambitious fundraising projects:

First, demonstrate that the fundraiser supports BLMA's mission: Our appeal was launched to support the study of the foundation ruin of the Colonial-era light tower. Why study the tower ruin? The study will increase our knowledge of the early history of Beavertail Light. We will use these new insights as a guide to studying the tower's construction and use. To gain support for projects like this one, we need also to show how the project advances BLMA's educational and/or preservation purposes. We also need to inspire confidence that our expectations on outcomes are realistic. We had an obligation, for example, to inform our donors that, while we can't promise we can *save* the ruin, we are committed to documenting and presenting information the foundation and the tower that the survey and further research reveal. This is the

stewardship donors entrust to us with their gifts.

Second: Seek help from groups who share in BLMA's purpose: Studies of Beavertail's history consistently show connections between lighthouse development and other fields of endeavor in local, regional, U.S., and world history. We stand to benefit from specialized help that organizations that care about this kind of educational enterprise can provide us. The 250-year span of Beavertail's story includes applications of knowledge and material goods in US lighthouses advanced through various fields of endeavor, including science, technology, manufacturing, economics, and public governance. This means that the promotion of our educational projects can draw modern-day cultural, civic, governmental, and educational groups who may be approached to affiliate with us and our mission. We are extremely pleased that the Jamestown Historical Society supported our fundraiser. We want to keep our friendship with them strong, and work toward attracting more groups to partner with us, too.

Third: Manage expenses responsibly.

Donations to the survey project totaled \$5,351.00, but a portion of that had to be applied to event expenses. This is a constant factor in fundraising. We think we kept our ratio of expenses-to-net very favorable in this effort, beginning with the use of material donations by key supporters. We are happy to report that 9.8% of the 500 households receiving our letter-invitation responded with gifts of support. This return exceeds the 2.5% - 3% normally expected from mailings. Our expenses totaled 17.3% of the \$5,351 gross receipts, which compares well with an often-hoped-for expenditure cap of 33%. Overall BLMA realized net proceeds of \$4,421.86, exceeding the minimum \$3,000 needed for the survey. The National Trust for Historic Places had awarded BLMA \$1,000 to help fund the study as well. If we plan for achieving comparable or better return ratios in planning future fundraising projects, we

will build on a strong reputation for wise fiscal management as we grow. And to grow, we will need to raise more funds. For starters, we must raise \$50,000 in 2009 to match the RI State Historical and Preservation Commission grant we received in late 2007 for much-needed repairs to the two keeper's houses. We think we can achieve this goal – and even more ambitious ones - if together we pursue projects aligned with our mission, productive strategic partnerships, and sound fiscal management practices.

Now, we have a question for you: Have we made our case in this brief report for acquiring *your* help? Will you help us? Please contact any member of the fundraising planning committee with any ideas and suggestions you have. Your support, assistance with events, and/or experience in fundraising would be most welcome to us.

Contact us as lsighthouse@verizon.net

BLMA Hosts Memorial Ceremony for Walter Eberle, Keeper at Whale Rock Light Lighthouse and Special Exhibit Commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the Great Hurricane of 1938

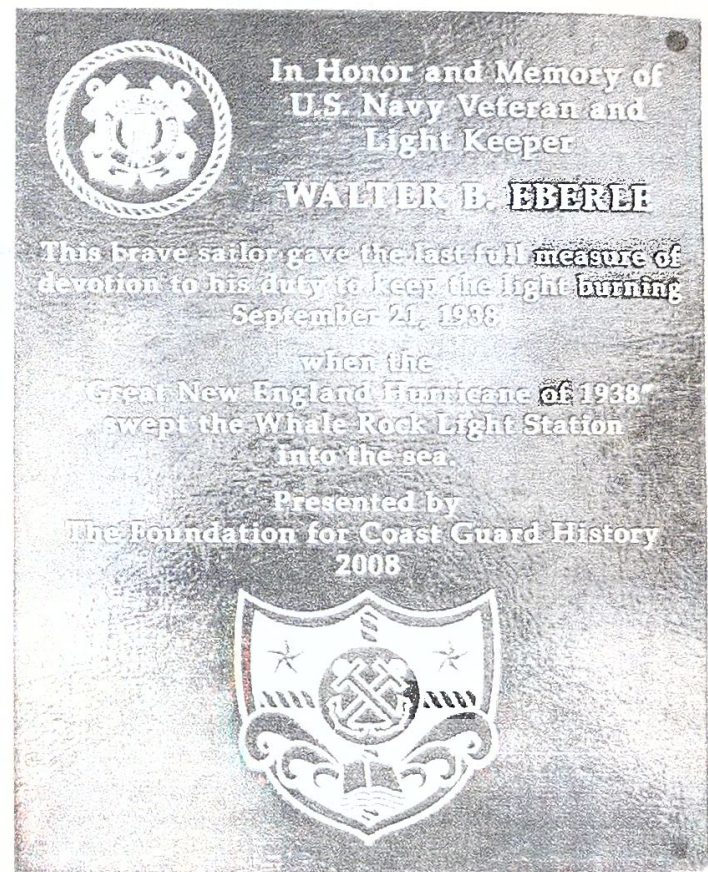


On 21 September The BLMA, The Friends of Whale Rock Light and the USCG History Foundation held Ceremonies on the grounds of the Beavertail Light Station dedicating a special memorial plaque in memory of the Walter B. Eberle. Assistant Keeper at Whale Rock. Eberle lost his life while on duty when the structure was toppled by the hurricane.

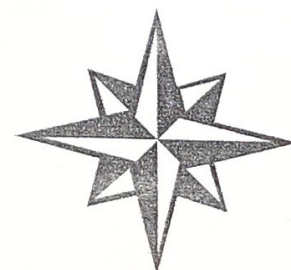
Over 50 members of the Eberle family attended the ceremonies as did about 100 others including members of the U.S. Coast Guard, Jamestown Town Officials, RIDEM, guest speakers from the American Lighthouse Foundation, and the USCG Historian's Office.

David S. Robinson the Director of "Friends of Whale Rock Light" was the feature speaker. Robinson, a diver and Jamestown resident was instrumental in promoting the memorial and worked closely with the Board of Regents of the "Foundation for Coast Guard History" and BLMA.

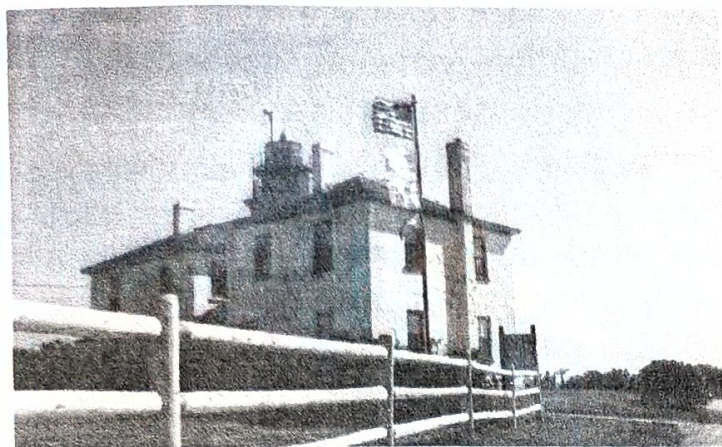
The memorial plaque will initially be mounted inside the BLMA museum next to a westerly looking window from where the remains of Whale Rock Light can be seen.



A special storyboard exhibit of the 1938 Hurricane was also on display in the museum.



NEW POST AND RAIL PERIMETER FENCE INSTALLATION COMPLETED



With the help of a team of RI DEM employees under the direction of Bryan Gallager and a "Community Service Grant" from BankNewport, a new cedar Post and Rail fence has replaced the broken deteriorated fence which surrounded the Light Station grounds. The \$5000 dollar matching grant which paid for the material was awarded to BLMA last November. BLMA asked for assistance from RI DEM to help install the fence. RI DEM Parks and Recreation Department graciously provided their services including a mechanized post-hole digger tractor.

The new fence returns the pristine appearance to the grounds and includes new openings on the east and west side to encourage visitors to use the open space behind the Light Station buildings.

THE FLAG POLE IS FIXED!!



By now most everyone has heard about the close call docent Ginny Saunders had when she was lowering the flags after an afternoon shift.

For those of you who have not, the top of the flag pole, the "truck" which weighs about 12 pounds broke off and dropped to the ground a few feet away. Fortunately for

Ginny, there was a strong southwest wind which caught the flags and carried the truck, its pulleys and decorative ball away from Ginny.

Courtesy of and with many thanks to Conanicut Marine, who repaired the broken truck and also made two trips out the Light Station with their mobile crane, the flag pole is again in use and in safe condition.

NEW INFORMATION ABOUT THE 1749 LIGHTHOUSE

Called both, "Harrison's Light" after the designer Peter Harrison and "Newport Light" before it came better know as "Beaver Tail Light" and ultimately "Beavertail Light", Dan Lynch of Soil Sight LLC has made an astounding discovery. Lynch was engaged by BLMA to conduct underground radar imaging of the foundation ruin to help determine possible options to preserve the 1749 artifact. On the first day of his observations, 6 September 2008 he recognized the difference between the post 1938 hurricane circular concrete cap and the stone formations of the ruin underneath the concrete cap.

The foundation base and the 1st light built in 1749, always considered to be round or circular is actually an "octagonal" shape. Historians and casual observers have been fooled by early island "Proprietor's Records" and the early description by "Dr. William Douglas", who stated construction details of the base of the original light to be; "Diameter at base is 24 feet in diameter and at the Top 13 Feet". The height dimension from the ground to the Cornice was 58 ft and the gallery above containing the lantern was "about 11 feet high and 8 feet in diameter". Multi sided structures with definitive edges in a circular configurations are often described with a "diameter" reference. In the case of the 1749 Beavertail Light, no contemporary historian nor engineer accurately noted its shape. Even the small model of the 1749 light displayed in the BLMA museum which depicts a round wooden tower is also in error.

This first light burned down (or up as may be the case) on July 23, 1753, 4 years after it was constructed. A second light was constructed in the same year presumably on top of the existing octagonal stone and lime mortar foundation, but this light was round in form made of stone and brick taken from "Fort George" on "Goat Island". Brick and stone construction easily conforms to conical or circular shape with added strength since it is void of seams. As far as is known, this structure remained standing for 103 years until the present granite tower was completed in 1856.

The only known images of the light tower prior to 1856 consist of two sketches, one drawn in 1798 and the other in 1817, plus an undated painting completed sometime in the 1830-1850 period. All of which were drawn after the 1753 fire. The two earlier renderings show a round structure, probably built of material suitable to be constructed in a circular form. The third image, the painting, appears to be a square or 4 sided structure which raises the question of its authenticity as to it being Beavertail Light.

Lynch's findings support a new supposition that indeed, the first light was not only built on an octagonal base but the entire structure above it was of octagonal shape.

We do know that first light was constructed of wood from the Rhode Island "General Assembly Record" of 1749. The easiest and most practical way to build a wooden lighthouse is with planks or board sheathing fastened to a frame. Not curved or steam bent planks but straight boards nailed or pegged to vertical joists as were most of homes in Colonial New England, Newport and Jamestown. It could also be possible that each of the eight sides were built flatly on the ground and raised. Each of its 8 sides, would have been approximately 9 feet ($3.1416 \times 24 \text{ ft dia.} = 75.3 \text{ ft in circumference divided by } 8 \text{ sides} = 9.4125 \text{ ft}$) wide at the base and the top 5 feet in width since we also know that the lantern room was 13 feet in diameter. ($3.1416 \times 13 \text{ ft dia}$

$= 40.8 \text{ ft. divided by } 8 \text{ sides} = 5.1 \text{ ft}$). Nearly every free standing light tower constructed of wood reflects a multi-sided flat faced structure wide at its base and tapered at its top. The first light built at Pt. Judith in 1809 was a wooden octagonal tower in similar shape adding even more credence that Beavertail, its predecessor, was built octagonal.

Certainly more research is needed to find factual evidence of the 1st tower's shape added to the mystery of why, over a 102 year period only 2 vague sketches and 1 questionable painting exist of the 2nd tower, at a time when photography in America was practiced and available.

In more modern times, the present 150 year old Beavertail light and its structures, because of its accessibility and its beautiful location have been considered the most photographed and most painted venue in Rhode Island. It is hard to believe that during its 102 existence, the old tower never had the same appeal. Somewhere, someplace there must be an accurate image.

LIGHT TOWER RESTORATION BEGINS

The most significant restoration and preservation project yet to be undertaken by BLMA commences this fall after receiving a \$227,000 grant from the Champlin Foundations this past November. The grant will repair broken supports of the internal spiral staircase, add a new safety brass handrail, repair brick work, repair and replace the upper catwalk deck and its external circular gallery railings. Also, all the lantern room panels will be replaced, painted, and the external granite blocks grouted and sealed to prevent further expansion damage by freezing water.

The light tower was previously off limits to BLMA and recently was included in the license to allow maintenance and restoration work neglected by the USCG for many years. The restoration was planned to start beginning this past spring but the USCG

imposed additional requirements and submittal of architectural drawings before the work could commence. The drawing package added additional non anticipated costs including engaging a 2nd design firm to provide the drawings.

ABCORE Restorations Inc, who has done work previously at Beavertail, Pomham Rocks and Plum Beach Light has been selected as the contractor to undertake the restoration. ABCORE will use the winter months to fabricate the replacement parts and fittings and begin the outside work this coming spring. The owner of ABCORE, Keith Lesarbeau plans to have much of the catwalk/gallery pre-assembly work being done at the base of the tower where both visitors and BLMA members may observe the process and the progress.

The light itself will remain operational during the night time hours. During daylight, when restoration work in the lantern room is required, the revolving beacon will be shut down and the light extinguished.

Hopefully by mid summer next year the tower work will be finished and scheduled visits up to the gallery deck will be open to the general public.

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION AND HERITAGE COMMISSION GRANT

The Scope of Work has been approved by RIHPHC. The \$50,000 matching grant awarded last November is designated for repair on the Keeper's and Assistant Keeper's houses. The primary goal of the work is the elimination of water infiltration and repair of a number of features on both houses that time and the environment have impacted. These repairs are the kind commonly found on older homes. The SOW has been approved by the Commission. The Coast Guard has asked for more detail and that information is being made available. Bids will be solicited late this year and the work will. Begin early next spring.

BEAVERTAIL LIGHTHOUSE NEEDS YOUR HELP

Your membership in the BLMA is needed to keep the third oldest lighthouse in the United States, from slipping away forever. It is our dedicated goal to work together to keep our eye on that goal, and to keep Beavertail Lighthouse in tact and preserved for generations to come. Lighthouses, in general, are rapidly slipping away, in spite of the great love many people have for them. Won't you join today to help us in our goal to keep the light burning at Beavertail?



Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association

Membership Benefits

As a member of BLMA, you will receive our newsletter, email notifications of special events, a *10% discount* on purchases from our *gift shop* and discounts on *event admission fees*.

The following Memberships are available:

Family Life	\$300
Individual Life	\$200
Sponsor	\$100
Family	\$ 40
Individual	\$ 25

Please contact me about helping with BLMA projects and services.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email _____

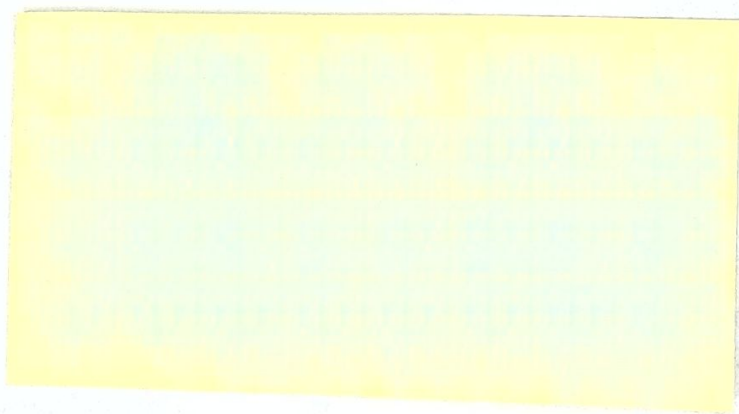
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A Winter Wonderland



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