Preserving the Light

Annual members' meeting: Wednesday, September 16, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at PITA Hall

Happy springtime, Members! Welcome to the 2026 season. We thank you for helping us care for the light and share it with the public. Peek inside for all the ways the green light is shining.

Tour Schedule

Grab your sturdy shoes or sneakers, and come tour the light! We invite you to visit our website to request a 15-minute tour during the following schedule.

Tour days 2026: All Saturdays, 10 a.m.–1 p.m., 15-minute slots.

May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.
30	20	18	22	19	3

What Should You Know in Advance?

For safety reasons, people climbing the tower stairs must be at least 5 years old and a minimum of 42 inches tall. Sturdy shoes or sneakers are required; sandals are not permitted. We do not charge for tours. We greatly appreciate a suggested donation of $5 per person or any amount that works for you. All proceeds are used to care for the light. Weather, unanticipated maintenance, or other various factors could cause cancellations at times, but we hope not. Rain dates are not available.

Mission: to preserve and maintain the lighthouse

Friends board members: Jenn Bogard, president; Mari Rumore, vice president; Anne Morin, treasurer; Ted Olsson, secretary; Ron Barrett, Kevin Byrne, Bill Cooper, Daniel May, RADM, USCG (ret.), Frank Pierce.

We appreciate our Legal Advisor Attorney Rob Ciampitti, Partner-Liberty Law Team at Touchstone Closing.

Newsletter assembled by: Friends of Plum Island Light
P.O. Box 381, Newburyport, MA 01950

Contact the friends by email: friendsofpilight@gmail.com



Pictured: A team of tour guides from left to right: board member Kevin Byrne; vice president Mari Rumore; volunteers: Sandy Tilton; Michele & John Holtgrefe. Interested in becoming a tour guide? Send an email to the Friends, we'd love to have you.

Friends of Plum Island Light, a 501(c)(3). Organization's program service accomplishments: Preservation and restoration of the lighthouse for the general public to enjoy. Volunteers give tours weekends between Memorial Day and Columbus Day.

Vision statement: To preserve and maintain Plum Island Lighthouse through charitable contributions. Provide educational tours and information on the historical importance of lighthouses and lifesaving. Research, obtain, and display historical records and artifacts for the benefit of the public.

Upcoming Events

In addition to our Tour Days from 10am-1pm on May 30; June 20; July 18; Aug 22; Sept 19; Oct 3rd, we hope you'll join us for the following events:



1. Clean-Up Day

Saturday, May 16th 10am-12pm

Bring your rake and garden gloves! We hope you'll come help us tidy up the fallen pinecones and clean up the lighthouse grounds for the season.

Email friendsofpilight@gmail.com to let us know if you would like to lend a hand.

2. Children and Family Event

Friday, August 7th 9:00am-10:30am

This year, we'll combine our children's events into one special morning to celebrate National Lighthouse Day. Come for a painting class, music, and stories by the lighthouse garden. We encourage you to bring your water bottles to stay hydrated. You might also want to bring a lawn chair or towels to sit on, in case benches fill up. All ages welcome. We ask that caregivers stay with children.

Email friendsofpilight@gmail.com to sign up.

Learn more about National Lighthouse Day by visiting The United States Lighthouse Society or the American Lighthouse Foundation.

3. August Boat Cruise

Back by popular demand! We are thrilled to share that we will set course once again on our annual boat cruise out of the Point. The cruise will take place in August. Once we have finalized a date, we'll send an email and post information on our website.





Pictured: Tour guide Ken Cmar welcoming visitors.



Pictured: Fonzie dreaming of opening day at the Light. We hope you had a cozy, healthy winter. Board Member Bill Cooper crafted this lighthouse from Linden wood!

Upcoming Events (continued)

4. Presentation by Dan May, RADM, USCG (ret.)

Thursday, July 16 7:00-8:00PM, PITA Hall*

History of the Plum Island Lens - 150 Years of Service: Last year, when the Fresnel lens that currently operates in our Plum Island lighthouse was cleaned and serviced, we discovered its manufacturer and likely the time period it was made in Paris, France. It turns out the lens is much older than originally thought and it has a unique history of being one of the oldest lenses still in use in the United States! Board member, Retired Coast Guard Rear Admiral Dan May, who helped coordinate the service & cleaning of the lens last summer will present a fun evening of the early history of Fresnel lenses and the unique history of the Plum Island lens recently discovered. Come share the evening with us and learn the history of these extraordinary navigational devices, the rich history of the manufacturers that created them and rare details of our own lens here at Plum Island Light!

5. Presentation by Ted Olsson, Secretary of Friends of Plum Island Light, hosted by PITA

Tuesday, May 19, 2026 7:00-8:30 PM, PITA Hall*

An Ode To The US Life Saving Service: The coastal area around Plum Island and the Merrimack River has a unique and significant historical maritime story. From 1871-1915 the Surfmen of the United States Life Saving Service were the emergency responders for a problem that plagued maritime trade for centuries - shipwrecks due to storms, accidents or aged vessels. This was especially the case off Plum Island. Two USLSS Stations were established on the island: the Plum Island Station (later named Merrimack River Station), 1874-1915, and the Knobb's Beach Station, 1891-1915. Ted's presentation provides a look at this history of shipwrecks, the formation of the United States Life Saving Service and the courage and commitment of hero USLSS crews, who risked their lives to save others often in perilous conditions.

6. Annual Member's Meeting with Speaker: Bethany Groff Dorau, Executive Director Museum of Old Newbury

Wednesday, September 16, PITA Hall*

6:30-7:00PM Business Mtg & Election of Board

7:00-8:00PM Speaker Bethany Groff Dorau, Executive Director Museum of Old Newbury

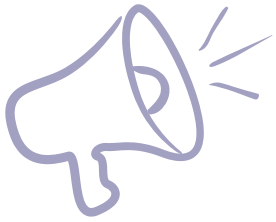
To Pay Our Respects to the Horses: Andrew Lunt and the Road to Plum Island

In the summer of 1807, ten-year-old Andrew Lunt, a native son of Joppa—then a lively warren of tenements and Dickensian characters in what is now Newburyport—went with his friends each day to watch the Plum Island Turnpike take shape.

"We used to go down to Johnny Pettengill's gravel bank, at the head of Rolfe's Lane, where all the gravel was taken from, for the making of the Turnpike to Plum Island…to pay our respects to the horses engaged on the work."

Join Museum of Old Newbury Director Bethany Groff Dorau for an illustrated talk on the early years of Plum Island's hotel and turnpike, seen through the eyes of a curious Joppa boy whose recently discovered recollections bring this vanished world vividly to life. Spend an evening with hard-working horses, boyhood adventures, and an eyewitness glimpse of the road that carried generations of visitors to Plum Island and its famed hotel.

8 Plum Island Turnpike, Newbury, MA 01951



Sharing the Light in New Ways

This past November, we received exciting news from Ghlee Woodworth and Jay Williamson, Trustees of The Rodigrass-Weare Newburyport Foundation. The foundation awarded Friends of Plum Island Light $2,000 "to bolster public outreach and education through the use of technology."

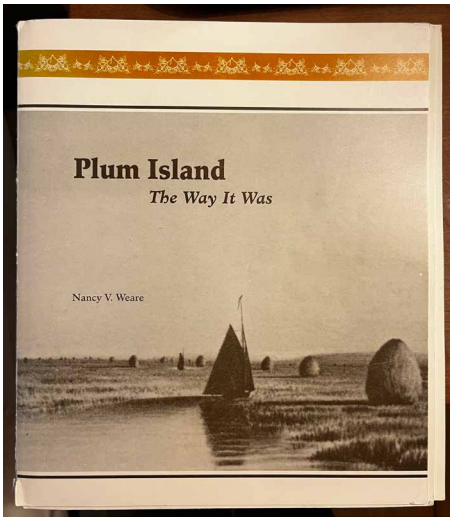
We applied for funds with the dream of creating virtual experiences that allow for wide access to tour the lighthouse, taking away barriers of distance, ability to climb, and more. We met with Jason Novak of Ruebenfilmz and creativity took shape- resulting in plans for a series of drone videos of the lighthouse! There will be a video for each season. The wintertime video is first in the series and is currently featured on our website. The series will include a virtual climb inside the tower, up through the lantern room, and to the catwalk. We hired Jessamyn Anderson of Dingo Creative on Pleasant Street to import the videos into our website as each one is completed in time.



Pictured: Still shot by Jason Novak, captured from his work of drone cinema at the lighthouse

"Flying my FPV drone around PLUM ISLAND LIGHT / NEWBURYPORT HARBOR LIGHT felt like slipping through a living postcard - wind, salt, and the soft creak of age beneath me as the tower held its quiet watch. From the bird's-eye view the coastline unfolded in layered history: weathered brick, eroded sand, and the steady geometry of a beacon that has guided generations. The whole shoot was both exhilarating and reverent, a fast-moving perspective that honored the lighthouse's timeless presence."

– Jason Novak, 'Ruebenfilmz' FAA P107 Certified Drone Pilot



In our award letter dated Nov. 18, 2025, the Rodigrass-Weare Newburyport Foundation provided us with interesting history. Here is a sampling of what we learned:

- Rodigrass-Weare Newburyport Foundation established in 2019, in Memory of Nancy V. Weare.
- The benefactor, Nancy Weare, was born in Newburyport.
- Nancy Weare summered at her family's camp at The Knobbs beach on Plum Island.
- Nancy was a longtime art editor and then became a special education teacher at the Brown School.
- When Nancy retired, she focused on the history of Plum Island and poetry.

We sell Nancy's special book: "Plum Island, The Way It Was".

Year in Review: Exciting achievements for our mission and vision (pp. 5-7)



We hosted 24 quilters from the Billerica Council on Aging. Their agenda included a trip to Plum Island Light and the Merrimack Valley Quilt Show.



Lampist Kurt Fosburg inspected and cleaned our original 4th order Fresnel Lens with Board Member Dan May, RADM, USCG (ret.). The team effort included coordination with CAPT Frederick of the Coast Guard and his staff; and ANT Boston (Aids to Navigation Team).



Dan May, RADM, USCG (ret.) shared that our lens was made by Louis Sautter sometime in the late 1860s before the company changed names when Paul Lemonnier joined. Lenses made after that had both their names on them. Our lens at Plum Island Light only has Sautter's name and it's in cursive!



"Newburyport's Road to Revolution Parade" Thank you to all who marched, decorated, and cheered us on! Visit our website to see many photos.



Left: We cruised the river on the Captain's Lady II and viewed the green light from the water while The Portermen sang sea shanties aboard the boat. Join us again this August!

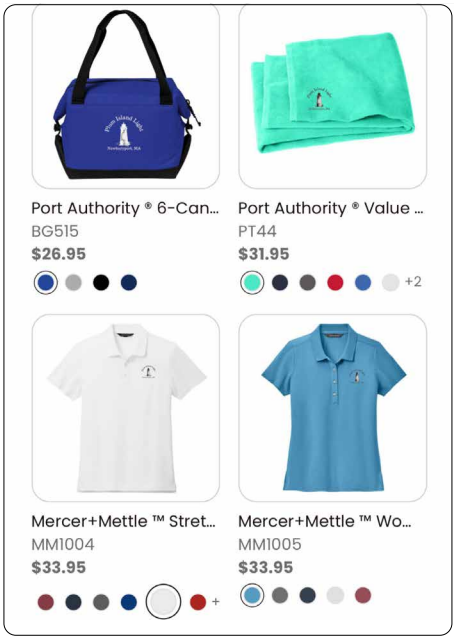
Right: It was a fantastic evening learning about Boston Light with Sally Snowman, Ph.D., Keeper of Boston Light 2003-2023, educator, author, and USCG Boston Light historian; and her husband and co-author, Jay Thomson.



TRAILS & SAILS

ESSEX NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

In 2025 we hosted a "Trails & Sails" event through Essex Heritage and welcomed visitors for historic tours.



Virtual Pop-up shops have been a fun way to fundraise. Thank you for your purchases. We'll be having another pop-up shop this fall. Stay tuned!

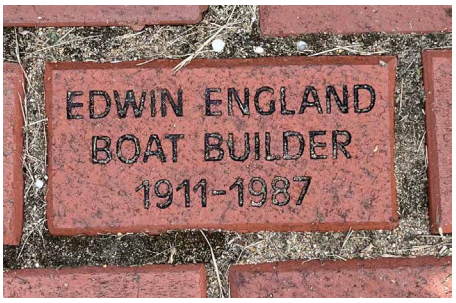




The holiday fair at PITA is always a special day. Thank you to all who volunteered in various ways and to Elia Ciampitti who donated beautifully adorned shells from The Adorned Shell: Art Inspired by the Sea, Newburyport & Plum Island.



Visit the lighthouse grounds and spend some time taking in a view of the tower from a bench near the gardens. We thank everyone who donated to seating over time; what an important part of the grounds for all ages and events, especially on hot summer days on the Island.



Brick orders are happening! There are still spots in the walkway at this time. Bricks can be ordered online through our website or by filling out the form included in this newsletter.



One of the many tables at our volunteer celebration. We are an all-volunteer organization, from Board members to tour guides and more— people giving their time and energy to preserving the lighthouse! If you'd like to volunteer, we hope you'll reach out by email.



Thank you to The Grog! This past March we held our first Grog-Raiser and it was a tremendous success. Thank you to all took part in the fundraising event.





We are thankful to the City of Newburyport for purchasing three parking signs to be placed during Tour Days. With an appointment, visitors park along the street (by the Wildlife's fence) in one of the three clearly marked, designated spots.



Sales table up and running! Pictured left to right: Nancy Byfield, Cynthia Cooper, Anne Morin, Roslin Esposito



We hosted three children and family day events: painting class with Newbury Elementary Art Teacher Mrs. Williams; story time with retired Newburyport Teacher Karin Caves; and range light demonstration with Board Member Ted Olsson. Pictured: Karin Caves choosing books to read from Emma L. Andrews Library.



Tradition of holiday decorations at the light, hung by Bill Cooper, Dan May, Steve Atherton and Nathan Varga. We thank Leslie May for crafting the beautiful holiday wreath for the door.



Field trips- inspiring students with stories of maritime history!

Linda Anton Retires from Board after many years of service

A very special thank you to our longtime Board Member, Linda Anton who retired from the Board after more than a decade of serving Plum Island Light. She was great friends with Barbara Kezer, our founding president and continued on their tradition of caring for the light. Linda is known for overseeing wedding ceremonies at the lighthouse with care and attention to detail. We are grateful that Linda wants to continue volunteering and helping out at the lighthouse on occasion. At our 2025 Annual Meeting, we celebrated Linda and her many contributions.

Barbara's daughter, Terri Frascone reached out with these words:

"I spoke with Linda and she told me she was stepping down from the board but she will be volunteering. I asked her what she was going to miss the most. She said the people, the Light house family. She then went on to remember all her and my mother did together along with the others. ***I would just like everyone to know that Linda is kind, loving, hard working, giving and most of all a dear friend.*** *She loved doing the weddings and cruises. Linda could always be counted on to do anything for the light house. She and Walter were my mother's trusted right hand people. I can't help but look at Linda and not think of my mother, which is always a wonderful memory. I would like to thank her for all the years she dedicated to the lighthouse."*

Steve Atherton shared words:

"I have enjoyed working with Linda over the years. As a dedicated member of the Friends for many years, Linda has contributed greatly in many capacities to our success... Thanks Linda"

President Jenn Bogard spoke at the annual meeting:

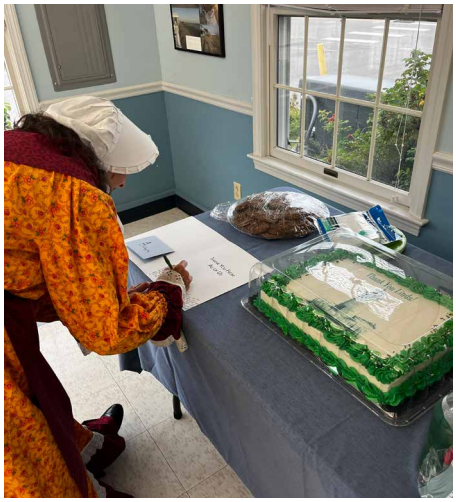
"You are a mentor, Linda, and I have learned so much from you. It is not a surprise to me at all that it was you who was in charge of weddings for all those years-you spread joy and beautiful moments. Your fingerprints are forever marked on the great things you did for Friends of Plum Island Light."



Pictured: Linda Anton with husband Bob Videyko. Members honored Linda with kind words, memories, standing ovation, special cake, and a brick for the walkway.



Pictured: Linda opening a special necklace honoring her service of overseeing wedding ceremonies.



Pictured: Friends gather to sign Linda's card including Sally Snowman, Boston Light Keeper, 2003-2023.

History Corner

Shingles on the tower



Shingles on the tower were replaced in June-July of 1996. This photo is from a collection recently donated by the family of Barbara Kezer. Barbara was the founding president of the Friends of Plum Island Light and the granddaughter of Keeper George Kezer.





Our Board of Directors received an invitation to the Dedication Ceremony at the Massachusetts State House in celebration of the new mural recognizing Massachusetts as the birthplace of the Coast Guard and those that served in the three founding organizations of the Coast Guard: Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1785; U.S. Lighthouse Establishment, 1789; and Revenue-Marine, Newburyport, 1790, later the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service, 1863. Friends of Plum Island Light contributed to this long awaited recognition. We are proud to do our part at Plum Island Light to preserve our maritime history and tell the story of the lighthouse and keepers. Pictured left to right: Board Members Dan May, RADM, USCG (ret.); Anne Morin, Treasurer; Ron Barrett: Kevin Byrne. Photo by lighthouse volunteer, Rich Morin.



Friends of Plum Island Light
P.O. Box 381
Newburyport, MA 01950

COMMEMORATIVE BRICK ORDER FORM

To order a personalized commemorative brick, please complete this form and mail it along with your $100.00* check per brick, payable to "Friends of Plum Island Light" to: Friends of Plum Island Light P.O. Box 381, Newburyport, MA 01950.

Turnaround Time
We accumulate multiple orders before we send to our vendor. After the vendor receives our order, experience shows that they deliver in about 6 weeks. After we receive the bricks, placement in the walkway will be done as soon weather and time allow. You will be notified after installation has been completed. To inquire about your order or if you have questions, please email "friendsofpilight@gmail.com"

Inscription Guidelines
Bricks are engraved with your inscription of up to 3 (three) lines. Letters, numbers, punctuation marks and spaces all count as a space per line. We recommend 14 characters as the maximum for an ideal look and fit, but the company allows up to 18 per line. Engraving is done using all capital monument style lettering, The lettering is highlighted with a special durable black resin.

Brick Inscription

Line 1 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Line 2 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Line 3 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Your Name _____Date _____
Address _____ City_____ State ___ Zip _____
Phone _____ email _____
**Cost per inscribed brick is $100.00 and is subject change at any time. This form, rev 4-2026 supersedes any previous form. Earlier forms are not accepted.*

FRIENDS OF PLUM ISLAND LIGHT

www.friendsofplumislandlight.org

NEW! Visit our website to become a member, renew, or donate online. Or, fill out and mail the form below.

Already a lifetime member? Thank you for your great support. If you would like to send a donation, please know that no amount is too small as costs to keep up with the tower and property are ever present.

Annual memberships will expire on the last day of the month, one year from receipt. For example, annual membership dues received on July 20, 2026 would expire July 31, 2027. You will receive a membership card with dates of membership.

*To save on cost and paper, we will be emailing our newsletter to Members, in addition to posting it on our website. However, if you prefer a paper copy mailed to your home, just let us know.

Tear on the dotted line & mail with your remittance. Or visit our website for online payment.

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Friends of Plum Island Light

Membership Form: (or sign up online at www.friendsofplumislandlight.org)

Annual: Individual: ____ $10 Family: ____$20 Business: ____ $50

Lifetime: Individual or Family Member: ____ $200 Lifetime Business Member:____ $500

Name: _____

Mailing Address (if new membership): _____

Phone: ( ) _____ Email: _____

New membership: ____ Renewal: ____ Would you like to be a volunteer? ____

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Donations: (or donate online at www.friendsofplumislandlight.org)

I would like to make a tax-deductible donation in the amount of: _____

Make checks payable to: Friends of Plum Island Light and mail to: P.O. Box 381, Newburyport, MA 01950

A 501 (c)(3) Charitable Organization

Office use only: Date of pmt_____ Amt of pmt _____ Check # _____