National Lighthouse Museum

Promenade at Lighthouse Point #200—PO Box 10296—Staten Island, NY 10301-0296—718-390-0400
www.lighthousemuseum.org - info@lighthousemuseum.org

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Lighthouse Weekend Commences With a Grand Opening

On a perfect Friday morning, August 7, 2015, the 226th anniversary of George Washington's signing of the U.S. Light House Establishment Act, The National Lighthouse Museum held its official grand opening. Elected officials, area dignitaries, and our financial supporters were invited to the celebration. At noon, President Jack Vokral and Executive Director Linda Dianto cut the ribbon, officially opening the doors.

Once inside, the first thing visitors saw was the *Wall of Lights*, almost two hundred lighthouse models, sponsored by generous donors who now have a permanent legacy in the museum. Exhibits show the history of lighthouses, samples of some of the items that were made in the Foundry Building we occupy, types of Fresnel lenses and how they work, people who kept the lights burning, and the way they helped the development of our nation.

In the future, neighboring Building 10, one of two lamp shops on the site, will become the main building of our museum, with many interactive exhibits and plans for a full-size lighthouse.

A brunch reception, with catering by Framboise, was enjoyed by everyone while viewing the new exhibits, or relaxing on our outdoor patio.

Contributed by Mike Cagno

World Lighthouse Society Newsletter Excerpt

Written by NLM 2nd Vice President, John Arntzen

National Lighthouse Museum Celebrates Lighthouse Weekend



On Friday evening, August 7th, the NLM hosted their 5th Annual Light Keeper's Gala. For the second year in a row, this fundraising event was held on the three-decked dinner cruise yacht M/V CORNUCOPIA DESTINY. Honorary Gala Chairs; Brian Laline, Editor of the Staten Island Advance, Anne and Frank Bennett of A.F. Bennett Salon and Wellness Spa, and Charlie La Ganga; native Staten Islander and Director of Business at R.F. Lafferty & Co., hosted one hundred and fifty guests for a beautiful evening on the



water, dining and dancing as they cruised from Staten Island's Navy Pier in Stapleton, up the East River, under the Brooklyn, Manhattan and Williamsburg Bridges, around the Battery to the North River, and past Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty on their way back to port. This year the museum honored Drs. Patricia and Loren Graham, keepers of the Grand Island North Light Station in Michigan, and historian Hibbard Casselberry, keeper of the Hillsboro Inlet Light in Florida, with the Modern Day Light Keeper Award. Former NYC Mayor Rudy Giuliani, former Congressman and Borough President Guy Molinari, and the NYC Economic Development Corporation were honored with NLM Wind in Our Sails Awards, for their contributions to the effort to establish the museum in St. George. Lastly, the Past Light Keeper's Award was presented to the family of Charles W. Vanderhoop Sr. for his accomplishments as principal keeper at Gay Head Light in Martha's Vineyard, Mass. Mr. Vanderhoop is the first Native American to be appointed as a light keeper by the U.S. Lighthouse Service.

Book Reading, Panel Discussion and 14 Lighthouse Harbor Tour Complete Weekend Festivities



NLM's Lighthouse Weekend activities continued on the morning of Saturday, August 8th , when noted children's author, Gregory E. Zschomler, traveled from Oregon to read and sign his latest children's novel, "Louie, the Lonely Lighthouse" for lighthouse enthusiasts of all ages.

That afternoon, a discussion of lighthouse preservation efforts and techniques was held at the NLM Educational Resource Center (Building 11). Captain Joseph Ahlstrom moderated a panel of distinguished lighthouse experts that included Dr. Loren Graham, keeper of the Grand Island North Light Station in Michigan, Hibbard Casselberry, historian and keeper of the Hillsboro Inlet Light in Florida and Charles Vanderhoop III, grandson of the late keeper of the Gay Head Island Light in Martha's Vineyard, Mass. The panel provided the attendees with insight into the status of lighthouse preservation projects around the country.

On Sunday, the weekend wrapped up with the NLM's signature Lighthouse Boat Tour featuring 14 lighthouses around lower New York harbor. One hundred and forty guests were treated to a narrated voyage where they learned about the reasons for the placement of lighthouses, construction and light technology, historical points of interest, and the status of each lighthouse. The museum conducts tours regularly from late spring to early fall. Please check the museum website for the latest schedule.

The Future Looks Bright for the National Lighthouse Museum

As a chill returned to the sea air blowing across New York Harbor waterfront, the NLM hosted several events. September 27th saw Building 11 as the site for Staten Island OutLOUD's reading of Chapter 7 of F. Scott Fitzgerald's 'The Great Gatsby' at 2:00 pm. This Big Read Initiative of the National Endowment of the Arts was conducted at various historic and cultural sites around the Island to revitalize the role of literary reading in American culture.

The weekend of October 17th and 18th , the NLM participated in ***Open House New York***, an event designed to promote a better understanding of the importance of architecture and urban design, to foster a more vibrant civic life, and help catalyze a citywide conversation about how to build a better New York. New York's most important historic buildings were included in the hundreds of sites across the five boroughs that were open to visit in conjunction with tours, talks, performances and other special events.

On Saturday, October 17th, the NLM ***Hudson River Boat Tour*** left from Pier 55 in Manhattan. Presenters narrated the cruise as guests viewed the Little Red Lighthouse at Jeffrey's Hook, Ambrose Lightship, Frying Pan Lightship, the Lilac, a Lighthouse Tender and the Titanic Memorial Light. Tour attendees also learned about West Point, Stony Point and the Tarrytown Light while viewing the magnificent Palisades and fall foliage. Due to the demand for tickets, NLM was able to secure a larger boat for this tour, but unfortunately or fortunately depending upon how one views this, those tickets sold out rapidly with 270 on board.

The Museum Needs Your Support!

While it was great to step back and celebrate what has been accomplished, the NLM Board of Trustees and volunteers still need your support. Many naming opportunities still exist within the museum for donors of all levels. The exterior of the museum, including exhibits consisting of actual aids to navigation, can be named for an individual, group or company for $125,000. $30,000 can name a Fresnel Light display. A gift of $20,000 can provide a named museum office or a multi-media display. Gifts of as little as $1,000 can support the named display of a model of a famous lighthouse on the museum's "Wall of Lights". 182 models have been sponsored to date, but less than 50 models are still available. The list of available lights is posted at *Wall of Lights Sponsors*. If your lighthouse does not have a model, a framed picture will be acceptable. Please note there are still many foreign lighthouse models available. We encourage everyone to visit the NLM website and make a generous donation. Now is the time to come onboard. For more information about naming opportunities, please contact NLM Executive Director, Linda Dianto directly at 347-463-1119.

Contact NLM Curator, Tina Cuadrado regarding donations of artifacts. The NLM is also very interested in accepting donations of significant artifacts particularly those marked USLHE or varying orders of Fresnel lens for display in the museum. Please email Curator, Celestina Cuadrado at *ccuadrado@lighthousemuseum.org* or call 152-390-0040 to discuss potential donations before sending any artifacts to the museum. Become a part of creating a lighthouse legacy, your generosity will be well recognized inside the Museum for generations to come.

IN MEMORIAM
Captain John Doswell
1943– 2015



In memory of Captain John Doswell, and to honor his contribution to maritime heritage, the National Lighthouse Museum sponsored the lightship model *San Francisco* to Capt. Doswell. The model was placed with other lighthouse and lightship models in the Museum's *Wall of Lights*. Doswell's wife, Jean Preece chose the lightship model due to Capt. Doswell's love of the city. During the August 9th Boat Tour, Linda Dianto, Executive Director of the NLM presented Jean with a sponsorship certificate.

Captain John Doswell who died on January 2, 2015 at age 71 was a US Navy Vietnam War Veteran. He was a Founder of Friends of Hudson River Park, Executive Director of the Working Harbor Committee, member of the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance, and other community and maritime organizations. An experienced sailor he occasionally piloted the restored lighthouse tender *Frying Pan*.

Light Keeping and The Perception of Those Who Keep Light

By Isaiah Rivera

Isaiah Rivera, worked at the National Lighthouse Museum as a summer intern from the Ladders for Leaders Program. An English major at Brooklyn College, Isaiah wanted to learn how to use primary and secondary sources in his writing. His findings deepened his appreciation for lighthouses and for a famous keeper, Kate Walker.

When the average person thinks of lighthouse keeping, they probably think of an elderly white man with heavy facial hair donning a navy blue uniform of some sort with a complementary hat. He is probably stoic and stately, has piercing eyes and is probably looking outward at the dark horizon of the ocean awaiting a passing ship to beam his glorious light to. There's definitely some cinematic orchestra music playing softly in the background.

My name is Isaiah Rivera and I have been interning at the National Lighthouse Museum this summer thanks to the Ladders for Leaders Internship Program. I applied, and thankfully got into, this internship because I have a great interest in Staten Island. Shocking, I know, considering the general narrative about Staten Island is that it's an overcrowded, forgettable, lousy place to live. I don't deny that there are days I want to run away to Borneo or Puerto Rico and forget this place exists, but I'm very invested in reframing my perception of the 'forgotten' borough. There is a vast history in Staten Island that shows its face in many ways via abandoned buildings, old monuments, and historical sites such as the National Lighthouse Museum. As a writer I am very interested in tapping into that history to expand my creative imagination and give a new legacy to my hometown. The experience of working at the museum was eye-opening and very stimulating for me, considering I have never had even an inkling of an interest in lighthouses prior. I suppose I saw them the way most young people see things like crocheting or country clubs or Hallmark Channel movies; that is, as things our weird, ancient conservative aunts and uncles are into that we just don't get. I think now I have a little bit more in common with octogenarians now, because I find lighthouses fascinating.

I was given the task of doing off-site research for different lightkeepers and their experiences in lighthouses. Certainly, there was already a plethora of materials in the museum itself. The person I was told to focus my attention on was Kate Walker. I had no idea that women could be lighthouse keepers, or at least not as frequently as I found out they did. Sadly, many people share this perception. The aptly named appendix "Women Who Kept the Lights, 1776- 1947" chronicles around 142 women who kept lighthouses. That's no small number. It makes sense when you think about it. Women during this era were expected (frustratingly so) to be lightkeepers of sorts for the family unit, so this wasn't a far-off assignment. Kate Walker was among the great women lightkeepers we remember today.

Finding concrete facts on Walker was no easy task. Besides the public records containing her birth date, legal name, and residence, much of the information lacked proper sources or citation. Much of the reporting was very sentimental and syrupy. Kate Walker was a brave and admirable woman who light-kept for over three decades and saved many lives during her career. However, much of her legacy is steeped in a laughable, if understandable, romanticism. I always laugh at the oral account of her rescue of a dog named Scottie. Walker saved a family and their dog, and once all was calm she commented, "That's when I learned dogs could weep... there were tears in his eyes." Whether or not she said that, it sounds straight out of a Lifetime movie.

The general public view of lighthouses and lightkeeping is overly romanticized. According to Alicia L. James in her thesis paper, *Pushing Past the Romantic: Preservation and Interpretation at Historic Lighthouses in North Carolina*, "There is no good modern academic work on lighthouses in the United States. The literature that does exist about lighthouses is sentimental and in need of updating." Much of the perception on lighthouses views them as, well, beaming towers of light and sunshine. Thus, most people romanticize lightkeeping. However, it was surely no walk in the park. If anything,

it was pretty depressing. According to Ken and Barb Wardius in their book, *Wisconsin Lighthouses: A Photographic & Historical Guide*, "[lightkeeping] was not glamorous. Put yourself in the shoes of the keeper, climbing tall towers or walking out to pier lights with buckets of fuel, winding mechanisms for flashing beacons every few hours, cleaning and polishing glass and brass endlessly, keeping the lighthouse grounds shipshape, etc. The list is endless." Take Chicagoan keeper Mary Ryan's log of her experience for example. Mind you, these entries come from someone who kept the light at Calumet Harbor, Ind. for seven long years:

April 7, 1874: So dull, this place it is killing me. Wind blowing violently.

Oct. 1, 1880: The news is that the light will soon go from me forever.

Nov. 1, 1880: This is all gloom and darkness.

That doesn't sound very romantic to me.

History is never as perfect and pretty as people often would like you to believe. It's a testament to the strength of women like Kate Walker, Mary Ryan and others that they could deal with sexism and misogyny during the restrictive 1800s, take care of their families and still take on the daunting task of tending lighthouses. I dream of the days in which we can see a movie or television series about lightkeeping that breaks the patriarchal, romantic view of lightkeeping as well as incorporates the many women who minded the light and the languid torture they dealt with, while still honoring the diplomatic legacy that lightkeepers rightly deserve. But why dream? Thanks to my amazing experience at the lighthouse museum which spawned my new interest, I now have the knowledge and perspective necessary to make this dream come to life myself. Who knows? You just might see a lighthouse production by yours truly on the Hallmark Channel.

Sources and Links

- **Wardius, Ken and Barb. 2003 Wisconsin Lighthouses: A Photographic & Historical Guide**

Appendix: Women Who Kept the Lights, 1776-1947 (www.lighthousehistory.info)

Illuminating the way : Women Lighthouse Keepers of the Great Lakes (http://greatlakes.coastguard.dodlive.mil/2014/03/illuminating-the-way-women-lighthouse-keepers-of-the-great-lakes/#sthash.4M9SLc3X.dp)

Alicia L. Thomas, Pushing Past the Romantic: Preservation and Interpretation at Historic Lighthouses in North Carolina (http://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncw/f/thomasa2008-1.pdf)



On Sunday, November 15, 2015, our own Bob Eisele (Patches) was honored at the Staten Island Not For Profit Association 's 5th Annual Community Service Awards breakfast. This year 27 unsung heroes of the non profit world were recognized. The event was held at The Vanderbilt, South Beach, and was attended by more than 300 guests. We congratulate Bob for this well deserved honor. Read more about Bob in this article published in the Staten Island Advance.

Bob Eisele Honored

Black Ties and Red Gowns…

…a busy day, a fireboat spray, passing under the Brooklyn span, admiring centerpieces by Fran

This lovely August Saturday was the culmination of years of our Directors', volunteers', and generous financial supporters', efforts, hopes, and dreams, to get to this special day.

After the Grand Opening of the National Lighthouse Museum that morning, The Fifth Annual Light Keepers Gala was held on board the luxury dinner yacht Cornucopia Destiny. As we cruised Upper New York Bay, enjoying the sunset view, Honorary Gala Chairman Brian Laline, Editor of the Staten Island Advance, Anne and Frank Bennett of A.F.Bennett Salon and Wellness Spa, and Charlie La Ganga, native Staten Islander and Director of Business at R.F. Lafferty & Co., hosted one hundred and fifty guests for a beautiful evening on the water.

This year, the museum honored Patricia and Loren Graham owners of the Grand Island North Light Station in Michigan, and historian Hibbard Casselberry keeper of the Hillsboro Inlet Light in Florida, with the Modern Day Light Keeper Award. Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, former Congressman and Borough President Guy Molinari, and the New York City Economic Development Corporation, were honored with the National Lighthouse Museum Wind in Our Sails Awards, for their help in establishing the museum in St. George. Lastly, the Past Light Keeper's Award was presented to the family of Charles W. Vanderhoop, Sr. for his accomplishments as principal keeper at Gay Head Light in Martha's Vineyard, Mass. Mr. Vanderhoop, of the Aquinnah Wampanoag community, was the first indigenous American to be appointed as a light keeper by the U.S. Lighthouse Service.









This report and pictures was contributed by Mike Cagno, member extraordinaire. Thanks, Mike!

We're Going to Need a Bigger Boat!

So we got one, and as soon as the additional tickets went on sale, the popular Hudson River Fall Foliage Tour sold out again! On a beautiful October afternoon, almost 300 lighthouse lovers, ship lovers, bridge lovers, and nature lovers enjoyed the National Lighthouse Museum's annual Hudson River Fall Foliage boat tour.

As we cruised the river, we saw the lightships Ambrose, Frying Pan, and Nantucket, and lighthouse tender Lilac. Did you know that all lighthouse tender ships are named after flowers, trees, or plants? That's been the custom since 1865.

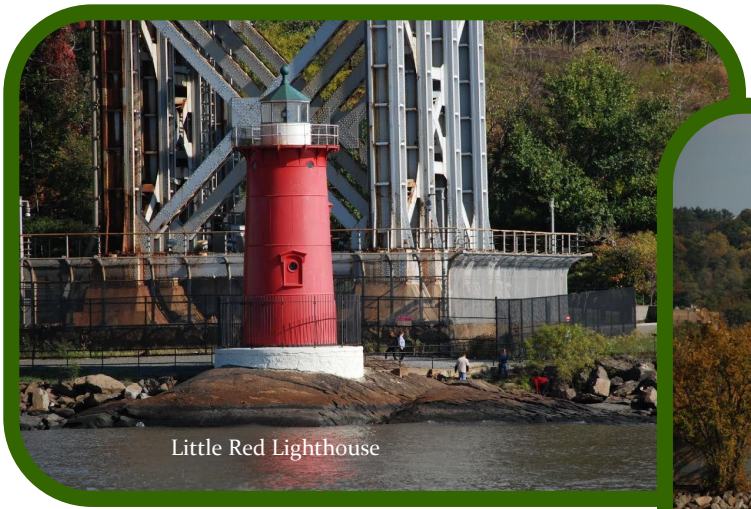
The nostalgic highlight of the trip was seeing the Little Red Lighthouse at Jeffrey's Hook. When we were children, most of us read "The Little Red Lighthouse and the Great Grey Bridge." Those memories, and desire to share this story with the younger generation, sold out our supply of books in minutes. Don't worry! We have more copies for sale in the museum gift shop, and will have more on next year's boat tours.

We continued up river north of the Tappan Zee Bridge to view the construction of the new bridge, and the charming lighthouse known as Tarrytown Light, or Sleepy Hollow Light. The climax of every boat trip is a stop in front of the first electrified lighthouse in the United States, the Statue of Liberty.

On the way back to Manhattan, the big cruise ships were getting ready to leave for far-away places, and the sun was starting to set on our successful season of lighthouse boat tours.

Next year, we have at least six boat tours planned. If you are on our email list, you will get the schedule as soon as it is finalized.

These tours sell out fast! Buy your tickets early.



Little Red Lighthouse



Tarrytown Lighthouse


Lilac Lightship

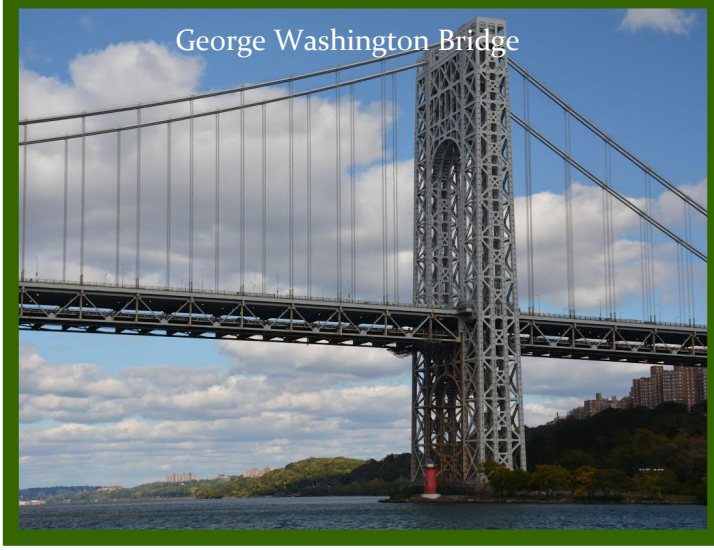

Statue of Liberty

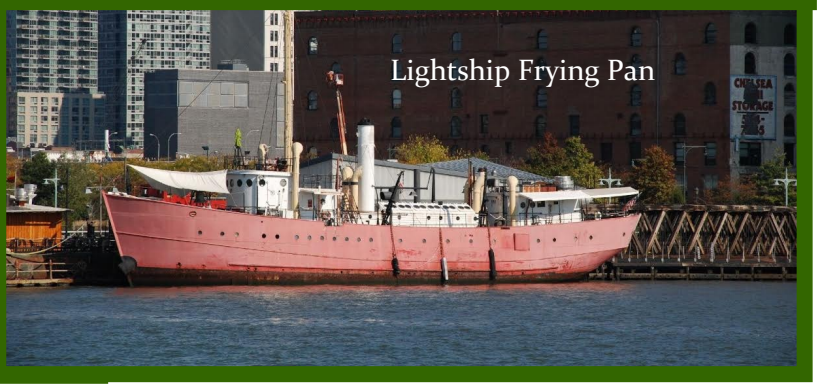









George Washington Bridge


Lightship Frying Pan

Coming Soon!

NLM's Multimedia Educational Experience

The National Lighthouse Museum was awarded a technology grant funded in part from the National Maritime Heritage Grant Program administered by the National Park Service (NPS), US Department of Interior in collaboration with the Maritime Administration / MARAD and the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO's). This grant will allow the Museum to create an immersive orientation video and a lightkeeper's database.

The 5 minute orientation video will play inside the Museum's *Wall of Lights*. The multimedia video will demonstrate the purpose and function of lighthouses and embody the stories of the keepers and their families. Through the use of soundtrack, lighting, and motion graphics, the video will create an engrossing experience for visitors and give the sense of being at a lighthouse in conditions ranging from stillness and solitude to raging storms. An additional slideshow using historical images will showcase the history and importance of the nationally landmarked General Depot site.

To compliment this video, the Museum will create a light keeper's database. Tentatively called "Wickies: United States Lighthouse Service Keepers Database," this database is an open-source, collaborative database that hopes to bring together national and regional knowledge to create a complete biography of lighthouse keepers when possible. Photographs, along with other primary sources, will help illuminate the stories of lightkeepers and add a more human element to lighthouse history. Searchable by lighthouse, state, or keeper's name the database will be available through a touchscreen at the Museum and online.

Comments From Our Guest Book . . .

- *"Fantastic place - wonderful people volunteering here! Hope to come back."*
- *"Thank you for the wonderful tour. We're excited to return and see the progress on this fantastic property."* *Richmond, VA*
- *"We really enjoyed our visit - the knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff especially." Thank you.* *Cambria, UK*
- *"A world I knew nothing about was opened up to me today."* *Staten Island, NY*
- *"Looking forward to watching the museum grow! Thx!"*
- *"Thank you for the guided tour, very interesting and great museum! Keep up the effort of preserving the history of lighthouses."* *Brussels, Belguim*
- *"This was an unexpected cultural & pleasant place to learn about the history of lighthouses . . . I will be back to visit with family & friends. Thank you so much."*
- *"Amazing place with great history."* *Spokane, Washington*
- *"Great boat ride and enjoyable visit to museum, will pass on the news!"*

Old Orchard Shoal Light – A Humpty Dumpty Story

Written by Frank Ninivaggi

Among the many victims of Hurricane Sandy, Old Orchard Shoal Light was the first. Located in the Raritan Bay, two miles southeast of Crooke's Point, Old Orchard succumbed to the tidal surge that swamped the eastern and southern coasts of Staten Island that fateful night of October 29, 2012.

Approved by Congress in 1891, the fifty-one-foot, cast-iron tower was built in the "spark plug" style. The light, which was first exhibited on April 25, 1893, was on for twelve seconds followed by three seconds of darkness. A fog signal, in the form of an air siren powered by an oil engine, was put in operation at the lighthouse on August 20, 1896 and sounded blasts of seven-and-a-half seconds followed by a silent interval of the same duration. Old Orchard Shoal Lighthouse was automated in 1955, but continued showing a flashing white light with a red sector, although it no longer had a fog signal. *

Currently, the spark plug style Lighthouse is still in the Raritan Bay, lying in 17 feel of water. Fabricated of cast iron, the lighthouse shattered into pieces when it toppled. It is the hope of the National Lighthouse Museum to work with NOAA to raise it from its resting spot. It is also our intent to work with local divers and students studying maritime archeology to develop positive learning experiences. Staten Island Divers Association, Staten Island Power Squad, Weeks Marine and Harbor School of Marine Archeology have all expressed an interest in helping with this initiative. Executive Director Linda Dianto has had preliminary discussions with NOAA and hopes to raise Old Orchard and bring it to the museum site in St. George. Once there and reassembled Old Orchard would serve as a memorial to all those who died on Staten Island during Hurricane Sandy.

Salvaging the cast iron lighthouse will not be an easy task. Discussions have also started with Coast Guard representatives as ownership and other logistics are sorted out. This initiative will be more extensively researched in the early months of 2016. We hope to make the Old Orchard Memorial a reality for the museum site.