KEEPER'S LOG

Point San Luis Lighthouse



ISSUE 10, JUNE 2017

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Life is a shipwreck, but we must not forget to sing in the lifeboats.
~Voltaire~

Welcome to the Keeper's Log!

Meet the new Trolley! The newest addition to the fleet needs a name. Do you have a name idea? Email it to PointSLOPrograms@gmail.com.

A Note from the Executive Director

What a great time of the year at our beautiful light station! It seems wildlife is so abundant...from the vast numbers of rabbits I see driving to work each morning on Marlin Stebbins Road to the huge array of sea mammals that swim by, plus the many pods of pelicans soaring through. We also observe our local fishermen out front and we always are on the lookout for whales spouting and breaching. Come on out and join us for a great day! Cheers! *Deb Foughty*

Grounds and Projects Update.

By Barton Dennen.

Numerous projects are currently being worked on or were recently completed at Point SLO.

As the Keepers work to transition the fleet to solely trolleys we are seeking to sell the fleet vans. If anyone knows anyone seeking a van at an affordable price please contact us.

Currently at Wild Cherry Canyon Board Director Joe Bradbury and John Went have been busy constructing a small shed where supplies for the fleet can be stored. The shed will be of great assistance in keeping supplies safe and dry during the winter months.

In May, Browder Painting from San Luis Obispo came out to paint the lighthouse tower. Their representatives did an excellent job of first inspecting the tower and then spending time diligently researching the best and most modern options for painting a structure that faces salt water and ocean breezes on a daily basis. The crew came out and painted the tower in just under one business week and the tower now shines in the sun.

The Keepers would like to extend a huge thank you to Browder Painting!

Also in May, the Keepers joined with the Avila Beach Community Foundation to present the completion of the ADA access ramp to the lighthouse.

Now more than ever, the lighthouse is as inclusive as possible, allowing people with mobility issues the ease of getting to and from the lighthouse without using any stairs.

The ramp was paid for by the generous grant from the Avila Beach Community Foundation and from PG&E.

Representatives from the ABCF were on hand for the plaque dedication.



Jay Painting the tower.



Members of the ABCF met with Point SLO Board Members and the Tuesday Work Crew.

Children of the Light. By Kathy Mastako.

During the 50 years that civilian keepers operated the Point San Luis Light Station, there was scarcely a time when at least one young person did not call our lighthouse home. Five head Keepers served here: Henry Young, William Smith, George Watters, Fred Saunders, and Robert Moorefield. All but Saunders had families. Twelve children spent part of their childhood in the Victorian residence our visitors love to tour.

More children lived in the old Victorian duplex, long since razed, the sons and daughters of assistant keepers. Lucy and Sonny Moorefield lived in the duplex until their father was promoted and the family moved to the head Keeper's dwelling. Twenty-one other children lived in the duplex, too, at various times between 1890 and 1942.

For some, Point San Luis was their first home. Fannie, John, and Louise Nixon were born in the early 1900's while their father, John Nixon, Sr., was an assistant keeper here. Judy Moorefield was born in 1939, when her father was head Keeper. For others, Point San Luis was the first place they likely remember as home—like Walter Devereux, Angelica Engels (great granddaughter of John Price, founder of Pismo Beach), Violet and Wheeler Greene, and Alton Scott (president of the California elementary school principals association by 1941), who all came as toddlers. Or, like Jens Wagner, who came at age six. His mother, wife of keeper Jens Wagner, Sr., threw a birthday party for him at the lighthouse in 1940 to celebrate him turning eight.

Other children came to the lighthouse in their teens, like Eva Ballou, daughter of keeper Steve Ballou, who was 17 in 1890 when her father was appointed keeper. Eva was President of the San Luisita Parlor of Native Daughters and an accomplished amateur photographer. Several of her images of the San Luis Obispo countryside were included in a 1900 souvenir program showcasing the Central Coast, published to memorialize a large gathering here of the Grand Army of the Republic. The Smith kids—Elsie, Bessie, Edna, and Ralph—also came in their teens, children of our second head Keeper William Smith

Many lighthouse children attended the Avila Port school, walking back and forth on a rough trail not unlike the one hikers take to the lighthouse now. To attend junior high and high school, the young people would lodge in San Luis Obispo, then return to the lighthouse for school holidays and breaks. Mrs. Moorefield's twin sister and parents lived in San Luis Obispo, so Sonny, Lucy, and their mother would board during school terms with Lucy's aunt or grandparents.



<**Dorothy Watters**, daughter of George Watters, who served as head Keeper 1920-1929. She is pictured with her mother, Della. Mr. and Mrs. Henry G. Babington could be the other two in the photo. Babington was a keeper at Point Conception. He and his wife visited PSLLS in December 1922. Dorothy would have been 10-years-old at the time.

Continued on Page 5.

What's Happening at the Lighthouse?

New Paddler Tours!

Offered every Saturday at 10 am, paddlers now have the option to take a tour designed specifically for them. Just land at lighthouse beach before 10, and walk up to the station where towels will be available for any sandy feet.

The same rules apply as for all tours: dry feet and appropriate clothing are required for entrance.

Tickets are presale only, and are available at PointSanLuisLighthouse.org, click the paddler icon on the front page to reserve your spot today.

Supervisor John Peschong Visited Point SLO

In May, District 1 Supervisor John Peschong visited the Lighthouse and took a tour of the historic site.

In the photo are Vicki Jansen, Deb Foughty, Andrea Lueker and Supervisor Peschong.



TOURS!

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See the wonderful photos that have been posted, and feel free to post your own!

Children of the Light – continued from page 3.

Graduations from the Port school were big occasions, regularly reported on by the local newspapers. The students put on programs of entertainment for their families and friends, and lighthouse children like Violet and Wheeler Greene, Mary and Jane Hilton, Dorothy Watters, Lucy and Sonny Moorefield, and Delbert Johnson participated in the many plays, skits and songs their classes performed.

In 1908, Bessie and Edna, daughters of Keeper William Smith, graduated from San Luis Obispo High School, and then attended the State Normal School teaching college in San Jose. Edna taught in one of the Gilroy public schools, and Bessie taught in Cayucos and Avila until her untimely death in September 1916. (In a tragic coincidence, Edna Silva, the 15-year-old daughter of assistant keeper Antonio Silva, also died that September, from what was first thought to be typhoid, but later ruled poliomyelitis. It must have been an extraordinary time of grief at PSLLS, with two keeper families both mourning the loss of a beloved daughter.)

Dorothy Watters, daughter of head Keeper George Watters, attended SLO High through her junior year in 1930, waiting until the end of the school term to be reunited with her father at the Point Bonita Lighthouse where he had transferred the year before.

Burton Gross, son of assistant keeper Elmer Gross, graduated from SLO High in 1938. Burton's nickname was "Lighthouse," and he wanted to become a lawyer, according to the school yearbook. Instead, after graduating from San Luis Obispo Junior College, he died at age 24, killed in action during WWII.

In 1940, Robin Wagner and his classmates presented the "Irish River Dance" at the Port school graduation exercises. Was it then that the theater bug bit? By 1957, Robin would be working in theater set design, first in California, then in New York where he designed Tony award-winning sets for Broadway plays like *Jesus Christ, Superstar, Kiss Me, Kate* and *Dreamgirls*.

Lucy Moorefield graduated from SLO High in 1939; Sonny Moorefield in 1940. Lucy went on to graduate from San Luis Obispo Junior College in 1941, where she was active in the art club and received a special award for her work in the art department. Lucy was known for "using big words." Her teachers commented that due to her semi-isolation part of the year she was exceptionally well read. Her classmates coveted her invitations to visit at the Point San Luis Light Station.



<Bessie Smith, daughter of head Keeper William J. Smith, member of the San Luis Obispo High School class of 1908, as pictured in the "Meteor" yearbook.

Martha Scott, > age 6 when she lived at the Point SLO Station. Her father, Albert J. Scott, was a 2nd assistant keeper in 1911.

Photo courtesy of the PCLK from the Baumgartner Family Collection.



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