Sandy Neck Light to be Restored

On the inside "elbow" of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, there is a 7-mile long peninsula just north of Barnstable village.

Every ship entering the harbor of Barnstable had to negotiate the tricky tides and sand bars that surround the tip of this long strip of land called "Sandy Neck." So important was this harbor, that the government built a Customs House building in the village to manage the great deal of commerce taking place in the 1800s. Because of the treacherous navigation around this point, the Government deemed it necessary in 1827 to establish a lighthouse on the tip end of the dunes and named it "Sandy Neck Light."

Today this stretch of land consists of sand dunes and beaches, which are now protected and overseen by environmental agencies. Adjacent to the lighthouse are some two dozen or so summer cottages, which are difficult to get to, but their privacy is well guarded by their owners.

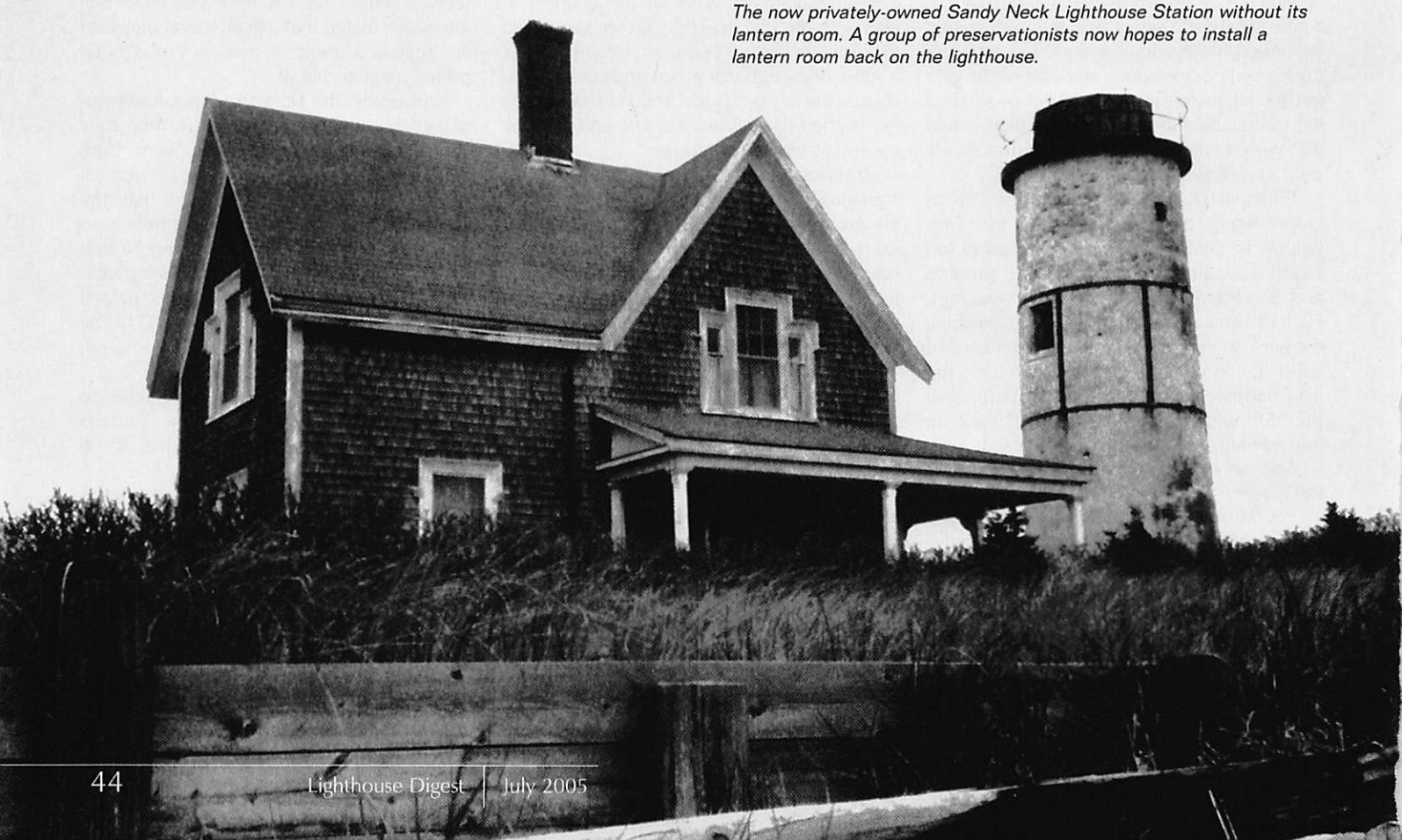
Sandy Neck Light remained operational until 1931 when the Government decommissioned the light, removed the lantern room, capped off the structure and sold the property to private ownership. This historic site now belongs to the Hinckley family and is managed by their nephew Ken Morton.

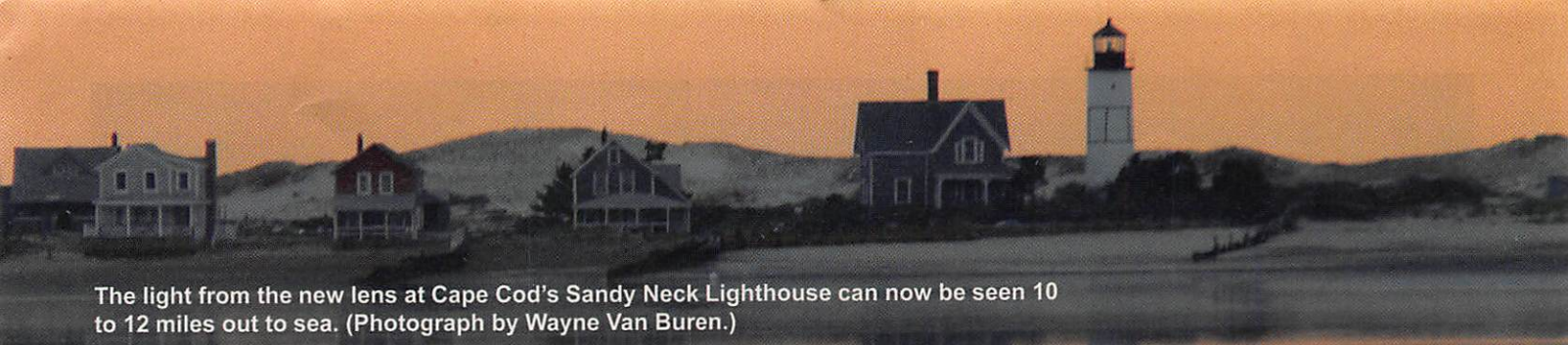
The light continues to be "topless" to this day. However, a group of individuals devoted to history has undertaken the plans to restore the light to its original condition. This involves totally fabricating a new lantern house from plans drawn up in order to mold new steel segments, exactly like the original. When assembled and completed, this new lantern will be flown by helicopter from the mainland and placed into position.

This small group of historians is known as the "Sandy Neck Lighthouse Restoration Committee" whose only purpose is to bring the old lighthouse back to original specs with as little disruption to the cottage owners as possible. If all goes well, the committee also hopes to restore the existing oil house.

Private donations have started the project on its way with a completion date of either late 2005 or early 2006. Hopefully, soon, thanks to the dedication of a small group of individuals, another historic lighthouse will be brought back to its original glory.

The now privately-owned Sandy Neck Lighthouse Station without its lantern room. A group of preservationists now hopes to install a lantern room back on the lighthouse.





The light from the new lens at Cape Cod's Sandy Neck Lighthouse can now be seen 10 to 12 miles out to sea. (Photograph by Wayne Van Buren.)

Donation Upgrades Sandy Neck Lighthouse Beacon

By Timothy Harrison

Thanks largely in part to a generous donation by a local businessman, the optic of Cape Cod's Sandy Neck Lighthouse has been upgraded. When the Sandy Neck Lighthouse Restoration Committee of the Cape Cod Chapter of ALF installed a lantern room on the headless lighthouse two and a half years ago, the light from the lens could only be seen for three miles out to sea. So, it was decided that a more powerful lens was needed.

The new optic, paid for and donated by Vivi Lopes, owner of the L & M Glass Company in Hyannis, Massachusetts and costing nearly $4,000.00, can be seen for an amazing 10 to 12 miles out to sea.

While it is the volunteers who have made a difference at Sandy Neck Lighthouse, it could not have been possible with the financial assistance of someone like Vivi Lopes who is making a difference in helping to keep lighthouse history alive for future generations. Not only did he donate the money for the new lens, he also helped to install it.



Vivi Lopes standing next to the new lens for the Sandy Neck Lighthouse on Cape Cod before it was unloaded from the delivery truck and installed in the tower. Lopes donated the funds for the group to purchase the new lens for the lighthouse.



The volunteers who helped install the lens at Sandy Neck lighthouse (left to right) back row, Gary Childs, Paul DeVeau, Jim Walker, Ron Jansson, Vivi Lopes and Bill Crocker. Front row (l-r) David Snowden and Paul Souza. Not shown is Wayne Van Buren, who took the photo.

Sandy Neck Oil House Restoration

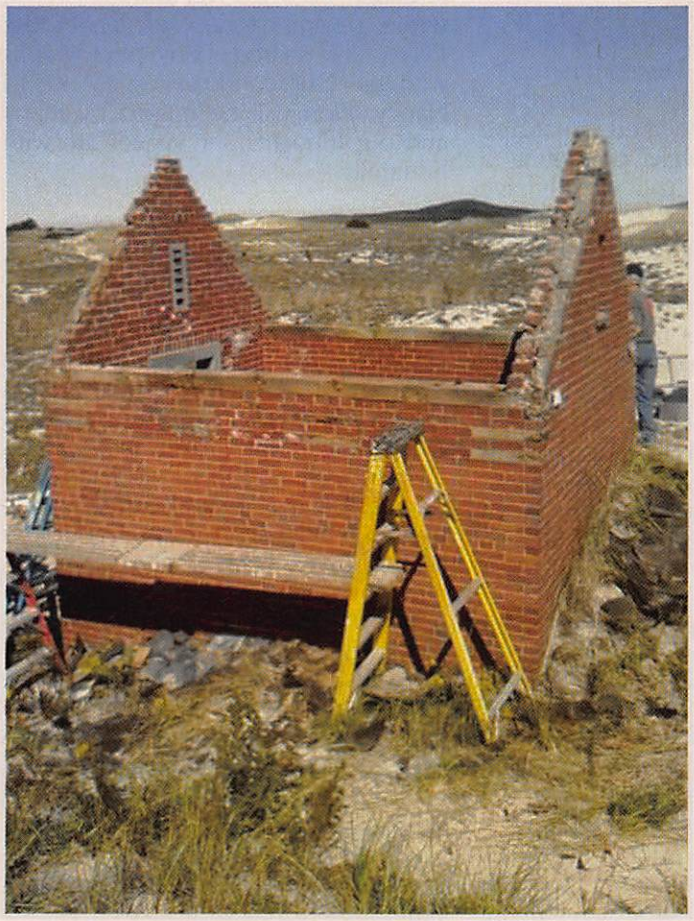


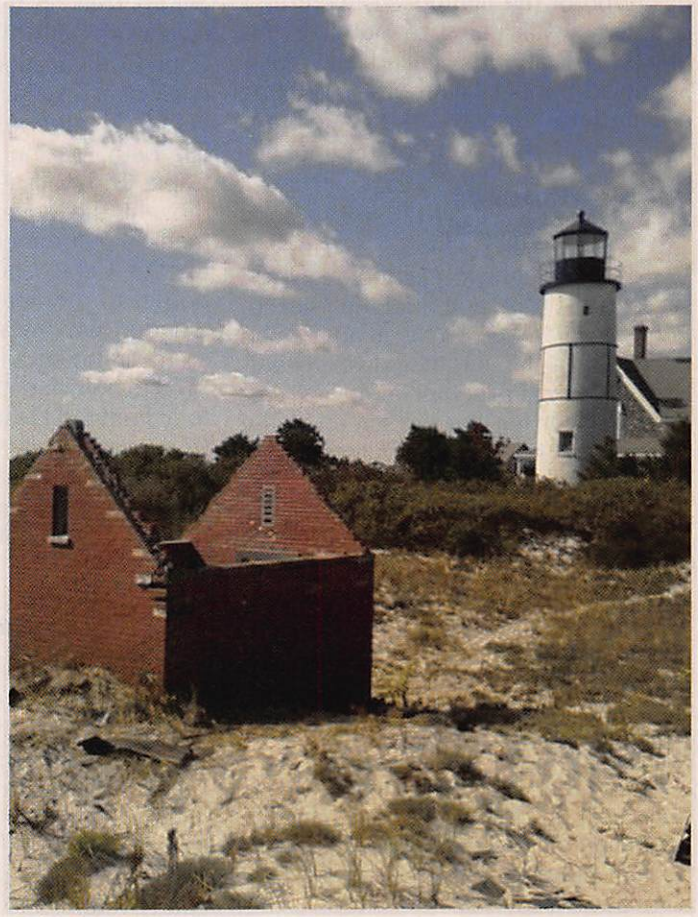
As anyone involved in lighthouse restoration is aware, there is more to saving a lighthouse than just the tower. All the other buildings at a light station as just as historically important.

However, generally, it's the tower that gets all the early restoration and attention and it was no different at Cape Cod's Sandy Neck Lighthouse where last year volunteers of the American Lighthouse Foundation's Sandy Neck Lighthouse Restoration Committee successfully installed a lantern room atop the lighthouse that had been headless for decades.

After years of deterioration from neglect, this year, the 1905, historic oil house got some long overdo restoration work. Amazingly, unlike many other oil houses at most lighthouses, this one had never been painted and the brick was in good condition, which was not the case with the rotted out roof and the door that had disappeared years ago.

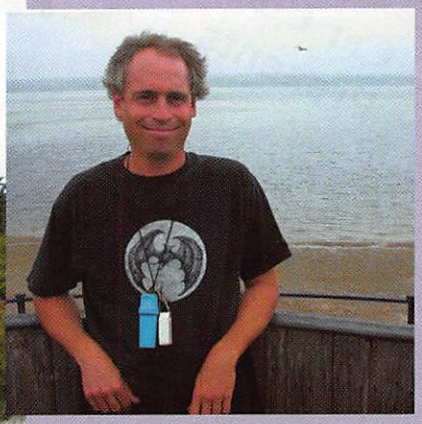
This was the fourth lighthouse oil house restoration spearheaded by Jim Walker, chairman of the Cape Cod Chapter of the American Lighthouse Foundation. He previously oversaw the restoration of oil houses at Wood End, Long Point and Race Point lighthouses. (Photographs by John Crocker)







Kenneth Morton



Owner of Cape Cod's Sandy Neck Light committed to its preservation, protection

By Bram Eisenthal

Imagine being on vaunted Cape Cod, seeking some R&R and the roots of late great writer, artist, and Tony Award-winning set designer Edward Gorey, who settled here permanently during his final decades. The dunes are soft, the waters warm, air fresh and it's not too crazy, if you can handle one-lane highways haunted by slow drivers. Then, while speaking to Gorey's cousin once removed, you discover the 36-year old political publication editor not only shares your appreciation of lighthouses, but actually owns one. Talk about an exciting revelation!

Kenneth Morton, whose aunt's cousin was Edward Gorey (and whose house Gorey resided in prior to his purchasing the 200-year old Yarmouthport home which is currently the Edward Gorey House museum) is the owner of the lighthouse and keeper's station at Sandy Neck Beach, less than 10 minutes by boat from the town of Barnstable. Sandy Neck is a seven-mile long barrier beach that forms Barnstable Harbor and links to Sandwich on the Cape. Located on the other side of the harbor, on a stretch of sand-dunes that is a nature preserve, the current brick lighthouse was built in 1857 (replacing the one built in 1826 for the sum of $3,500) and is missing its lighting apparatus and cap. The neighboring Victorian keeper's house has been there since 1880. The site was decommissioned in 1931.

Another side of Morton's family had owned the light previously, but he is the proprietor now and considers himself fortunate to be in this position. Yet, he is also very conscious of the related responsibilities and desires to do the right thing. "I'd like to really fix it up, but I'd need some financial and hands-on assistance to do so," admitted Morton. "The whole thing needs a paint job - both the tower and keeper's dwelling - and could also benefit from some expertise with respect to the structural integrity of the tower. All may be well, but I wouldn't really know.

"For both cosmetic and preservation reasons, my ambition is to have a new cap fabricated for the tower. The cosmetic part is obvious, but having a cap would also protect the interior of the tower from water. If the banister around the outside were repaired, then the top would be an enclosed room, with a door leading to the safe outer rim."

The view from atop the tower is quite lovely, with the harbor in front of you, dunes behind and several buildings to the right, past the keeper's house. As with most old lighthouses, there's a history to this place, not all of it good. One 19th century keeper, Thomas Baxter, died of complications after his leg was pinned between ice and a dory. He was succeeded at the task by his brave wife, Lucy Hinckley Baxter, who raised three children there. The Baxter's grandson, Harry Ryder, was quoted as saying "The picture she often described to us was of her having to heal whale oil, in the winter months, behind the kitchen stove and carrying two oil butts up into the tower at midnight. It's a story we never forgot."

Morton revealed that one of the original keeper's logs still exists somewhere in town. The owner is reluctant to part with it, due to its age and extremely fragile condition. "But it's likely that it will be donated to the historical society here, eventually," Morton stated. "There is also discussion of having it transcribed."

"I've only been responsible for managing the place, on behalf of my family, for three years and I'm still at the overwhelmed stage," Morton said. "The greatest challenge is maintaining the property. The greatest pleasure is having access to such a beautiful place in such a special location and being able to share it with others. I have an annual Memorial Day party there..... those are fun, too."

While Morton's famous cousin, Edward Gorey, did visit the lighthouse on occasion, it wasn't a regular occurrence. "When I was growing up, the side of my family that owned the property only allowed visitors on Sunday afternoons. They were strict teetotaling Presbyterians who did not laugh very often. His boating days were over before the lighthouse changed status and became more accessible." Gorey died in 2000, at age 75.

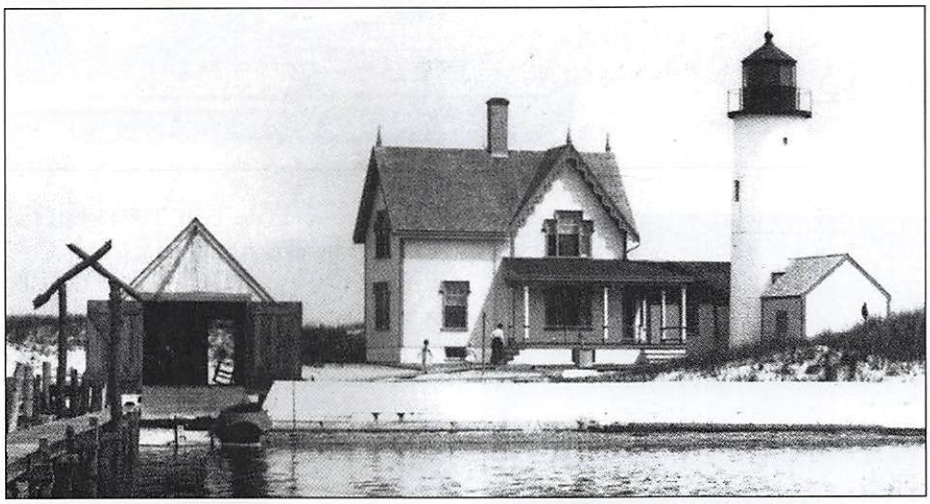
Morton stressed that Sandy Neck is a private area and off limits to the public. "But if I am heading over there and I know of an individual or very small group of people wishing to see the lighthouse, I might be willing to take them over, with advance notice, of course."

Morton can be contacted by e-mail at kmorton149@hotmail.com



The breathtaking view of the Sandy Neck community from the porch of the keeper's house. All photos by Bram Eisenthal.

75 feet from the edge of the nearby bluff. The move was performed by International Chimney Corporation together with Expert House Movers. The two companies have collaborated on a number of lighthouse relocations, including the 1999 Cape Hatteras move.



Sandy Neck Lighthouse with original lantern. Photo (undated) courtesy of Robert J. Lewis.

Light Shines Again from Sandy Neck

Barnstable, MA

The Sandy Neck lighthouse was relit on October 20, 2007, after having been dark since 1931. The Sandy Neck Lighthouse Restoration Committee has been working for the past four years to raise funds to replace the lantern and relight the lighthouse. The lantern replacement began earlier this year and culminated with the relighting ceremony. 2007 marked the 150th anniversary of the lighthouse's construction. The light is solar-powered and will be maintained by the committee. It has now been designated as a private aid to navigation and will appear as such in navigational charts.

International Lighthouse Challenge Announced

Maine, USA and New Brunswick, Canada

Three different lighthouse groups have announced a "Lights Across the Border Lighthouse Challenge," that will take place on Saturday, August 9, 2008. The Challenge will include Head Harbour Lighthouse and Muholland Lighthouse, both on Campobello Island, New Brunswick, Canada, and Lubec Channel Lighthouse, West Quoddy Lighthouse and Little River Lighthouse in Maine.

The Friends of Head Harbour Lighthouse, West Quoddy Head Light Keeper's Association and Friends of Little River Lighthouse are planning the event to draw public attention to the lighthouses and educate others about their efforts to save the structures and preserve the history of the lighthouses of Washington County and Campobello Island. Cosponsoring the event along with the lighthouse groups are the University of Maine-Machias, Machias Savings Bank, and *Lighthouse Digest Magazine*.

Although people are not yet required to have passports to cross to and from the United States to or from Campobello Island, Canada, the law may change by the time of the event. Participants are encouraged to apply for a passport now, if they don't yet have one.

Pre-registration, which is $15.00 per person, is encouraged before the event. Registration from fifteen days prior to the Challenge will increase to $25.00 per person. For more information call Kathleen Finnegan at 207-259-3638 or Junia Lehman at 207-733-2457.

Those wishing to participate in the event are encouraged to book overnight accommodations early because the area has limited rooms, especially in the summer months. More informatrion is available from the Machias Bay Area Chamber of Commerce <www.machiaschamber.org> and the Cobscook Bay Area Chamber of Commerce <www.cobscookbay.com>.

Registrations for the event can now be made by mailing $15.00 per person to:

Lights Across the Border Lighthouse Challenge
P.O. Box 671
East Machias, ME 04630 USA

Dice Head Lighthouse to be Lit Once Again

Castine, ME

In September, 2007, a microburst hit the town of Castine, ME. As a result, the steel skeletal tower that had replaced the Dice Head lighthouse was damaged and has not been active since then. The residents of Castine suggested to the Coast Guard that, rather than replace the tower, they replace the light in the lighthouse itself. It has been 72 years since a light shone from the tower, which is now owned by the town. At a special town meeting in October, the residents voted unanimously to grant an easement to the Coast Guard to allow them to maintain the light. A 300mm optic will be placed in the lantern and sector panels will be installed to prevent the light from shining into nearby homes. The Coast Guard is currently waiting for an electrical easement so that they can install a separate power line to the lantern. In the meantime, twice-daily radio broadcasts and a monthly notice warn mariners that the light is not functioning.

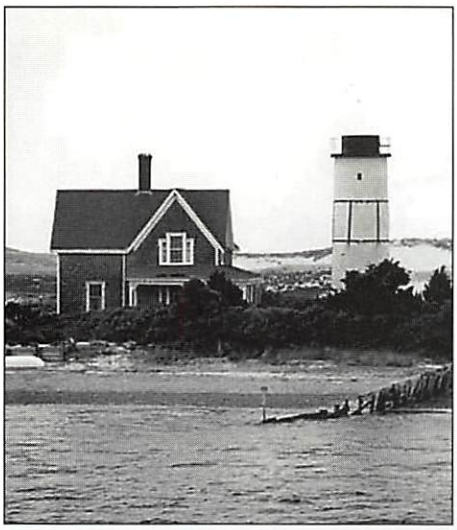


Dice Head Lighthouse. 1989 photo courtesy of Elliot Tayman.

Owls Head Light Transferred to ALF

Owls Head, ME

The American Lighthouse Foundation (ALF) has received a license from the U.S. Coast Guard which allows them to restore and maintain the Owls Head lighthouse and open it to the public. The organization will attempt to raise $257,000, which is the estimated amount needed to restore the brick and steel tower. The Friends of Rockland Breakwater, a chapter of ALF, will hold the license and partner with the Foundation in its fundraising efforts.



Sandy Neck Lighthouse without its lantern. Photographer unknown.

Sandy NeckPrivate Group to Replace Sandy Neck Lantern

Cape Cod, Massachusetts

The Sandy Neck Lighthouse has spent fully one half of its life as a misnomer. It's had no light. That will change early this fall with the planned restoration of the lantern room with a cast iron replica. Last week, the Barnstable Old King's Highway Historic District Committee approved plans to replace the lantern, providing the last approval before a building permit could be issued.

This marks the 75th year since the original lantern was removed and dumped in the harbor for disposal.

The decommissioned light was replaced by an automated beacon atop a skeleton tower. The project is not only to return a lantern to the top of the tower, but to preserve the lighthouse. The committee wants the work to be completed in time for next year's 150th anniversary of the Sandy Neck light. The Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association recently replaced a similar 10-sided lantern on the St. Helena Lighthouse near the Straits of Mackinac in northern Lake Michigan. As the Michigan lantern was built to the same government specifications as the Sandy Neck light, it's an exact match. The Michigan group has agreed to let the Sandy Neck restoration group borrow the molds for its castings.

Funding for the project has come 100 percent from private donations. There's still a need for about $100,000 more to complete the restoration of the Oil House and other outbuildings associated with the light, as well as the creation of a perpetual care fund. The fabrication of the final parts will be done in place by members of the restoration committee, hoisting and installing the individual pieces. There will not be regular tours of the lighthouse, which is private property. Those interested in contributing to the Sandy Neck Lighthouse Restoration Committee can do so at P.O. Box 147, Barnstable, MA 02630

North Atlantic District

(New York through North Carolina)

Chesapeake Chapter
Henry Gonzalez, President
P.O. Box 1270 Annandale, VA 22003-1270
www.cheslights.org

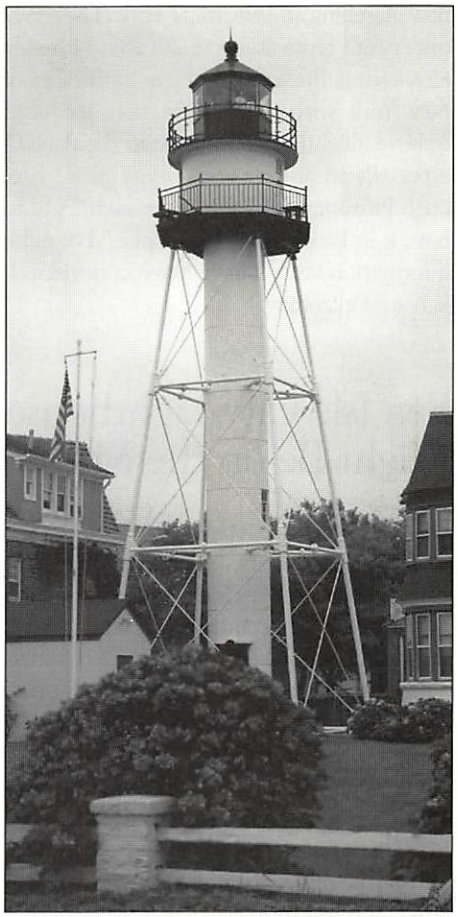
New York / Long Island Chapter
Brian Keena, President
29745 Main Road
Cutchogue, NY 11935
(631) 207-4331
www.lilighthousesociety.org

National Lighthouse Museum
Jerry Roberts – Acting Director
One Lighthouse Plaza
Staten Island, NY 10301
(718) 556-1681
www.lighthousemuseum.org

Historic Lighthouse Tours May Be OK'd in a Flash

Coney Island, New York

Brooklyn's oldest lighthouse could be opened to the public for the first time in its 116-year history. The Seagate Association signed a five-year lease on the 80-foot-tall lighthouse this month, ending a century-long ownership by the U.S. Coast Guard and a ban on public tours. "There are millions of lighthouse



Coney Island Lighthouse. Photo courtesy of the Shanklins

lovers from all over the world who have heard about this lighthouse and would love to see it but have never had the chance," said Seagate Association Treasurer Michael Breslof.

By next summer, the association could begin hosting tours of the Beach 46th Street tower and a nearby home, where light keeper Frank Schubert lived until his death in 2003. The tours would cost about five dollars and would include visits to Schubert's home at the foot of the tower, which is known both as the Coney Island Lighthouse and Norton's Point Lighthouse. Schubert, known as the last civilian light keeper in America, continued to watch over the tower until his death three years ago - even after it became automated in 1997. "He's a legend because he held the post for a long time, and he's a legend because he was the last lighthouse keeper in America," said Breslof.

Breslof said the tower also could be included in the Long Island Lighthouse Challenge, an event in May that draws hundreds from across the world to tour the area's towers. First, however, the house needs renovations,

Landmark was towed to Boston via tugboat from Oyster Bay, Long Island, New York, to become a permanent floating learning center. For nearly 40 years (1936-1975), the ship operated out of the U.S. Coast Guard First District headquarters in Boston. It was stationed nearly 100 miles off the U.S. mainland, serving as a floating lighthouse to guide transoceanic ships through the shipping lanes into the New York and New England seaports, past the notoriously treacherous Nantucket Shoals. The distinctive white letters "NANTUCKET" painted on its red hull were the first sign of America visible to voyagers between Europe and Boston/New York.

A ceremony was held on the weekend of May 8 to welcome the ship to its new home. The lightship will undergo dry dock maintenance and restoration at Fitzgerald Shipyard in Chelsea. Next spring, it will be opened to the general public as a floating learning center, situated at Boston Harbor Shipyard & Marina, adjacent to Piers Park in East Boston. Programs will highlight the life of crew members, nautical and marine sciences, the maritime heritage of the lightship service, and the remarkable place of LV *112* in sea history.

Moose Peak Declared Excess Property

Washington County, Maine

A Notice of Availability has been issued, under the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act, for the Moose Peak Light Station. Written letters of interest are due to the General Services Administration by mid-September 2010. The property is being made available at no cost to any eligible entity (federal, state, or local agency; nonprofit corporation; or educational organization). The light tower is an active aid to navigation and will remain so with the Coast Guard retaining ownership of the ATON equipment.

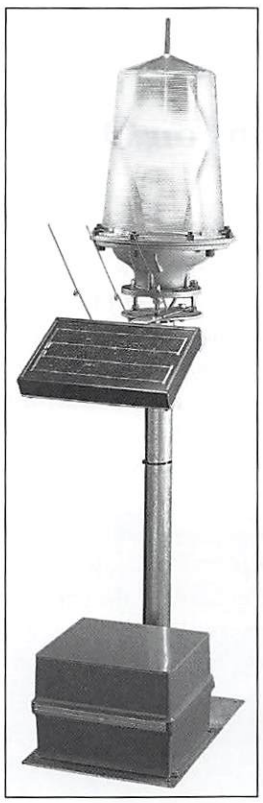
Tideland Signal Lights Sandy Neck Lighthouse

Barnstable, Massachusetts

Tideland Signal is proud to have worked with the Sandy Neck Lighthouse Committee, supplying them with a new ML-300 SolaChan and MaxiHALO-60 LED light source to bring the Sandy Neck Lighthouse back to life.

First constructed in 1857, the Sandy Neck Lighthouse is located on the Sandy Neck Peninsula, just over eight miles away from Cape Cod Canal, a major artery for outgoing and incoming ocean tonnage.

Decommissioned by the United States Coast Guard in 1932, a restoration committee was formed in 2004 with the aim of restoring the lighthouse in time for its 150th birthday. After years of hard work, the Sandy Neck Lighthouse Restoration Committee raised enough money to restore the lantern room, reopening it in 2007 using an optic with a visual range of four nautical miles.



The ML-300 SolaChan light assembly. Photo courtesy Tideland Signal Corporation.

For the committee members, however, this was not enough. They wanted to replace the optic with one that would increase the power of the lighthouse in order that ocean-going vessels going through or entering into the Cape Cod Canal could utilize the lighthouse to triangulate their positions. They continued with their project and by 2010 had raised enough money, much of it from personal donations, to purchase a new optic.

The new optic they chose for this job was ML-300 SolaChan assembly, supplied by Tideland Signal Corporation of Houston, Texas.

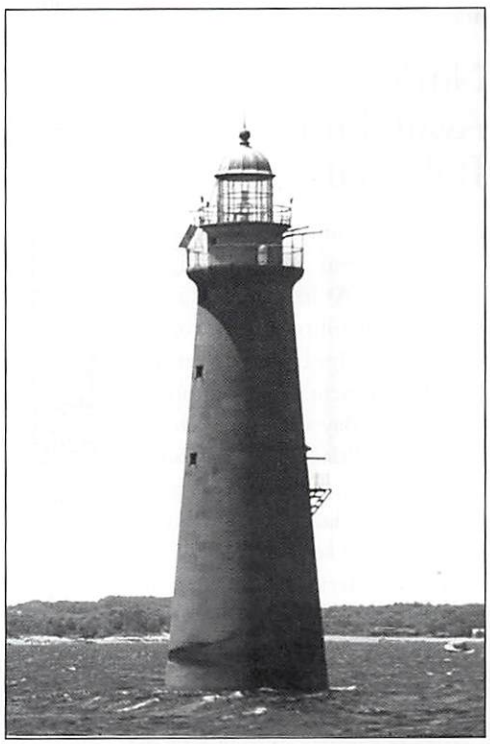
The lantern is lit by Tideland's MaxiHALO-60 LED light source and is powered with a pedestal-mounted solar and battery system. The new optic has a visual range of over nine nautical miles, meaning the lighthouse can finally be used as the restoration committee had intended.

The lighthouse is now classified as a private aid to navigation and is listed as such with the United States Coast Guard. Each of the volunteers from the Sandy Neck Lighthouse Restoration Committee is engaged in not only its ongoing preservation and restoration, but the maintenance of the lantern itself. The members of the committee are performing the comparable functions of the lighthouse keepers of the former United States Lighthouse Service, and each deserves the title of "Lighthouse Keeper."

Minot's Ledge Celebrates 150 Years

Scituate, Massachusetts

The Scituate Historical Society just celebrated the 150th anniversary of the completion of the new Minot's Ledge Lighthouse with a full weekend of activities: a cruise to the light, the debuting of Donna Elias' Minot's Ledge painting, and an exhibit of underwater photography from the recent Coast Guard dive on the remains of the first lighthouse at the Scituate Maritime and Irish Mossing Museum.



Minot's Ledge Lighthouse as seen during the Society's 1997 Cape Cod Tour. Photo by Jerry Waters.

Sandy Neck:

A Lighthouse Again

By Timothy Harrison
Photographs by Russell Loud

Cape Cod's Sandy Neck Lighthouse has been headless since 1933 when the government discontinued the lighthouse near Barnstable, Massachusetts and removed its lantern room.

The fact that the lighthouse had a wonderful history of family life, a former keeper who had also served at the famous Minot's Ledge Lighthouse, and the school teacher who was boarded there to teach the keeper's children was not enough reason for the government to keep the lighthouse active as shifting sands and the change in shipping needs made the structure no longer needed.

Over the years the ownership of the lighthouse changed hands and remained a topless lighthouse and has appeared so in thousands of photographs, paintings and even some souvenir products.

Ron Jansson, a local lawyer, recalling the memories of his childhood, said as a young child he recalled asking his grandfather what was wrong with the lighthouse and if it would ever be fixed. His grandfather replied, "I don't know, but maybe someday you can fix it."

Finally, 50 years later, Jansson decided that time had come. The Sandy Neck Lighthouse Restoration Committee was formed and with the help of Jim Walker of the Cape Cod Chapter of the American Lighthouse Foundation, which restored Race Point Light and also maintains Long Point and Wood End Lighthouse, formed an official affiliation with the American Lighthouse Foundation to bring the lighthouse back to its glory days.

Jim Walker, a retired Coast Guardsman, who has worked on lighthouses nearly his entire adult life, went on a search for a new lantern room. He finally received help from the Great Lakes Lighthouse Keeper's Association. It seems they had created a mold for a lantern room from the remains they found of one at Michigan's St. Helena Light Station.

While he and other volunteers began working on making a replica the group started the all-important fund raising, something that was much harder than they ever imagined.

Saving and restoring a lighthouse takes time and it took the group five years to accomplish their goal of getting a lantern room back on top of the Sandy Neck Lighthouse. Even when the time came to install the lantern room, things didn't work out the way they were supposed to. The panels they built for the lantern room didn't fit correctly. But through some ingenious reworking back at the shop the final day came for the installation, which then took more than the days work they expected, but in the end accuracy was assured right down to the ventilator ball at the top. Finally, the long project was completed and the Sandy Neck Lighthouse, thanks to dedicated volunteers, was restored to its glory days.

Although they still need to raise $50,000 the group hopes to soon be able to install a light in the lantern room and finish the restoration of the lighthouse and the stations oil house. Donations can be sent to the Sandy Neck Lighthouse Restoration Committee, P.O. Box 147, Barnstable, MA 02630.

See more photos on page 22...

