



## **NELL'S 2010 YEAR IN REVIEW**

*Tom Kentworthy, President, NELL*

The weather for the weekend of January 14 and 15, 2010 was sunny with blue skies, perfect for NELL's annual Lighthouse Hot Chocolate & You weekend. The Hilton Hotel, Mystic CT was our host hotel.

We first visited Morgan Point Lighthouse for our 2004 LHHC&Y. Having received so many requests to visit/revisit Morgan Point Lighthouse, it made good sense to use that as our starting point for our 2010 LHHC&Y.

Leaving Morgan Point, we made the short drive to USS Nautilus and the Submarine Force Museum. Here members decided which to visit first with, it being about a 50-50 split. I went to the museum first and then toured the Nautilus. There was so much to see and learn I wish we had planned to spend more time there. But we didn't, so I will probably revisit them in the spring.

After lunch, we visited the Palmer House, then the Stonington Lighthouse and Museum, ending our day back at the hotel for hot chocolate, brownies, tea and coffee, along with some light refreshments, courtesy of the Hilton Hotel, Mystic CT. After warming up on hot chocolate, we sang Happy Birthday to our good friend and member Patrick Clark. The perfect ending to a perfect weekend.

As spring approached, thoughts went to lighthouse preservation. NELL received a Project H.O.P.E. request from Anthony Savino, NELL member and a member of the newly formed New London Ledge Light Foundation (NLLLF). In his request, Anthony stated NLLLF needed help in scraping, spackling, and general cleaning. He also stated that the only reason the work party would be cancelled would be due to inclement weather and/or high seas. Thankfully, the weather, wind, and waves were calm and Anthony reported that much was accomplished and he is looking forward to another Project H.O.P.E. at the ledge light sometime in the coming year.

Receiving many requests from our members to travel to "foreign lands" (outside of New England), Ron and Mike put together a trip to the St. Lawrence Seaway. The weekend of May 14-16 was the weekend we went to lands not travelled to by NELL. For some unknown reason, reservations for this trip were very slow in coming in. Then they suddenly stopped. Ron and I discussed the situation. He re-worked the figures and we were able to notify all who had signed up for the trip that we did not have the required number of reservations but, if they were willing to pay \$15 more per person, the trip would

definitely go as planned. Everyone agreed that they would be willing to do that, so we went ahead with the plans and confirmed the dates with the boat company so we wouldn't lose our deposit. Two days before we were set to leave for the resort, we received our 79th reservation making it possible to offer a refund to the people who agreed to pay the extra fare. Most people donated it to our preservation fund, while others happily received a refund.

Members and non-members who signed up for the trip headed to Capt. Thomson's Resort and Uncle Sam Boat Tours in Alexandria Bay. On Saturday, we cruised the St. Lawrence Seaway seeing many lighthouses and had a great "bag" lunch. They were so unbelievably big, many members had enough left over for their picnic lunch the next day. On Sunday we held our semi-annual meeting which included elections of our officers. You were promised a short meeting and we had one of the shortest we've ever had. After the meeting, many members took a self-guided land tour of the lights we had seen the previous day and some lights that could not be seen on the cruise. The outcome of our first "out of the New England area" event was a resounding success.

We had received many requests to go to or return to Vermont which NELL first visited in September 2004. So, with autumn only a couple turns of the calendar pages away we started to prepare for our return. In order for us to re-visit Isle LaMotte and Windmill Point, Ron and I found it necessary to drive up to Vermont and meet with the Clark's, Rob and his mom Claire, owners of both lights. After meeting with the Clark's and seeing the problems that could arise, we were able to devise a plan that was suitable to both parties and, like magic, the two lighthouses were included in our itinerary.

Cruising Lake Champlain we saw a half a dozen lighthouses, including the old foundation of Colchester Reef lighthouse, which is now part of the Shelburne Museum. Upon returning to the dock, we took our group picture and many members then went to the Shelburne Museum to see Colchester Reef along with many other structures in this unique outdoor museum. Members Fran D. and Greg F. did a unique thing after the meeting. They took a flight to photograph the lights we had just seen by water. After the meeting on Sunday, we had the opportunity to visit and climb Isle LaMotte and Windmill Point thanks to the generosity of owners Rob and Claire Clark.

In the fall our parent organization, the American Lighthouse Foundation (ALF) and its chapters, joined in a fund-raiser with each participating chapter submitting a photo of "their" lighthouse. As NELL does not have a lighthouse under its stewardship, we submitted our logo surrounded by a collage of lighthouses that received preservation grants from us. Each chapter then received 300 copies to sell, with profits going toward preservation.

This year NELL gave out grants totaling \$6,900.00 and donated \$1,600 from our trips for a total of \$8,500.00. Giving us a grand total of \$138,902.88 donated to New England lighthouses. Congratulations to all members, past and present. Without you, your dedication and hard work, this would not have been possible.

As of Dec. 10, 2010, our 2009 membership stands at 308 members, slightly down from last year.

I hope you and your families all had a good Christmas and holiday season and a happy New Year. Now it's time to rest up and start to prepare for another great year of lighthouseing. I look forward to meeting our new members and renewing old friendships.

To see the full reports on our trips and more pictures please go to our web site [www.nell.cc](http://www.nell.cc)