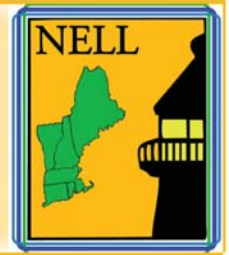


New England Lighthouse Lovers

A Chapter of the American Lighthouse Foundation

NELL Beacon



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How I Got Hooked on Lighthouses

Story & photos by Robert Ojamaa

Before I begin let me warn you I am not a professional writer so please forgive my lack of style. I live in NJ and am a member of a number of lighthouse organizations. I have currently seen 334 lighthouses listed on lighthousefriends.com. Of those, 333 are US lighthouses and one is in Canada, which can be viewed from the United States (Mulholland Point). I started actively going to lighthouses in 2007. Before that I had only knowingly seen two lighthouses. The first was Barnegat Lighthouse, which is closest to my home, and the other was the Statue of Liberty. You may be wondering what started my drive to see lighthouses. I did not intend to get hooked on lighthouses, but it happened anyway.

A few years before my lighthouse obsession started I was visiting a friend in California. She took me to Disneyland, Hollywood, The Tar Pits, Knott's Berry Farm, Long Beach, etc. When she was finally able to come my way, I was desperate for places to take her here in NJ. I know a lot of outsiders see NJ as refineries and toxic waste dumps, so I wanted to show her beautiful parts of the state. I figured Cape May was one of the nicest areas with the zoo, the beach, etc. I took her down there, and we ended up going to the lighthouse. We climbed the light and saw the beautiful view. We then went down into the gift shop. My friend loves mugs, and she purchased one with all the lighthouses of NJ on it. She commented on how it would be a shame

not to see them all on her trip. Thus began our quest. Over the next three days we visited all the lighthouses on the mug and climbed most. After that I was hooked on lighthouses.

Last year I went out and visited her again. During my visit we were able to view almost all of the lighthouses from San Diego up to San Luis Light (except Point Conception). The day I landed we drove right from the airport to Marina Del Rey where there is a faux lighthouse that I was able to photograph.

The next day was beautiful, so we headed to Point Fermin. It was also the same week the road along the shore that we were going to take to get to the lighthouse fell into the ocean. Next we went to a pier to get some distant shots of Angels Gate, which was being restored at the time so it looks black in my photos due to the protective tarp. We then took a harbor cruise where I got some distant pictures of Long Beach Harbor Lighthouse.



A day or so later we headed south again to San Diego to see the two Point Loma lighthouses. My trip happened to coincide with a day the old lighthouse was open for climbing



which was a major thrill. We took some photos of New Point Loma and had lunch down by the rocks and ocean. Before we left the area we went to Old Town San

Diego where the lantern room of Ballast Point sits on the sidewalk.

After a couple days of doing other activities, such as Disney, we headed north for a trip to San Luis Light



as well as visiting a neat town called Solvang. On the way up we stopped and took a photo of the Santa Barbara Light,



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Hooked cont...

which is not very attractive. We arrived at the San Luis area at least an hour early for the trolley so we decided to take a walk out on the Harford Pier. That was an awesome ex-



perience. I saw seals, sea lions, otters, dolphins etc. There was one place with steps leading down to where a bunch of seals were resting, and I was able to get within feet of

them. The trolley ride to San Luis is quite an adventure because the road is barely big enough for the trolley. It first brings you higher and higher on one side of the hill then rapidly zigzags down the other side of the hill. The lighthouse itself was well worth the trip. On our way back we had booked a trip to Anacapa Island, but it was rained out, so we postponed it for a couple days. We walked all the way out to **Point Hue-neme** (left) in the pouring rain, though, and took some photos.



I think the next day may have been the **Point Vicente Lighthouse** (center, left) open house, so I was able to climb the lighthouse. I love the view of this lighthouse from the nearby park. When we finally did go out to **Anacapa Island**, (below) it



was a beautiful day, and there were a lot of common dolphins that followed us almost all the way out there. That was the end of my 2012 California lighthouse adventure. We had a great time over three weeks.

Pictures from LHC&Y 2013 by Doug Scott



This article was published by Timothy Harrison in the Keeper's Korner section of *Lighthouse Digest* recently. I thought it would be appropriate to include it as Doug took a picture of our plaque at Race Point.

Repairs at Race Point

Thanks to a grant from New England Lighthouse Lovers, (NELL) a chapter of the American Lighthouse Foundation, Race Point Lighthouse on Cape Cod now has a restored tower door and new downspouts. The members of NELL are to be congratulated for their ongoing efforts over the years for the money that they have raised to help various New England lighthouses.

Lighthouses clockwise from top left: Race Point, Three Sisters, Nauset and Highland Light