

PROJECT H.O.P.E.

of the

NEW ENGLAND LIGHTHOUSE LOVERS

By Tom Kenworthy

President, NELL

In the fall of 2008 the New England Lighthouse Lovers (NELL) received two requests for our Project H.O.P.E. (Hands On Preservation Effort.) to be done in the spring of 2009.

The first, a request made by Jim Walker of the Cape Cod Chapter of the American Lighthouse Foundation (ALF) was requesting NELL return to Long Point Lighthouse for a day of painting.

It was soon after the holidays were but a memory that Jim was able to get a copy of the newly released tide charts. After studying them carefully he saw there was one weekend the tides would be low enough to allow us to safely drive across the sand to Long Point Lighthouse, get the work completed and drive back across the sand to safety before high tide returned. He called to give me the news and the wheels were put in motion for NELL to return to Cape Cod and Long Point Lighthouse in April.

The long awaited day finally arrived and the NELL volunteers met at the Ranger Station on Cape Cod. After loading the equipment and personal effects we piled into the chapters Suburban's and drove across the sand to our home for the next 2 nights.....Race Point Lighthouse and the keepers house. The weather was beautiful and several of us went for a walk on the beach after we unloaded the suburbans.

The whales were visiting Cape Cod and it didn't take long for the word to spread thru our small group. Soon we were all outside waiting and watching, trying to get a picture of them breaching the water. Even with a long lens it proved to be a difficult task at best and soon it was time for dinner and pictures of the sunset.

Morning came quite fast that day and after a hearty breakfast made by our in house chef, Maureen Kitching, we went to meet our Park Ranger escort to take us to Long Point. The escort is required due to the nesting Piping Plovers, a small bird that nests in the sand.

Making the successful drive across the sand to Long Point, we unloaded the equipment and touched up the gallery, painted the interior of the lantern room including the floor, the ladder to the lantern room, and the tower stairway. We also repainted the exterior base of the tower. As we were painting the lantern room, the whale watch boat passed by and we saw Amy W. waving to us.

We had painted the complete exterior 2 years ago and Jim stated he was out there in the fall and it looked fine. Now, seeing it after the winter passed, it looked like we were never there. The winter played havoc with the lighthouse and it looks like we'll be returning when tide and weather permits.

Our second request came from the Friends of Rockland Breakwater (FRWB) and was for a more extended period of time.

On Friday May 22, 2009 a small group of NELL members drove from as far away as southwestern New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts to Rockland, ME to help the FRBW restoration efforts. The NELL volunteers started the work on Saturday morning, the beginning of Memorial Day weekend finishing Tuesday afternoon, painting the walls, trim and ceilings of four interior rooms, as well as the stairwell, within the keeper's house at Rockland Breakwater Lighthouse. The work included the dwelling's kitchen, living room and two second floor bedrooms.

The Bandocks and I had been to Rockland Breakwater lighthouse prior to any restoration work beginning at the site and what we saw was enough to stagger the mind at that time. Suffice to say the interior was in dire need of a complete makeover. I must say that the Friends of Rockland Breakwater have done an amazing job over the past years in their restoration efforts and the New England Lighthouse Lovers are proud to have played a small part in the restoration of the beautiful sentinel that protects Rockland Harbor.

Previous NELL Project H.O.P.E. work has been done at New London Ledge Lighthouse CT, Pemaquid Point ME, and on Cape Cod MA -- Long Point, Wood End, and Race Point lighthouses. NELL has also donated over \$130,000.00 to New England Lighthouses and Lighthouse Museum preservation efforts.

NELL has members in 28 states ranging from the six New England states as far SW as Hawaii and as far NW as Washington State, south to Texas and many states in between.

New England Lighthouse Lovers is a Chapter of The American Lighthouse Foundation (ALF). For more information on or to join the New England Lighthouse Lovers please go to www.nell.cc.