

I'm very pleased to be able to greet all of you lighthouse lovers from the "Lantern Room" again. Most of you know that the NELL website has been unchanged since last year when our webmaster at the time, Ray Patnaude, was unable to continue, due to his real work requiring more of his time. Ray certainly did a fine job with the old site and I wish to thank him for all of the hours he spent volunteering his time and knowledge to keep the old site going for NELL.

We have a [new Webmaster in Penny Miller](#), a charter member of NELL, who just recently took on the job of learning all she could about hosting a website. She and husband Randy live in Somers, CT and also have a home on Cape Cod. You remember them, I'm sure, from the May 2001 Cape Cod outing that they coordinated. It was a wonderful outing. We were fortunate to have **Nancy Younger** (Harbour Lights) as our special guest for the weekend, and **Tim Harrison**, American Lighthouse Foundation (ALF), as our guest speaker. The outing was perfectly planned down to the menus that Penny had on the bus tour. She could call our lunch order in ahead of time (from the bus) so it would be ready when the bus arrived.

Penny has put this same planning and effort into learning how to build a website and I wish to thank her for getting us back online. I hope that many of you will visit the new site as well as contribute to it. You may access the new site at:

<http://www.nell.cc/>

NELL held it's second winter lighthouse tour, aptly titled **Lighthouses, Hot Chocolate & YOU 2002** in January. This year we visited some of the lighthouses of Rhode Island. Our dear friend **Doug Bingham** (ALF, U.S.C.G. Lightship Sailors Assn., NELL), who planned last year's event, did a splendid job again and the turnout for this event topped last year by 33%, with a showing of 60 lighthouse lovers.

Our tour started at **Ida Lewis Yacht Club (Lime Rock Lighthouse)** where we were shown the inside of the lighthouse. Renovations are being made to the entire inside in order to bring it back in line with how it was when Ida Lewis lived there. It was noted that Ida used to sleep in a room not far from the lantern, just across the hall. She would place the head of her bed in the direction of the lantern so she could check on the light during the night.



The lantern as seen from the outside, is not what you would call a lantern room but rather a cubbyhole.
Bob Tellier Photo



From the second floor inside Ida Lewis' lighthouse you can view the Newport Bridge, in the distance past the lantern.

The next stop for our tour was **Castle Hill Lighthouse** on Narragansett Bay. This stout looking structure is built into the rocky cliffs and has a steep stairway down the rocks to its door. The U.S.C.G. was on hand to open the door and to educate us about the lighthouse. It was a very windy day and just off shore was a sailboat and crew tacking back and forth against the force of the storm.



Milton & Eleanor Banker and Jeanne Panciera move to allow Norman Bosse to descend the tight stairway inside Castle Hill Lighthouse



Dennis Cosmo Jr., U.S.C.G. Lightship Sailors Assn., was also on hand to explain some significant history and artifacts dealing with our maritime history and lightships. Dennis brought with him some limited edition collector coins to help raise funds for the **U.S.C.G. Lightship Sailors Memorial** located in New Bedford, MA. If you are interested in obtaining one of these coins you may contact Dennis via email wlv613@hotmail.com

or write to him at:

[Dennis M. Cosmo Jr.](#)

[50 Belvedere St.](#)

[Johnston, RI 02919](#)



Did I mention that the mode of transportation was made up of 25 cars in a caravan, all sporting an American flag waving proudly in the wind? Along the way were asked "who was coming to town" and "who died" by several onlookers, and we were given the right-of-way by motorists who probably thought we were part of a funeral procession or a government official's cavalcade. Spirits were high as we pulled into the parking lot of the Marriott Hotel, on which grounds is located **Goat Island Lighthouse**.

Awaiting our arrival at Goat Island Light was **Bill Collette** (ALF VP) who opened the door to the lighthouse for us. This lighthouse comes under the care of ALF and just recently had some work done on her to keep her in shape.



Maureen "Mo" Kitching descends the stairs inside Goat Island Light



There is more work to be done on this lighthouse (i.e. painting of lantern room rails, etc.) and NELL expects to put the call out for volunteers for a workgroup this Spring. If you are interested in being part of this please, let me know, email me at spooler@snet.net.

Our next stop was to the cemetery where **Ida Lewis** is buried, less than 3 minutes from Goat Island. As our caravan pulled into the cemetery I couldn't help but think of this American lighthouse hero, who saved some 20 or more lives while at Lime Rock Lighthouse. As our group gathered around Ida's gravesite for a short flag laying ceremony I was proud of how her legend lives on in all of us who love lighthouses and wish to preserve them, and their history, for future generations to enjoy.



Shirin Pagels (Left) and Elinor DeWire prepare to place flags at the grave of Ida Lewis



It was soon time to head for the final official destination of this trip, so it was off to Jamestown and the southernmost tip of Conanicut Island, home to **Beavertail Lighthouse**. This would take us over the Newport Bridge, from which we could see Rose Island Light and a beautiful expansive view of Newport Harbor.

By the time we arrived at Beavertail Light the wind and travel had taken its toll on many of the folks in the tour, who hadn't eaten since early in the day. It was about 1:30 PM and we were starting to feel hunger pains. Fortunately, the **Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Assn. (BLMA)** greeted us with an assortment of homemade goodies (including cookies, pastries, hot chocolate & coffee) spread out for the taking, inside the museum not far from their beautiful Fresnel lens.

While many warmed up with a hot drink and a bite of homemade pastry they listened to the BMLA members tell the history of Beavertail, our nation's fourth lighthouse station. This station was first established in 1749 to mark the east and west entrances to Narragansett Bay.

Rejuvenated by the warmth of both the refreshments and welcome the docents of BMLA provided, we were able to climb the tower to the top of the lighthouse for a spectacular view.



Donna Eno (left) and Dottie Mastrullo walk around the platform outside the lantern room of Beavertail Light.



Frank Carbone, NELL Preservation Co-Chair, presents a donation check of \$250 to Linda Warner, BMLA.



I wish to thank all of the wonderful folks who made this day a very special one, indeed. Doug Bingham especially, for his work in coordinating it and for being the knowledgeable and caring guide that he is. Without Doug's contacts within the lighthouse community this trip would not have happened. Due to all who participated NELL donated a total of \$600 for lighthouse preservation.

Looking to the future are the plans made by Tom & Arlene Pregman for our **Spring Business Meeting** and the tour of all five of the **Lighthouses of Martha's Vineyard**. This tour, scheduled for Saturday, May 18th, filled up in a matter of just a few days and it promises to be very busy and loaded with fun. I look forward to seeing many of you on this tour and at the business meeting in Falmouth in May. Remember it is time to nominate officers of the

club for the next term.

The Meeting will be our first ever breakfast meeting on Sunday, May 19th at the Falmouth Inn, with breakfast starting around 8:30 AM. The actual meeting will start about 9:00 AM. If you plan to attend and haven't yet indicated such to Tom & Arlene, please contact them at tomarpregman@webtv.net or phone 203.287.8064. Breakfast is \$6.25 per person.

Other upcoming events, including the Harbour Lights Regional in New Jersey, Bill & Nancy signings at Collectors World (Eastham, MA), Lighthouse Depot (Wells, ME) and Melissa's Hallmark (Guilford, CT) can be found on our new website.

I hope that this finds you all in good spirits, good health and good company.

"Keep the Flame",

Ron