**X-Treme Lighthousing**

**NELL SPRING MEETING / TOUR**

*May 6-8, 2005 (extended to May 9-10)*

"Thar She Blows", and blows, and blows !!


Weather Forecast for 41.26N - 70.12W

**NANTUCKET ISLAND**

"I thought I should pass on this weather forecast to you all as soon as I found it. The storm forecast for this weekend has become much worse since yesterday. Rain Friday late afternoon through Sunday night. Inches of rain, high winds up to 48 MPH and high seas. No one on the island seemed to be aware except the Trustees.

Great Point and the walking tour are cancelled. The CG checked their weather while on the phone and said "where did this come from"! They are not coming (to open the lights for us) and say it would not be safe in those winds at Sankaty Head Light and advise that seas will be rough for a return on Sunday."
The CG, the Trustees of Reservations, the bus co. all advise that ferries may cancel on Sunday, but the ferries say they won’t know until the first boat sails that morning. If that happens it means another night on the island (?) in the rain. The ferry home crossing will be rough."

Several of our group were already on their way to Hyannis. Of the 66 NELL members registered for this tour, 21 opted to cancel after the above e-mail. The tour was not cancelled, and 45 hearty souls survived:

**HURRICANE NELL II - The Resurrection**

Cliff Olson flew to the island on Thursday. Some took the fast ferry, but most of us traveled on the cheap slow car ferry under overcast skies but calm seas. The rain didn’t start until we had all checked in at the Nantucket Inn. You couldn’t ask for a better place to be stranded, well maybe.

Sales Manager Mark Manchester and the entire staff were most accommodating, personable, efficient and very friendly. The ambiance of the Inn and its well appointed rooms were among the best we have stayed at, and Mom’s breakfast buffet was "to die for".

Friday night’s NELL group buffet dinner was served in their Nobadeer Ballroom. Everyone enjoyed the excellent meal catered by Richard Diamond of A. K. Diamond’s, a restaurant down the road frequented by members on other nights. Meanwhile, the storm gathered strength.

Our whole Saturday tour schedule was changed as I noted in my May 5 e-mail above. We all departed the Inn at 9:00 AM on two buses for Sankaty Head Light. The rain was not heavy but the wind was extreme at the lighthouse atop the bluff. Lee Hall did his impression of a ski jumper leaning into the wind without falling over. Cameras began clicking. People sheltered themselves behind a small shed and only a relative few "brave diehards" gathered for a group photo with the NELL banner while those "less inspired" stayed on the bus. This was a most invigorating stop and set the tone for the morning. Are we having fun yet?

A few days before our trip, the 67-foot commercial clammer, the Hanna-Sarah out of Hyannis, beached itself about 100 yards from Sankaty Light when its pumps failed while taking on water. We stopped to photograph the wreck with waves crashing over the boat. It was taking a beating and was a lesson for all in the seriousness of the storm. Many of us who returned Sunday in rental cars we booked to tour the island were shocked to find only the steel superstructure remained in the pounding surf. The boat was totally destroyed.

From Sankaty, bus 2 went on to the Lifesaving Museum and its 3rd order Fresnel lens from Great Point Light and 4th order from Brant Point Light. Curator, Jeremy Slavitz gave a presentation of the lifesaving history of the island and members were able to escape the wind among the museum exhibits.

Bus 1 moved to the Brant Point area where we viewed (from the street) the old wooden range lights relocated to a private residence off Bathing Beach Rd.. The
buses later switched venues. We could only peek at the 2nd order Fresnel lens in the Whaling Museum lobby through the window. The Museum reopens in June.

The stop at USCG Station Brant Point was more sheltered and we were able to photograph the Old Brant Point tower without its lantern room, (moved to the “new” 1901 current Brant Point Light) and the two tall harbor range lights. The latter had been brightly visible from the ferry coming down the channel into Nantucket harbor. They were quite a sight up close too, being so very tall to be visible over area homes (including that of Senator John Kerry).

The wind and stinging rain, sleet, or sand at the red flashing Brant Point Light kept us from spending much time photographing that light, but alas the NELL banner was displayed proudly by the very few who gathered in the lee of a sand dune in front of the island’s signature lighthouse.

At noon, the buses then returned us to the Inn for our box lunches in the shelter of our home away from home. We spent the rest of the day there conducting the NELL business meeting and raising preservation monies from silent auction items, 50-50 drawing won by Judy McCann, chances on the 2 HL GLOW Brant Point flashing lighthouses donated by Collectors World and Country Card Corner, as well as several others donated by Harbour Lights, including a #10 Alki, Washington HL from Bill’s private collection with winning bid by Frank Carbone. NELL merchandise also did a brisk sale. I defer to the Treasurer Judy Hall’s report for an accounting, and Carolyn Carbone for meeting minutes.

Thanks again to Ron Foster for his "treasured" Nantucket tour buttons, and MJ’ for her mailing labels. Ron has been putting together a great NELL Fall meeting / tour for the Avery Point relighting in Sept. so stay tuned, and check our website for other events.

I learned later that the 5:30 PM ferry did sail that night but encountered 20 foot waves that crashed over the bow deck and took 3+ hours to cross in 60 mph headwinds. :( The ferries as well as commercial flights were cancelled until Monday.

Steve Nicolle of the Trustees checked out Great Point Saturday and told us it would not be possible to go out in open trucks even on Sunday due to wind blown sand. Bob Cipriani and Lynn Robinson would not be deterred, rented a jeep, and gave it a shot only to be stopped short by high tides. But that told us it was possible, and at least half a dozen SUVs rented by groups of members trekked out at low tide early Monday AM for another lighthousing adventure several miles across the sand.
The majestic 1986 tower stood solemnly against the strong winds and the seagulls hung silently in mid-air. A lone seal lay down the beach and appeared sick, or perhaps just tired and battered by the storm. :( We didn't get to enter the tower, but those who really wanted to go, made it out to GP. :)

Some members desperate to return to the mainland and their work-a-day world flew out, but most departed on the noon ferry Monday. The winds had subsided some but the seas were still rough. Five of us, the Halls, Pregmans, and Cliff Olson stayed yet another night, shopped the day away in Nantucket town, and took a leisurely, warm, sunny, smooth ferry home at noon Tuesday.

"AT NELL WE DON'T JUST DO TOURS, WE DO ADVENTURES", or how about "I SURVIVED THE NANTUCKET NOR'EAaster OF MAY 2005" (I see a T-shirt there somewhere.)

Those who went to Nantucket I'm sure had a good time with friends in an environment reminiscent of the hard lives of lightkeepers of old. We at least visited all the lights and got to see how really small the island is. The tour book says "Spring comes to Nantucket a week before summer." With wind chill in the thirties, wet off-season weather, in fact the nor'easter of May 2005, "we were there" while other NELL members could only watch "Storm Stories" on the Weather Channel and wonder.

Eat your hearts out !!!

Tom Pregman
Nantucket Ferry-Eagle

Location! Location! Location!

Nantucket Town

Xtreme Lighthousing on Nantucket - Spring 2005
Photos by Tom Pregman
Sankaty Lantern Room

Tour Directors

What part of “NO”....

Surfside Rescue Team
Old BP and Range lights
New England Lighthouse Lovers - NELL

NELL'S MASCOT

Photo by Hilari Seery

X-treme Nantucket Weekend Photos
by Tom Kenworthy

Entering Nantucket Harbor

Another View
Hi-speed ferry

A sight for old eyes! An old 'woody'

Point Gammon

Joyce W.

Brant Point Coast Guard Station

What's this?! The NELL guard Ron and Reg making like the seal? Its good to be going home after a wonderful weekend!

The Hannah Sarah - Saturday Morning - thanks Tom
The link takes you to an article about the 67-foot clammer (Hannah-Sarah) which we saw briefly on the beach near Sankaty this past weekend.

This is not the sun or the moon. We didn’t know they existed. It's the Sankaty cyclops (see next photo).
Ocean view of C.G. Station Brant Point. Notice flags and their lines blowing in the wind.

Sand dune and Great Point

4th Order Lens from Brant Point on display in Lifesaving Museum

Sankaty Lighthouse

Sleepy Guard at Great Point

"Hey NELL, why are you bothering me? You must be crazy coming out here on a day like this!"
The Point at Great Point

Station and Old Brant Point

Two ships passing at Great Point. It was a close one. Lee and Tom P coming and Ron, Reg, Bob and Marquerite going.

Tom K and the Great 'windy' Point

Saying Good-bye until the next time !!!

"Oh well they must be crazy. I'm glad they're going. Back to work. Zzzzzzzz"
X-treme Nantucket Weekend Photos
by Judy Hall

Looking out from Great Point

Not a lighthouse

Not a lighthouse - two
The only stoplight on Nantucket

Not much left!

Top of the hill Nantucket
New England Lighthouse Lovers - NELL

X-treme Nantucket Weekend Photos
by Al Pochek
New England Lighthouse Lovers - NELL
X-treme Nantucket Weekend Photos
by Shirin Pagels

Anthony

Brant Point
X-treme Nantucket Weekend Photos
by Ron Foster

Hyannis Harbor

Hyannis Harbor Lighthouse (Brant Point Replica)

Lexis stays busy on the boat to Nantucket

Endeavor just off Nantucket
Nantucket Range Lights and the Old Brant Point Lighthouse

NELL lenses capturing the Brant Point lens

Brant Point Coast Guard Station

Guinea hens of Nantucket
Braving the elements at Sankaty

Trying to stay dry while photographing at Sankaty
If there are easy ways to abandon ship, the three crew members of the Hannah-Sarah out of Hyannis Harbor that beached 100 yards from Sankaty Head Lighthouse, above, discovered one early Saturday morning. After transmitting a mayday call to U.S. Coast Guard Station Brant Point around 4:02 a.m., which roused a rescue boat and helicopter, their skipper drove the 67-foot clammer inshore after its pumps malfunctioned trying to pump out their vessel that was taking on water. All three jumped onto the beach and were picked up by Station Brant Point’s coasties. None of the crew was injured. Station Brant Point Senior Chief Sheila Lucey suspects the Hannah-Sarah sprang its leak elsewhere, because the ocean at the time of their distress call was relatively tame. Clean Harbors and Harbor Fuel removed all of the fuel and oil from the vessel. Salvage of the vessel is currently being worked out by its owner.
Jim, Lexis and MJ chat between shops downtown

Hilari and Jim at Lunch
New England Lighthouse Lovers - NELL
Glad Hatter spotted

Boundary Line

Window Shopping
Regal smile from the "Regal Hobo"

Checking out the bear

Great Point Group - aka NELLS Angels
X-treme Nantucket Weekend Photos
by Hilari Seery
Nantucket Signposts

Nantucket’s Windmill
X-treme Nantucket Weekend Photos
by Linda Graham
Thanks again to everyone!!
Al Pochek returned to Nantucket Island on Friday, May 20th. He relates that Nell’s new mascot was still at the tip along with some of the relatives, including the bull. He also included photos of all that remains of the Hannah-Sarah. Thanks, Al!