



**New England Lighthouse Lovers - NELL**

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2006 Lighthouses, Hot Chocolate and You

January 21, 2006

Portland/Cape Elizabeth, ME

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## NELL LHHC&Y TOUR JANUARY 2006 LIGHTHOUSES OF PORTLAND MAINE

A hardy group of 73 NELL members traveled to Maine expecting to take photos of the lighthouses in the snow, but alas it was the "winter that wasn't". The Spring-like weather was in the mid-fifties and sunny with patchy clouds. However the cold wind on the shore, out on the Spring Point breakwater, and especially on the catwalk atop the Portland Head Light made us appreciate our heavy coats.

Hope new members Dave Hannum who came from Indiana, and John Chidester from Arizona, stayed until Monday when it did in fact snow. :)

Our day started on Munjoy Hill at the Portland Observatory. This tall wooden maritime observation tower was used by Captain Moody to spot sailing ships on the horizon so he could notify owners, for a fee, of their arrival. His descendants later opened a diner in Waldoborough. Just kidding. :)

Thanks to Emily Wiederkehr and the volunteers from Greater Portland Landmarks who gave very informative tours of the tower and related its history including its survival of the great Portland fire. They showed details of its construction and restoration from the large stones seen through a hatch in the first floor that stabilize the tower, to the 7th story observation room where the telescope was stationed. The view was fantastic and we could see the next 3 lights that we would later visit. Members were glad we included this stop in our lighthouse tour.

We then crossed the Casco Bay Bridge to Bug Light Park where Tom Meyers, Waterfront Director for the City of South Portland, opened the Portland Breakwater Light for the group. It is a petite tower with Greek architectural design and contemporary lens. Tom was pleased to see the enthusiasm of our members, was happy to receive our donation of \$325 for Bug Light preservation, and with the good weather, promised access to the Spring Point Lighthouse for those willing to return Sunday morning. THANK YOU TOM !!!

Next stop was all important lunch. Many of us gathered at Joe's Boat House at the marina between Bug and Spring Point Lights. Great food and waterfront view!

Jeanne Gross of picturesque Portland Head Light and Museum at Fort Williams State Park welcomed us out of the wind to explore the museum's many exhibits including half of a second order Fresnel lens that once occupied the lantern room where an aerobeacon currently rotates. To walk the catwalk atop the tower was a most exhilarating experience. One needed a warm coat but no hat. :) We donated \$342 to the Museum at Portland Head and gathered for a group photo before heading to the Cape Elizabeth Town Hall.

Town Manager, Mike McGovern, came in special on this Saturday to open the Town Hall for us to view the Fresnel Lens that was originally used in the Cape Elizabeth Light. The six bullseyes and long clear panels on this unusual lens, without the upper and lower beehive shape, was like nothing we have seen elsewhere. Be sure to check it out in the photos at the end of this story.

We saved the best for last. What a treat ! A really big THANK YOU to Bob Trapani and ALF for arranging our access through the owner's yard to climb the north tower of the Two Lights at Cape Elizabeth. And thanks also to Kathy Finnegan for the shuttle service to the property from the parking lot. This was indeed a rare opportunity and fantastic view. The huge bird cage lantern room with only the contemporary lens was most spacious. However the late afternoon sun didn't allow any photos of the south tower from there. :( Some members walked the neighborhood private streets for other shots of that privately owned light.

It was then back to our Howard Johnson Inn for hot chocolate and cookies provided by the hotel. The room was small but the refreshments welcomed. We introduced a dozen new members, presented ALF with a donation of \$340 for the Cape Elizabeth Light tour, and did a little fundraising by auction of an original Harbour Light donated by Frank Carbone. We also held a 50/50 drawing won by new member, Frances Toliver, Doc's Mom, discussed our Spring L I Sound Lighthouse cruise, and then called it a day.

Sunday morning we returned to Spring Point and climbed the steel ladder to the tower. Sandy Peterson felt like Connie Small, and Preston "Doc" Toliver nearly ruined his day by backing into an open floor hatch. He caught himself and seemed OK. Hope he wasn't too sore the next day. Several of us shot distant silhouette photos of Portland Head Light through the RED sector windows. Hilari's came out better than mine. :(

Final destination for many members was the Museum of Lighthouse History at Wells, opened by ALF for our NELL visit on this winter weekend. Lots of great exhibits there and the Lighthouse Depot right next door too.

Whew ! We do squeeze a lot into one of our tours. So be sure to join in the Spring cruise of the 10 CT lighthouses of western L I Sound. Hope to see you there, "on the road with NELL."



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Photos by Shirin Pagels





