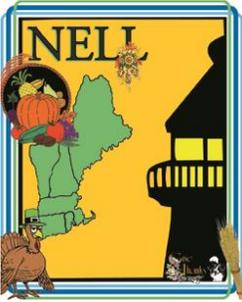


# CHAPTER CHATTER

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November/December

**Happy Thanksgiving** - **Happy Hanukah** - **Merry Christmas**

## LightHouses Hot Chocolate & You 2017

The next get-together for NELL is tentatively scheduled for January 14, 2017.

We are looking into visiting the greater Newport, RI area.

Some of the lighthouses include Goat Island Light, Castle Hill Light, Beavertail Light, and Point Judith Light.

### Important membership dues notice

It is time to renew your NELL membership dues for 2017.

Your membership runs from January 1 through December 31, 2017.

If you plan to attend LHHCY (Lighthouse Hot Chocolate and You) your dues must be paid by December 31, 2016.

Single membership is \$20 and dual membership is \$30.

Make out your check to "NELL" and send it to: Kathy Santucci, 38 Lime Kiln Rd., Tuckahoe, NY 10707.

If you would like to pay your NELL dues by PayPal click on the link below and follow the instructions.

<http://www.newenglandlighthouse lovers.org/membership-form/>

*If your address or email has changed, please notify me. Thank you - Walt Mills, Membership*

### Happy Birthday to:

Kim Ely	11/04	Pamela DePasquale	11/07	Larry Thompson	11/10
Laurel Mills	11/13	Kathy Santucci	11/13	Norm Bosse	11/15
Bob Mills	11/15	Jim Streeter	11/15	Gary Toth	11/19
Sandra Peterson	12/03	Linda Sherlock	12/03	Carol Drogowski	12/12
Cynthia Bosse	12/12	Jim Seery	12/14	Eugene Carew	12/19
Madelene Taylor	12/22	Judy Newbloom	12/26	Cliff Olson	12/28
Hank Heacock	12/29	Barbara Kepple	12/31		

### Anniversary Wishes to:

Christine & Tom Cardaci	11/02	Frank & Pamela DePasquale	11/14		
Bill & Linda Grumman	12/24	David & Janice Dingley	12/30	Elinor & Jonathan DeWire	12/30

## Meet the new Mr. NELL



Congratulations to Bill Kent the new Mr. Nell. Bill and his wife Odette are charter members. Bill has also just completed his term as President of NELL. The title and paddle were past from John Donovan at the NELL 2016 Fall meeting.

In previous years the paddle was given to:

2000 - Ron Drummer

2001 - Walt Mills

2002 - Fred Thumm

2003 - Henry Winkleman

2004 - Bob Taylor

2005 - Norm Bosse

2006 - Anthony Savino

2007 - Lee Hall

2008 - Tom Pregman

2009 - Ron Foster

2010 - Frank Carbone, Jr

2011 - Tom Kenworthy

2012-2013 - Ron Bando

2014 - Doug Scott

2015 - John Donovan

## Lighthouses in the News

Restoring forgotten Buffalo lighthouse will create 'heritage bookends'



Shut down in 1962, the South Buffalo Lighthouse is unknown to many, but restoring the 197-year-old structure will provide a link to the city's maritime heritage

Think of the historic Buffalo waterfront, and your mind is likely to picture the Buffalo Lighthouse. The limestone tower built in 1833 and located across the Buffalo River from Erie Basin Marina is an impressive display on a late summer's night. But there is another lighthouse on Buffalo's waterfront, unknown to most.

The South Buffalo Lighthouse stands at the south entrance to Buffalo's Outer Harbor. Its isolated location – waterside and bordered by privately owned industrial property – renders it almost inaccessible by land and makes it relatively unknown by most Western New Yorkers.

Decommissioned in 1962, the lighthouse and adjacent fog signal building may have gone forgotten by many. But it is now being reclaimed by a stalwart group of maritime preservationists.

"The building itself is a few years from collapsing," said Mike Vogel, president of the Buffalo Lighthouse Association. "It was stripped out pretty well when they were abandoned and pretty much left to the elements for a half-century."

On a recent visit to the 43-foot tall, iron-clad lighthouse topped with its signature black lantern and diamond-shaped glass panels, Vogel explained how he and other preservationists acquired it and what it will mean when their restoration efforts are completed.

Once restored, the South Buffalo Lighthouse and the Buffalo Lighthouse will complement each other as "cultural and heritage bookends" in the ongoing development of Buffalo's Outer Harbor, giving the area a stamp of "historical authenticity."

"A lot of the harbor is a blank slate," said Vogel, who has received national honors for his efforts in lighthouse restoration. "A lot of what was there – dock facilities, seaway piers – is gone. Of all the industry once there, only a few remnants remain, like the grain elevators. They are really the bridge to the past."

"Incorporate those remnants," he said, "and you'll have a unique sense of place – and not all new. It will be a much better attraction, a link to Buffalo's maritime heritage."

The South Buffalo Lighthouse tower's brown base and cream-colored body led historians to call it a "bottle light" because it resembled a milk bottle.

Bill Zimmerman, president of Seven Seas Sailing School, had the "bottle light" in his sights for years before it was offered in 2008 to qualified groups through the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act of 2000.

The General Services Administration – working with the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Parks Service – handled the transfer of lighthouses, which legally belong to the U.S. Coast Guard.

Each season, Zimmerman led a small fleet of sailboats on the water surrounding South Buffalo Lighthouse. He said he must have passed the faded beauty hundreds of times.

"We've been chomping at the bit to dock the boats," said Zimmerman. "What's neat about that area is its natural gifts of water and nature. On the grounds behind the lighthouse, you will never see as many birds in your life as you do in May and June."

Zimmerman, executive director of Maritime Activity Inter-youth Network, and Vogel each submitted a letter of interest to acquire the lighthouse. Applications followed, and while the deed for the lighthouse station was transferred to Vogel's group, it is clear that Zimmerman is a working partner. He has, for example, engaged the University at Buffalo Department of Geology and National Geographic Society in water testing, with Seven Seas boats collecting and logging the samples.

Renovation efforts at the South Buffalo Lighthouse are expected to cost \$850,000, according to Vogel, who spent significant time bringing the Buffalo Lighthouse back to life. That project, still ongoing, will cost \$830,000 when completed, he said.

On the recent trip to the recently acquired South Buffalo Lighthouse, he pointed to the brown fog signal station – dwarfed by its companion lighthouse – as a catalyst for the restoration effort.

"It became the testing station for the entire Great Lakes," said Vogel. "If anyone was putting out a new fog signal, they would first use it here. There were a lot of lighthouses, but only one fog signal testing station."

Construction on the arch-roofed building started in May 1904, with the original fog siren powered by twin 13-horsepower engines and compressed air. The structure, with its heavily patched roof, sported a rusted 11-foot sound reflector with twin trumpets.

One could only imagine the bassoon-like alert that cut through the fog when the lighthouse beam could not. The air diaphone installed in 1934 produced a two-tone air blast of three seconds, followed by a silence for 27 seconds.

Alfred Coppola as a young boy lived in Dante Place, a housing development that in the 1940s occupied the city's Canal District. Coppola, now 73, recalled hearing the siren's deep wail in the middle of the night. As he stood near the fog signal station one recent night, he described the sound.

"It was like an orchestra playing in the evening," said Coppola, the former Delaware Common Council member who is now on the board of Zimmerman's group. "We had bigger boats in those days, more like ships. It was a beautiful sound. There was a calming to it."

Zimmerman and Vogel have been promised \$7,000 in funding that would allow them to erect a safety railing around the perimeter of the lighthouse station.

"There was never a safety railing, and we want to make the new one as invisible as possible because we are trying to maintain historical integrity," Vogel explained.

Fundraising for the first stage of the project, a \$185,000 stabilization and safety phase, began in 2012, Vogel said. The Niagara River Greenway Commission awarded a \$50,000 grant for the effort.

## **International Lighthouse News**

### **Tangi's Grand Old Lady to get a Lift**



Very soon the 114-year-old Tangasseri point lighthouse in Kollam will not look the same from inside. The well of the 135 feet tall lighthouse's spiral staircase will be filled with a pre-fabricated glass tube to accommodate a lift.

Admiring and photographing the beauty of the well from down and above had all along been a favorite pastime of visitors. That view will get cut off with the installation of the lift. Work on erecting the lift commences on September 1. Head light keeper of the lighthouse Salim Jose said that to facilitate the work, the lighthouse will remain closed to visitors for three months from September 1. The plan, as per an assurance given by the lift contractors, is to commission the lift on December 1.

So the next few days will be the last opportunity for visitors to get a glimpse of the well in its original colonial grandeur. Mr. Jose said the Directorate of Lighthouses and Lightships had sanctioned Rs.80 lakh for the lift and the contract had been awarded to a Kochi-based firm.

He said the wooden spiral stair case would be maintained intact and even after the commissioning of the lift, those who prefer going up the lighthouse through the staircase can do so. The lift is for the convenience of those who find it uneasy to climb the stairs.

A backup system will complement the main power supply to the lift. The lift will carry visitors till the service room on top. From there the visitors will have to climb a flight of stairs to reach the lantern room and the balcony surrounding the lantern room.

The grand old lady of Tangasseri had her origin as a raised column with an oil lamp built by the East India Company at the same site during the mid-19th century. The purpose was to guide their merchant vessels that came from the Malabar coast to Anjengo (now Anchuthengu) and went further down to enter the Bay of Bengal via Ceylon.

Commissioned on March 1, 1902

The present structure, also erected by the British, was commissioned on March 1, 1902.

Lighthouse to be closed to visitors for 3 months to facilitate work

### **UPDATE October 17<sup>th</sup>.....Tangasseri Lighthouse to re-open December 1st**



The prefabricated glass tube through the staircase well which will accommodate the lift.

After remaining closed to visitors since September 1<sup>st</sup> to facilitate the erection of a lift to the top, Tangasseri lighthouse is expected to reopen on December 1<sup>st</sup>.

Head lighthouse keeper Salim Jose said that given the pace of the progress of the work, the reopening can be expected as targeted.

He said “more than fifty per cent of the work has been completed. The pre-fabricated glass tube through the staircase well for accommodating the lift is already in place” Work on fitting the lift inside the tube will commence next week and the contractors have given an assurance that the work will be complete in November.

After trial operations, the lift will be commissioned on December 1<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Jose said. He said “the lift will have the capacity to accommodate only five people at a time” The old granite staircase with wooden panel of the 135 feet tall lighthouse will also remain open for visitors. Erecting the lift is a Rs. 80 lakh project he said.

As part of the project, a ticket counter and a kiosk is also being constructed in the 93 cents compound of the lighthouse complex. The kiosk will showcase the lighthouse history and also display the operation of the lantern room.

A toilet complex is also being constructed. A portion of the compound wall will be demolished to create a car park area for visitors.

## Italy Sells Off Lighthouses to Help Balance the Books



Capo Murro di Porco lighthouse is planned as a hotel and therapy centre

Pressure on public finances has generated opportunities to develop historic buildings for tourism. Romantics seeking a unique investment property in a secluded location with uninterrupted sea views need look no further. The Italian state is accepting bids on a remarkable portfolio of coastal properties: its historic lighthouses.

In an effort to reduce [Italy's](#) crippling public debt, private investors are to be given leases of up to 50 years on the properties, in exchange for converting them into luxury resorts or boutique hotels.

Twenty working lighthouses and coastal towers are up for tender, with bids accepted until December 19. Their secluded positions on little-inhabited islands or rocky promontories are part of the appeal. A more practical consideration is that the properties come with permission for redevelopment as hotels, restaurants or cultural centres.

They include the 19th century Spignon lighthouse at the mouth of the port of Malamocco in the Venice lagoon. The 15m lighthouse stands on a tiny islet.

On the island of Ponza, a weekend destination popular with wealthy Romans, the Guardia lighthouse — comprising a square-based tower and the former lighthouse keeper's premises — stands on a cliff 100m above the Tyrrhenian Sea, part of the Mediterranean.

Nine properties are available on Sicily and nearby islands, including Capo Faro lighthouse on Salina, the setting for the 1994 Michael Radford film *Il Postino*.

The nightly ritual of the lighthouses' rotating beams will continue under new ownership. The lights were largely automated in the 1980s, says Marcello Monti of the Italian defence ministry's Defence Services agency, which is co-ordinating the sale with the State Property Agency. "The lantern itself will be retained by the Navy," he adds, "while the tenant will effectively lease what was once the lighthouse keeper's house."

The bidding process will favour those who propose a touristic or community use, according to the State Property Agency. This will account for 60 per cent of the weighting in the assessment of bids, with the financial offer making up the remainder.

Sebastian Cortese, a management consultant, won the bid for the Murro di Porco lighthouse in Syracuse, Sicily, with a plan to open a six-room hotel, wedding venue, theatre and therapy centre for disabled and terminally ill people. The 29-year-old beat six other applicants.

Mr Cortese, who plans to call his resort Beacon Hope, grew up watching the lighthouse's beam from the window of his parents' home in Syracuse. "I won the bid because I know this place, so my proposal was made to measure," he says. His mother became sick during the bidding process, giving him the idea to create a space where the terminally unwell could enjoy spending time by the sea.

"The challenge is to have luxury with a social conscience," says Mr Cortese, who hopes to open the venture in 2018. "If I can help another family who are suffering to find some happiness in desperate times, I will be doing right by my mother's memory."

He anticipates that there may be the opportunity to buy or renew at the end of his lease, in 50 years. “But I’ll be 80 then, maybe I’ll be happy to retire.”

Sought-after locations on little-inhabited islands and rocky promontories are part of the appeal Foreign investors are welcome to apply, says Mr Monti. A German company, Floatel, which specialises in the restoration of lighthouses in Spain and Germany, won the bid for the Punta Imperatore lighthouse on the island of Ischia, in an earlier phase of the state sell-off last year.

Buyers must have experience in the tourism sector. They must visit the site in person so they know what they are getting into, Mr Monti says. “We hope they will take the lighthouses back to their former splendour,” he adds.

International investors are already returning to Italy, according to Emanuele Serafini of the Italian Trade Agency in London. “There’s a lot of interest in Italian real estate at the moment, especially publicly-owned assets,” he says.

Mr Serafini adds that some members of the international community in London have money to spend, having been discouraged from investing elsewhere by geopolitical instability and because much investment into the UK is on hold after June’s Brexit vote. Italian tax reforms have given international investors more confidence — 2015 was a bumper year for foreign investment in the country, he says.

There are already some successful examples of lighthouse restorations. The 19th century Capo Spartivento lighthouse on a cliff in Sardinia was one of 20 ordered by Victor Emmanuel II of Savoy, whose initials are wrought in iron above the entrance.

Now a luxurious boutique hotel available for weddings, teambuilding events and as a film location, it may serve as a beacon to show the way for the new lighthouse keepers.

**Just for fun...can you guess which lighthouse I am in?**



If you think you know you can e-mail me. (answer next Chapter Chatter)  
September/October answer: Windmill Point, Vermont

**Please Note:**

We are looking for **volunteers** who are interested in serving on committees, those who have good ideas for lighthouse preservation, fund raising, suggestions on improving the operations of the club, or just getting more involved. Please contact Greg Fitzgerald

**The Lighthouse Digest** – For each subscription, please use the subscription envelope that you can get from NELL’s 2nd VP Lynne Kerber, or the form on the NELL website. Mail with check to Lighthouse Digest, ATTN: Kathleen Finnegan, P.O. Box 250, East Machias, ME 04630. Be sure to write NELL in the memo section of your check and NELL will receive \$10.00 per subscription to go toward restoration and preservation of lighthouses.

If you have any **knowledge of an upcoming event or news to share**, please send it to me: [chapterchatter@outlook.com](mailto:chapterchatter@outlook.com)  
All articles and information must be received by the 25th of the month prior to make the publication.

**The NELL Beacon** wants your stories too, send with pictures to Lynne Kerber: [lighthousecats@comcast.net](mailto:lighthousecats@comcast.net) for publication. The NELL Beacon is our official club newsletter and will be published three times a year in time for our events. Deadline for the LHC&Y issue will be mid-December, for the Spring Event issue mid-April and for the Fall Event issue mid-August.

If you know of a member that needs **some cheer, get well wishes, condolences or congratulations**, please let Cynthia Bosse - Sunshine Chair know at: [bossnjc@comcast.net](mailto:bossnjc@comcast.net) or call 1(860) 688-7347.

Please let me know your **birthday** (month & day only) and **anniversary** so I will be able to recognize you on your special day in our monthly Best Wishes section.