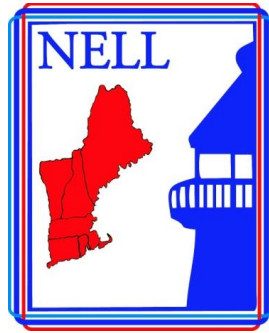


# CHAPTER CHATTER



**July/August**

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**Happy 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Don't Forget** – National Lighthouse Day – 8<sup>th</sup> August

**John Donovan Receives ALF Volunteer Award**



John Donovan was presented with an ALF Len Hadley Volunteerism award during the American Lighthouse Foundation's annual Gala, which was held at the Nonantum Resort in Kennebunkport, Maine, on May 7, 2017.

John joined NELL in January 2014, and immediately started making an enormous impact on the group. He has contributed to NELL in many ways, but the most vital has been his work on our digital and print marketing tools.

John elevated our digital profile to a much-needed new level, with a beautiful website built on a modern platform. He has worked hard to build our Facebook presence, which has had direct correlation to membership numbers. He also has taken the same standard to creating a suite of printed promotional materials, including new rack brochures, and has also become the new editor of our Beacon newsletter.

In a time where preservation groups thrive from their Internet presence, John's work has been vital to NELL's recent successes, and that combined with his can-do spirit make him a very worthy recipient of the Len Hadley Volunteerism Award.

**The National Lighthouse Museum's**  
**7th Annual National Lighthouse & Lightship Recognition Weekend**  
**August 4-6, 2017**

**Friday, August 4, 2017**

Light Keeper's Gala.

A champagne Museum Reception will precede the vessel leaving from Pier 1 adjacent to the Museum. Harbor cruise, open bar, hors-d'oeuvres, dinner, dancing in the moonlight. Purchase tickets and journal ads below.

**Saturday, August 5, 2017**

Presentations, panel discussions. Free tours and public events at Museum site. 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm Wayne Wheeler, President of the United States Lighthouse Society will speak on "Saving America's Light Stations" (a 30 Year Prospective). Free Admission.

**Sunday, August 6, 2017**

Lighthouse Weekend Signature Boat Tour

It's Lighthouse Weekend, we're celebrating! Lighthouse Weekend is an annual event commemorating the signing of the Lighthouse Act by George Washington, August 7, 1789. Join the party and cruise the harbor with us as we go out to sea, to the Jersey Shore, passing at least 10 lighthouses, most not visible from land, all the way to Navesink and Sandy Hook. We'll see the NLM site, Fort Wadsworth at Battery Weed, Coney Island Light, West Bank, Old Orchard site, Romer Shoal, Sandy Hook, Twin Lights, Great Beds, Prince's Bay Light, Staten Island Range Light, Elm Tree Light, Robin's Reef, and the most famous lighthouse in the world, the Statue of Liberty!

Treat yourself and your family to a memorable three hour cruise.

Refreshments are available on board but feel free to bring your own snacks. Tickets are \$60 Adults, \$40 Children (under 10yrs.), \$50 Military and Seniors (62+).

The boat leaves promptly at 11am from Pier 11, South and Wall St. NYC, rain or shine.

To learn more go to:

<http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07edfgch1u8e4c7ddf&llr=gh9s9ogab&showPage=true>

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



If you think you know you can e-mail me. (Answer next Chapter Chatter)

Last edition's answer: Isle La Motte - Vermont

## Lighthouse News

### Stonington borough approves lighthouse museum addition



A rendering of the proposed addition to the Old Lighthouse Museum in Stonington. The project was unanimously approved by the borough Planning and Zoning Commission on Tuesday, May 9, 2017.

(Courtesy of the Stonington Historical Society)

Stonington — after four years and four revisions, and despite repeated opposition from some neighbors, the borough Planning and Zoning Commission on Tuesday night unanimously approved a proposal by the Stonington Historical Society to construct a 500-square-foot addition to the Old Lighthouse Museum.

This was the society's fourth attempt to renovate and slightly expand the size of the museum. Neighbors have opposed all the previous plans, including two larger designs in 2013 and 2015, and one last summer. Residents repeatedly have criticized the size of and rationale for the addition, landscaping, additional traffic and the society's holding of special events such as weddings on the scenic waterfront property adjacent to Stonington Point.

In December, the commission approved its own zoning amendment that allows it to grant a special-use permit to nonconforming uses that serve the public, such as the museum, restaurants and shops in all zoning districts, to expand for the purpose of complying with public health and safety standards, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act. The lighthouse is a nonconforming use; the amendment paved the way for the society's new application.

The addition, which will operate as the new entrance, now will accommodate a handicapped-accessible bathroom and ticket counter that could be accessed by visitors, volunteers or employees using a wheelchair. The existing ticket counter in the front of the museum cannot be accessed by wheelchair. Moving the ticket area also would open up space for exhibits and the walkway will allow wheelchairs to access the museum.

The society has agreed not to expand the number of its events.

During the commission's public hearing Tuesday night, in which more than 75 people packed Borough Hall, society President Michael Schefers outlined the handicapped improvements and said they were not being done to expand the scope of special events.

"Please do what is responsible and right for people with disabilities," he told the commission.

"Let us put this unpleasant chapter behind us" and unite as one community, added resident Joyce Pandolfi.

But neighbor Betty Richards, a former Planning and Zoning Commission chairwoman, said she had "great concerns" about the appropriateness of the project. She urged the society to maintain the existing front entrance so visitors could have the same experience of the lighthouse keepers as they entered the building and climbed the staircase to the light. She also criticized the loss of some of the lawn which extends out to Little Narragansett Bay to make way for the walkway. "Let the grounds stay the way they are," she said.

In celebration of the project's approval, the museum announced Thursday that it will offer free admission for all Stonington residents from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, May 20. Renderings of the proposed addition and landscaping changes will be on display and staff will be on hand to answer any questions members of the public may have about the project, historical society Executive Director Elizabeth Wood announced in a news release.

## New London Harbour Light



The New London Maritime Society again has failed to clear a city zoning hurdle allowing public access to New London Harbor Light, one of its three historic lighthouses.

The Planning and Zoning Commission last Thursday denied the nonprofit's recent application to alter zoning regulations and add a definition for "historic properties" throughout the city.

Maritime society President Edward J. Cubanski III, a retired U.S. Coast Guard captain, said the application was the first step in getting the city to acknowledge the importance of historical structures. The proposal would have allowed structures to be designated as "historic properties" if they are listed on the National Register of Historic Places or otherwise recognized by the State Historic Preservation Office of the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism. "We believe that amendments are needed to the zoning regulations so custodians and curators of such historic sanctuaries can share the history as well as conduct activities to ensure historic preservation," Cubanski wrote in his application. The proposal was not specific to New London Harbor Light off of Pequot Avenue but the overall intent was to open the door for visitors to the iconic structure, something that hasn't been allowed since 2015, when the city issued a cease-and-desist order shortly after restoration was completed and neighbors started noticing an increase in activity at the site.

"The New London Maritime Society feels that promoting historic and cultural tourism within the city is going to bring people to this rich maritime historic area," Cubanski told the commission. "It's going to benefit the city, not hurt it." Opposition to the zoning amendment was overwhelming, however, with much of it coming from neighbors of the lighthouse in the city's south end, home to some of the most valuable homes in the city as well as the top residential taxpayers. Pequot Avenue resident Edward Young, who said he lives three houses away from the lighthouse and pays \$53,000 a year in taxes on his home, told the Planning and Zoning Commission that passage of the amendment would "destroy" home values in the residentially zoned area. Beverly Steinman, a Parkway South resident, said if the amendment passed, "we taxpayers will be fighting more noise, more disorderly conduct, littering, traffic and parking congestion and the slippery slope potential for land use changes to move further into the neighborhood." In addition to designation of historic properties, the maritime society's proposal would have required no minimum lot size restriction, as opposed to the 20,000-square-foot required for libraries, museums and art galleries. The proposal also would designate one off-street parking space for the owner or manager and a provision that allows parking off-street parking for visitors within 500 feet of the historical structure. Randy Waesche, who owns a home adjacent to Harbor Light and has a property line dispute against the maritime society pending in federal court, questioned both the need to change zoning citywide and the lack of minimum lot size requirements. He said the proposal was an attempt to circumvent existing regulations and would be unenforceable. The Planning and Zoning Commission voted 5-2 against the application.

Commission Chairman Barry Levine, who voted against, said he could not support the application with no minimum lot size requirement. He said the proposal also did not explain "what this gives anyone a right to do with an historic property." Commissioner Paul Reid said the lack of a minimum lot requirement could be detrimental to neighbors especially in residentially zoned areas, which make up more than 30 percent of the city. "I am not opposed to having more tourism for historic district sites. However, I just believe there could be a different way of going about it ... that benefits the entire area and not just a small portion," Reid said.

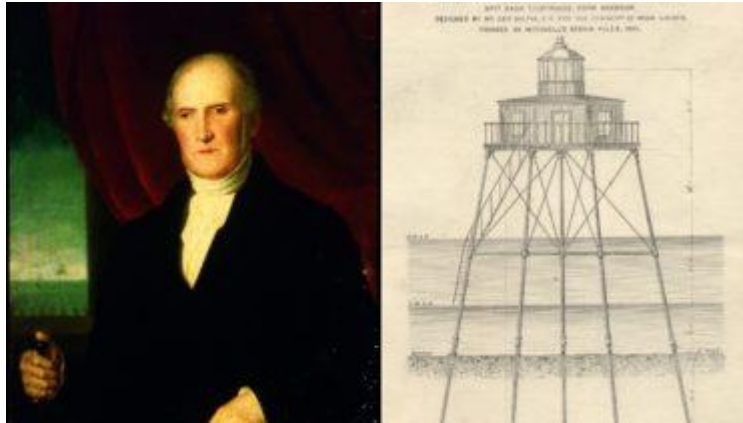
It is the second defeat for the maritime society, which had applied a year ago to modify zoning regulations to allow for tours and events at historical properties in residentially zoned areas of the city.

Cubanski said the society would continue to work with the city and neighbors to try and come to an amicable solution to obtain access to the lighthouse. He called the commission's decision "unfortunate."

He said the maritime society planned to write letters to the city asking for clarification on access to the lighthouse, whether the society's own members can do things like hold meetings at the lighthouse. He said he also wondered about the city's long-term vision.

## International Lighthouse News

### Alexander Mitchell - Inventor of the Screw-Pile Lighthouse

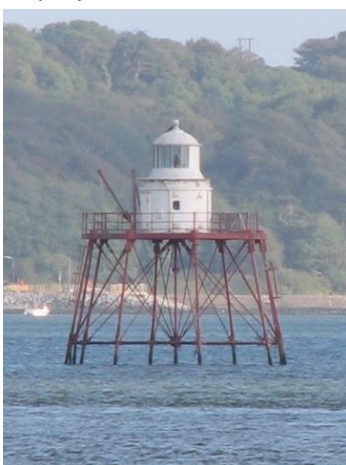


The extraordinary Dubliner Alexander Mitchell (1780–1868) who invented the screw-pile lighthouse Alexander Mitchell's story is inspirational despite complete blindness he used his incredible engineering talent to help seafarers to see in the dark.

Mitchell was born in Dublin but grew up in Belfast where he attended the prestigious Belfast Academy. His eyesight began to fail at a young age and by 22 he was completely blind. But he didn't let this sizeable challenge overcome him and would become one of Ireland's greatest engineers. Over the course of his life he patented several significant inventions and greatly advanced maritime technology with his durable designs with several still in use today. His most famous invention is the screw-pile lighthouse. His design enabled lighthouses to be built in the difficult soil conditions of shifting sands in deep waters. His design made the lighthouses easy to construct, inexpensive and quick to build. It worked by screwing a central pile surrounded by eight perimeter piles in a hexagonal or octagonal shape into the sea bed.

Mitchell himself was heavily involved with the building process, he supervised all construction and was even seen climbing ladders and scaffolding. The first one was built at the Maplin Sand Lighthouse at the mouth of the Thames. His technology was used all around the country in Belfast, Wexford, Cork and Dundalk.

Not all lighthouses were successful though. He tried to build one the perilous Kish Bank but a gale caused the piles to fail and the project was abandoned.



Moville, Inishowen



Spit Bank, Cobh



Passage East, Waterford

Only four of Mitchell's iconic lighthouses remain in Ireland, Dundalk Bay and the three pictured above. Often described as giant spiders at sea these few remaining lighthouses are still operational and acting as unique lights in the dark for mariners at sea.

## Happy Birthday

David Schulman	7/05	Reg Kitching	7/07	Lee Olson	7/12
Jeremy D'Entremont	7/13	Tracie Carpenter	7/15	James Cope	7/17
Tom Chisholm	7/17	Odette Kent	7/24	Darlene Chisholm	7/30
Elinor DeWire	8/03	Bill Newblom	8/04	Nancy Younger	8/09
Marguerite MacDonald	8/11	Geraldine Powell	8/12	Harry Hine	8/13
Ellen Scott	8/17	Bill Younger	8/18	Ron Bandoek	8/30

## Anniversary Wishes

Bill & Judy Newblom	7/9	Norm & Cynthia Bosse	7/23		
Bob & Ellen Granoth	8/10	Reg & Maureen Kitching	8/11	Tom & Darlene Chisholm	8/16
Lee & Judy Hall	8/17	David & Jessica Schulman	8/20	Frank & Carolyn Carbone	8/24

### **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 Bill Kent: [seagirtlight@gmail.com](mailto:seagirtlight@gmail.com) or 1(978) 809-7133.

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