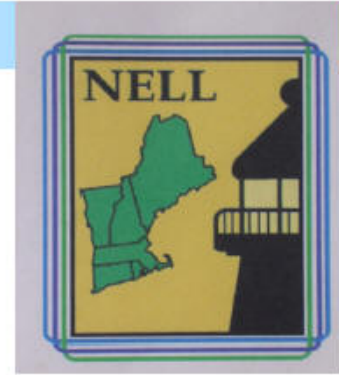


# NELL Beacon



## Lighthouses, Hot Chocolate and You 2009

By Mike Boucher

On January 17, 2009, NELL members descended on Newport Rhode Island for its annual Lighthouses, Hot Chocolate & You. This year's outing was during the coldest weather in the last ten to fifteen years. With bright blue skies and temperatures in the single digits and wind chills below zero at times, it will be a LHHC&Y to be remembered.

Most of the group met at the Hyatt Regency Newport Hotel on Goat Island on Friday night. After picking up our envelope packages on Saturday morning and receiving a few announcements, we were off to our first lighthouse, Goat Island, which was on the grounds of the hotel. Goat Island light station was first established in 1824 after Congress appropriated \$2,500 for its construction. After a breakwater was built in the late 1830's, the old lighthouse was going to be relocated to the breakwater but instead the current tower was built in 1838 and remained unlit until 1842 when the breakwater was completed. The old tower was moved to Prudence Island in 1851. The present tower is made of granite and is 35 feet high. The 250 mm lens shows a continuous green light. The Coast Guard opened the tower for us, and we followed the granite steps that led to the landing and a steel ladder to the lantern room, which had room for four members. It was a long wait for everybody to get to the top, but luck-

ily there was no wind at the time. The weatherman informed us it was eight to ten degrees out, but what is a two degree difference when it's that cold out?

Our next light was Castle Hill Lighthouse which marks the eastern side of Narragansett Bay. Built in 1890, this 34-foot round granite tower blends into the rocky coastline. We parked at the Castle Hill Cove Inn parking lot and had to walk a short distance in the snow to get to the light. Here the wind had picked up and it was very cold out. After a long wait we made it to the top. We had to climb a spiral staircase to the first landing and then climb a steel ladder to the top to get into the lantern room. There is a 300 mm lens flashing a red light that is on for three seconds and then off for three seconds. This lantern will be replaced soon with one of the new LED lights. Once in the lantern room we had a very nice view of the surrounding area if you were looking south, but the west and north side windows were frosted over where you could not see out of them. Beavertail Lighthouse appeared across the water and Point Judith Lighthouse, our next stop, could be seen in the far distance.

After lunch, we drove the 23 miles to Point Judith Lighthouse. It was even windier and colder there than at Castle Hill. To get relief from the cold wind, the Coast Guard opened the fog signal build-

ing, built in 1923. Even though there was no heat in the building, it felt balmy inside compared to outside. Point Judith Lighthouse was built in 1857 to replace an 1805 wooden tower destroyed in an 1815 storm. A new stone tower was built the following year. The brownstone tower is 51 feet high with a focal plane of 65 feet and is the only lighthouse in Rhode Island that has its original fourth order Fresnel lens. The flash pattern is very unusual at five seconds on, two seconds off, two seconds on, two seconds off, two seconds on and then two seconds off before repeating the pattern.

After surviving Mother Nature's wrath at Point Judith, we headed north to Beavertail Lighthouse, the third lighthouse built in America. The first wooden lighthouse was built in 1749 on the southern tip of Conanicut Island. It was known as the Newport Lighthouse, since Newport was collecting a tax from the vessels to build a lighthouse. The 68-foot wooden tower burned to the ground in 1753. The next year a brick and stone tower was built with a two-tiered spider lamp  
*Continued on page 4.*





## *A Cruise on the Chesapeake*

Story and Photo by Tom Kenworthy

Many NELL members also hold memberships in several other lighthouse organizations. One of the other groups NELL member Linda Speece belongs to is the Chesapeake Chapter of the USLHS (CCUSLHS). On July 26, 2008, members of both groups gathered under Drum Point Light at the Calvert Museum preparing to board the Jennifer - Ann for a cruise Linda had put together. After a group picture was taken by member (of both groups) Sandra Sableski, we all boarded the Jennifer - Ann and sailed to the following lights; the original site of Drum Point where we observed some of the screw piles still in the sand, the remnants of Cedar Pt, Patuxent N.A.S, Point No Point, Pt. Lookout, and Smith Point. We then stopped for a lunch of local fare at Smith Island. After lunch we headed for Solomon's Lump. Upon arrival, Ron and Pat Bandoock were awarded their 30+3 badge from CCUSLHS. Solomon's Lump was the only lighthouse of the thirty required that Pat and Ron were missing. They had already seen the three required lightships. When we got to Holland Island Bar we saw the skeletal tower that was erected by the Coast Guard due to the accidental bombing of the original site. We finished up a very enjoyable trip at Hooper Island and then made our way back to Drum Point.

The next day we took advantage of the day to cruise to Thomas Point Shoals. The day started out overcast and we were wondering if we'd make it through the day without rain. Surprisingly the day turned out to be nice. As we neared the light, we saw, in the water on the north side of the lighthouse, a steel ice-breaker set on a steel pile tripod to break up the ice floes. There was also riprap rock piled up on both the ebb and flow sides of the foundation that serves as an ice break which helps protect it. Once we were tied up to the dock we were given the strict rules and instructions for transferring from the boat to the lighthouse. When we were all on the lower deck of the light, the boat pulled away to wait for us out in the channel. An interesting fact about the

light was manned -- the deck was used to store fuel and livestock.

We then climbed the ladder to the first level gaining access through a small trap door in the gallery that surrounds the structure. Touring the light was very interesting with its winding narrow stairway inside and with the way the different rooms were set up. Once we were all back on board the Captain made sure everyone got their fill of pictures going around Thomas Point so we could get pictures from all directions.



## *Boston Light at Sunrise*

by Noreen Waters

I have retired from nursing, and I am now working in a simple nursing capacity as a nurse monitor in a handicapped transportation van. We transport one little girl to Boston every morning and return to pick her up in the afternoon. This requires crossing the Tobin Bridge to get to Storrow Drive and to the Kennedy Day School in Brighton. I have more than enough time to not only observe the child closely, but to see many things I would never see if I were driving. One of the most beautiful things I am fortunate to observe daily are the most incredible sunrises ever. As we reach the top



of the bridge, the sun is a huge, orange, shining orb, a certainty daily, unless it is stormy or cloudy. However, the one constant and always present thing, which even surpasses the sunrises, is the Boston Light, which greets me no matter what the weather is like. It is a comforting and happy sight and assures safe passing whether on the ocean or on the bridge. Even though I have seen it frequently, I feel excited when we reach the top of the Tobin, and I am assured that it will be welcoming me to Boston. It is the most incredibly

beautiful sight, and I have never become tired of seeing it nor do I take it for granted. It is a happy and uplifting thing to see—like seeing your best friend. It actually makes me feel very happy. Even if there is something askew, it has a soothing affect as it flashes its smiling light toward me every eight seconds. It reassures me that no matter what, it will always be there for me. I am blessed to have something special to look forward to daily.

Photo by Lynne Kerber



## Mission Trip: Honduras

Story and photos by Sharon Mills

One of the most interesting things I (Sharon Mills) did this year was to go to Honduras on a Mission trip in October. The flights were great. I didn't get motion sick at all, and on the way to Honduras sat next to a Honduran woman who pointed out what we were seeing from the window and told me where well known places were located. A very nice conversation.

Words aren't really adequate to express what my experience in Honduras was like, but I am so glad and thankful I had the opportunity to go. The Cristo Salva Hacienda (Farm) is located just outside a small village up several steep and very rough roads, especially when it rains as it did most of the week I was there. Our team was made up of fifteen people, including a teen and her mom, several younger single adults, an older couple and several other regulars.

Several days we visited families in their very poor, humble, dwellings located in little villages around the area. We took bags containing cups of rice, flour, beans, etc. that we had assembled for each family, prayed with them, and returned on a few occasions with medicine if there was a physical problem. We also passed out pieces of candy to the many children who were in these villages. A couple of times we visited schools – one was a private bi-lingual school where the children sang a chorus

called "Father Abraham" in English including motions for us. The other was a small kinder school where the young children again sang and recited for us. We were able to give each child in this class a small stuffed animal. Children in these villages can only attend school if they have a uniform consisting of a white shirt/top, blue pants or skirt (for girls) and black shoes, therefore many children are unable to attend school because parents can't afford the clothes. Cristo Salva is sometimes able to provide uniforms for these precious children thanks to donations of caring people here in the states.

On a couple of the rainiest days we worked at the Clinic taking inventory and sorting the medical supplies while others painted a storage building and put up shelving for the supplies. Several evenings we attended services at small village churches. Our team sang a couple of choruses for the congregation and one of us would share a testimony. One night we were invited to the home of the founders of Cristo Salva – a businessman and his Honduran wife.

We were treated to a home cooked meal consisting of steak that was cooked on their open outside grill, wonderful mixed veggies, rice, tortillas, and a delicious caramel flan (a pie filled with a mix between custard and cheesecake) for dessert.

The poverty is so acute – conditions hard to believe people live in. Most have no running water or electricity and floors are made of dirt, with only wood and mud or sometimes cardboard huts. Yet, in spite of everything, the people are gracious and caring. The children seem happy and are so precious.

On Sunday morning we visited a Sunday school started by a wonderful elderly lady named Adelaida. We were blessed to have visited her at her home earlier in the week. I especially bonded with her. We ate breakfast, lunch and dinner most of the time at home base, but we visited a couple of little cafés for snacks and coffee which was a treat for most of the team. (I don't drink coffee, but found other interesting fruit sodas.) Our accommodations were rustic but very nice. I slept on a bottom bunk in the girls room with ten women. We had hot running water for showers most days and the meals were really delicious. We did go shopping a couple of times in markets similar to what one might find at Quincy market in Boston, therefore I brought home a couple of items from Honduras.

One day we did something that was a challenge to me. After driving across a swing bridge made of wood and wire, we walked back over it. The bridge led to many acres of sugar cane fields.

I could write several more pages about my experiences in Honduras but I hope you now have an idea of what it was like without being bored. If you're interested in learning more go to: [www.christosalva.org](http://www.christosalva.org).





**NELL: New England Lighthouse Lovers**  
A chapter of the American Lighthouse  
Foundation



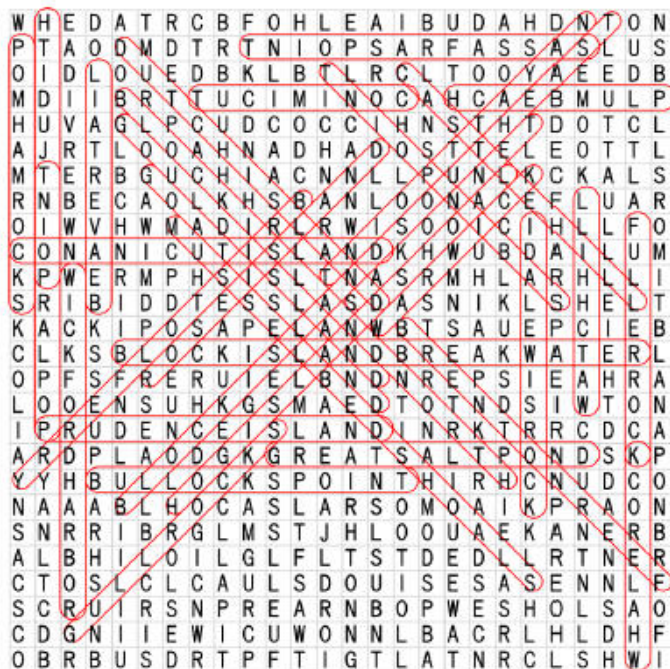
**WE'RE ON THE WEB!**  
**WWW.NELL.CC**

**T0:**

**NELL currently has more than  
300 members in 25 states.**

*NELL Beacon compiled by  
Lynne Kerber. Have an article to  
submit? Email Lynne at  
lighthousecats@comcast.net*

Answers to the word search puzzle found in the  
last issue of The Beacon. Thanks to Mike  
Boucher.



**LHHC&Y 2009 cont...**  
with fifteen whale oil burn-  
ing wicks, each with a nine-  
inch reflector. British troops  
controlled Newport during  
the Revolutionary War and  
when they left in 1779, they  
took the spider lamps and  
burned the inside of the  
tower. It would be several  
years before the light-house  
was back in service. The  
current granite tower, built  
in 1856, is 45 feet high and  
has a focal plane of 68 feet.  
The DCB-24 aerobeacon  
flashes every six seconds  
day and night. As it was  
getting late in the day and  
the sun was setting, not eve-  
ryone got to climb Beaver-  
tail due to safety concerns  
and the darkened tower.  
NELL did leave behind a

nice donation at the gift  
shop, however.

This year's Lighthouses,  
Hot Chocolate and You is  
in the history books, but it  
will be remembered by all  
because of the biting cold  
wind on Saturday and  
snowy ride home on Sun-  
day.

**Stamp Update**

For those of you who  
were looking forward to  
the Edward Hopper sail-  
boat stamp with Long  
Point Lighthouse in the  
background, you are going  
to be disappointed. The  
USPS has decided NOT to  
issue the stamp at this time.  
Lynne Kerber