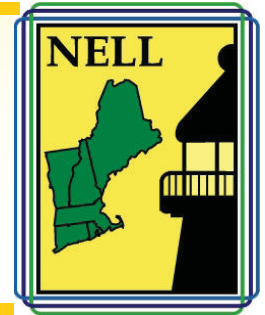


# New England Lighthouse Lovers

A Chapter of the American Lighthouse Foundation

## THE BEACON



May 2010

### ExxonMobil Donates Pomham Rocks Lighthouse

On Saturday, April 17, 2010, at a lawn-side ceremony overlooking the historic Pomham Rocks Lighthouse, ExxonMobil donated the lighthouse to the American Lighthouse Foundation (ALF) and the Friends of Pomham Rocks, a chapter of ALF.



*Bob Trapani, Executive Director of the American Lighthouse Foundation, Capt. Raymond J. Perry, USCG, Honorable Joseph Larisa, Mayor East Providence, Dennis Houston, Vice President of ExxonMobil Refining & Supply and Don Doucette, President of Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse.*

"In an era when lighthouses are disappearing from the national landscape, this donation will help ensure Pomham Rocks is preserved for future generations as a symbol of commerce and maritime safety," said Dennis Houston, Executive Vice President of ExxonMobil Refining & Supply. "Pomham Rocks will stand as a majestic and bright light that reinforces the importance of commerce and maritime excellence to Rhode Island, New England and the United States of America."

In 1981, ExxonMobil purchased the offshore lighthouse from the U.S. government and 23 years later formed a partnership with ALF and the Friends of Pomham Rocks. In 2005, this triumvirate was responsible for the



restoration of the exterior of the lighthouse with the funds coming from private fundraising efforts and a donation from ExxonMobil. Together with local residents and members of the lighthouse community, they celebrated a relighting ceremony in July 2006, re-establishing the beloved red beacon that guided the way to safety for many mariners. Built in 1871, Pomham Rocks is one of the oldest lighthouses in Narragansett Bay and is listed on the United States National Register of Historic Places.

Bob Trapani, Executive Director of the American Lighthouse Foundation stated, "We applaud ExxonMobil's generosity in donating the lighthouse to us and its willingness to partner with us over the years to keep it a part of the Narragansett Bay landscape. We now look forward to beginning preparations for the restoration of the interior of the structure and continuing to 'keep a good light' for all who admire this Ocean State historic treasure.



*Don Doucette, Dennis Houston, and Bob Trapani, signing paperwork for the lighthouse transfer.*

## Skip and Martha's Search for Warmth in the Caribbean

By Skip & Martha Empey

It has been a cool winter down here in Florida, the consolation being no snow, so it is not really a complaint. For the pool and beach bunnies it hasn't been fun, for people with breathing problems like me, it's been great. Martha and I, deciding we wanted to find some warmer weather, thought a Caribbean cruise might be in order.

Well, the weather was no better there, just as cool. As a result, Martha was able to enjoy time visiting Mayan ruins and temples, and I went on a search for lighthouses. We both had great success. Here are some of my photos.



**Faro de Roatán:** Located at the western end of Roatán Island, the largest of the three Bay Islands with a population of about 17,000, it also includes Guanaja and Útila Islands. The Bay Islands are one of the 18 states of Honduras and are about 50 miles offshore. The light is a tall cylindrical tower with red and white stripes and shows a white flash every 8 seconds. The port of call is Coxen Hole, discovered by Christopher Columbus on his fourth voyage in 1502.



**Mahalual (Majahual) Lighthouse:** Costa Maya, Mexico, a cruise ship docking facility just east of the town of Mahalual. The buttressed tower flashes 4 white flashes every 16 seconds. The area still has much damage from a devastating 2006 hurricane.

Coming through the reef and following the challenge to the Belize City Anchorage was a great time for someone who really enjoys aids to navigation. You pick up your pilot from English Key, and he guides you through the serpentine course. At many of the bends and twists you can see the shallow bottom. The turn points are all marked with lighted poles. You can only wonder what it must have been like during the days of sailing vessels.



**English Cay Light:** On a small island called Lighthouse Reef about 30 miles east of Belize City. A frame-work tower with a white flash every 2.5 seconds. The reef is a favorite location for divers and also the location for the pilots that take ships in and out of Belize City. There are many stationary beacons along the snake like channel that gets you through the reef. The cruise ships have to anchor about eight miles off shore and passengers are tendered in.



**Great Stirrup Cay Lighthouse:** The island is the property of the Norwegian Cruise Lines with beach and recreation facilities for cruise ship visitors. The cruise ships anchor outside the reef and passengers are tendered in to the beach. The lighthouse was established in 1863 and flashes 2 white flashes every 20 seconds.



**Fort George (Baron Bliss) Lighthouse:** Belize City, Belize, established in 1885 when it was British Honduras. The light is a memorial to Henry E.E.V. Bliss: an English financier and self styled baron and major benefactor to the country (it seems naming rights to anything in Belize is open to anyone with cash). Bliss's tomb is also adjacent to the light.

## Biloxi Lighthouse Reopens for Tours

By Mile Boucher

Early in April, Judy and I had a chance to visit the newly rebuilt Biloxi Lighthouse in Biloxi, Mississippi. The lighthouse was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. The storm hit the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005, becoming the fifth deadliest and the sixth strongest hurricane in United States' history.

The Biloxi Lighthouse was built in 1848 for a cost of \$12,000. The plans called for a new technique for constructing lighthouses by using cast iron plates bolted together instead of just bricks. It was one of three lighthouses built along the Gulf Coast to mark the Mississippi Sound leading to New Orleans. It was built in six weeks and first lit in May of 1848. The need for a lighthouse was apparent as early as the 1830 as Biloxi was a vacation destination of the wealthy residents of New Orleans. To enter the small harbor a ship had to navigate a shallow, narrow channel.

Only six people were keepers of the lighthouse before it was automated in 1939. There were women keepers for 74 of the 91 years it was manned. Marie Youngmans, the longest serving, became keeper after her husband's death in 1867 and was forced to retire 52 years later at the age of 77.

Located just above sea level, the lighthouse has been invaded by the Gulf's waters many times. The water surge of Hurricane Camille in 1969 climbed 17½ feet up the tower and destroyed the keeper's house. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina tore the door off the lighthouse and water rushed in. The waves, acting like a plunger in the tower, took all the bricks out and the water filled the tower over 21½ feet.

After Katrina, the lighthouse became a symbol of the City of Biloxi's resilience and ability to bounce back from a disaster. Because of the damage to Biloxi, the city applied to FEMA for funds to replace and repair many buildings



High water marks with Hurricane Katrina at the top at 21½ feet..

including the lighthouse. Reconstruction was started in 2008 and completed in February of this year. The lighthouse, which originally took six weeks to build at a cost of \$12,000, was totally rebuilt for \$400,000 in 14 months.

Since 2008 the Mississippi license plate has featured the Biloxi Lighthouse with the sun rising in the background. The image of the lighthouse is intended to remind people of those who lost so much in Katrina and to serve as a symbol of recovery.



On July 23, 2009, the U. S. Post Office unveiled the First-Day-of-Issue Gulf Coast Lighthouse Stamps that featured the Biloxi Lighthouse as one of the five stamps.

The lighthouse opened for tours in March of this year. Tours are given at 9:00, 9:15 and 9:30, six days a week and cost \$5.00 per person. The lighthouse is located in the median of Highway 90 at Porter Avenue.



## Word Search Puzzle: May Cruise along the St. Lawrence Seaway

By Mike Boucher



The St. Lawrence River originates at headwaters of the North River in the Mesabi Range at Hibbing, Minnesota, then thru the Great Lakes. The St. Lawrence River/ Seaway starts at the eastern end of Lake Ontario and travels 744 miles to the Atlantic Ocean. This Word Search will deal with the lighthouses along the Seaway only. The **Canadian lights are in RED** while the **United States lights are in BLUE**. Only the **BOLD** words are in the puzzle. The answers are on the back cover.

- CAPE VINCENT BREAK-WATER
- CLAYTON
- COLE SHOAL RANGE
- CROSSOVER ISLAND
- DE WATTEVILLE ISLAND RANGE
- DICKINSON LANDING
- KNAPP POINT
- LANCASTER RANGE
- OGDENSBURG HARBOR
- PRESCOTT HARBOUR
- PRESCOTT ROTARY
- SISTERS ISLAND
- SUNKEN ROCK
- TIBBETT'S POINT
- WINDMILL POINT



## Always Bring Your Camera: You Never Know What You'll Find!

By Kevin Sullivan

You never know what treasures you may find when you head out for an out-of-state business conference. With one slated for Newport, RI, I was wise enough to pack my camera for the trip.



On my way into Newport the day before the conference, I stopped to visit the Newport Light (a familiar sight for those who participated in the 2009 LHHC&Y event) and

see Rose Island (where I spent the night of my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday). On the trip over the bridge to Goat Island, I noticed the familiar masts and lanterns of a lightship. On the return trip off Goat Island, I was pleasantly surprised to see it was the

Nantucket docked at the Newport Shipyard.

I'm aware the "real" Nantucket is moored at Oyster Bay, NY, but several ships have been commissioned and served at the Nantucket Shoals lightship station and have been called *Nantucket*. It was common for a lightship to be reassigned and then "renamed" and identified by its new station. So whichever Nantucket it was, it was great to visit and photograph.



## A Mystic Adventure

By David Dingley

On Friday, January 15, the weather was seasonably crisp and cold, but also clear and sunny, as Janice and I drove to Mystic, CT, to join up with NELL for the 2010 Lighthouses, Hot Chocolate, and You (LHHC&Y) weekend.

We arrived at the Hilton Hotel mid-afternoon and, after some unwinding and relaxation, made plans for the evening. I decided to perk up my appetite on a treadmill in the hotel's exercise room. It seemed to do the trick. We then set off to scout out a local eatery.

We finally chose the Captain Daniel Packer Inne, a quaint restored stagecoach inn located in Mystic Center and dating back to 1756. Our choice was rewarded with an excellent meal and a warm, convivial atmosphere with 18th century décor all in place. It made for a great start to the weekend.

After breakfast on Saturday morning, we linked up with the NELL caravan and made our way to the Morgan Point Lighthouse in Noank. The weather continued its cold, crisp, and clear touch throughout the morning and well into the afternoon.



The present Morgan Point Lighthouse dates back to 1868 and is a three-story granite structure that combines the keeper's residence with a 35-foot tower. Although the building is privately owned with a modern summer vacation

home attached to the rear, it was opened to NELL visitors to enjoy for a few hours.

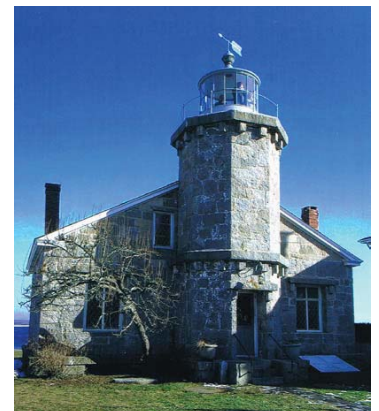
We were surprised to discover the interior tower was comfortably updated with a modern wooden spiral staircase and a circular couch for

sitting and relaxation that surrounded the electric beacon in the lantern room. An extensive collection of bells and brass nameplates from various commercial watercraft added to its ambience and enrichment. Our hostess gave us a friendly and fascinating tour of the summerhouse as well. Once outdoors, it was photo-op time with plenty of light and shadows to capture the lighthouse in its many shapes, angles, and moods.

Our next destination was the Historic Ship Nautilus and Submarine Force Museum in Groton. There we went aboard the Nautilus itself and received an extensive audio tour of the world's first nuclear-powered submarine. All of its equipment and furnishings were intact and upfront for the viewing.

We could almost smell the bacon and eggs being prepared in the galley by servicemen frozen in time (aka "mannequins"). We then toured the museum building for more detailed exhibits on the history of submarine technology and its applications. Included in the display models, both life-sized and miniature, was "Bushnell's Turtle", one of the first submarines used during warfare. It was a one-man mechanism driven by hand-and-foot pedaling power and used to plant explosives on the sides of Confederate ships during the Civil War. Needless to say, we've come quite a way since then and the museum has its history well in place for both tourist and scholar.

From the submarine museum we drove to Stonington to visit the Stonington Harbor Lighthouse. Similar in design to Morgan Point with a 35-foot octagonal tower and 2-story keeper's house functioning as one, this structure dates back to 1840. The house is now a public museum with artifacts such as the lantern room's 6th order Fresnel



- See *Mystic*, page 6

- *Mystic*, continued from page 5

lens and related lighthouse paraphernalia on display. Janice and I enjoyed an invigorating, but not exhausting, tower climb and gave an hour's worth of browsing to the exhibits. The steadfast sun and clear-blue sky provided plenty of outdoor photo shoots.

At the conclusion of our visit, we made our way back to the hotel to partake of some hot chocolate, cookies, fruits, veggies, and cheese and crackers along with plenty of good company. It was a perfect close to a perfect lighthouse day!

Our dinner destination for the evening was the Riverwalk Restaurant overlooking the Mystic River on Schooner Wharf in Mystic Center. Italian fare was on our menu for this occasion with an extensive wine and beer list to choose from. The atmosphere was casual, family-oriented, and waterfront spacious, similar to a warehouse in size with plenty of novelty interior lightings and wall hangings.

We spent Sunday morning visiting the shops in Mystic Village across from the hotel. Quite a bit of variety in the shops and selections! Fortunately, we managed not to exceed our budget and let browsing be the rule for the day.

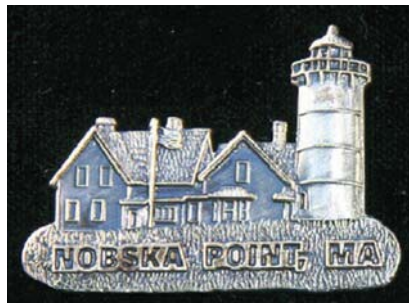
Before heading home, we returned to Groton to attend a free concert of the U.S. Coast Guard Band at the Coast Guard Academy. "Movie Madness XIV" was the theme and the musicians delivered well on their promise. Fast—lively and slow—sentimental selections from *Mission: Impossible*, *The Sea Hawk*, *Sugarland Express*, *Tombstone*, and others filled out two hours that went by all too quickly. A special highlight was "Oscar Sings"—a medley of Oscar-winning songs presented by Musician 1st Class soprano Lisa Williamson.

From there it was back to Holbrook, MA, and home. Our final thoughts: NELL put together another prize-winning LHC&Y weekend, one of the best in our recent memory. Here's hoping for an even greater one in 2011—along with the mandatory sunny skies, of course.

## NELL Merchandise Special Offer!

By Doug & Ellen Scott

For a limited time we are having a special on pins. Pin sets are \$20 each or 2 for \$35. Remember that we have 2 pins sets. Pewter pins are \$3 each or 2 for \$5. They can be purchased at the spring meeting or through the Merchandise Chairs.



Below on left:  
Brant Point, MA



Left: Bug  
Light, MA

## NELL Needs Your Help!

After the successful raffle we had last year, we are looking to do a repeat performance and hold another raffle in conjunction with ALF next year. The raffle committee needs your help in obtaining large prizes. Are you able to make a donation? Do you have a friend or family member who could donate something?

Maybe your employer is able to donate something to this worthwhile cause (lighthouses!). The only prize we have to date is a two-night stay in the [Blue Room](#) at Race Point Lighthouse. If you have a prize to donate, or know someone who does, please contact Lee Hall, Fundraising Co-Chairman.



Race Point Lighthouse  
at the tip of Cape Cod

