

New England Lighthouse Lovers - NELL



LIGHTHOUSES, HOT CHOCOLATE & YOU - 2009

January 16 - 18, 2009

by Tom Kenworthy, NELL President

Friday January 16, 2009 was a cold day with temperatures forecast to be in the single digits with a chance of snow. But that didn't stop 95 hardy NELL members from travelling to the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Newport RI for our annual Lighthouses Hot Chocolate and You.

Once all members that had material for the event packages arrived at the hotel, the envelopes were stuffed. The packets, which included the first issue for 2009 of the NELL Beacon, our quarterly newsletter,

were given to the attending members. All other members will be receiving their copy of the Beacon via USPS within the week.

At 8:45 a.m. Saturday we met in the hotel lobby where all members were informed that Coast Guardsmen Pat Moran, DC1 and Saulo Casdello, EM2 would be joining us to open each lighthouse enabling us to climb them. We then visited our first lighthouse of the day -- Goat Island/Newport Harbor, located on hotel property, right outside of the hotel. Saturday the 17th was a beautiful sunny, clear, crisp, very cold day. We were lucky it wasn't windy. If it was, we never would have been able to stand in line like we did waiting to climb.

After climbing Goat Island we went to Castle Hill Light. We parked in the Castle Hill Inn parking lot and then walked the approximate length of a city block thru the woods on snow/ice covered ground. Seeing the tower and lantern room thru the trees made the walk worth it. The line moved fairly quickly. Then the wind decided to pay us a visit and the temperatures seemed to plummet. It got very cold, very fast. We had to speed up the line to allow everyone to climb without having to return to our cars to warm up.

Breaking for lunch after Castle Hill, we then headed to Point Judith. We expected to take our group picture there before climbing the tower but nature had different plans for us. We thought it was windy at Castle Hill, but arriving at Point Judith we immediately realized that that was just a cool breeze. The wind at the Point was unrelenting and made things almost unbearable. It was so bad the only group picture we could manage was of members standing in line to climb. Even then, the members were reluctant to stand facing the camera as that meant they had to face the wind. The folks that were lucky enough to be waiting inside the tower didn't want to come out. After the picture taking, many of us lined up behind the tower letting it block the wind.

EM2 Casdello unlocked the boat house so we could get some relief with many members waiting their turn in the "comfort" of that shelter.

Then into our cars for a warm drive to Beavertail Lighthouse Museum and Gift Shop. Our last stop. There we were very warmly welcomed by the association members who treated us to hot chocolate and homemade cookies. All made by members of the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association.

Beavertail was not as windy as Pt. Judith but all the members were gathered inside enjoying the cookies and hot chocolate while waiting for the Coast Guard to arrive to open the light. Thinking that would be an excellent time for the group picture I made that suggestion and was informed that no one wanted to move as they were all in line -- not for hot chocolate -- but to climb the light as soon as it was opened. So much for that idea. I was not about to ask 95 people to go outside and lose their place in line and risk a "mutiny". About 40 minutes into climbing and with dusk approaching fast, the Coast Guard made the announcement that it was too dark in the top of the tower to safely continue climbing (no lights installed there) so they had to shut things down and put the light back on to continue serving as a navigational aid.

With LHHC&Y 2009 ending, some members headed home while others went to dinner planning to stay the night and visit several more area lights before heading home the following day. But when we awoke to a couple of inches of fresh snow on the ground with freezing rain coming down, many of us decided to have a warm breakfast and immediately head home. Some members stayed, did some shopping and visited Conanicut North before leaving for home, hoping the roads would be in better condition. But that was not to be with a forecast of 6 inches to a foot of snow as you travelled further north.

It was good to see many of our new members participate in our first event of the year and their first LHHC&Y. I believe everyone had a wonderful time and that hot chocolate will remain a fond memory for all -- even with the bone chilling wind and cold.

I know for one couple this Lighthouse Hot Chocolate and You will be very fondly remembered and always hold a special place in their hearts.

I'm referring to long time NELL members Alan Ells and Yadiira Tarnliella. When they returned to their hotel room Alan did something that he so ardently wanted to do in the lighthouse but didn't due to the extreme cold. Alan proposed to Yadiira ---- who very happily accepted. Congratulations Alan, and best wishes to you and your bride to be!

Tom



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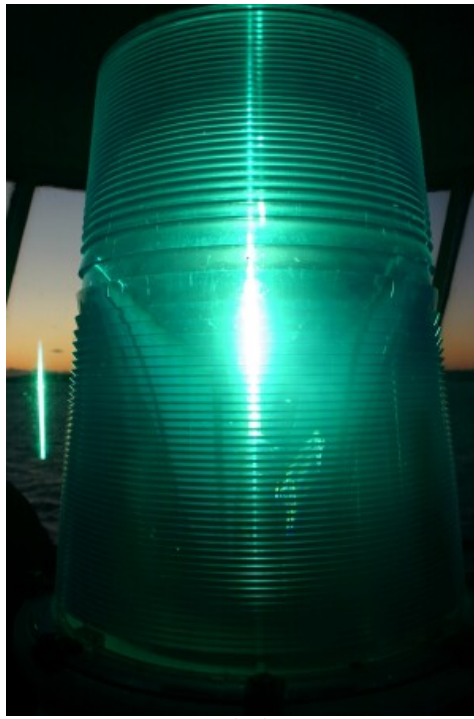
Thanks to Tom Kenworthy for these photos



Goat Island



Goat Island



Goat Island Lens



Goat Island at dusk



Goat Island and Newport-Pell Bridge



Tom Kenworthy presenting check to Bob Trapani, Exec. Director of Alf for climbing Goat Island



Castle Hill on Narragansett Bay



Castle Hill staircase from Lantern Room



Castle Hill view from the woods



Castle Hill full view



Castle Hill Inn & Resort from Lantern Room



Full view of Castle Hill Light



Tug passing Castle Hill Light



Coast Guard Station Pt. Judith - Pt. Judith Light



Pt. Judith



Pt. Judith



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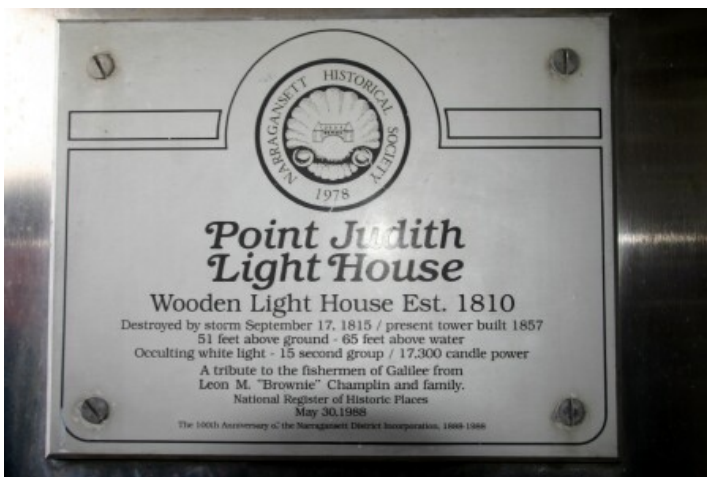
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Entrance to Pt. Judith Lantern Room



Pat Moran and Dave Kelleher (in background)



Plaque inside door of Pt. Judith



Coast Guard Station Pt. Judith from lantern room



Stairway to Pt. Judith lantern room



Pt. Judith 4th Order Lens



Walt Mills in lantern room



Pt. Judith Light



Waiting to climb Pt. Judith



Beavertail Light and Museum - Gift Shop



Beavertail Light



EM2 Casdello, Ron and DC1 Moran at Beavertail Light



President of BLMA Richard "Sully" Sullivan and Ron Bandock - Check Presentation

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Comments

From Debbie Haney

Tom:

Gregg and I want to thank you and all the people who worked so hard to make Lighthouses, Hot Chocolate and You so wonderful - GREAT JOB and extremely enjoyable.

Please pass this along to those who made this trip possible.
Have a good day.

Debbie