President’s Message - Keep Our Lights Bright!

Keep Our Lights Bright! That's the slogan I've been using. For years, Ken Smith used “Keep Our Lights Shining!” With all of Ken's hard work and stewardship over the years, I felt a lot of our Lighthouses were in pretty good shape and others were on their way towards bright futures. Keeping Our Lights Bright rather than just Shining. Almost all Florida light-houses are represented on the FLA board and participate in managing our association and its future. Ever the optimist, I felt that the reef lights would be turned over to a caring and capable support-organization as they are being surplused by the GSA. Gasparilla Range was being cared for by a lighthouse group who already had plans and funds to restore it back to glory.

Sure there are bound to be bumps in the road but I know our historic lighthouses will endure and thrive. We are a twenty-year old association composed of devoted lighthouse groups and individuals who treasure lighthouses and their histories.

Reality hits home! Amelia Island lighthouse's 113 year-old 3rd-order Fresnel lens has been turned-off and the lantern room shrouded with moving blankets. During routine cleaning in March, one of the twelve bulls-eye lenses came loose from its flash-panel and fell into the Fresnel lens. The 8-½” diameter lens lost a minor 1-½” wide chip on the edge. The US Coast Guard felt it best to stop the rotation and protect the other eleven bulls-eyes. The lenses are friction fit into the back of the flash panel and have litharge around the edges. The USCG is working to procure an assessment from a lampist. Once the assessment is made, and costs estimated, the USCG will determine the best future for the Fresnel lens - either stabilize it in place and reactivate it or move it to a controlled environment in a museum.

My hope is all of our member Lighthouses will continue to be preserved, restored, protected & defended.

With your help - We Will Keep Our Lights Bright!
Chris Belcher, Florida Lighthouse Association President

THANK YOU! YOUR support makes it possible to preserve and restore Florida's lighthouses!

The Florida Lighthouse Association’s mission is to safeguard Florida’s remaining lighthouses for future generations by supporting community based restoration, preservation and education efforts.

FLA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, funded by philanthropic gifts and memberships from individuals.
Florida’s "Visit Our Lights" license plate sales provide additional funding for preservation and restoration grants to local lighthouses.

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION (CH8757) AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES ON THEIR WEBSITE AT https://csapp.800helpfla.com/cspublicapp/giftgiversquery/giftgiversquery.aspx OR BY CALLING TOLL-FREE 1-800-435-7352 WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.
Gasparilla Island is home to 2 lighthouses, Port Boca Grande Lighthouse Map and Boca Grande Entrance Rear Range Light. Port Boca Grande Lighthouse was built in 1890 and is a one-story wooden dwelling on iron pilings with a black octagonal lantern on top, the original lens being a 3 ½ Order Fresnel lens. This building also served as the Lighthouse Keeper’s residence. The light was automated in 1956, deactivated in 1966, and abandoned by the Coast Guard in 1969. Due to erosion and waves at high tide crashing under the house, the support screws were exposed, requiring the building of rock groins and pumping sand onto the beach to protect the house from additional damage. Boca Grande Lighthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980, and restoration work began in 1985. The light was recommissioned in 1986, and remains today an aid to navigation. Along with the Assistant Keeper’s house next door, the Boca Grande Lighthouse is the oldest building on Gasparilla Island.

The Boca Grande Entrance Rear Range Light, now known as the Gasparilla Island Light, is one of only a few lighthouses that has had active service in two states. This lighthouse, an iron skeletal tower, was originally built in 1881 in Delaware, and served as the Delaware Breakwater Rear Range Lighthouse until 1918 when operation was discontinued due to the shifting shoreline/erosion. In 1919 the Seventh Lighthouse District in Florida notified Delaware that there was a need for the tower in Florida; however, due to money problems the tower was not erected on Gasparilla Island until 1927 as Port Boca Grande’s Rear Range Light, and the 4th Order Fresnel Lens was not lit until 1932. Recently the Light was turned over to the Barrier Island Parks Society, and has been completely restored to its 1927 condition. Both Port Boca Grande Lighthouse and The Gasparilla Island Light remain aids to navigation.

Our spring event will start on Friday May 5, 2017 at the Crowninshield Community House 240 Banyan St. Boca Grande, Fl 33921 Map on Gasparilla Island with committee meetings at 4:30 PM, followed by the FLA Board meeting at 6:00 PM. Please note, the social will be AT THE BOCA GRANDE LIGHTHOUSE at 7:30 where we will have the opportunity for a night climb. On Saturday the membership meeting will start at 9:00 AM at the Community House, with a salad Luncheon (details to follow) at about 12:00, followed by a visit and climb to both Lighthouses.

The cost for the event will be $50 each for members and $75 each for non-members, which includes a 1 year membership in FLA. Due to FLA insurance requirements all attendees MUST be members. The meeting fee includes the Friday night Social, the Friday night climb, the membership meeting, Lunch, and visits to both lighthouses.

Visit our website for more information—
www.floridalighthouses.org
Brilliant Beacons: A History of the American Lighthouse
by: Eric Jay Dolan

Review by Josh Liller: If Dennis Noble's Lighthouses and Keepers: The U.S. Lighthouse Service and Its Legacy was the best synthesis of US lighthouse history, Brilliant Beacons is the closest we've come to a true monograph on the same subject. In 422 pages, Dolin presents a moderately comprehensive history from colonial times to the present. The first 132 pages cover the early era: all the colonial lighthouses, lighthouses in the Revolutionary War, post-colonial, and the infamous Pleasanton era. The next hundred pages cover the general history of the "Golden Era" of lighthouses under the Lighthouse Board and Lighthouse Bureau (1852-1939), followed by another 150 pages on various aspects of lighthouses during that era such as keeper's duties, lives, and heroics and some examples of especially difficult engineering feats. The modern era of Coast Guard lightkeeping and public and private lighthouse preservation/restoration efforts get less than three dozen pages.

I think Dolin does a very good job tackling the subject matter which I think he understands quite well. There are extensive endnotes and the narrative is an enjoyable read that I breezed through in less than a week (admittedly, I have a strong preexisting interest in the subject). Appropriate illustrations and photos are scattered throughout.

An entire chapter is spent on the impact of the Great New England Hurricane of 1938 on lighthouses and keepers. While it's a short chapter of only 17 pages, this seems like an oddly specific tangent, especially since only one other hurricane gets more than a passing mention. If there's a problem with this book that is somewhat a symptom of it. I was left scratching my head a bit on what gets left out, such as the challenges of the Florida Reef Lights or almost any mention of the Outer Banks lighthouses beyond 'Cape Hatteras is really important and the lens went on a wild adventure in the Civil War.' The famous Minot's Ledge Lighthouse disaster goes oddly unmentioned until the chapter on engineering. I think Noble's much shorter book manages to do a better job covering certain aspects of lighthouse history than Dolin. This book could have really used another 50-100 pages.

Brilliant Beacons is not quite a brilliant book, but it is a really good one. Anyone interested in lighthouses wanting something both interesting and fun yet substantial will be quite pleased with this work. (I suspect the issues I pointed out are the kind that will likely go unnoticed by most readers.) Strongly recommended.

Review by Eric S. Martin: This brand new book came with a flyer from the marketing people basically claiming this was the best lighthouse book ever. I had my doubts, especially since other books have made that claim and did not hold up (like "The Complete Guide to Lighthouses" that was missing several lights).

There were some good things about this book. For one, it is up-to-date (published this year) so it includes things like the National Lighthouses Preservation Act. Another is the large number of of pictures and drawings, some that have never been published. Dolin also talks about Stephen Pleasanton and Winslow Lewis. He is fair and points out things that we may forget. For example, the Lewis lights at first were a major improvement to lighting. However, Lewis never improve on his original design so when the Fresnel lens came along the Lewis lights were inferior (and still Lewis did NOT try to improve them). Pleasanton had many friends in the government so he was able to hold off changing the lights for years and years.

This book also contains a list of lighthouse organizations. It seems to include the national and well as some regional. It does NOT claim to include all, however, and I was disappointed that the Florida Keys Reef Lights Foundation was not included (OK I am biased). On an up note, the Florida Lighthouse Association is on the list.
January Meeting Recap ~ Egmont Key

More Photos can be found on the FLA Facebook page!

U.S. LIGHTHOUSE SOCIETY

USLHS (http://uslhs.org/tours) announced it will "make a $200 donation to your nonprofit for every tour registration that comes in referencing that nonprofit." (The donation amount is the same whether it is for a single or double registration.) What a wonderful and easy way to donate to FLA. Make sure you write on your tour registration form that you want the $200 to benefit FLA and then tell them again when you take the tour. Thank you USLHS!
January Meeting Recap ~ Egmont Key
by Josh Liller

The Florida Lighthouse Association held its first meeting of 2017 in St. Petersburg at the end of January. Due to other local events this meeting was scheduled a little differently with a Saturday-Sunday schedule instead of the more common Friday-Saturday.

The Saturday meeting was held at Tampa Bay Watch, an environmental science center built to resemble the Port Boca Grande Lighthouse, including a working lantern on the roof. Unfortunately, due to the building’s design we were not able to climb this lighthouse. Preceded by the usual board meetings, the regular meeting moved along at a brisk pace including an Italian dinner.

Serena Miller, a 6-year-old who made a donation to FLA in lieu of birthday presents, was an honorary guest at the meeting along with her parents and sister. Serena’s father is an active duty member of the Coast Guard and we thank him for both his service and for helping to raise the next generation of lighthouse lovers and preservationists.

Candace Clifford was our main guest speaker. Candace has been an independent researcher at the National Archives for many years specializing in records relating to the lighthouse service. Many lighthouses in Florida and around the country have had the opportunity to make use of her excellent research skills to help uncover their lighthouse's history. In addition to discussing her research work and the records available, Candace also talked about her new position as Historian for the US Lighthouse Society. The USLHS publishes an excellent quarterly magazine, Keeper's Log, and provides online resources for the public to learn about many aspects of lighthouse history, and Candace’s work will be a great help to both. She also contributed signed copies of her books for the FLA’s event raffle. Candace has published several books with her mother, Mary Louise Clifford.

Richard Sanchez of the Egmont Key Alliance spoke twice at the event, including substituting for an Egmont Key park ranger who was delayed by boat problems. Rich talked about the history of the lighthouse, island, and his organization.

Rain swept through the Tampa Bay area overnight, but was clearing out by Sunday morning. FLA members gathered at Fort DeSoto Park on Mullet Key for the boat ride to Egmont Key. A bike race in the park delayed many attendees causing them to miss the scheduled 9AM departure time for the ferry. Fortunately, this did not result in anyone missing the boat because among those caught in the traffic was the boat’s captain! The cold, wet weather cleared out as the morning progressed and the short trip on the water proved fairly calm out and back.

Richard Sanchez greeted visitors in a Confederate uniform and Richard Johnson, past president of the Egmont Key Alliance, was in uniform as a lighthouse keeper. Visitors got a rare but greatly appreciated opportunity to climb the Egmont Key Lighthouse. Also available to visit were the light station’s radio beacon building and many structures related to Fort Dade, including the restored guardhouse. In the guardhouse’s former jail, Donald and Carol Thompson presented a slide show of Egmont Key’s history. Donald and Carol are the authors of the most complete history of the island written thus far, Egmont Key: A History (published 2012).
Lighthouse News

CAPE FLORIDA ~ On February 10, our park hosted “Loving the Lighthouse” a pre Valentine’s Day Celebration under the full moon. Hundreds of visitors got to enjoy the Full moon over the ocean from the top of the tower. Our new LED beacon shone brightly with a horizontal pattern that replaced our old incandescent star burst display. Delicious refreshments were served by the Boaters Grill (www.lighthouserestaurants.com) and a campfire kept visitors warm while enjoying the view of the moon over the sea.

DRY TORTUGAS ~ Dry Tortugas National Park has resubmitted a project proposal for 2020 Line Item Construction funding for a full Stabilization of the Dry Tortugas Light Station Lighthouse located on Loggerhead Key.

Additionally, we have received Treatment Recommendations for a Restoration of the Tortugas Harbor Light located on top of Fort Jefferson, Bastion 6, Garden Key. As a priority, the park is moving forward in the contracting process to produce full Construction Documents for this Restoration solicitation to go out to bid ASAP. It is anticipated that we will produce full Historic American Building Survey (HABS) documentation for the Library of Congress and laser scan the Harbor Light around August 2017 with final deliverables in Jan/Feb. 2018.

EGMONT KEY ~ Egmont Key was the host lighthouse for the recent FLA Conference. We had some questionable weather for the Sunday trip to the island but it turned out to be a good day. Everyone had a good time, the lighthouse was open for visitation and the Guard House was open as well. There was a Confederate soldier seen on the island firing his musket in the air and even encouraging the visitors to try it out!

The Alliance was set to host the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute from nearby Eckerd College on a tour of the island on March 3rd. OLLI is a very popular program at Eckerd and offers a wide range of courses and field trips. We wanted to showcase the invisible history of the island which visitors don’t normally hear about. Unfortunately the weather was too bad for the ferry to operate so it was postponed for another day. I will have an update in a future issue.
**Lighthouse News**

**JUPITER INLET** ~ In January, Joe Cocking and Nick Johnston of Lighthouse Lamp Shop performed important conservation work on Jupiter’s 1st order Fresnel lens. We have 1 of only 13 active first-order lenses in the entire US. The work consisted primarily of caring for the special putty that holds the 397 glass prisms in their brass frames. The lens now in as good a shape as it has been since the original restoration here in 2000.

On February 25, Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse and Museum welcomed more than 2,600 visitors to our second annual Sea Fest For Kids. Admission was free for those under 18. This fun and educational maritime festival held on the light station grounds included arts and crafts, boating safety, pirate-themed activities, Civil War reenactors, and live entertainment.

In May and June, Jupiter Lighthouse will undergo a major restoration project. The primary purpose is critical repair and preservation of the iron roof and cupola of the lighthouse lantern. We will be taking this opportunity to also do preservation work on the rest of the tower’s ironwork and the brickwork directly underneath the gallery deck. Work will be done by lighthouse experts Alex Klahm and Anthony Houllis, from Razorback, under the architectural direction of Ken Smith. Our Fresnel lens will be carefully protected by Joe Cocking from Lighthouse Lamp Shop. This will be an expensive project with an estimated cost of $152,000. We are applying for a FLA Grant and funding through our partnership with the Bureau of Land Management as well a local fundraising drive. Additional support is greatly appreciated! Donations can be made through our website: [http://www.jupiterlighthouse.org/join-give/donate/](http://www.jupiterlighthouse.org/join-give/donate/)

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**ST. MARKS** ~ St. Marks Lighthouse is gearing up to start phase II of our restoration. At the end of January, asbestos tile was removed from the floor of the keepers' house exposing the cistern. Architect Ken Smith has submitted plans to the State Historic Preservation Officer and the US Fish & Wildlife Service's archaeologist. Last week the archaeologist visited and we tore up some the damaged flooring to examine construction details and do some archaeology investigations. Nothing of significance was found. We expect to have a bid package available within four to five months.
Lighthouse News

ST. AUGUSTINE ~ We are currently in the middle of building our new Maritime Archaeology & Education Center. This 2,500 square foot building will provide learning opportunities for school children in our day camp programs as well as undergraduate and graduate students studying archaeology at one of the nation’s only underwater archaeology field school programs.

Our new facility will provide:

» A permanent home for research

Academics and students will be able to study the maritime history of the area throughout the Nation's Oldest Port programs utilizing the latest technology. An X-ray machine will allow conservators to see inside 200 year-old concretions to determine the best course for preserving the artifacts inside for future generations.

» Accessible learning space for all

In addition to ADA accessible classroom space for students of all ages, the new building will also be home to accessible exhibit spaces to share Nation's Oldest Port stories with Museum visitors. From volunteer ship modelers demonstrating their historic craft to interactive features focused on shipwreck archaeology, people of all ages will have the opportunity to be hands-on with history.

» New public archaeology opportunities

A special viewing window in the conservation area will give Museum guests a unique glimpse inside the world of archaeological conservation. Visitors will be able to see the careful process behind conserving historic artifacts recovered from the ocean floor.

AMELIA ISLAND ~ Durable Restoration installed the window louvers on March 8th. We placed data-loggers in the bottom and top of the lighthouse a couple of weeks prior to the installation and are waiting a few weeks to get before-and-after humidity and temperature readings. Initial impressions are the humidity now "feels" the same as outside and the temperature is more moderate. We will provide the final report at the May membership meeting.

REEF LIGHTS ~ Have talked to the GSA (General Services Administration) recently and I am told that the NOA (Notice of Availability) for Sand Key will be "SOON". Of course when the Federal Government says that NOT sure what that means. They are talking with the state about signing off on the bottom lands. They also need a sign off from Fish and Wildlife, and the Florida Keys Marine Sanctuary. All in the works.
The Gene Oakes Memorial License Plate Project

We want to give you the opportunity to display this beautiful art as your Florida license plate. While displaying your love of lighthouses you will be helping generate funds to restore these state treasures.

The bill authorizing the "Visit Our Lights" tag was approved by the Florida Senate on April 28, 2008 by a vote of 35-4. On April 29, 2008 the House of Representatives gave it a 118-1 approval. The bill was forwarded to the governor's office, and Governor Crist signed it on May 28, 2008. Thank all of you for your support in bringing this about. The plate became available at the local tax collectors offices throughout Florida in mid December 2008. Now we can all give our full support by purchasing these tags and proudly displaying them on our cars. $25.00 from the sale of each tag will be used for the preservation and restoration of our 29 remaining historic lighthouses.

Our late president, Gene Oakes had set as his top priority the obtaining of a specialty license plate to raise funds for the preservation of Florida's historic lighthouses. Gene's untimely death came before he was able to obtain that goal. The Association was determined to accomplish what Gene had started and in 2005 established the Gene Oakes Memorial License Plate Fund with Gene's widow, Beverly Oakes, as chairperson. Three years later that goal was accomplished.

Now, eight years later FLA is redesigning our license plate to take advantage of the latest technology in color printing and graphics. The Marketing Committee, in conjunction with the Board are also exploring changing the wording from “Visit Our Lights” to something more descriptive and meaningful to the general motoring public. Hopes are to have a more vibrant and colorful license plate and a tag-line that when searched for on the internet will point to our website.

We ask that you support Florida House Bill 1375 (FL H1375) which changes our license plate wording from “Visit Our Lights” to “SaveOurLighthouses.org.” This simple change not only defines our mission, it also points to our website where residents and visitors can learn more about Florida's historic lighthouses.

The Full text version of House Bill 1375: https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2017/01375

Please contact your State Representatives and State Senators and show your support for passing House Bill 1375. If unsure of your state officials, your county Supervisor of Elections should list them on their website - http://dos.elections.myflorida.com/supervisors/ .

The State site http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/sections/representatives/myrepresentative.aspx

Help Keep Our Lights Bright by showing your support for our Florida Lighthouse Association and its Mission to preserve, restore, protect, and defend Florida's 29 historic lighthouses.