Chris Belcher  
President

I look forward to seeing you at our 20th anniversary celebration later this month. It is hard to believe how FLA has evolved from its humble beginnings in 1996 into today’s strong and vibrant community of lighthouses and supporters. I am especially proud of our volunteers who have stepped up, joined our committees, and are providing the voice, strength and guidance of our association. Without our volunteers and donors, we can not fulfill our mission to support our Florida Lighthouses.

I am excited to announce that we have made great strides this year in allowing our committees to function as independent teams reporting to the FLA board. We now have an energetic yet focused Finance committee hard at work and you will see their efforts in new and streamlined budget forecasts and reports. Our Marketing/PR committee has strong leadership and now have new marketing opportunities opening up for them to pursue. They will share their plans and long-term goals at the meetings this month.

Our Governance committee provides the foundation of our organization and will continue work under its dynamic leadership. The Governance committee has designed and implemented board positions and committees along with the descriptions documenting their responsibilities and strategies. And ultimately, they created a succession plan which enables committee members to be in position to assume leadership as needed. This means successors will already understand the purpose, responsibilities, and internal dynamics and will hit the road running on day one. Speaking of the “road,” our Governance chair is travelling the state and meeting with lighthouse representatives to educate about FLA’s Board and how the lighthouses fit in as key members of the association.

We hope to elect permanent leadership for our Grants/Commissioner committee and anticipate approving larger grant budgets for this coming year. We have two grant funds; Gene Oakes and Tom Taylor. Both of these funds are named in memory of past FLA presidents. Gene Oakes grants are funded by our “Visit our Lights” license plate sales. Tom Taylor grants come from our operating budget.

Our Meeting committee is continuing internal development of volunteers and has a fantastic chairman - as we all know from the quality of meetings we’ve had in the past years. Through succession planning, our Membership committee will have a new chair seamlessly assuming office due to retirement of its long-time chair. Revenue development will always have its challenges of raising money and requesting donations but is under strong and capable leadership with our past-president.

We also have two ad-hoc committees with Retail and Government Affairs. Please go to our website and click on the “Store” link. There are many items available for purchase. You can even purchase a personalized FLA name tag which many of us proudly wear at our meetings. Government Affairs is exploring how to update the 2002 Florida Lighthouse Study and how to monitor legislation that could effect our lighthouses. They are also surveying our lighthouses about their support needs and asking if they have expertise they can share with other lighthouses.

If any of these committees interest you, please let me know. We will get stronger through your participation and contributions towards our mission of preserving, restoring, protecting and defending Florida’s lighthouses.

Help keep our lights BRIGHT!

Chris Belcher  
President

The Ponce de Leon Inlet Light Station is proud and honored to welcome the Florida Lighthouse Association on October 22. This is both the annual meeting and the FLA’s 20th anniversary. A day of tours and fun is planned for attendees, including a close-up look at the many new additions to the museum’s collection. Upcoming fall events at the Ponce Inlet Light include Biketoberfest at the Lighthouse, October 13-14, noon – 2 pm, with an exhibit chronicling the history of Motorcycles on the Beach plus a chance to learn about life at the lighthouse 100 years ago. On November 11, Veterans’ Day, all veterans and active duty military personnel will be admitted at no charge with their military ID cards. The holiday season gets underway on Friday, November 25, from 10 am until 2 pm with Thanksgiving Gifts, a family fun program including tours, a visit from the “Old Lighthouse Keeper,” and a chance for participants to make (and take) an old-fashioned Christmas ornament. And on Monday, December 26th from 10 am until 2 pm, families can enjoy our winter holiday event with activities and a chance to meet the “Old Lighthouse Keeper.” There will be three opportunities to “Climb to the Moon” and enjoy the sunset and moonrise from the top of the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse. Dates are October 16, November 14, and December 13. Visit our website at ponceinlet.org or call 386-761-1821 for more information and advance tickets. The lighthouse will be closed on November 24 for Thanksgiving and December 25, Christmas Day.

As of July 2016, FLA is 387 memberships strong. However, if you count Family memberships as 2+ persons, TOTAL person membership is 547+.

There were 26 FLA Founders who attended the first organizing meeting in July 1996 led by Tom Taylor. Four are still listed in the membership file as active: Hib Cas-selberry, Jim Dunlap, Kathy Fleming, and Larry J. Parker. The first annual FLA meeting was held that October. Ann Caneer of Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse was elected the first president. Other current FLA members joining that first year were George Diller, Elaine Gridley, Neil Hurley, and MaryLou & Red Shirar. In the next 4 years, 39 more memberships were added (21 family, 1 lighthouse delegate, and 17 individual) which are still active amounting to 69+ persons who have been FLA members for 15 years or more…9 of those have been FLA members for all 20 years!

Twenty-two states are represented in our current membership (19 family, 35 individual, and 1 corporate membership/74+ persons): Alabama (2), Connecticut (1), Colorado (1), California (1), Georgia (9), Hawaii (1), Kentucky (2), Massachusetts (4), Minnesota (1), Michigan (2), Maryland (2), Mississippi (1), Missouri (1), New Jersey (5), North Carolina (4), Pennsylvania (4), South Carolina (2), Tennessee (3), Texas (1), Virginia (4), Wisconsin (2), and Washington (2).

By Betty Lowe Phelps, Membership Committee

Data from July 2016 membership file and online FLA documents
AMELIA ISLAND
Work is progressing on our window-louvers project funded by a FLA Grant. Soon after the FLA grant was awarded, we had an attempted break-in of the lighthouse and the lowest window-frame and door were damaged. We discussed installing a louver at the top of the window, out of reach, during an onsite meeting with Durable Restoration. All agreed it was best to skip that window and build five louvers instead of six. Durable Restoration also suggested they professionally install the louvers. The painter gave us a slight discount on his quote and has completed his work. We hope to have the louvers installed later this month.

JUPITER INLET
Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse and Museum is hosting its second annual River Rendezvous event on Saturday November 19, 2016. This is a fundraising social event on the riverfront featuring food and drinks from local restaurants, live music, and a silent auction. Attendees receive a 2017 calendar featuring new photos of the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse by local photographers.

CEDAR KEY
Hurricane Hermine did only minor damage here. Branches were knocked down and 2 feet of beach washed out, but no damage to the lighthouse or ramp. The floating dock needs to be put back in the water.

CAPE FLORIDA
We are about to replace our incandescent TF 3 AC light assembly with a brand new Maxi Halo 60 – II LED assembly. While it is quite a bit more expensive, it should be substantially more reliable and long lasting, and replace a system that’s difficult to troubleshoot without removing the entire apparatus and shipping it back to the manufacturer – Tidelands Signal. The TF 3 AC has been in service since 1996, and was replaced each time, and the bulbs also replaced several times. We also recently replaced the air conditioning system in the LH Keepers House for our visitors comfort and to protect the building and historical furnishings. We will be hosting an evening program on Sunday November 13, 2016 starting at 7 p.m. under a full moon.

Fresnel Lens Exhibit Installed at Cape St. George Lighthouse Museum
A new Fresnel lens exhibit has been installed in the Keeper’s House Museum at the Cape St. George Light. The lens displayed in the Lighthouse Museum is a replica of the Third Order Fixed White Fresnel Lens that lighted the Cape St. George Light from 1857 to 1949. The replica lens contains 149 individual prisms set into the brass framework. The prisms are made of acrylic rather than glass, because acrylic has a better light transmission percentage than glass, and is lighter in weight and much less expensive than glass. The prisms are tinted green to match those in historic Fresnel lenses.

Tortugas Harbor Light (Garden Key) update: Contractors are mobilizing to the fort next week to begin to scaffold the Tortugas Harbor Light located on top of Fort Jefferson at Garden Key. The scaffolding will be to temporally stabilize the structure and allow full access for our structural engineers to complete their assessment.

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