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FRIENDS OF SEGUIN ISLAND

Fall 2006

#44

SEGUIN ISLAND FRESNEL LENS RESTORATION

By Joe Cocking, CWO, USCG Ret.

On August 18, 2003 at the request of the First Coast Guard District, Joe Cocking, then a Chief Warrant Officer, performed a structural condition assessment of the Fresnel lens, which was submitted to the Office of Aids to Navigation.

A copy of Joe's report was acquired by the Friends of Seguin resulting in hiring a private contractor to remove the bracing attaching the spider to the lens in 2004.

In September of 2005, the Coast Guard solicited bids to perform the remaining restorative processes necessary to stabilize and continue the operation of Seguin's lens. A site visit was performed by all interested parties accompanied by LT Jose Pena of CEU Providence, RI. In June of 2006 the contract was awarded to Lighthouse Lamp Shop, Inc, owned by now retired Chief Warrant Officer Joe Cocking.

The project commenced in July of 2006. Joe Cocking and primary sub-contractor, Nick Johnston owner of Carolina Lighthouse Lens Work, removed two central prisms that were fractured and repaired them, reinstalling upon completion. The frame of the lens was solvent cleaned concentrating on areas where corrosion was beginning to appear. There are 1,668 putty joints on this lens and each was carefully cleaned in preparation for the restoration process. This means that each joint is addressed a number of three times for a total of 5,004 times. After this was completed the lens was solvent cleaned to remove encrusted contaminants and afterwards buffed each day while Joe and Nick were on site. The lamp changer and lamps were reinstalled and focused within the center of the focal plane allowing optimal performance and exhibiting the brightest light possible.

Joe Subcontracted a company from Baltimore, MD to assist with the prism replication process, this took a full day and a half to perform the necessary task to complete this process. At present the remainder of the task is being worked on and will be completed by the spring of 2007.

There are no bull's-eye prisms within a fixed lens, only linear, the prisms referred to are central Dioptric prisms that make up the central focal plane of the lens.

Much of what was accomplished while on site included restoring materials that were decaying, major repair of glass elements that had been damaged and removal of corrosive contaminants from both the lens and the metal frame. Good stewardship means keeping it cleaned and providing the best possible signal for the mariner and prevents further deterioration to the lens.

Joe and Nick repaired cracks in the lenses and thoroughly cleaned and polished and repeatedly re-polished the lens. They also provided the Friends of Seguin Island with instructions on how to safely clean the lens. Friends from shore report that it now shines 20% brighter.

The contract for the Seguin restoration from the United State Coast Guard was awarded by the Civil Engineering Unit in Providence, Rhode Island, and also the includes the restoration of the Boston Harbor Light.

SUMMER 2006

After a slow and soggy June, the months of July and August saw many visitors on Seguin. 1415 visitors signed the guestbook and probably an equal number just enjoyed walking the trails, having a picnic and/or being awed by the beautiful vistas seen on a clear day.

Geographic Information Sciences Study

Eleven researchers from the University of Southern Maine came to Seguin Island on June 12 and camped to do a five day GIS (geographic information sciences) study about Seguin Island. Together with cartography, remote sensing, global positioning systems, photogrammetry, and geography, the GIS has evolved into a discipline with its own unique research base. The application of this cutting edge process is far reaching as it is able to unite in various combinations the aforementioned sciences plus more. It would be interesting if the study could provide information as to the sizable magnetic disturbance that surrounds Ellingwood Rock and the west side of Seguin. This was the initiative of Friends of Seguin Island board member John Bliss of Salter Island and Friends of Seguin Island provided transportation.

The benefits to the FOS are we would receive at least one hi-res full color printout for the museum's collection. Three dimensional models and oblique view fly-bys material could be used in color maps, posters and brochures; as an educational resource; development for unique memorabilia items; and as a continuing basis for conservation efforts.

Hyde School

On July 16, the Hyde School arrived to begin their 17th summer assisting the Friends of Seguin Island with island maintenance. They did impressive work clearing trails, brush under the entire tram length and the beach of rocks. They also built a stone walkway and steps from the rocky beach up to the wooden steps that lead up to the island. Visitors have appreciated this more user-friendly access to the Seguin Light Station. Many thanks go to the Hyde School for helping make Seguin Island a beautiful place to visit.

Georgetown Historical Society Tour

August 1st was a bright, warm, sunny Saturday for the Georgetown Historical Society trip to Seguin Island. Fifty people left from Five Islands aboard the *Sasanoa*. Executive Director, Anne Webster provided the narrative on the trip out and Publicity Chair, Troy Wallace provided the shuttle from the boat to the beach and back. The group was very impressed with the stone steps built by the Hyde School.

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SEGUIN ANNUAL MEETING

The Friends of Seguin Island's Annual Meeting and Barbecue was held at the Popham Chapel on July 15, 2006. Festivities began at 2:00 pm with Auction items available for viewing and memorabilia available. The Annual Meeting started at 3:00 pm in the Popham Chapel where new Board members Dee Perry and Emily Chandler were welcomed. Seguin's 2006 caretakers, Jack and Rose Speight from Orlando, FL gave a presentation consisting of snippets of their life on and off Seguin.

Auctioneer State Rep, Lilia Percy conducted an animated Live Auction. Dave Power of Phippsburg and Lance Fuller of Bath provided their masterful barbecue. A variety of salads and deserts were contributed by many attending. The final event of the day was the raffle drawn from the barbecue tickets purchased.

The combination of all events raised nearly \$4,000 for the Friends of Seguin Island.

HONORING ISLAND VOLUNTEERS

The Friends of Seguin Island relies extensively on the efforts of our hardworking volunteers. This summer the following are given our heartfelt appreciation for their work on the island: Dave Power, Lance Fuller, Cindy Carney, Jim Bennett, Rachael Bennett, Carney Hamilton, Linda Power, Anne Webster, Troy Wallace, Ken Young, Gavin Joannides, Bill Webster, Peter Bacon, Mark Metcalf, David Platteter, and others.

The project that was the major job for this year was installing a bathroom, kitchenette and generally making the guest quarters over the museum habitable. Special thanks to Dave Power and Lance Fuller for their efforts in this area. The plumbing was done by Todd Barabe and his assistant Scott Robinson. Some other projects included weed-whacking the trails, painting the museum side porch, cleaning out oilhouse, replacing boat house hinges, installing new fire extinguishers, installing a screen door to the kitchen, and constant attention to equipment, particularly the lawn mower to keep all in functional condition. And of course there is the day-long big push at the beginning and the end of the season when generally six to eight volunteers participate. In closing this year, we added Seguin's end-of-summer shore clean-up to the database for the 2006 International Coastal Clean-up.

ON-SHORE VOLUNTEERS

On-Shore volunteers are critical to the operations of the Friends of Seguin Island. They provide the manpower to mail special mailings, Spring and Fall Newsletters. They are the primary source for getting donations for the Annual Meeting Live and Silent Auction and assist with the auctions. They are also the cheerful faces that you see promoting Seguin's memorabilia at the Annual Meeting, Georgetown Working League Fair, Bath Mayfair and Bath Early Bird Sales.

The outstanding unsung volunteers assisting with these efforts are Troy Wallace, Barbara Paiement, Claudia Hayward, Lynne Jones, Anne Webster, Connie Donovan, Cyndy Carney, Joyce Pye, Kathy Gravino, Nancy Evans, and John Evans.

The Friends of Seguin Island give a special thank you to those at BIW who assisted with the lens restoration by providing the labor and materials to fabricate the chimney to vent the heat in the lantern room. The BIW volunteers are Greg Bridgman, Kevin Gildart, Jim DiMartini, and Jim Favreau.

CARETAKERS LOG

Seguin's 2006 caretakers were Jackson (Jack) and Rose Speights from Orlando, FL. The Speights kept a thorough daily log detailing the weather, visitors, dinner menus, group interactions and other Seguin Island highlights. Following are excerpts from that log.

Thursday, June 1

The weather was clear and the fog horn was blowing before we went to bed just to annoy us. I have about had it with no sleep due to that horn. I finally thought about the problem and found a way to muzzle that cow but I am not going to elaborate here and now just how I did it. We did get to sleep well last night however. When we got up this morning Rose mentioned that she got up during the night and it was very dark outside, more than usual. She said she thought the light in the lighthouse wasn't on. I went to inspect and sure enough the main 1000 watt light had gone out in the lighthouse and the spare one right beside the main one had not kicked in. This was not good for a lighthouse to be without a light. I called Anne Webster and Cindy to report the light out. Anne called the Coast Guard at Portland and duty officer needed to talk with me as I was on station and could answer questions of conditions etc... After the report the CG duty officer said he would get in touch with the experts that handled the lights and they would get back in touch with me.

Late in the afternoon Rose and I walked down the trestle, 742 feet, to fish in the harbor. As we were fishing (not catching) we saw an Osprey up in a tree. He would wait watch and then soar above the harbor, dive like a bomber and come up with a nice sized fish. I learned two things: One, there are fish here in the waters and two, I am not an Osprey and would not have fish for dinner.

We came back up the 756 foot 10° incline carrying the plants we had bought in town yesterday and began planting our garden. We hope to have all kinds of heirloom tomatoes, peppers (we love hot and spicy), basil and other veggies. Other caretakers over the years have built a 2 foot rock circle about 15 feet in diameter in the sun with good soil to serve as a garden. We can't wait to start getting things to eat from the garden.

At about 8:00 pm the CG Lighthouse and Navigational Aids expert, Jason, called and we tried to reset the light by his instructions from afar. We couldn't reset the lights so Jason said he would arrange for the CG to come out to the island to repair the light. It surely gets dark on the isolated rock 2 ½ miles in the Atlantic alone without the light on. Part of the "lore" of this historic lighthouse is that past caretakers have "seen things" in the house. I will not use the word haunted but Rose and I haven't seen "things" and believe us, we are not looking!

Sunday, June 18

The people that came in last night came back up the hill and visited for awhile. They said they had lots of mosquitoes on the boat last night. The wind blows all the time up on top of the rock so we aren't bothered by bugs at all here.

Anne Webster, husband Troy Wallace, Claudia Hayward and Mark Metcalf from the Friends of Seguin arrived and came up to put some more items in the museum and stayed through lunch. Anne brought out to Seguin the flag that draped the coffin of her father that passed away recently. He was a founding member of The Friends of Seguin and it was fitting that the flag flies at Seguin. It is a much bigger flag and does the lighthouse honor to have this flag raised everyday. He would be proud. Thanks Anne for this!!

About the time this group left another group of five arrived. An ENT doctor and family had sailed in from Boothbay Harbor and we gave them the tour of the lighthouse and museum. We took pictures of them and will send them by e-mail.

Rose and I went back down the hill and fished for awhile around the rocks in the cove and took the dingy out about 100 yards trying to get the fish to bite but we decided again not to have fish for dinner.

Thursday, July 27

It is not a great weather day, overcast and wind blowing a bit and it looks like it will get worse before it gets better. Evidently, the sea state must be good as we started getting visitors about 11:00 am. There was a big group of about 30 students from the Small Point summer school on tour here. About the time they got up the hill, Atlantic Seal, a boat from Freeport that tries to bring a charter group out here every Thursday, radioed and said he was bringing another 7 people out. I waited until everyone was here and finished their picnic lunch before gathering them all on the big rock which is the highest point on the island for a history lesson and then a tour through the museum.

It is a shame that the lighthouse is closed while restoration is going on for two weeks as that is the highlight of the tour to go up and see the glass Fresnel first order lens (worth about \$8.5 million). Just as I finished my talk, as if on cue, the fog rolled in from the ocean and socked the whole island in. I went down and turned on the foghorn so the guest could hear the wonderful thing.

Other visitors came in the afternoon as the fog came and went about 3:00 pm. One of the lens restorers, Nick Johnson, came in and repaired our only big burner on the stove that had not worked since we got here. We really appreciated that as it put a crimp on our cooking. Thanks Nick!!

All the visitors were gone about 5:00 pm so we had dinner and called it a day. The fog had cleared so we don't have to listen to that fog horn tonight.

Saturday, July 29

Today is BEAUTIFUL, the best yet and the greatest visibility ever from the rock. We can clearly see Monhegan Island 21 miles away to the West and Mount Washington, New Hampshire, 72 miles away to the East. We already know that today will be a heavy visitor day.

A group of 7 from Burnt Island lighthouse came out about 10:30 am. They knew Joe and Nick from their restoration project on the Burnt Island light a couple of years ago and came to see the work they are doing on our lens.

Anne Webster brought out a group of 50 from the Georgetown Historical Society for a picnic and tour of the lighthouse and island. They stayed until about 3:00 pm. There were many other visitors up here that had sailed in and moored in the harbor and came up the trail. I went down to the cove and the harbor was full of moored boats and others waiting. After a day of this many visitors I get somewhat scratchy voiced about dark. I also had to take a couple of families out to their boat in our dingy as they had hitched a ride in earlier. About 7:00 pm as we were about to sit down to dinner again with Joe and Nick in our dining area we saw another family with 3 kids outside. Rose and I went out to greet them and they stayed for ½ hour touring and roaming the top of the island.

Nick had cooked pork chops with mushroom sauce in the slow cooker all day and Rose steamed cabbage and we ate it with fresh hot peppers from our garden. Nick is a very good photographer and gave us a spectacular computer slide show of the lighthouses they had worked on from the north tip of Maine to Hawaii. There are some absolutely gorgeous lighthouses with tremendous scenic setting in the USA.

Friday, September 1

It was a beautiful day and we could see Mount Washington 74 miles away in New Hampshire. We had our first visitors about 10:00 am and they continued coming until after 4:00 pm. We had a quick tuna sandwich for lunch.

It was just another typical day on the rock with visitors and pretty weather. The forecast for the next few days is not looking good so a busy day like this will be good since we won't have anyone tomorrow if the forecasters are correct. One of the good things about being on this rock is the people we have met that visited the island. We were too tired to eat tonight and went to bed early.

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A PREVIOUS KEEPER FOUND

The Friends of Seguin is continually looking to fill in the gaps of the list of those who served on Seguin. Tom and Phyllis Bardsley of Silver Hill, Florida are the latest former keepers with whom we've had contact. Their son, Tim, and daughter-in-law Michelle, from Oakland, Maine were visiting the Maine Lighthouse Museum in Rockland. During a discussion with a docent they, mentioned that Tom Bardsley had served on Seguin. It was suggested they contact FOS and they did. The result was a very nice luncheon meeting with members of the Board. Tom, with additional comments from Phyllis, added to the picture of keeping the light on Seguin in 1949.

The meeting was taped for prosperity.

EXTRA EXTRA!!!!

On October 26, 2006 Friends of Seguin Island's Founder, Anne W. Webster made known her retirement decision to the Board of Directors. She is retiring as of December 31, 2006. Until January 15, 2007 Anne has volunteered to assist with the transition by training the administrative person in the office aspects of the organization. After that Anne is looking forward to enjoying life without obligations.

Anne has served the organization in many roles since founded in 1986. Anne was one of three incorporators and FOS's first President, then Vice-President, again President and most recently, Executive Director. Throughout wearing the different hats, Anne has been a constant in writing newsletters, press releases, coordinating the Annual Meetings and auctions, manning booths at fairs, and speaking to community groups.

Anne is Vice President of the American Lighthouse Coordinating Committee, a national voice for the lighthouse community.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Your membership expiration date is at the top of your mailing label on all mailings sent. Please check the date and if not current, please consider renewing. Membership categories and amounts are: Individual \$25.00, Family \$50.00, Best Friend \$100.00, Lightkeeper \$250.00; and Life Member \$1,000.00.

ENDOWMENT FUND

The Webster Endowment Fund balance has increased by \$4,950 since October 21, 2005 for a total of \$7,250 in the endowment fund. We welcome three new Life Members at \$1,000 each: Graham Newsom, Dick & Lois Rosenthal and Natalie Smith. Other than modest interest the remainder came from donations in memory of Sewall Webster and Nat Chandler. The goal with this fund is to ensure that years in the future there will be a sizable amount of interest to assist with the operating budget of the Friends of Seguin. As the fund was established, the conditions were that only interest can be used for expenses and the principal remains intact.

☺ HOLIDAY GIVING ☺

A **membership** in the Friends of Seguin Island is a perfect gift for those who relish Seguin and its history, but who currently are not members. Brighten-up your Christmas with a **Seguin ornament** by Springer's Jewelry. This limited edition, three dimensional artistic rendition of Seguin is in gold, white and red. The Artistic Ornament, about \$24.00 (tax included) ships for \$27.00 (\$3.00 post & pack). Rush to secure yours in Beth.

artistic rendition of Seguin is in gold, white and red is a true collector's item: \$21.00 (tax included) plus S/H of \$5.50 or call Barbara to arrange pick-up in Daul.



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