

# the FLA FLASH

A quarterly newsletter of the Florida Lighthouse Association, Inc.  
www.floralighthouses.org

## ANNUAL MEETING TO BE AT KEY WEST

### THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

It seems our work of saving Florida's Lighthouses has truly been critical this year. Without the FLA and all the letters that our members have written and the tremendous efforts of Commissioner Tom Garner, the Air Force probably would have gotten away with letting at least one of the Cape San Blas keeper's dwellings disappear. But, we were watching!

We have been more recently involved in trying to convince the U. S. Navy not to move the historic St. Johns River (Mayport) Lighthouse. It now appears that that situation is on the way to being properly resolved. Tim Harrison has published an article about it in the *Lighthouse Digest*, and Wayne Wheeler has assured me that there will be a large write up about the situation in the summer issue of *The Keeper's Log*. Things seem to be swinging our way on this issue, but let's keep the ball rolling, and please write to the people that were listed in the last *FLA FLASH*.

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Your letters REALLY do count! If you need a copy of the list, let me know. I will be glad to send you the list. (Call 904-761-1821, or e-mail me, Tom Taylor, at:

fla@ponceinlet.org.)

Now there appears to be an even greater crisis! We have just learned from GSA (General Services Administration, the government agency which disposes of excess property) that unless a Federal or state agency can use the excess property, a new Federal law requires that the property be auctioned off to the highest bidder. (The proceeds go for the restoration of the Everglades!) This means that four of our lighthouses - Cape St. George, Crooked River, Amelia Island, and Cape Canaveral, could conceivably be sold to private interests without the intervention of a non-profit organization being able to save it. All four lighthouses are either on the National Register of Historic Places or in a National Register Historic District.

There is some hope for Cape St. George which could be assigned to the local state wildlife refuge which already has all the land around the lighthouse property. But we have no assurance that the refuge manager would not tear down the lighthouse in order to make his island more naturally

pristine. Nor is there any assurance that the management of the Cape St. George Lighthouse would be transferred to John Lee's Cape St. George Lighthouse Society despite the more than \$200,000 they have put into the lighthouse to save it!

At Amelia Island, the Coast Guard wants to retain this as an active light, so the fear is not that it might be torn down, but still that private interests could intervene and keep this very historically important lighthouse closed to the public. Hal Belcher has approached the manager of the Fort Clinch State Park to see if that state agency might intervene to take the lighthouse for the public good, and there is a chance this might happen.

Cape Canaveral Lighthouse is probably the least threatened as it is already in transition to the Air Force as it sits in the middle of the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station and in the NASA Security Zone. You can be sure that no private interests could even get close to this lighthouse. However, we are still concerned about the continuance of the tower's maintenance and its eventual opening to the general public between rocket launches.

Undoubtedly the most endangered of the four lighthouses is

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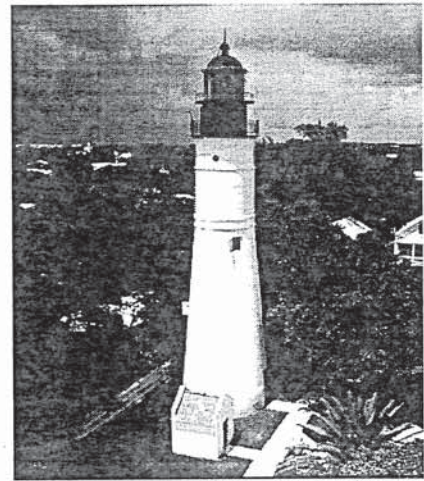
Crooked River. At this point, there is no Federal or state agency close enough to want to step in. From 1972 to 1982, the City of Carrabelle did have possession of the lighthouse, but they had to return it to the Coast Guard when they found they could not financially maintain it. *Oh*, if only they had it now with the enthusiasm which Barbara Revell's new Carrabelle Lighthouse Association could bring to its restoration and opening to the public! Somehow, we need to make sure that this can happen!

A real key to the economic rebirth of this section of the Panhandle through tourism is the restoration and opening of these lighthouses. Nowhere along so short a section of Florida's coast could so many lighthouses be seen and visited as in the area between St. Marks and St. Joe. We are doing our best to inform our state representatives and local officials that these lighthouses can be the "geese that lay the golden eggs" for this area. But the success of this effort requires that ALL of the lighthouses are saved and restored. With all the lighthouses restored and opened to the public, this could truly become the "Lighthouse Coast" of Florida.

As an insert to this newsletter is a listing of people that you can write to help us save these endangered lighthouses and set a precedent so that others are not lost in the coming years!

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!!!  
NUMBERS CAN WORK TO  
OUR ADVANTAGE!!  
"SAVE OUR  
LIGHTHOUSES!"**

**ANNUAL MEETING AT  
KEY WEST  
THURSDAY  
OCTOBER 14, 1999  
5:45 pm  
CASA MARINA RESORT**



*The Key West Lighthouse. (SkyShots)*

This year's Annual Meeting will be held in Key West as part of the National Lighthouse Conference. Because there will be SO many things going on and so many tours and activities, the FLA itself will be organizing nothing but our own meeting.

Our meeting will be held at 5:45 pm on Thursday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, in a meeting room at the Casa Marina Resort Complex, where the NLC will also be held. We are meeting at this time as Friday and Saturday will be filled with the special tours to Sand Key and the Dry Tortugas.

One of the most important issues we need to address at the Annual Meeting is the election of two new Vice-Presidents to succeed Cindi Para as Vice-President of Meetings and Special Events, and Kathy Fleming,

Vice-President of Fund Raising. Cindi has agreed to continue to work out the details of the January, 2000, meeting at the Sanibel Island Lighthouse, and Kathy will continue to work on the details for this year's Annual Appeal Campaign. The new candidates thus will have a chance to work with these experienced leaders in the positions for some time to see how this is all done. If you are interested in one of these officer positions, please contact Barbara McClure, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee at :

Barbara J. McClure  
2610 Via San Marino Court  
Merritt Island, FL 32953  
(407) 454-7400(w)/453-7202(h)  
e-mail: SuthrnLyte@aol.com

There is no charge for attending our meeting, and the National Lighthouse Conference is offering special rates for those FLA members who can participate in only a day or two of the events. We hope that everyone will be able to attend the full conference. A special mailing on the Conference will be sent to all our members in the near future.

Since a tour to the lighthouses of the Dry Tortugas was going to be made available to the participants of the Conference, the FLA decided to drop our plans to provide a similar trip. A day trip to the Dry Tortugas, with breakfast and lunch provided, and a 4-hour stop over at Fort Jefferson, is normally \$95 per person, and a tip for the boat crew is expected. The Conference is providing this tour for

our FLA members for \$60 per person, and a 2-day Conference pass for this and the tours of the Sand Key and Key West lighthouses will be available to FLA members for \$100. See further details in the NLC brochure which will be mailed to you shortly.

Although the FLA will not sponsor a luncheon with this Annual Meeting, a registration form is included so that we can have an idea of how many of our members plan on attending the various events of the National Lighthouse Conference.

### THE AMELIA ISLAND MEETING



The meeting and tours at the Amelia Island Lighthouse went very well. One hundred and fifteen people came, and because our attendance so much exceeded our expectations, we were changed at the last minute from a regular meeting room to the Recreation Center gymnasium. The speaking acoustics were not the best, and we apologize to those who could not hear some things as well as could be hoped.

Nevertheless, the meeting and Hal Belcher's slide program about the Amelia Island Lighthouse were well received, and

the meal that was catered was truly wonderful. Hal Belcher, Cindi Para, and Hal's assistants (including Jay Sintes and Hib Casselberry) are to be commended for all the hard work they did to bring this great event to fruition.

At the meeting, after the usual organization business reports, President Taylor reported on the status of the various lighthouse preservation movements we have been active in. Taylor was happy to report that BOTH Cape San Blas keeper's dwellings had been moved by Eglin Air Force Base, and we commend the Air Force and Col. Caravello for managing this important historic preservation effort. The Air Force will fully restore the better of the two homes, and we hope that they can at least do some weatherizing on the other, such as replacing the roof and waterproofing the old windows, etc., so that wind and rain will not further damage it.

At Cape St. George, John Lee and his crew of intrepid lighthouse salvers have begun to work the miracle: The Cape St. George Lighthouse is NO LONGER LEANING! Work is now beginning to build the new seawall and foundation to protect the lighthouse!

As the Coast Guard has somewhat stalled our plans for the restoration of the St. Marks Lighthouse, we were not able to go for a special category state grant for that project this year. However, we will continue to dedicate this year's Annual Appeal Campaign towards raising funds for the lighthouses's re-

storation. Tom Garner will attend a special meeting of the interested parties on August 3<sup>rd</sup> to begin the coordination of this project.

President Taylor was especially pleased to announce the formation of the new CARRABELLE LIGHTHOUSE ASSOCIATION and to introduce to the group BARBARA REVELL, the first President of this exciting new group.



*Barbara Revell and President Taylor*

The new group already has the endorsement of the local Chamber of Commerce, and it is hoped that they will be able to be top on the list when GSA hands over the lighthouse. The problem will be to get around the new law which gives the commercial, profit-making groups a better chance than formerly of getting the lighthouse. As this is the most endangered of the four lighthouses which GSA is giving away this year, we will be very actively working on this situation. We want to thank Barbara for all the work she has done in getting this new group formed and for driving all the way from Carrabelle to attend this meeting.

President Taylor announced that the major restoration projects at Ponce Inlet and Jupiter Inlet appear to be on track for

the coming winter. Jim Dunlap of Ponce Inlet provided details for the project at Ponce Inlet.

Hal Belcher, our host for this meeting, spoke about the situation at Amelia Island Lighthouse and requested people to show support for his group and their restoration and public opening of this lighthouse. As this, too, will be affected by the new law as applied by the GSA, we will also be lobbying hard on Hal's behalf.

Another critical issue is the one at the St. Johns River (Mayport) Lighthouse, where the Navy has seemed inclined to give the lighthouse to a group of businessmen who wish to move the lighthouse to a development they are planning. Andy Liliskis, President of the Mayport Lighthouse Association, spoke of this problem to us and asked for our continued support and letters to help keep the lighthouse on its historic location.



*Andy Liliskis addresses the members*

Since the meeting, Andy has reported that Jacksonville Mayor John DeLaney, one of the former major proponents of the move, has now decided that the lighthouse should be left on its original site. We hope that this philosophy will prevail with everyone else!

Taylor reported that our FLA website is now firmly operational at its new address:

*[www.floridalighthouses.org](http://www.floridalighthouses.org)*

This new name should make us more visible on the Internet and our site domain name easier to remember. Be sure to check us out!!

*The Florida Lighthouse Trail* book is coming along nicely with Elinor DeWire, Love Dean, Neil Hurley, and many of our own FLA experts writing on our lighthouses. Artist Paul Bradley is doing the maps and lighthouse sketches, and he brought a sample of a large map showing the State of Florida and the locations of its lighthouses to show as a sample. Taylor hopes to have a rough first-draft of the book ready to send to Pineapple Press in September, so that final touches can be worked up before the end of the year. Pineapple has the book scheduled for publication in 2000, and it should have a huge impact on the visitation of tourists and lighthouse buffs to our lighthouses and historic lighthouse sites.

Taylor also reported that the Daughters of the American Revolution might be interested in working with the FLA in obtaining the state highway historical markers for all those lighthouses which currently do not have any. Taylor will be talking with the DAR about this possibility, and also that of obtaining a state matching grant for this project.

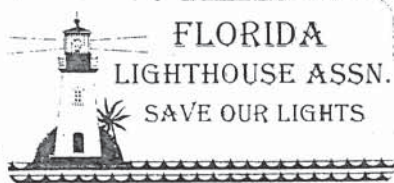
Executive Vice-President Richard Schulze then took center stage and unveiled the new FLA FRONT license plate the sale of

which will help us fund the \$60,000 which we need to go after the REAR license plate.



*Vice-President Rick Schultze unveils the new front license plate.*

The new front plates went on sale immediately, and our stock was nearly 1/3 sold out at this meeting alone. The plates sell for \$6 apiece (including tax) and will be available at the Key West meeting or by mail (add \$1.65 for postage) from our main office. Remember, we still need about 12,000 signatures on our petitions, so PLEASE help us out with this. If we could get a lighthouse specialty plate (and seven states now have them), we would have a major income with which we could truly do wonders for the preservation and interpretation of Florida's lighthouses. *Come on, folks, we need to get this project underway!!*



Cindi Para announced the coming meetings and special-events for the FLA. The Octo-



*Cindi Para announces the coming meetings.*

ber, Annual Meeting will be held in conjunction with the National Lighthouse Conference in Key West. The January, 2000, meeting will be at the Sanibel Lighthouse. In April, we will be meeting at the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse, where George Diller, our Treasurer, will reprise for us the wonderful experience that we had there two years ago. Andy Liliskis has invited us to hold our July, 2000, meeting at the St. Johns River Lighthouse in Mayport. The wonderful tour of the Panhandle lighthouses may also be held again next April!, so things look very exciting for the new year in terms of meeting venues and programs.



*Hal Belcher tells us the history of the Amelia Island Lighthouse.*

After the business meeting, Hal Belcher presented an excellent slide program about the history of the Amelia Island

Lighthouse, and he acquainted us with the wonders that we would see on the tours of the afternoon. Then came a magnificent spread to satisfy our appetites as the caterers played their role to perfection.



*LUNCH!*

The program and lunch were followed by tours to the Bosque Bello Cemetery where Helen O'Hagan Sintes, granddaughter of Principal Keeper Thomas Patrick O'Hagan and daughter of last civilian Keeper Thomas John O'Hagan escorted us around the graves of her family and regaled us with tales of their service at the lighthouse.



*Helen O'Hagan Sintes, daughter and granddaughter of lighthouse keepers at Amelia Island.*

Buried here also are Amos Latham, the Revolutionary War veteran who served as the first keeper, and several others, in-

cluding Edward Mordecai and Clarence and John Miles, African-Americans who served either at Amelia proper or the Amelia Island North Range Lighthouse. It was very special to have Helen tour us around this sacred ground, and we thank her for her very special contribution to this program.

Groups of us also went to explore the unknown ruins of the Willow Pond Range Beacon where the foundations for a skeletal-style tower and a roofless oil storage house still survive in a relatively jungle-like environment.



Hib Caselberry at the Willow Pond Range Light Oil Storage House.

Hal Belcher at the foundations for the skeletal tower of the Willow Pond Range Light.



Although right next to the road, these ruins are most likely never seen by the passing motorists! Also in this area which

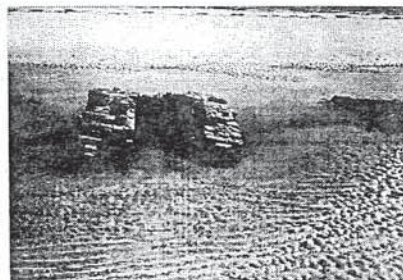
encompasses today's Fort Clinch State Park, is the site of the old Amelia Island North Range Lighthouse. The first lighthouse was built here in 1858 but was probably destroyed during the Civil War. A second lighthouse was built in 1872 and is seen in the photo below.



Amelia Island North Range Lighthouse



On the day of our visit, there were no remains visible of this lighthouse, but under the sand, there does lurk the remains of a fireplace.



Of course, the main focus of these tours was the Amelia Island Lighthouse, itself. Built in 1839, it is the oldest extant lighthouse in Florida. Its hand-hewn granite steps came from New England and were climbed by Keeper Amos Latham as early as 1820! As one of only two Winslow Lewis lighthouses to survive in Florida, this is truly a very special tower.

Then, as if this interesting and wonderful lighthouse is not enough, you should take a look at that lens!!! Although installed on October 24, 1903, this Barbier et Benard Third-Order, revolving lens is in absolutely *pristine*



condition! Since Barbier et Benard made lenses only from 1894 to 1901,

these are fairly rare, and this may be the best example of the breed left in the country!

Our many, MANY thanks go to Hal Belcher, Cindi Para, Helen and Frank Sintes, Richard Johnson, Hib Casselberry, and all those who made this trip truly extraordinary!

### THE KEY WEST LIGHTHOUSE

The first lighthouse at Key West was lighted on March 10, 1826. Its first keeper was Michael Mabrity who entertained John James Audubon here during the naturalist's visit to Key West. When Michael Mabrity died in 1832, his wife Barbara took over as Keeper of the Key West Lighthouse. She would serve in that position for 32 years, retiring at the age of 82, when she was encouraged to retire from her position by Federal officials, who felt she had made a pro-Confederate remark.

However, staunch Barbara Mabrity is one of the true legends of women lighthouse keepers. She has been remembered through a new Coast Guard buoy tender which has been named for her. Her granddaughter would marry a later keeper, and then succeed him as keeper. One of Barbara Mabrity's grandsons then succeeded his cousin as keeper. His wife later succeeded him. All in all, Barbara Mabrity and her grandchildren or their spouses kept the Key West Lighthouse for 82

of the 89 years it was a manned station!

Described by the local superintendent of lights as "unquestionably one of the best lights in the U. States," the first lighthouse tower was, however, destroyed by a hurricane in 1846. Recently, the foundations of this tower, which had long been



believed to have washed out to sea, were found on Whitehead Point. A special ceremony during the National Lighthouse Conference will commemorate this site and rededicate it.

A second lighthouse, the tower which is still standing today, was built further inland on a more sheltered hill, fifteen feet above sea level, about half way up Whitehead Street. This was the first lighthouse built within a city limits, and its thirteen whale oil lamps were first lighted on January 15, 1848. In

1858, a magnificent Henry Lepaute Third-Order lens would be installed which we believe serves in the tower to this day!

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were many changes at the Key West Lighthouse. It received a new lantern in 1873. In 1887, a new and still existing keeper's dwelling was constructed. The lamp was changed from lard oil to mineral oil (kerosene) in the late 1880's, and in 1891, an oil storage house was built. In 1895, because so many ship's captains complained that the light was too low and sometimes obscured by trees, the tower was extended twenty feet, and another new lantern was mounted on top. In 1898, the lighthouse witnessed the arrival of the Battleship *Maine* on its way to Havana Harbor and destiny.

Many important people visited Key West during this period, including Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase, Jefferson Davis, Ulysses S. Grant, General Philip Sheridan, President Grover Cleveland, Winslow Homer, Jack London, and Clara Barton. While there is no official record that any of these notables visited or climbed the lighthouse, they assuredly saw it during their stays, and it is highly likely that they did visit and maybe even climb it. The views of Key West from the top were legend, even then!

Hurricanes devastated Key West many times in the Twentieth Century, but the lighthouse endured them all. In 1908,

the old kerosene lamp was finally replaced with an incandescent oil vapor (I.O.V.) lamp.

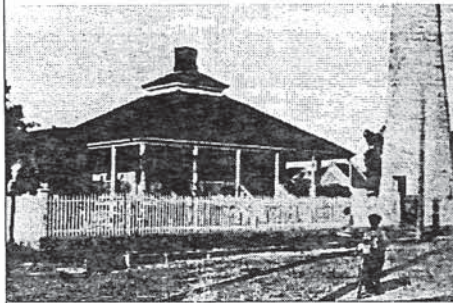
In 1915, the lighthouse was automated through the use of an acetylene gas system. The system used a "sun relay" which turned the gas on at sunset and off at sunrise. This particular device was developed by Thomas Edison and manufactured by his company. (An original of these "sun relays" is on display at the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Museum.) Later, Edison visited the lighthouse and declared his surprise that his acetylene system was being used in preference to his electric system. Partially due to Edison's comments, the lighthouse would be electrified in April, 1933, sixteen years after Edison's advise!

Throughout the Twentieth Century, the lighthouse continued to be a destination for visitors. These included William Jennings Bryan, Upton Sinclair, and President William Howard Taft, who came to Key West on the first train of the Overseas Railway in 1912. One man who came to visit decided to stay. He purchased a house across the street from the lighthouse where the beam would shine into his bedroom window. The new Key West resident was Ernest Hem-



mingway. Legend would later report that he did some of his writing under the Banyan tree next to the lighthouse tower.

In the 1930's, on the advise of aviators who used the Key West Lighthouse as an aviation landmark, the lighthouse was painted buff color with a green lantern. It was later decided that the new color scheme was no better than the original colors, and the old daymark colors were restored.



After the lighthouse was automated in 1915, the keepers' dwelling was no longer inhabited by keepers, but was used as housing for the superintendent of the Seventh Lighthouse District. This was William Demeritt, who came from a long line of lighthouse people. He would maintain and beautify the lighthouse grounds for many years. One of his most important moments came during the visit to Key West of President Franklin Roosevelt in 1939. Roosevelt had just announced that he would do away with the Lighthouse Service and merge its duties with the Coast Guard. Demeritt was very much against this idea, and when Roosevelt came visiting, Demeritt let him have it. This famous debate was featured in last year's PBS series on the *Le-*

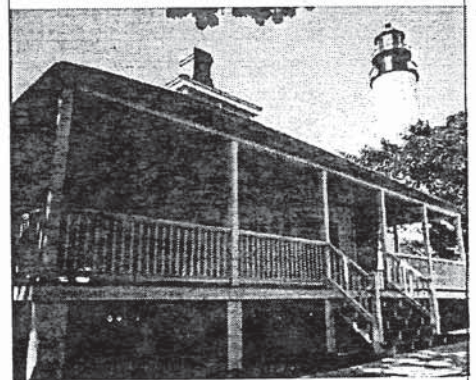
*gendary Lighthouses*. Unfortunately for the Lighthouse Service, Demeritt lost his debate.

In 1966, the Coast Guard gave up the old keepers' dwelling and turned it over to Monroe County to use as a museum. The county in turn leased the property to the Key West Art & Historical Society which developed a maritime and military museum in the old house.

The lighthouse was decommissioned in 1969, after 121 years of service, and the tower was also turned over to the Key West Art & Historical Society. Thanks to them, the tower and keepers' dwelling have been beautifully restored and are open to the public. The Key West Light Station is open today daily from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm. The admission is \$6.00. For more information, contact:

Key West Lighthouse Museum  
938 Whitehead Street  
Key West, FL 33040  
(305) 294-0012

More detailed information about the history of both of the Key West Lighthouses can be found in Tom Taylor's articles on them in the Spring and Summer, 1995, issues of *The Keeper's Log*.

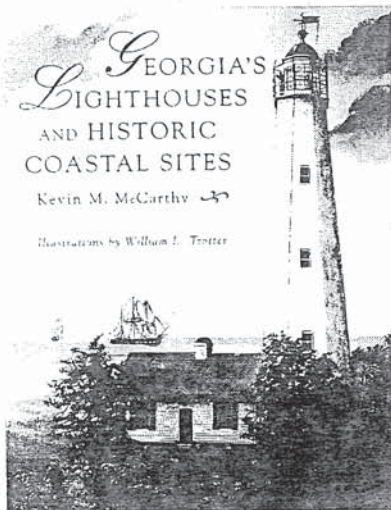




### FLA MEMBER WORKING ON NEW BOOK

Jim Miller, a new member of the FLA from Gulfport, Mississippi, is currently preparing a historical book which includes the lighthouses as well as other historical monuments of old West Florida. Jim reports that "This is a Tricentennial project which is being implemented in order to encourage more public support for such [preservation] efforts as well as serving as general public educational information." The book should be out very soon, and we will be very interested in seeing it.

### BOOK REVIEW



*Georgia's Lighthouses and Historic Coastal Sites* by Dr. Kevin M. McCarthy and illustrated by William L. Trotter, two members of the FLA, is another one of those books which should be in everyone's lighthouse library.

In the Introduction, McCarthy relates a short history of coastal Georgia and places the role of the lighthouses in that exciting history. Five historic lighthouses

– Cockspur Island, Tybee Island, Sapelo Island, St. Simons, and Little Cumberland Island – are highlighted in this book which also brings the intrigue of other important sites to our attention.

Three of Georgia's five lighthouses are now open to the public (a percentage which puts us here in Florida to shame), and Cockspur Island is open to people who can arrive by boat. Only Little Cumberland Island Lighthouse is absolutely closed to visitors. McCarthy's text is pleasing to read, and he seems to have researched his subject well. Bill Trotter's paintings, as always, are wonderful masterpieces.

### JUPITER'S GEORGE BLANCK

We have gotten word that George Blanck, administrator of the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse is recovering from his surgery. Things were a little more difficult than at first expected, so his recovery has been slower than we have prayed for. However, he is now on the mend, for which we are grateful. We hope to see George again at our meetings very soon. If you would like to send George a get-well card or an e-mail expressing your hope that he will be well soon, you can contact him at:

Mr. George R. Blanck  
6861 140<sup>th</sup> Lane, North  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418  
(407) 747-8380  
grblanck@msn.com  
GET WELL QUICK, GEORGE!

♣ DISTRICT NEWS ♣

DISTRICT 1: HIB CASSELBERRY

Everyone should know by now the struggles we are facing with regards to the preservation of the Amelia Island and St. Johns River (Mayport) lighthouses. It is essential that the FLA do everything in its power to help the local non-profit groups obtain these historic stations so that they can be restored and opened to the public. An insert in this newsletter will give you all the addresses of the people we need to contact to help influence the outcome on these towers. Please help us by writing some letters.

We are deeply grateful for the work and hospitality of Hal Belcher and his assistants in hosting the July Quarterly Meeting of the FLA at the Amelia Island Lighthouse.

At St. Augustine, Kathy Fleming is back at work after leave to give birth to twins in March. We are glad that she is feeling well and will be able to help us get the Annual Appeal Campaign underway this fall.

The Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse sponsored three special programs this summer, including the opening of a new exhibit featuring the original paintings from Roger Bansemmer's new book *Bansemmer's Book of Florida Lighthouses*. In July, Robert Muller, an FLA member from Long Island, NY, presented an excellent program about the lighthouses in his neck of the woods. It attracted a lot of Daytona Beach people from Long Island who wanted to see a little bit of "home." On August 7<sup>th</sup>, National Lighthouse Day, Dr. Kevin McCarthy returned

for his third summer with us to present a program of "The Lighthouses and Historic Coastal Sites of Georgia.". McCarthy will reprise his talk on Florida Lighthouses next year. These latter two programs netted the FLA donations of \$148.

The Cape Canaveral Lighthouse is in transition of ownership from the Coast Guard to the Canaveral Air Force Station. The Air Force hopes to make the lighthouse a stop on the NASA tours and eventually have the tower open on occasion to the public. Anna Bonner of the Daughters of the Confederacy and our own historian, Neil Hurley have been working to get the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse is slated to begin its major restoration project this fall and winter.

At Hillsboro Inlet, difficulties have arisen with the manufactured lens bearing, which replaced the mercury-based float. The metal has proved to be too soft, and the bearing's balls gouged irregularities in the race. Now, a high-strength commercial bearing is being considered, but its placement requires that the nine-foot vertical shaft of the lens be separated from a cast-iron horizontal plate on which the lens rests. This shaft has a tapered joint between the shaft and the plate which has been frozen in place for more than 90 years. More of this special procedure in the next newsletter. The Hillsboro Lighthouse

Preservation Society held their Annual Meeting on August 8<sup>th</sup> which included tours of the lighthouse for the members.

#### DISTRICT 2: JERRY WILKINSON

District 2 will be the site of the National Lighthouse Conference and the FLA's Annual Meeting in October. The NLC should bring a lot of national attention to the lighthouses in this FLA District. On your way down to the Conference, be sure to look for the Reef Lights, and bring along your telephoto lens. Fowey Rocks can be seen from Cape Florida on Key Biscayne (as many of us experienced at last January's meeting). There is no good land viewing spot for Carysfort Reef Lighthouse, but Alligator Reef Lighthouse can be seen from the bridge from Upper Matecumbe to Lower Matecumbe, and the Sombrero Reef Lighthouse can be seen from the east end of the Seven Mile Bridge just west of Marathon. American Shoal is a little harder to get a glimpse of, but it is off Sugarloaf Key. The Key West and Sand Key lighthouses will be toured as part of the Conference, and a special tour is being arranged for the Dry Tortugas through the Conference. This will be your best opportunity for seeing the lighthouses of the Florida Keys!

#### DISTRICT 3: RICHARD JOHNSON

Cindi Para is working with Jody Brown and Charles LeBuff on the details for our January, 2000, meeting on Sanibel Island. It should be a magnificent venue by which to bring in this new

special year.

Scott Keeler, a reporter for the *St. Petersburg Times* and out FLA watchdog for the Anclote Key Lighthouse, recently sent us this report:

Here is the very latest on the Anclote Key Lighthouse. Jeb Bush took the budget axe to the \$450,000 for the tower restoration. State Senator Jack Latvala (R), Palm Harbor, told the *St. Petersburg Times* he was unhappy by Bush's decision but would ask again in 2000 for the funds. "The lighthouse *will* be restored," said Latvala. Not all was lost, however . . . Bush did fund a new cement dock on Anclote Key to be built this summer . . . on the southern end . . . The dock will allow state ranger boats to service the island and light. Bush also funded a full time park ranger position for Anclote Key as well as a home for the ranger near the light. We believe this will be a double wide mobile home to start . . . with the construction of a stilted structure later on. So there you have it . . . We get a new dock, a full time ranger, and a new ranger home to start. The State wants to curb any vandalism and trespassing on the Anclote site. With all of the project money that got the axe this year, we'll take what we can get. It's a start! Larry McSparren told me he is very confident the State will fund the Anclote site over the next few years. The tower is in fairly good shape and there is much local public support to make it happen. The citizens' group formed by Chief Ranger Perry Smith is called the Gulf

Islands Alliance. The group meets once a month at Honeymoon Island.

Thanks . . . Scott Keeler

The Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge is once again holding an Open House at the Cedar Keys Lighthouse on Saturday and Sunday, October 16-17. Those of you NOT going to the Annual Meeting in Key West might want to consider this trip as an alternative. Also, those leaving Key West after Saturday's tour to the Dry Tortugas could still make a visit to cedar Keys on Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup>. The lighthouse is normally closed to the public except for this Annual Open House which occurs during the National Wildlife Refuge Week celebration. Staff from the Refuge and the University of Florida Marine Lab will be available for tours, and there will be wildlife exhibits. A boat is required to get to Seahorse Key. Visitors may use their own boat or you can go on a commercial tour. Last year, many of us used the Island Hopper tour boat. To make reservations, call (352) 543-5904. This year's Open House also coincides with the Annual Sea Food Festival in Cedar Key. For more information about this, call the Cedar Key Chamber of Commerce at (352) 543-5600.

#### DISTRICT 4: TOM GARNER

On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, Tom Garner made a complete survey of the lighthouses in his district and attended a meeting of the parties involved in the St. Marks Lighthouse restoration. Here is

his report:

**Cape San Blas:** the restoration is underway on the one keeper's quarters, while the other sits in disrepair. Charlotte Johnson is in contact with an aid to Congressman Boyd who has asked the St. Joseph Historical Society what it thinks should be done. I've encouraged them to request that the Air Force weather-in the other structure and put it on a permanent foundation.

**Cape St. George:** I met with John Lee for a little while. He says they are in the process of creating a foundation for the lighthouse. He has been in contact with Bobby Pickles in Rep. Boyd's office and has explained their situation to him. He seems to believe that no one would want to purchase Cape St. George, but the one person who we would most want to want the lighthouse in Woody Miley, the director of the preserve that the lighthouse is part of. Unfortunately, Miley wants the property but not the lighthouse.

**Crooked River:** I had lunch with Barbara Revell and Laurel Newman. Laurel is on the Carrabelle Lighthouse Association Board and ironically works for John Lee. Barbara has gotten resolutions in support of the lighthouse association from the City of Carrabelle and from Franklin County. Bobby Pickles met August 4<sup>th</sup> with several folks, including a county commissioner, city commissioner, city clerk, and the banker who is also the treasurer of the lighthouse association. The end result is that a special

meeting has been set by the City of Carrabelle on August 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm to discuss Crooked River Light Station.

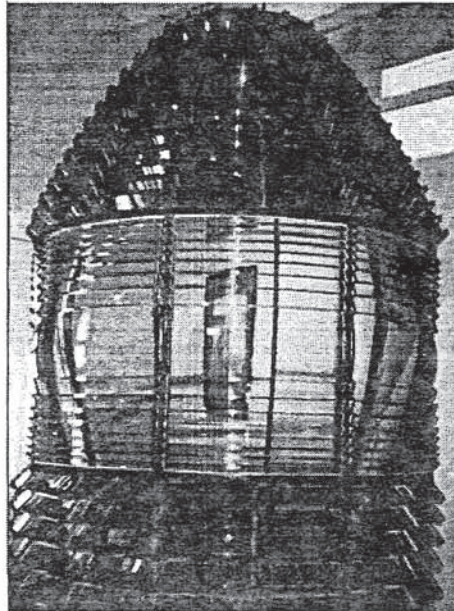
**St. Marks:** we had a good meeting that included Sandy Carter, Tom Hensler, James Burnett and representatives from the Wakulla County Chamber, Wakulla County Tourism Development Council, St. Marks Wildlife Refuge Association and CG Auxiliary. To be honest, I think everyone understands now that everyone wants and expects the Refuge to take over and operate the lighthouse. The immediate plan is to start a campaign to get the Coast Guard to cough up the \$150,000 they should have coughed up last year. After that: fund-raising!

**General Services Administration:** I've been contacted twice by Representative Fowler's office, and I've received a letter from Representative Dave Weldon from down at Canaveral. Fowler's office is in contact with Laura Yeager, and Weldon indicated that he has contacted GSA to get more information. I also received a letter from Wayne Wheeler who says not to get too "exercised" by all of this. He says that it takes a long time for this process to take place and that GSA must offer lights to Federal, State, etc. I wrote him back and explained some of the difficulties we see in this process. I appreciate Wayne's experience, but I don't think he appreciates the fact that if we don't get some folks lined up to accept these towers then they may very well be sold. I've also

spoken with Gail Fuller, CG Curator, who gave me the name of someone in the CG real property office who may be able to help us.



*Key West Lighthouse prior to 1886, showing the original dwelling which was pre-fabricated and brought down to Key West on the lightship Honey.*



*First-Order fixed, lens from the Sombrero Key Lighthouse, on display at the Key West Lighthouse Museum.*

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!**

We welcome the following New Members for the third quarter of 1999:

- Kathleen Arbuthnot, Elizabeth and Richard Boggs, Karla Brock and Peter Alvarez, John E. Brush, Denise Carr, Michael Clegg, Ann S. DeLoney, Don Francis, Nancy Graham, Tom and Ruth Hicks, Sandra Johnson, John Kling, John Leben, Joseph and Carol Lenahan, Andrew Marglin, Jim Miller, Robert and Joyce Noe, Rita Pence, Mary Ann Ruzecki, John and Nancy Sampson, Jay and Helen Sintes, Maxine J. Smith, Carol Summerville, Katherine Von Ahnen, Mr. and Mrs. John J. Wilkinson

FLORIDA LIGHTHOUSE ASSOCIATION  
4931 S. PENINSULA DRIVE  
PONCE INLET, FL 32127





FLORIDA LIGHTHOUSE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

CASA MARINA RESORT, KEY WEST, FLORIDA

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1999, 5:45 PM

The Annual Meeting of 1999 of the Florida Lighthouse Association will take place at the Casa Marina Resort, Key West, Florida, at 5:45 PM on Thursday, October 14, 1999, right after the conclusion of the National Lighthouse Conference. The need to fit our meeting in between the Conference and the scheduled tours on Friday and Saturday necessitated the holding of our meeting at this unusual time.

In order to better know how many of our membership will be attending the Conference and the related events, we ask that you please fill out the following form and mail it to Tom Taylor at the address at the bottom.

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FLA KEY WEST ANNUAL MEETING RESERVATION

OCTOBER 14, 1999

5:45 PM

CASA MARINA RESORT

(Reservation Deadline: Wednesday, October 6, 1999)

NAME(s) (please print) \_\_\_\_\_
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_
TELEPHONE: HOME ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ OFFICE ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

I (We) plan to attend the following events of the National Lighthouse Conference:

- The Entire Conference, Tuesday- Saturday, October 12-16th; Registration Fee: \$150\*
The FLA Annual Meeting, Thursday, October 14th, 5:45pm; NO CHARGE!!
The Tours of the Key West Lighthouse and Boat Tours to Sand Key Lighthouse ONLY, Friday, October15th, 1999; \$100 for both Friday and Saturday Tours\*
The Tour to the Dry Tortugas, Saturday, October 16, 1999; \$60 for this tour only\*

\* FOR REGISTRATIONS FOR THE CONFERENCE EVENTS AND TOURS, see the mailing which you will be receiving shortly from the NLC. Make checks out to The National Lighthouse Conference 1999, 3501 S. Roosevelt Blvd., Key West, FL 33040. Mail your reservations ASAP. Hope you all can come!!

MAIL THIS FORM TO TOM TAYLOR, 4931 S. PENINSULA DRIVE, PONCE INLET, FL 32127



# Florida Lighthouse Association, Inc.

4931 South Peninsula Drive; Ponce Inlet, Florida 32127

Phone:(904) 761-1821; Fax:(904) 761-1821

Website: <http://www.floridalighthouses.org> E-mail: [lfla@ponceinlet.org](mailto:lfla@ponceinlet.org)

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September, 1999

## ACTION NEEDED ON BEHALF OF ALL EXCESSED LIGHTHOUSES IN FLORIDA PARTICULARLY CAPE ST. GEORGE, CROOKED RIVER, AND AMELIA ISLAND

We have just learned from GSA (General Services Administration, the government agency which disposes of excess property) that unless a Federal or state agency can use the excess property, a new Federal law requires that the property be auctioned off to the highest bidder. (The proceeds go for the restoration of the Everglades!) This means that four of our lighthouses - Cape St. George, Crooked River, Amelia Island, and Cape Canaveral, could conceivably be sold to private interests this year without the intervention of a non-profit organization being able to save it. All four lighthouses are either on the National Register of Historic Places or in a National Register Historic District.

There is some hope for Cape St. George which could be assigned to the local state wildlife refuge which already has all the land around the lighthouse property. But we have no assurance that the refuge manager would not tear down the lighthouse in order to make his island more naturally pristine. Nor is there any assurance that the management of the Cape St. George Lighthouse would be transferred to John Lee's Cape St. George Lighthouse Society despite the more than \$200,000 they have put into the lighthouse to save it!

At Amelia Island, the Coast Guard wants to retain this as an active light, so the fear is not that it might be torn down, but still that private interests could intervene and keep this very historically important lighthouse closed to the public. Hal Belcher has approached the manager of the Fort Clinch State Park to see if that state agency might intervene to take the lighthouse for the public good, and there is a chance this might happen.

Cape Canaveral Lighthouse is probably the least threatened as it is already in transition to the Air Force as it sits in the middle of the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station and in the NASA Security Zone. You can be sure that no private interests could even get close to this lighthouse. However, we are still concerned about the continuance of the tower's maintenance and its eventual opening to the general public between rocket launches.

Undoubtedly the most endangered of the four lighthouses is Crooked River. At this point, there is no Federal or state agency close enough to want to step in. From 1972 to 1982, the City of Carrabelle did have possession of the lighthouse, but they had to return it to the Coast Guard when they found they could not financially maintain it. *Oh*, if only they had it now with the enthusiasm which Barbara Revell's new Carrabelle Lighthouse Association could bring to its restoration and opening to the public! Somehow, we need to make sure that this can happen!

A real key to the economic re-birth of this section of the Panhandle through tourism is the restoration and opening of these lighthouses. Nowhere along so short a section of Florida's coast could so many lighthouses be seen and visited as in the area between St. Marks and St. Joe. We are doing our best to inform our state representatives and local officials that these lighthouses can be the "geese that lay the golden eggs" for this area. But the success of this effort requires that ALL of the lighthouses are saved and restored. With all the lighthouses restored and opened to the public, this could truly become the "Lighthouse Coast" of Florida.

On the back is a listing of people that you can write to help us save these endangered lighthouses and set a precedent so that others are not lost in the coming years!

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!!! NUMBERS CAN WORK TO OUR ADVANTAGE!!!**

**"SAVE OUR LIGHTHOUSES!"**

UNITED STATES CONGRESS

Senator Bob Graham  
325 John Knox Road, Bldg. 600  
Tallahassee, FL 32303  
(850) 422-6100  
FAX (850) 422-0359

Senator Connie Mack  
1 San Jose Place, Suite 9  
Jacksonville, FL 32257  
(904) 268-7915

Representative Tillie Fowler  
4452 Hendricks Avenue  
Jacksonville, FL 32207  
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FAX (904) 367-0066

Representative Corrine Brown  
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ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Don L. Klima, Director  
Eastern Office of Review  
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation  
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Washington, DC 20004  
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NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

John Hildreth, Director  
Southern Regional Office  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
456 King Street  
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Office of Property Disposal  
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Rep. George Crady  
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Senator Richard Mitchell  
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George W. Percy, Director  
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Laura Kammerer  
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Florida Division of Historical Resources  
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NATIONAL MARITIME INITIATIVE

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National Maritime Initiative  
National Park Service (2280)  
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