

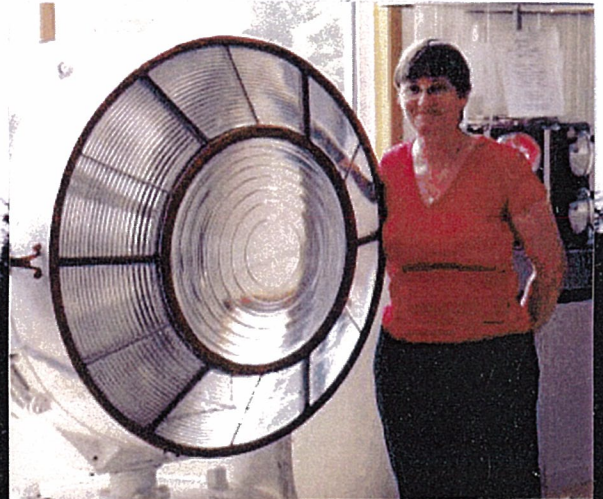


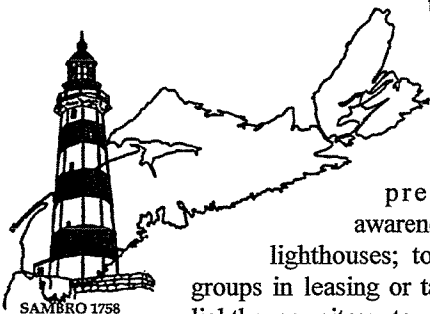
The Nova Scotia Lighthouse  
Preservation Society

THE

# Lightkeeper

Vol. 10 , No. 3, September/October 2003





The objectives of the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society are: To promote and support preservation and awareness of Nova Scotia lighthouses; to assist community groups in leasing or taking ownership of lighthouse sites; to provide access to written research and photographic documentation and to initiate oral history research, and to classify and monitor the status of historic lighthouse sites.

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## PROGRAMS

### Keeping Our Lights

#### *Weekend Workshops for Community Groups*

Saturday, Nov 8 and Sunday morning Nov 9 in Halifax.

Once again NSLPS is hosting a weekend get-together for people from communities running their lighthouses, or working to take over their lighthouses. Meet other lighthouse people and exchange experiences and tips. Find out about divestiture, liability insurance and more. Topics covered will be those suggested by community groups. NSLPS is aiming at a low registration fee and will offer billeting to make the workshop affordable. Information will be mailed to NSLPS Affiliates. NSLPS members and anyone interested in lighthouses are welcome, too. Call Dorothy MacLeod at 423-8034 after October 15 for more information.

### Build Point Prim lighthouse

Wednesday November 26,  
7:00 PM

Point Prim in your living room? How? In miniature, of course! Make a model of this historic lighthouse with attached dwelling which guarded the entrance to Digby

Gut from 1873 to 1964. This workshop is for adults. There will be a fee for the materials. Number of participants is extremely limited. To register, call Dorothy MacLeod at 423-8034 now.



## NEWS FROM THE BOARD

*Donna Merriam*

Completion or promotion of a number of vital activities have been the subjects of meetings of the NSLPS Board of Directors throughout the summer. Interest continues high on three fronts: support for community groups that are

preserving lighthouses across the province, development of tools and activities to attract visitors to lighthouse sites and ongoing networking with various levels of government in support of the preservation of Nova Scotia lights. Work is proceeding on ten lighthouses as community groups funded by the Kaplan Fund through NSLPS raise the matching funds and people-power to complete their repairs and improvements. Doug Bamford has visited sites to ensure repairs are underway and appropriate. In late October - early November the NSLPS will again host the community workshops that groups have found useful in the past. Active networking with community partners is planned in support of this workshop.

The funding application was submitted in June to the NS Department of Tourism and the federal Department of Heritage for the new website design. A third of the budget has been received from Tourism & Culture, which has enabled work to begin. Peter MacCulloch, Kathy Brown and Tony Thompson worked hard to write and submit the proposal describing the new website. Since September '99 the current website has attracted 61,897 page views, ( 40% Canada, 38% US ) indicating increasing interest and the need to have the new site up and running in the coming year. It promises to be very user-friendly and to provide for updates on existing content, as well as easy additions of new content. A standing committee of five has been established by the Board to oversee these developments and to create corporate funding activities to obtain needed matching funds.

The *Visit Our Lights Brochure* has been a success in its initial distribution of 5,000 copies. NSLPS partnered with the Atlantic Lighthouse Council on this project. The brochures have literally been going like hotcakes!

Trips to Queens, Halifax, Cumberland and Kings County lights this summer have all been small but successful. With the participation of a number of board members, Dorothy Macleod continues to organize schedules and registrations for NSLPS lighthouse tours.

One issue discussed this season with FHBRO has been an appeal of the ruling regarding heritage status for Seal Island.

Part of the appeal process undertaken by Dan Conlin, Chris Mills and Tony Thompson will focus on perceived flaws and means of improving the assessment process by FHBRO.

Autographed copies of Rip Irwin's excellent *Lighthouses and Lights of Nova Scotia* will be available from NSLPS by November 15<sup>th</sup> and will make great holiday gifts.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

### Canning

After being decommissioned in the 1930s, the Canning lighthouse saw life from the other side.... as a pig-pen and a tool shed on nearby farms. Partially demolished in the 1950s, it now looks forward to a brighter future as the Fieldwood Heritage Society plans to restore the small wooden tower (only a 13 foot-high portion of the structure remains) to its former glory.

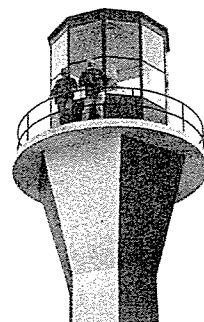
The Fieldwood people are now in the process of talking with the Northeast Kings Educational Centre, with a view to having students from the centre restore the tower. The Society hopes to have the work completed by spring 2004.

The Canning light is only original lighthouse remaining in King's County.

### Cape Forchu

As at many tourism sites this summer, visitor numbers were down at Nova Scotia's premiere lighthouse site this year. Friends of the Yarmouth Light Society president Adrienne Speck says despite fewer visitors, the Friends hired six regular staff to run the museum, tea room and to guide visitors. The group also hired an extra groundskeeper to help maintain the extensive property. There are now more picnic tables and benches on the property, and less mobile visitors now have a chance to get around the site in a golf cart!

The weather did not favour the Cape with postcard-perfect blue skies and puffy white tourist brochure clouds this summer – Adrienne says Yarmouthians endured 38 straight days of fog in July and August. Great fog horn weather, except for the fact that the Coast Guard silenced Cape Forchu's horns in 1998.



### Chebucto Head

The old keepers house/lighthouse at Chebucto Head is now one step closer to a brighter future. Representatives of DFO, the Chebucto Head Lighthouse Society, NSLPS, the Underwater Diving Council of Nova Scotia and the ALC met in the old house on September 15<sup>th</sup>. The ALC has offered to assist both the CHLS and the Underwater Council by leasing the structure from the feds and helping out initially with insurance.

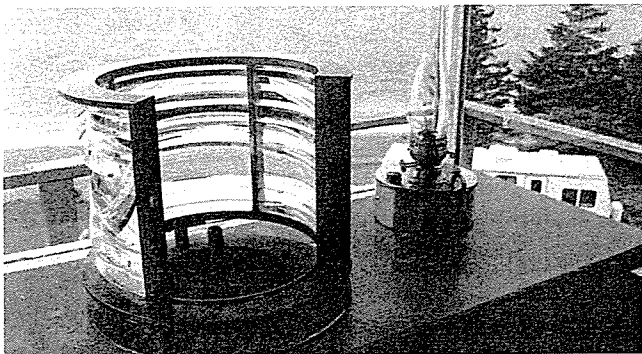
This is an excellent opportunity for our various groups to work together to save this important structure. The house has been targeted by assorted vandals this year – one of the doors on the adjacent garage has been ripped apart, and someone burned a car a few feet away from the lighthouse during the summer. The CHLS is now working on a business plan for

the site and will meet again with DFO and the ALC.

*Note: The double garage at Chebucto Head no longer exists, having fallen victim to Hurricane Juan on September 29. Parts of the structure now litter the barrens west of the station while the corpse of a defunct Volkswagen sits on the building's cement base.*

### **Coffin Island**

It has been a difficult summer for the folks trying to spruce up the province's fifth oldest lighthouse site. Although a work crew built a causeway across the head of the island's harbour and cleared out the trail through the woods to the lighthouse earlier in the summer, the Coffin Island Lighthouse Heritage Society was not able to secure any grants for work on the 90 year-old tower. Ken Wilkinson says the group looked to the Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps and the Region of Queens for help, but without any luck. Although the tower site is secure, Ken is concerned about deterioration around the lantern and interior ladders. He says the Coast Guard has been supportive of the work the group does, but says he wants to know the province's plans (or lack thereof) for the site, given that the feds want to divest some of the lighthouse property.



Five Islands original kerosene lamp, next to the current sixth order lens. *Barry MacDonald*

"We're dying on the vine while we're waiting for the province to come to grips with this," he says. The Coffin Island society has about a dozen active members.

### **Five Islands**

*Barry MacDonald*

On Sunday, August 24<sup>th</sup>, the Five Islands Lighthouse group celebrated their own "Lighthouse Day" opening with boat rides provided free of charge by Richard Lewis. The tour afforded people the opportunity to get some great photos of the lighthouse from the water. The festivities included bagpiping by Bob Durning and songs by Megan Patriquin and George Cooke. The event was well attended and all seemed to enjoy the tour of

the lighthouse which included access to the lantern and gallery. An additional bonus was the original double-wick oil lamp which was on loan for the occasion. Group volunteers were kept busy chatting with visitors and providing hot dogs and hamburgers from the barbeque. Organizer Gloria Lewis declared the day a success and plans to hold the event again next year.

### **Fort Point**

*Jill Cruikshank*

It has been a challenging summer to say the least, with two minor fires on the property (from carelessly discarded cigarette butts – no damage to the light, thank goodness) and a mysterious blight attacking all the shrubs and plants in the gardens. Visitor numbers to the end of August are down about 2,000 from last year, but visitors are still coming from all over the world. The exclusive Queens Lighthouse Pewter Ornament series has been very popular - as well as Fort Point, we now sell Coffin Island and Port Medway ornaments. Staff have been excellent again, with three new people trained this year. Visits were hosted from a group of Ontario press, the US Lighthouse Society, a number of Elderhostel groups and many other bus tour operators, who now make Fort Point a regular stopping place. Fort Point was filmed for a TV program on the Parliamentary (CPAC) channel, which featured a lighthouse success story (Fort Point), contrasted with a disaster story. The lighthouse will be open until October 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **Gilberts Cove**

*Gail Long*

The Gilbert's Cove lighthouse restoration project finally got underway September 2, 2003. Although the application for a matching grant from ACOA has not yet been approved, the contract was awarded to proceed with the exterior carpentry and masonry work due to the arrival of the fall season. The ACOA grant application recently passed the final hurdle when it was determined that a full environmental review would not be required. The application is now with the Minister and it is anticipated that a grant offer will be made soon so that the interior restoration work can proceed as well. Our visitors are down this year – by the end of September hopefully we'll have seen about 4,000 tourists, which will be down by about 1,500 from last season. All in all it was still a great season with a very successful annual family picnic. Our local crafts people did very well with their wares in our gift shop.

### **Hampton**

Louise Sanderson says the summer was relatively quiet, but steady at the Hampton Light. The tower now sports a fresh coat of paint and Sanderson says local volunteers will remove three spruce trees growing close to the tower, so that visitors

can better see the structure from the community wharf. Hampton folks have held a few fund raisers for the light this year, including a music night at the lighthouse, and a celebration of the tower's 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday. The United States Lighthouse Society also visited the light during its August tour of NS and PEI.

### Low Point

Progress on work at the vandalized keepers house at Low Point has been slow. The Sydney Harbour Fortification Society is working to preserve the site and make the house accessible to the public. The electrical system in house has been upgraded and a new furnace is on order. The group has also replaced some windows and installed new temporary shutters. The Low Point site has been vandalized repeatedly over the past decade. In early summer someone tried to burn both the house and the lighthouse, and smashed 17 lantern panes in the tower.

### Margaretsville

It may be the one of the only Nova Scotia lights to see a rise in visitors this year – John Freeman reports he's seen more tourists at the light this summer than over the past few years – including bus tours! John says the Coast Guard has placed the light on its "C" list, meaning that it *will* be retained as an active aid to navigation for the foreseeable future. As a result, the community cannot take over the light for the time being, although the Coast Guard has allowed a deck to be built around the base of the tower. John says with the CG's permission, Margaretsville volunteers plan to remove alders from around the tower and level some of the ground around the light.

### Port George

"The lighthouse is the focal point of our community," says Sheri Fritz, chair of the Port George District Lighthouse Society. Sheri says the light saw a lot of TLC this summer, including a complete re-shingling and three coats of paint. Workers also shored up the tower's supports, replaced the lantern deck and railings and installed a new walkway and railing to the entrance. Recently, the scouring tides of the Bay of Fundy had eaten the bank to within six feet of the lighthouse. When the Department of Highways offered to place some extra fill behind the lighthouse, Society members said "Yes please!" Last November a local contractor placed enough rock along the shoreline to stop the fill from washing away, and more rock will be placed this fall. The Port George lighthouse, although decommissioned in 1999, still shines by night. Congratulations to local residents who have worked so hard to keep their light in tip-top shape!

### Port Greville

The Age of Sail Heritage Centre's Ohra Collins says the Kaplan Fund was a great boost to the Port Greville lighthouse this year – rotten shingles and boards have been replaced, and priming began in early September. Ohra says visitors to the museum complex were down about 30 per cent this year. The museum closes the last Sunday in September.

### Port Medway

*Jill Cruikshank*

The Park has proven very popular with visitors and locals alike and there have been plenty of visitors (unfortunately no guest book to judge numbers). As well as Lights Along the Shore, the lighthouse was specially opened for a group of Nova Scotia Visitor Information staff and for a group of 43 from the United States Lighthouse Society. (Dan Sinclair of Port



Port Medway after Hurricane Juan. *Dan Sinclair*

Medway reports the USLHS group "showed a keen interest in success of the park and were very complimentary.") The community held a very successful Garden Party in the Park with proceeds going to the Port Medway Parents & Tots Group. A local entrepreneur has been selling hot dogs and refreshments to visitors and also providing information on the local area.

Although spared the brunt of Hurricane Juan on September 29, the Port Medway lighthouse park took a beating, with damage to the grounds, as heavy seas tossed chunks of the breakwater on to the landscaped park.

### Sandy Point

Bernice Goodick reports that SARS, Mad Cow Disease and other vagaries of the summer of 2003 have put a dent in the number of visitors to the Sandy Point lighthouse and community centre this year. Bad weather led to the rescheduling of Sandy Point's "Augusta Festiva" last month – the community held a children's parade, cakewalk, horseshoe games, variety show and pile sale – to support the lighthouse and community centre – in early September instead. Last year's walk-a-thon raised \$2,500, \$2,000 of which the community used to have the lighthouse painted. Bernice says the old wooden tower is in good shape, but has a small leak in the lantern deck. The cribwork supporting the tower also needs some new boards. The Sandy Point

Community Centre does not yet have ownership of this decommissioned lighthouse.

### **Seal Island Light Museum**

*Brenda Maxwell*

The museum was opened to visitors on June 1st. All floors were accessible to visitors. Visitor count was down for the season with July being the slowest month. Our plans are proceeding for repairs to the Museum. The applications for grants are almost ready for submission and we are holding out breath and hoping all will be accepted. Our last hurdle is to raise another \$5,000. We wrote to the local municipalities and town earlier this summer, asking for a commitment of funds. The Town of Clarks Harbour has responded with \$600. We are most pleased to hear from them and their interest in the museum. Fundraising is still ongoing with bake sales and raffle tickets. Barrington Municipal Council's plan to move the Seal Island light to its tourist centre (see June 2003 *Lightkeeper*) has been scrapped as too costly.

### **Stoddart Island**

DFO proposes to turn off the light at Stoddart Island ("Aggie's Light, featured in the Sept/Oct 2002 *Lightkeeper*") according to a recent issue of *Notices to Mariners*. Perhaps interested folks in the Shag Harbour area can rally to take over this light and run it as a private aid to navigation.

### **Terence Bay**

"Still waiting," reports Mary Thomas of the Terence Bay Lighthouse Committee – waiting, that is, for a resolution to issues with an adjacent landowner, and for the opportunity to assume responsibility for the lighthouse. Thomas says her group met with DFO last December to discuss these issues, but has had little information from DFO since then. Coast Guard has not yet divested the light.

Volunteers continue to keep the path to the tower clear and Thomas urges visitors to walk to the light, in keeping with the committee's goal of making the site accessible to the public. The Tenant Point light, as it is officially known, turned 100 this year. Thomas says more than 100 people turned up for a celebration at the light in June.

The lighthouse is now in desperate need of a good cleaning and a coat of paint. Thomas says ultimately she'd like to see a lantern re-installed on the tower, to replace the enclosure removed more than 20 years ago. This is a beautiful little light in a very scenic spot, and most worthy of the Terence Bay committee's plans for

### **Walton**

Visitors were down at the Walton light this year, but Reg Clark says volunteers and carpenters kept busy this summer, re-shingling the 1873 lighthouse and lantern. The Walton light group used money from the Kaplan Fund to replace two supports in the lantern, and to re-roof the lantern deck. Reg says future plans for the site include an extension to the site's gift shop.

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## **NEWS AND VIEWS**

### **Website Receives Grant**

*Kathy Brown*

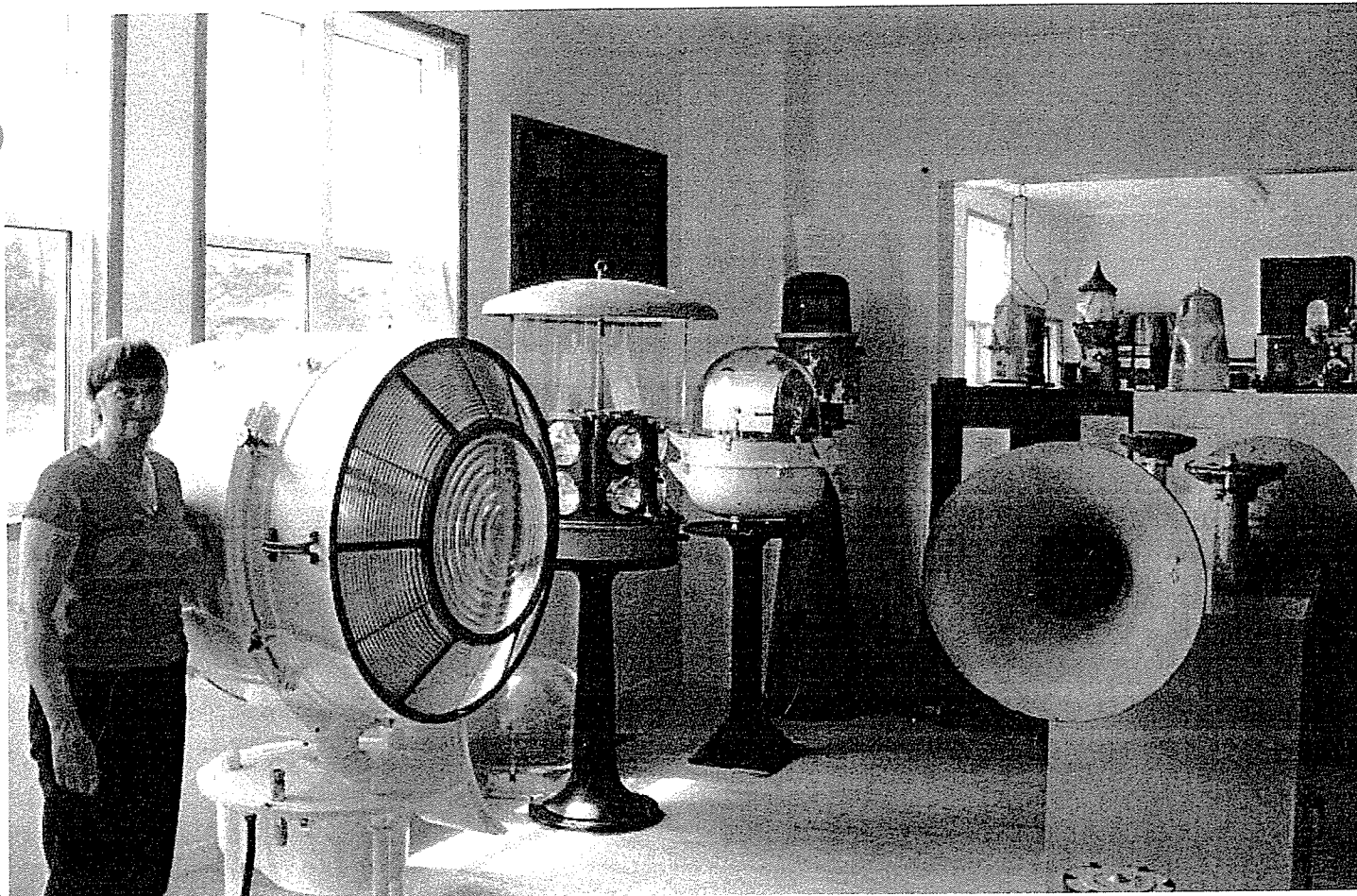
The current NSLPS website, begun in 1999, used the best available technology and was cutting edge at that time. Over the years it has grown without an overall plan. The lights included are entirely arbitrary, except for 15 which were designated the most important by board members. In addition, the World Wide Web has changed and expanded. New technology is available that makes sites easy to search and navigate. Our site is still good, but it is out of date.

For the past few months a committee has been developing a plan for a brand new, user-friendly, searchable website to showcase our lighthouses to the world. It will include 150 lights in the province plus many of the lost or discontinued lights. We'll also add location maps, oral history, more historic photographs, and technical data for every lighthouse. Visitors will be able to search by keywords, by technical data, by date, by distance from a major town or city, and more. The new site will be professionally built using the recently developed Active Server Page (ASP) technology that builds pages to the visitors demands. The new site will be one of the largest lighthouse sites on the Internet and we expect it to be the best.

One of the difficulties with the current website is keeping it current and adding new information. ASP technology uses templates rather than special software or HTML language to build pages. This means that volunteers can easily contribute items and help keep the site up to date.

Last spring we applied to the Tourism Opportunities Program 2003/04 of the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism and Culture, for funding. We have received a grant for \$7,420.00 towards this project. This amount must be matched from other sources and is about one third of the projected budget. The committee is actively seeking corporate partners and donations. Donors receive a charitable tax receipt and will be recognized on the "Partners" page.

NSLPS will also be applying for funds from the Department of Canadian Heritage. Members interested in further information about this important project can contact Kathy Brown at (902) 479-3115, or e-mail: [kathy@fromthesea.ca](mailto:kathy@fromthesea.ca).



Gloria MacQuarrie is a driving force behind the Out of the Fog lighthouse museum. Look at these lights and horns! *Barry MacDonald*

## OUT OF THE FOG MUSEUM NOW A REALITY!

*Barry MacDonald*

August 2, 2003 marked an important day for the preservation of Nova Scotia's rich lighthouse history, with the official opening of our province's first museum dedicated to the display of lighthouse artifacts. The occasion was well-attended by local politicians, media, former lightkeepers and their families, lighthouse enthusiasts, and many local residents, including a trawler captain who has been well-served by lighthouses over the years.

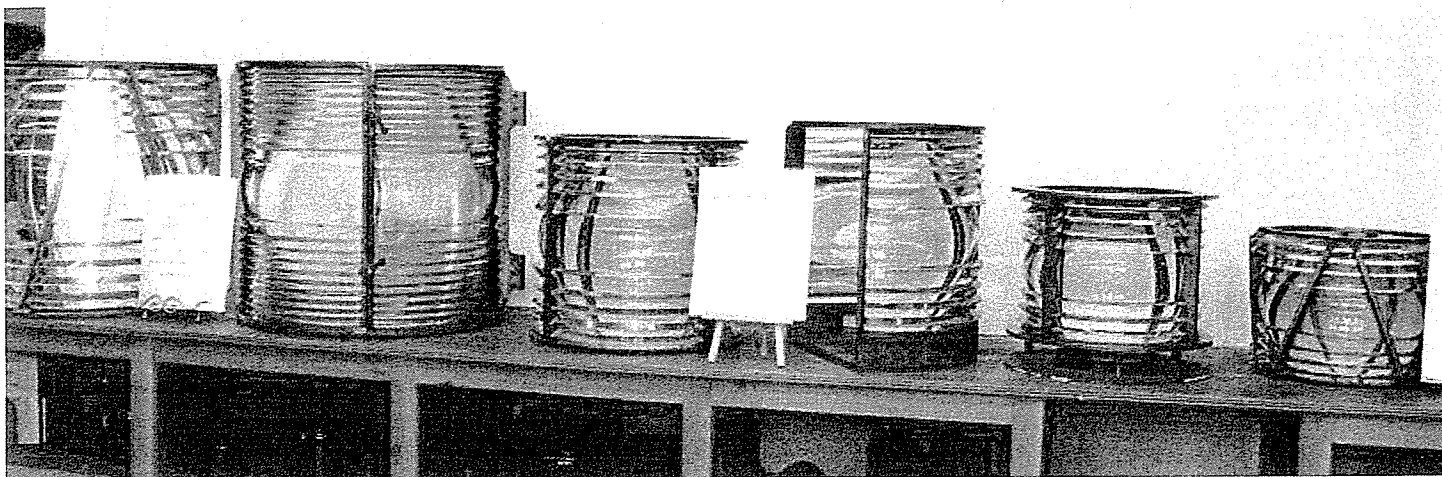
MLA Ron Chisholm, Guysborough County Warden Lloyd Hines, councillor Blair George, Canso Mayor Frank Fraser, lighthouse historian and author Rip Irwin (and a founding member of the NSLPS) and current NSLPS president Barry MacDonald gave congratulatory speeches. Master of ceremonies for the day was former lightkeeper John MacQuarrie. All joined in congratulating Keepers of the Beacons for their many hours of hard work and determination in getting the museum off the ground.

After the official ribbon-cutting ceremony,

musician Gertie Grant entertained the crowd with "The Lighthouse," a song written especially for the occasion. Gertie did an excellent job in both composing and



Warden Lloyd Hines and MLA Ron Chisholm cut the ribbon to open the Out of the Fog museum. *Barry MacDonald*



A veritable smorgasbord of lenses. *Barry MacDonald*

performing the number. After the ceremonies, everyone got a chance to chat and look at the many items on display at the museum.

There is indeed much to see at this museum! The range of items covers more than a century of lighthouse



technology and includes an impressive selection of Fresnel lenses, fog horns (hand horns, large Airchimes and diaphones), fog detectors, catoptric (reflector) apparati, DCB 10 and DCB 36 rotating beacons, and buoy lanterns ranging from compact 150 mm models, to the massive 500

mm AGA gas lantern.

Several newer-style lenses are on display as well, giving visitors a good sense of how much technology has changed the traditional aids to navigation business.

Keepers of the Beacons have given the museum a personal feel with a display of period clothing, lightkeepers' log books, personal items donated by former lightkeepers, and my favourite – a home-made school desk used by John Curtis MacQuarrie when he lived on White Head Island with his lightkeeping parents John and Gloria.



Gloria MacQuarrie, Barry MacDonald and Polly Gurney get ready to slice into a congratulatory cake donated by the NSLPS. *E.H. Irwin*

Included in this display is an audio tape of a very young John Curtis doing his lessons, with the sound of the fog horn in the background. Such was life for a lightkeeping family before total automation in the 1980s.

The Out of the Fog museum opening was an important day for lighthouse preservation, but it was equally as important for the people who put it all together. I personally followed the progress of this museum and I was constantly impressed with the enthusiasm and work shown by this small, dedicated group of volunteers. For

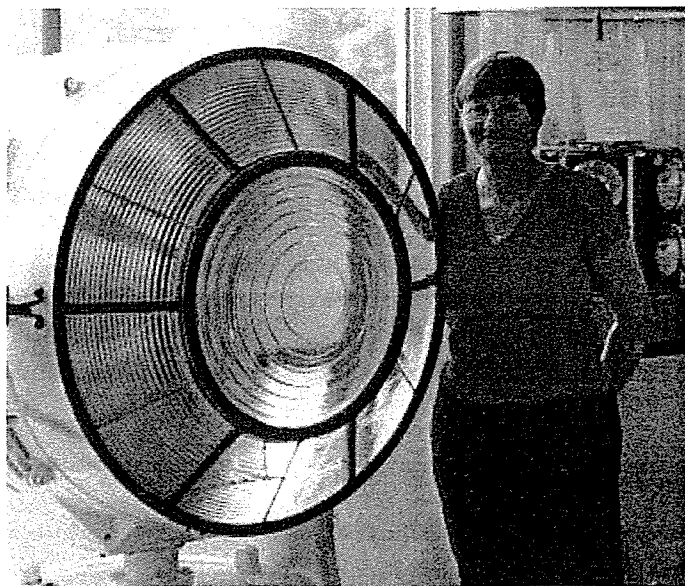


The Out of the Fog Museum with fibreglass light tower ready for installation. Inset: Light tower installed, with ML 300 lens. *Barry MacDonald*

example, it was no small job to round up the artifacts necessary to put a museum together. Volunteers made many calls, wrote letters and placed ads in newspapers.

Slowly, things started to happen and the Keepers received donations from across the country, south of the border and from down the road. The largest single donation came from the Canadian Coast Guard College in Sydney. The answered the call with a wide variety of artifacts that had been in storage for many years. These items are now

proudly displayed along with a thank you plaque which was presented on opening day. It is heartening to see the Coast Guard's support of a venture such as this. Keepers of the Beacons and all who helped make this museum a reality can indeed be proud of what they have



A True Lightkeeper: Gloria MacQuarrie. *Barry MacDonald*



John and Gloria MacQuarrie, Rip Irwin and Polly Gurney with a beautiful 500 mm AGA buoy lens. *Barry MacDonald*

accomplished. The NSLPS sees this as an excellent example of what a group of volunteers can do when given help and encouragement. We would also like to applaud the support of municipal and provincial governments. We wish the Keepers of the Beacons every success.

*The Out of the Fog Museum is located at Half Island Cove, along highway 16, between Guysborough and Canso. For information about hours of operation, call 902-747-3068.*



Point Prim in the 1950s. *Courtesy Valerie Mount*

## POINT PRIM MEMORIES

*Nancy Walker*

*Digby's Point Prim light is one of Nova Scotia's earliest – established in 1817 to guide shipping into the "gut" leading from the Bay of Fundy to Digby. The longest serving keeper was Captain William Ellis, who kept the light from 1876 to 1912. Descendent Nancy Walker, of Bella Vista, Arkansas describes her memories of summer visits to Point Prim in the 1940s.*

My grandmother was Mrs. William Ellis. She had been Elizabeth Turnbull until 1931 when she married William Ellis [not the Captain Ellis who kept the light] after the death of my natural grandfather. They were better known as Aunt Lizzie and Uncle Will to the residents and summer people of Bayview, and just Grammy and Grampy to me.

Their house was just a half mile up the dirt road from the Point Prim lighthouse and my happiest memories are of the summer vacations I spent there.

My parents would take me by car from Cranston, Rhode Island to Boston where I would meet my Aunt Miriam Turnbull. Aunt "Min" and I would then make the overnight bus trip to Saint John, New Brunswick in the early morning.

I would be in a fever pitch of excitement as we boarded the ferry *Princess Helene*, bound for Digby. During WW2 crossings we were made to wear a lifejacket and the *Princess* zig-zagged across the Bay of Fundy to avoid the dreaded German U-Boats.

If there was no fog I would keep a constant eye out for the first glimpse of Digby Gut. That small V-shaped opening would get larger and larger and finally I could spot Point Prim. When Frank Wilson would salute the ship with a foghorn blast I would puff up with pride and smile at all the passengers looking around to see the important person who warranted such a salute!

As we moved through the Gut my next landmark would be the Justice house (summer people from



William E. Ellis and his wife Elizabeth – Nancy Walker's grandparents. *Courtesy Nancy Walker*

Philadelphia) with an American flag draped over a balcony rail. Then came the lifesaving station, the Pines Hotel, the weirs, and finally the dock at Digby. My grandmother would be there along with Hart Hayden who owned a station wagon and was the Bayview 'cabbie'. As soon as we were on the lighthouse road the dust would billow from behind the station wagon, but I could smell the salt air, fish, the pines and spruce trees, flowers and I knew I was on the way to my vision of paradise.

After settling in at Grammy's my first destination was Point Prim. There was a whole gaggle of kids there, but they were all either older or much younger than my eleven or twelve, and after all, I was from the States, so we were not real good friends. I was so envious of them! They knew how to do the neatest stuff!

They could find what we called periwinkles in the rocks, build a small fire, cook them and then pick out the meat with some kind of pin and actually eat the stuff!! They were hugely enterprising and at low tide



Bricks from the wrecked *Donahoe* lie strewn below the Point Prim lighthouse, circa 1914. *Courtesy Nancy Walker*

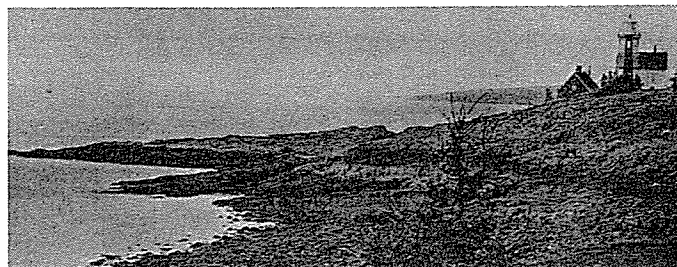
would gather the special seaweed known as dulce, dry it in small brown paper sacks and sell it to the tourists.

My crowning achievement of one summer was running to the point and back in my bare feet. That run was fraught with danger as I had to pass Joe Condon's farm, where his geese would chase me! I was terrified of them!

My lowliest achievement was on a last night visit to the lighthouse to say goodbye to "my" rocks. It was dark, "my" rocks were very slippery and of course the next thing I knew I was down and bleeding. The Wilsons called my grandmother (two longs and a short ring) and then I was on my way to the Digby doctor. I still have a scar over my left eye "in remembrance of things past".

The absolute best time was when word spread around Bayview of a good sunset. After supper a group of us, including a lady who was the registrar at Wellsley College, Johnny Rider and his sister, Guy Hayden, Gordon Ritcey, maybe Fern Adams, and myself would walk to Point Prim and wait in quiet contemplation and anticipation of that spectacular event.

On the way home I would hope that Guy would slip his hand in mine, that the fog would roll in, and that my sleep would be accompanied by the mournful sound of the Point Prim foghorn.





Cape d'Or. *Josette d'Entremont*

## TRIPS 2003

*Dorothy MacLeod*

From May until August, 59 lighthouse lovers enjoyed three land and one offshore trip to Nova Scotia's scenic lights, including Port Medway, Medway Head, Fort Point, Western Head, Bon Portage, Five Islands, Cape d'Or, Spenders Island, Port Greville, Horton Bluff, Canning and Black Rock. 35 hardy souls also spent September 13th viewing the lights of Halifax Harbour - Georges Island, Maughers Beach, Devils Island, Chebucto Head and Sambro Island.

Thanks is extended to the leaders of the various trips -Brenda Shannon, Janet McGinity, Kathy Brown, Tony Thompson and Dan Conlin. A special thank you goes to the community representatives who welcomed visitors and made the local lore of each lighthouse come alive.

## Parrsboro Shore Trip

*Josette d'Entremont*

On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, a group of 11 lighthouse enthusiasts met at Bass River. Despite a little rain we enjoyed a visit to the Bass River lighthouse on the shore of the Cobequid Bay,



Cape Sharp. *Josette d'Entremont*

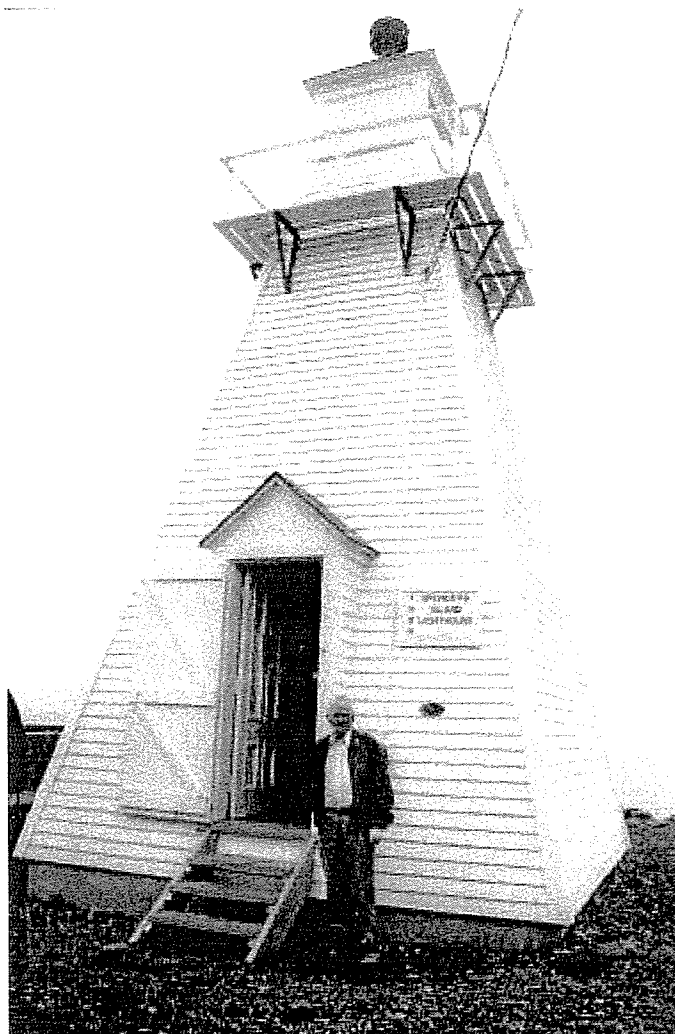
with its panoramic view of many miles of mud flats! We looked at the lighthouse (built 1907) from the beach area as it is now a private summer home.

The group then proceeded to the Five Island lighthouse at the Five Island Provincial Park and

Campground. From the top of the light there is a wonderful view of the legendary Glooscap's five islands. The tide was low at the time and there was still a drizzle falling, but it was well worth a climb to the top of the tower.

Our next stop was Parrsboro. The lighthouse there is a typical 1960s style, built to replace a skeleton tower that in turn replaced the original 1852 tower, when it was heavily damaged during a storm in the 1950s. The lighthouse is located across the harbour on a long breakwater/beach.

By mid-afternoon the rain had stopped and some



Author and historian Stanley Spicer at the Spencers Island lighthouse. *Josette d'Entremont*

of the group had continued along to Cape D'Or, but Tony and I felt adventurous and decided to find Cape Sharp lighthouse. A local gentleman pointed out the way, but warned us that the climb (20 minutes on foot) was a bit steep! The lighthouse overlooks the beautiful Minas Basin and we could see Cape Split in the distance. Well worth the hike!

By late afternoon, everybody had made it to Cape d'Or, with magnificent views of the turbulent Minas Channel. Unlike Cape Sharp, you can drive a twisted

gravel road to a parking area above the lightstation. Everybody got settled into their rooms at the lightkeepers house and then we went to the kitchen house where hosts Darcy and Jenna prepared us tasty meals for supper.

As the sun set I kept thinking what a beautiful place to be on such a fine evening. After a little stroll around the lightstation and watching the fall of the night we all settled in our bunks! At about one a.m. we were awakened by the fog horn (three blasts a minute 'till way past morning)! Despite the horn, I felt that it was all part of the mystical peacefulness one experiences at a lighthouse.

In the morning our next stop was the Port Greville light, which is part of the community-owned Age of Sail museum. The little pepperpot lighthouse (built 1908) has a very interesting story. When the shipyard in Port Greville closed in the mid 1970s, the Coast Guard moved the lighthouse to its college in Sydney, Cape Breton, where it was restored.

The folks from Port Greville decided they wanted their little light back at its home port, and eventually had it trucked back to the community. In Aug 1998 the light was officially opened at the Age of Sail complex.

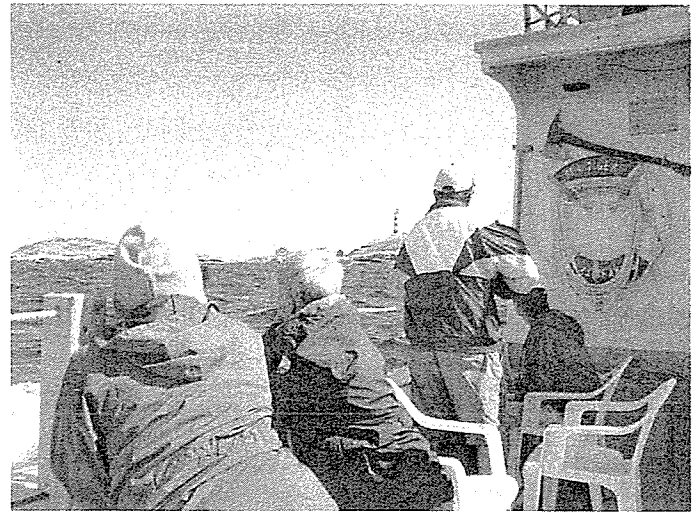
Our last lighthouse visit was at the Spencer Island Lighthouse. It overlooks the Minas Channel. Spencers Island is home to the famous brigantine *Mary Celeste*, found drifting and crewless 1872. Author and historian Stanley Spicer met us at the site to tell us about the history of the area.

After a nice lunch at the restaurant there, we all said our farewells and everybody went their separate ways. With its huge tides, the Parrsboro Shore is unique, mystical and well worth a visit!

### The Lights of Halifax Harbour

*Josette d'Entremont*

What a day! The weather was p-e-r-f-e-c-t, and 35 souls enjoyed six lighthouses (Maugher's Beach, Chebucto Head, an hour stopover at Sambro Island (the highlight!), Devils Island, Georges Island and the Saint Paul Southwest light at the Coast Guard base in Dartmouth.



Approaching Sambro Island. *Kathy Brown.*

We had a great boat ride on the *Sea Tiger* and Captain Ed was more than accommodating! We left from Purcells Cove at 10:00 and returned at 16:00, with sunny skies and NO fog! Despite the swells off Sambro Island, our skipper managed to dock the boat so we could enjoy and explore the beauty of Sambro Island.

Whether it was picnic-ing or snapping pictures or just plain 'taking it all in,' everybody's hour on that island went pretty fast! We all had picture-perfect views of all six lighthouses, plus commentary from Kathy Brown, George (our first mate!), Barry MacDonald, Dale (Matthews) Veinot (daughter of Georges Island lightkeeper Victor



Stalwart Sambro Island trip volunteers George Hebb, Kathy Brown, Nancy Eisener, Ashley Lohnes and Dorothy MacLeod. *Courtesy Kathy Brown*

Matthews – she lived on the island for 18 years), Jeanne Thomas, Dorothy MacLeod and other NSLPS folks helped out too – many thanks to them.

Captain Ed even gave us a nice tour of Halifax Harbour and the Naval Dockyard. There was a military training vessel from India ( a tall ship) that had just arrived and the port was busy with all kinds of different vessels. It couldn't have been more PERFECT! The only thing....more time on Sambro Island next time!

## CHEBUCTO HEAD VISITOR SURVEY

Lise Chapman

On Saturday, July 26, 2003, the Chebucto Head Lighthouse Society (CHLS) conducted a survey of visitors to Chebucto Head. We wanted to begin an investigation of the primary reasons for people to visit Chebucto Head, as well as inform the public about developments at the site and our involvement as a non-profit society. From a traffic count earlier in July, we already knew that between 200 and 500 cars per day drive up to Chebucto Head; a figure which must classify it as one of the most favoured spots on the Halifax peninsula.

We were especially lucky because the date we had selected was a glorious summer day and the weather made it easy to convince people to donate some of their time to answer our questions. Many society members helped with the survey, which turned it into a big success. We interviewed 50 visiting parties on that day – a total of 148 people – and came away with a somewhat better understanding of what motivates people to visit Chebucto Head and what they envisage the site to look like in the future. Apart from answers to our questions, we heard many personal stories and connections and always comments along the lines of: "What a beautiful spot – make sure it is protected for what it is!"

The vast majority of visitors (84%) came from NS, with more than 50% from Halifax, but we also had tourists from other parts of Canada, the US and the rest of the world. 98% of people arrived in cars (in groups of 3 on average), and a few individuals arrived on foot. 43% of visitors that day come to Chebucto Head at least once a month, 17% come once a year, and 20% were there for the first time. The natural setting of Chebucto Head Lighthouse is clearly the main attraction. 85% of respondents named either "the view,"

"the ocean," or "the natural environment," as their primary reason for a visit. Some had specific interests, such as fishing, climbing or walking, which they pursued around the site (11%), and 4% came specifically for the lighthouse. A fair number of interviewees named all of the above as motives for a visit to Chebucto Head.

In terms of changes that might be seen at Chebucto Head (during and after divestiture), we presented a selection of options, and asked people to rank them from 1-5, with 5 representing a highly desirable option, and 1

being an undesirable option. Most people thought that some changes were necessary at the site in order to preserve the lighthouse and especially the keeper's house, which has been vandalised and is gradually deteriorating. They also mentioned the poor state of the access road, which is in need of upgrading. Among alternative future uses of the keeper's house, a café, museum and an educational facility were the three favoured options (with average ranks of 3.9, 3.7 and 3.5). Among our remaining options for future uses (community facility, facility for cultural events, SCUBA diving base or a gift shop), a gift shop was ranked lowest (average rank of 2.5). However, most interviewees expressed serious concern about not changing the overall character and atmosphere of the site and preventing large-scale commercial



The rugged beauty of the Chebucto Head area. *Chris Mills*

development.

Whereas the majority of visitors interviewed strongly believed that public access to Chebucto Head should remain free of charge, many were willing to contribute by donation to the restoration and upkeep of the site on a regular basis.

We received serious encouragement to pursue our goals of saving the Chebucto Head Lighthouse site with all its present charm and beautiful scenery.

## LIGHTSHOP

**Help support the NSLPS!** Profits from these items go to the society to help save our historic lights. Perfect Christmas gifts for your lighthouse friends. *Please note: NSLPS now has Charitable Tax Status and an HST number. Because of this we must add tax to our prices.*

### NEW!

#### ***Lighthouses and Lights of Nova Scotia: A Complete Guide***

This very special book is written by Rip Irwin, one of the founders and the first president of the NSLPS. *Lighthouses and Lights* is the result of eighteen years of patient research. Beginning in 1985, Rip visited and photographed every lighthouse in the province and talked to lightkeepers. One of the keepers noted that if you heard a motor and saw a Zodiac coming out of the fog, you knew it was Rip Irwin!

The 183 page book features 164 lighthouses, all shown in living colour. It includes information, anecdotes, technical details, maps, historical photographs, access information and more. This book is a "must have." You can purchase it in two ways: You can have it sent to you immediately by NSLPS, or we can have a **signed copy** delivered to you after November 15, in time for Christmas giving. **Orders for signed copies must be placed by November 1st.**

#### **To order:**

The book is \$32.00 including tax.

#### **Book + packing and postage:**

For mailing in Nova Scotia: \$40.00

For mailing in Canada, outside Nova Scotia: \$43.00

For mailing to USA: \$45.00. Air mail to USA please add \$3.00

#### **NSLPS MEMBERSHIP PIN:**

Enhance your prestige with this oval pin, showing the NSLPS logo in red and gold on a dark blue background.

\$7.50 including packing and postage.

#### **SAMBRO LIGHTHOUSE PEWTER KEY CHAIN:**

A pewter oval with the famous 1758 lighthouse beautifully depicted with red bands.

\$16.00 including packing and postage.

#### **LIGHTHOUSE LOCATOR MAP**

Two copies of a map showing the location and accessibility of Nova Scotia lighthouses. One map is suitable for framing and the other can be folded to take along in your car or boat. Correlates with the book *Lighthouses and Lights of Nova Scotia*.

\$18.00 including packing and postage.

#### **Order from:**

Pam Tupper, 6051 St. Margarets Bay Rd., Head of St. Margaret's Bay, NS, B3A 2C5. Tel: 826-7550. e-mail: gannetrock@yahoo.ca

Orders must be pre-paid. Please make cheques payable to NSLPS.

## NEW BOOK

Look for William (Billy) Budge's *Memoirs of a Lightkeeper's Son: Life on Saint Paul Island*, published by Pottersfield Press in Lawrencetown, NS. An engaging and evocative look at life on this inhospitable rockpile in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence in the 1950s. 192 pp., b&w photos. To order, phone 1-800-646-2879

**Cover photo:** Out of the Fog lighthouse Museum in Guysborough County. **Barry MacDonald** **Back cover:** A Herring Gull surveys his domain from atop the Bon Portage Island lighthouse emergency light. **Chris Mills**

*The Lightkeeper* is published quarterly by THE NOVA SCOTIA LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION SOCIETY, c/o Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, 1675 Lower Water Street, Halifax., B3J 1S3 Editor: Chris Mills. Send items for publication to Editor *The Lightkeeper*, c/o Chris Mills, 1121 Ketch Harbour Road, Ketch Harbour, Nova Scotia B3V 1K7, or e-mail ketch@ns.sympatico.ca. **Deadline for December issue: November 15, 2003**

## NSLPS MEMBERSHIP FORM - January 1 - December 31, 2003

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_  
E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_ New ☐ Renewal ☐ Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Family/Group names for extra cards \_\_\_\_\_  
Single - \$15.00 Institution/Group - \$30.00 (4 cards) Patron - \$100.00  
Family - \$20.00 Sustaining - \$50.00 Foreign - \$15.00 U.S. Funds, or equivalent.  
Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Please make cheques payable to Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society  
Mail to: THE NOVA SCOTIA LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION SOCIETY  
c/o Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, 1675 Lower Water Street, Halifax, B3J 1S3

