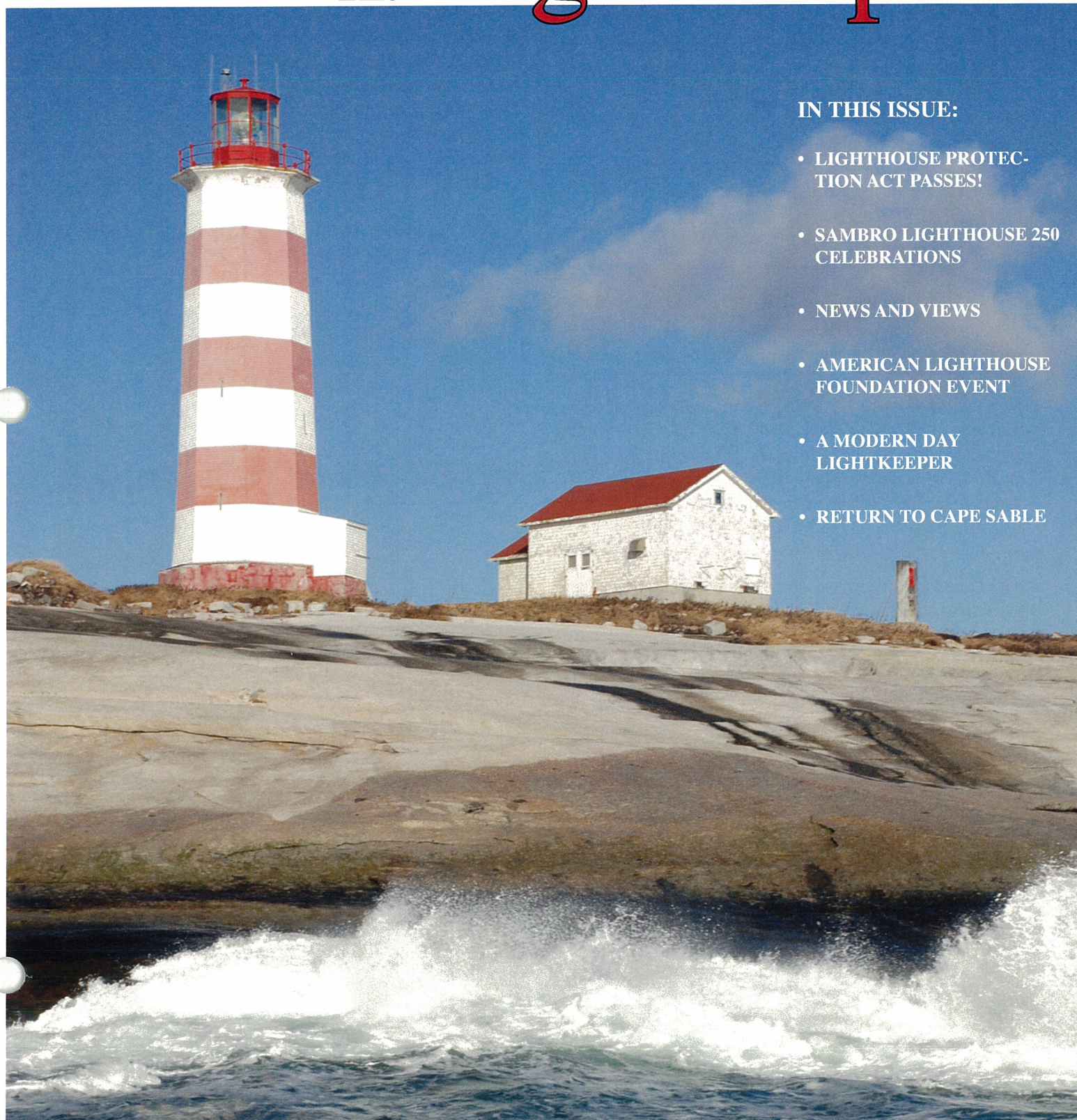


The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society  
Vol. 15, No. 2, June / July 2008

# The Lightkeeper<sup>TM</sup>

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The objectives of the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society are: to promote and to support the 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, to initiate oral history research and to classify and monitor the status of historic lighthouse sites.

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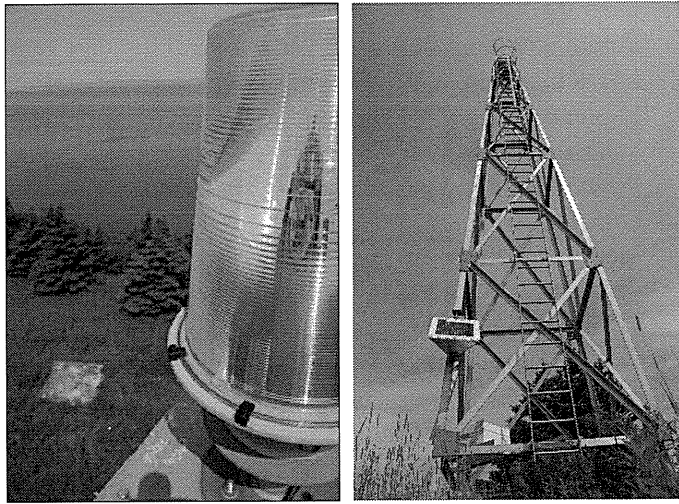
**Member-at-Large:** Andrew Powder

**Cover: THE SAMBRO ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE IS 250 YEARS OLD THIS YEAR.** CHRIS MILLS



## DO YOU RECOGNIZE THIS LIGHT?

*Last issue's mystery light was a stumper. Although we had a few guesses, no one knew exactly where this light was, although Jim Schlechta was correct in guessing that it was a Cape Breton lighthouse. The photo shows the northeast light on Scatarie Island, possibly taken in the 1940s. The current tower on the station was built in 1981 and the last keepers left in 1987.*



**T**his is the June/July Mystery Light. Send your guesses to: The Editor, *The Lightkeeper*, c/o Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, 1675 Lower Water Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 1S3, or e-mail Chris Mills at [ketch1@eastlink.ca](mailto:ketch1@eastlink.ca)

## From the Editor

2008 has so far been a very exciting year for the NSLPS, and for lighthouse preservation efforts across Canada. In May, after a decade-long battle, Canada finally got a lighthouse protection act. Bill S-215 will ensure a framework for groups across the country as they strive to preserve and protect community lights, whether they be on isolated island or “downtown”.

2008 also marks a very important milestone in North American lighthouse history. The Sambro Island lighthouse is 250 years old this year. The light’s birthday also coincides with Democracy 250 celebrations being held in Nova Scotia, to mark the birth of parliamentary democracy in Canada.

It’s been an up and down period for Sambro Island, with the continuing deterioration of the station site, and the removal of the fog horn last October. Fortunately, user pressure resulted in an about-face by Coast Guard, with the installation of a new fog horn as part of the solarization of the lightstation this spring. North America’s oldest operational lighthouse now has some of the latest in lighthouse technology, with a high powered rotating acrylic Fresnel lens and a battery-operated fog horn.

Elsewhere in the province, the Coast Guard has begun remediating various lighthouse sites up for divestiture. The work includes environmental clean-ups and paint jobs, before lights are handed over to community groups. The Bear River and Mabou lighthouses are prime examples of this initiative, as you’ll see in this issue of *The Lightkeeper*.

The year is only half over, so stay tuned for more exciting developments in the journey of lighthouse preservation! *Chris Mills*

## A MILESTONE FOR CANADA’S LIGHTHOUSES

*Barry MacDonald*



MPs GERALD KEDDY AND LARRY MILLER LOOK OVER PROTECTION ACT DOCUMENTS WITH NSLPS PRESIDENT BARRY MACDONALD IN OTTAWA. *BARRY MACDONALD*

**M**ay 29, 2008 marked an important day for lighthouse preservationists in Canada when the long-awaited Bill S-215 (an Act to protect Heritage Lighthouses) was given Royal Assent by the Governor General. This historic event marked the end of a nine year struggle that began in Nova Scotia in late 1998. Up to now, the only heritage protection afforded Canadian lighthouses was through FHBRO (Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office). This “policy only” means of designating federal heritage buildings had no provisions for enforcement – hence, maintenance of buildings under the FHBRO umbrella was left to the conscience (and budget) of the custodial department.

Shrinking budgets within the Canadian Coast Guard over the past couple of decades have meant limited or no lighthouse maintenance and when asked why they were not living up to FHBRO policy, Coast Guard’s response was quick: “We have no mandate for heritage, only marine safety. Talk to FHBRO.” Given the deteriorating state of many of our lighthouses, we knew it was time to act.

In late 1998, a small group of concerned individuals formed the “Lighthouse Protection Act Committee” which put together an action plan. By March 1999, the committee had assembled a package consisting of a Statement of Principles, a document pointing to the reasons why Canada needed a lighthouse protection act and photos of some of our most-endangered lighthouses.

This “package” was then sent to every Member of Parliament and Senator in Canada. In February 2000,

(the late) Senator Michael Forrestall presented our committee with a draft of Bill S-21, "An Act to protect Heritage Lighthouses". Bill S-21 was introduced in the Senate of Canada and received first reading on April 12, 2000. Senator Forrestall was soon joined in his efforts by Senator Pat Carney, who had long been a champion of all things maritime on Canada's west coast.

A combination of federal elections and dissolution of sessions of Parliament saw this legislation die on the Order Paper SIX times before its recent passage into law. It is rare for legislation to last this long in the Canadian parliamentary system and its passage speaks volumes to the tenacity of all those involved in the process.

Hats off to now retired Senator Pat Carney, who continued the crusade after the death of Senator Michael Forrestall and who made it her last order of business in the Senate of Canada. Thanks as well to Senator Lowell Murray who guided the bill through the senate, following Senator Carney's retirement. Also on the political side, we owe debts of gratitude to MP Gerald Keddy, who carried the bill in the House of Commons on a couple of occasions; MP Peter Stoffer, who was a consistent, strong supporter, and MP Larry Miller, who carried the bill for the last time and contributed much towards its success.

The work and dedication of the Heritage Canada Foundation was also integral to the success of Bill S-215. Executive Director Natalie Bull, Communications Director Carolyn Quinn and Policy Advisor Chris Wiebe worked tirelessly, providing much-needed expertise.

The new Act to Protect Heritage Lighthouses:

- Provides a means for the selection and designation of federal heritage lighthouses;
- Prevents the unauthorized alteration of federal heritage lighthouses;
- Requires that designated federal heritage lighthouses be maintained in a manner consistent with accepted conservation standards;
- Facilitates the sale or transfer of federal heritage light houses in order to ensure the lighthouses' public purpose.

Significant features of the legislation:

- Increased protection of the heritage lighthouses under federal stewardship.
- A clear process for the identification, maintenance and divestiture of federal heritage lighthouses.
- New mechanisms for public involvement in the protection of federally owned lighthouses:
- Public nominations of lighthouses to be considered for heritage designation;
- Public consultation before alterations are made to heritage lighthouses;
- Public notice of lighthouses considered surplus to the

federal government;

- Public notice of the transfer of a federal heritage light house to a community group or municipality;
- Public meeting if a lighthouse is considered for sale to a private owner;
- Public notice and public meeting if a lighthouse is to be demolished.

The next phase towards enactment of Bill S-215 is the establishment of criteria for the legislation, as well as development of the process to be followed by interested groups in applying for inclusion under the bill. This work is being done by the office of the Minister of the Environment, which will administer the bill. So far, a time-line has not been established for completion of this work.

One very positive aspect of all that has happened so far is the spirit of cooperation which exists between government and non-government organizations. Testimony given before the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans was requested and provided from lighthouse and heritage groups from all across Canada.

This resulted in our law-makers coming away with a truer sense of how much our lighthouses mean to Canadians. As one seasoned politician recently told me... "while it takes the work of politicians and bureaucrats to put the legislation in place, it is people in the grassroots movement who really deserve the credit for this bill" Indeed, it is the work of many volunteers which not only inspired this legislation, but kept the ball rolling, despite many set-backs and disappointments along the way.

I want to thank everyone who worked on and supported this initiative and while it is we who reap the immediate rewards, it will be our grand-kids and their grand-kids who will continue to enjoy these historic beacons, as a result of our work. BRAVO, everyone!

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## Royal Assent

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that the following communication had been received:

RIDEAU HALL

May 29, 2008

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Honourable Marie Deschamps, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada, in her capacity as Deputy of the Governor General, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bills listed in the Schedule to this letter on the 29th day of May, 2008, at 2:38 p.m.

Yours sincerely,

Eileen Boyd



For the Secretary to the Governor General  
The Honourable The Speaker of the House of Commons  
Ottawa

**Bills assented to Thursday, May 29, 2008:**  
**An Act to protect heritage lighthouses (Bill S-215, Chapter 16, 2008)**

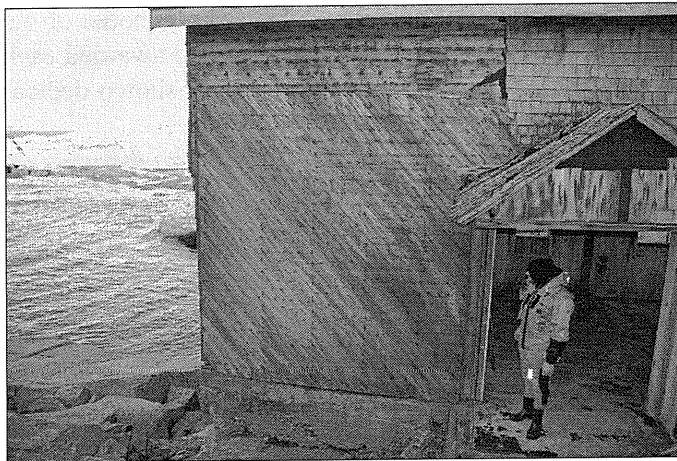
An Act respecting the provision of official development assistance abroad (Bill C-293, Chapter 17, 2008)

An Act to amend the Criminal Code (criminal procedure, language of the accused, sentencing and other amendments) (Bill C-13, Chapter 18, 2008)

An Act to establish a Ukrainian Famine and Genocide ("Holodomor") Memorial Day and to recognize the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-33 as an act of genocide (Bill C-459, Chapter 19, 2008)  
(1510)

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## **Bill S-215, Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act**



THE SAMBRO ISLAND GAS HOUSE IS IN DEPERATE NEED OF STABILIZATION AND RESTORATION. *CHRIS MILLS*

### **The new Act to Protect Heritage Lighthouses**

Provides a means for the selection and designation of federal heritage lighthouses

Prevents the unauthorized alteration of federal heritage lighthouses

Requires that designated federal heritage lighthouses be maintained in a manner consistent with accepted conservation standards

Facilitates the sale or transfer of federal heritage lighthouses in order to ensure their public purpose.

### **What Happens Next:**

2008 – Bill received Royal Assent on May 29

The legislation will come into force in two years in order to enable Parks Canada to develop the criteria for

heritage designation, with the assistance of an advisory council, for approval of the Minister of the Environment.

Communities will have a further two years to petition the Minister for heritage designation and to propose community uses for any building surplus to DFO operational requirements.

### **Timetable for the implementation of the legislation:**

2010 – Coming into Force of legislation

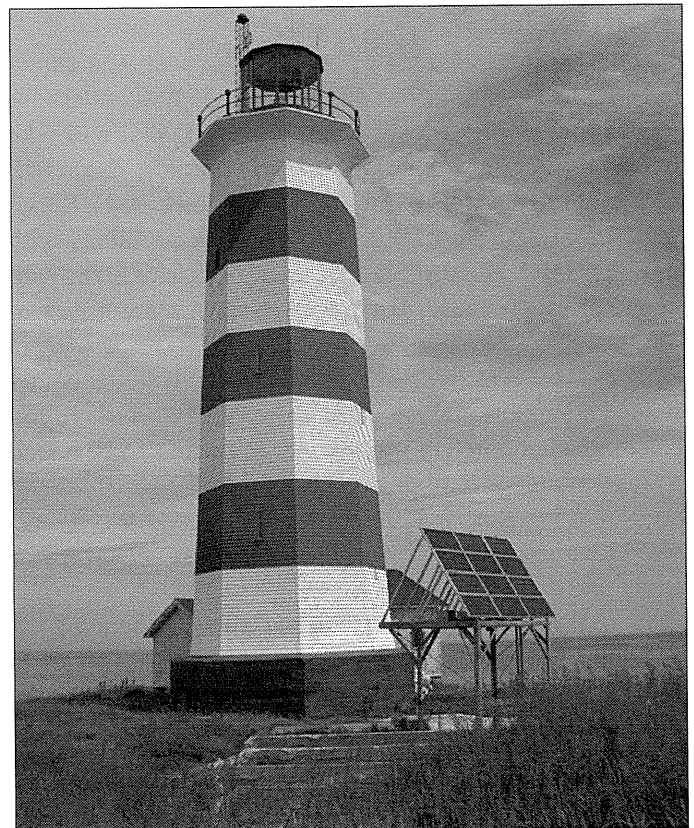
2010-2012 – Nominations of heritage lighthouses for designation to the Minister of the Environment must be received

List of surplus lighthouses must be posted by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans

2012-2015 – The Minister of the Environment must publish list of designated lighthouses and those denied designation

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## **SAMBRO ISLAND CELEBRATIONS!**



SAMBRO ISLAND'S FRESHLY PAINTED LIGHTHOUSE IN JULY. *BARRY MACDONALD*

**M**ark your calendar for August 15-17, 2008 for exciting events in Sambro! Members of the of the Mainland South Heritage Society, the Nova

Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society, St. James United Church, Harbour Mates Dory Club, and the community at large are hard at work getting ready to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Sambro Island Lighthouse. The event is a weekend-long festival celebrating our famous beacon. While plans are still in the works, watch for an event website to be launched at: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nsmshs/Sambro250-1.htm>

The weekend will start off with a community ball game on Friday evening followed by Local Ghost Stories and Folklore presented by Clary Croft and Janet Kidston. Saturday starts off with a local parade. Following the parade, the family fun begins with carnival type games and concessions. For the adults, there will be a washer toss tournament and a beer tent with local entertainment. Dory races will take place in Sambro Harbour. Over at Crystal Crescent Beach, members of the Halifax Amateur Radio Club will be talking with other HAM radio operators around the world all afternoon in honour of International Lighthouse and Lightship Weekend.

**Sambro Island will be open to the public for guided tours between 10 am and 4 pm, leaving from the Harbour Authority wharf (the former government wharf) in Sambro.**

St. James United Church will be hosting a chowder supper from 4-6 pm. An adult dance with entertainment provided by a local band, Payday Poets, will take place Saturday evening. On Sunday morning, there will be a fishermen's style church service followed by a Blessing of the Fleet at 12:00 noon. The fun continues with a rubber duck race on Sunday afternoon. The finale will be a closing fireworks display at Crystal Crescent Beach/Pennant Point Park.

An event this large needs lots of volunteers and financial support and we can't do it without you! If you can lend a hand in any way, please contact us to be added to our volunteer list. Or, if you would like to become a corporate sponsor, or a private donor of goods or services, we'd love to hear from you. Please help us celebrate our Light and do her proud!

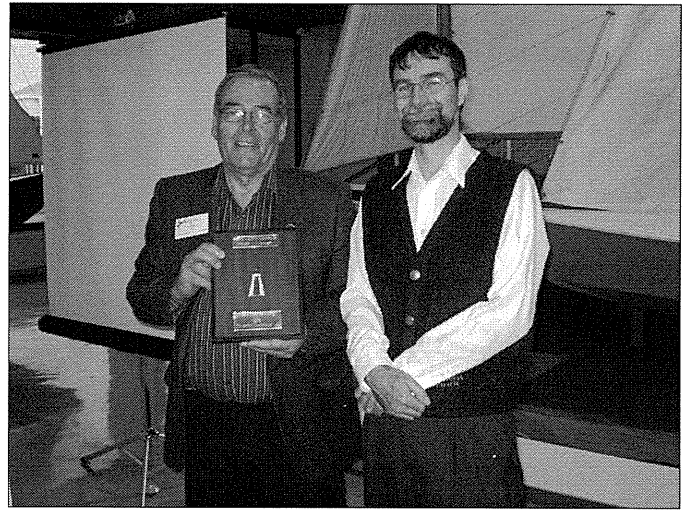
Please contact Leslie Harnish, President of the Mainland South Heritage Society at [harnish@hfx.east-link.ca](mailto:harnish@hfx.east-link.ca) or 902-868-2553.

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## NEWS AND VIEWS

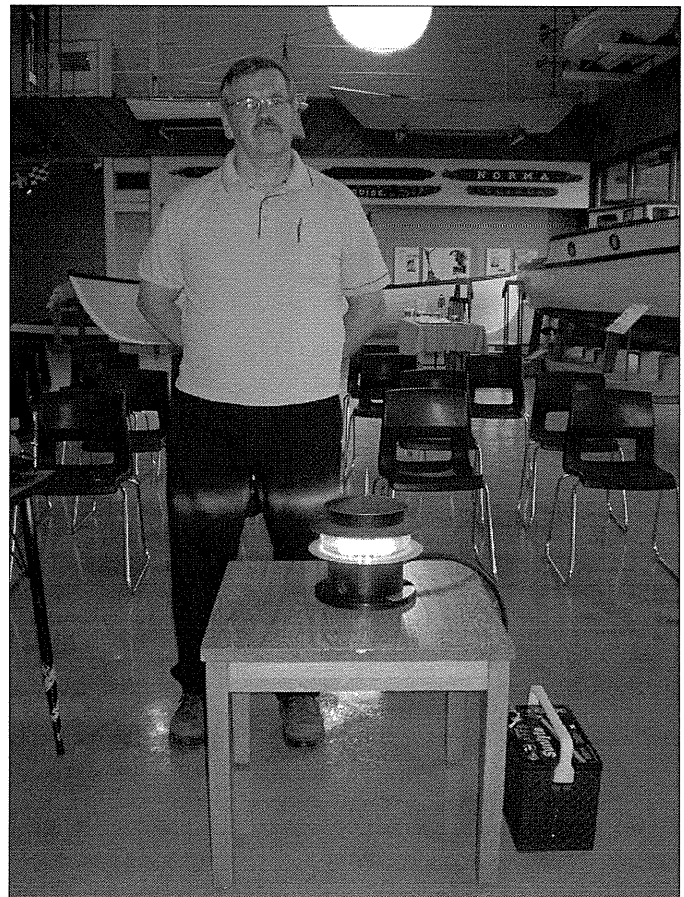
### Annual General Meeting 2008

On April 23, the NSLPS held its 14th annual general meeting. Although the turnout was modest, it was a good night, with the usual stalwart supporters of the society



BARRY MACDONALD RECEIVES THE 2008 CRAIG HARDING AWARD FROM THE MARITIME MUSEUM'S DAN CONLIN (WHO MAKES THE BEAUTIFUL MINIATURE REPLICAS OF THE CAPE FORCHU LIGHTHOUSE WHICH ADORN EACH PLAQUE.) *CHRIS MILLS*

in attendance. After the tabling of reports, we presented Barry MacDonald with the Craig Harding Award. The hand-made plaque (including a hand made model of the old Cape Forchu lighthouse) and \$250 are awarded each year to groups and individuals who have shown dedica-



COAST GUARD NAVAIDS TECHNICIAN TOM ROBERTS WITH THE LATEST IN LIGHTHOUSE TECHNOLOGY —A 12 MILE LED LIGHT! *CHRIS MILLS*



tion and excellence in preserving Nova Scotia lighthouses and lighthouse heritage. Barry's hard work on the national lighthouse protection act (Bill s-215) and his tireless interest in lighthouse preservation made him a prime candidate for this year's award.

Afterwards, Coast Guard technician Tom Roberts gave an informative talk on the recent solarization of the Sambro Island lightstation. Tom's interest in aids to navigation and his willingness to help the NSLPS always shines through!

## **Boars Head Remediation Means Site is Closed For Now**

Barry Buckman of the Tiverton and Central Grove Heritage Society informs us that DFO has cut off public access to the Boars Head lighthouse at Tiverton because of concerns about lead paint contamination. The site is one of several around the province slated for environmental remediation, but we don't know just when DFO will get to work at Boars Head.

In the meantime, it means the site is closed to tourists, while Barry and other members of the society wait in a state of limbo as they try to move forward with plans to clear the road to the lightstation and maintain the site. DFO has indicated that divestiture to the Tiverton and Central Grove society would speed up the remediation process.

## **Chebucto Head Fog Horn on the Block**

Thanks to the Coast Guard's continual review of levels of service, the big AGA fog horn at Chebucto Head is now slated for decommissioning. It's the last horn of its kind remaining along most of the eastern and the south shores, and the only powerful horn left between Cape Breton and Lunenburg's Battery Point.

Although we understand that the needs of mariners have changed over the years, the idea of removing an easily accessible, mainland-based horn powered by mains electricity does NOT make sense. Maintenance on these AGA horns is minimal, and for the cost of the electricity to run it, why not leave well enough alone? If it ain't broke (and as I write this, on a very rainy July 22nd morning, I can clearly hear Chebucto Head), don't mess with it!

The removal of horns only serves to underscore a reduction in service to mariners by the Coast Guard.

## **Five Islands Lighthouse on the Move**

Colchester County's Five Islands lighthouse could be

headed from private, to public land. The 94 year old wooden tower has already been moved at least 3 times during its lifetime because of erosion. Now, the plan is to move the 10 metre (33') wooden lighthouse from its current location at a recently closed campground, to county-owned land 6 kilometres away.

Five Islands Lighthouse Preservation Society president Gloria Lewis says the major stumbling block right now is the money involved – she says it could cost up to \$15,000 to move the structure. Unfortunately, the group is not eligible for provincial money because they don't own the lighthouse – it belongs to the municipality.

Gloria says they're waiting for the results of a municipal council meeting in late August to see what the possibilities are. If funding becomes available for the move, the light will be relocated to a large field overlooking Five Islands, in Central Economy, where it will form the centrepiece of a day park.

## **A Rare Glimpse of Georges Island**

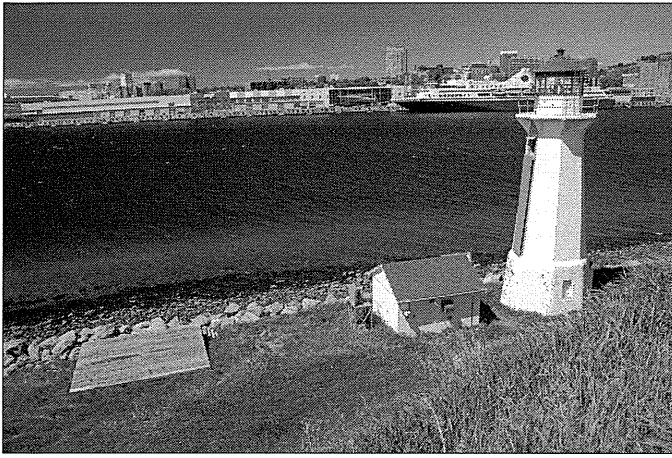


LIGHTHOUSE KIDS DALE VEINOT AND VENITA MURPHY CONNECT ON GEORGES ISLAND. JOSETTE D'ENTREMONT

On June 14 and 15 the grassy hummocks and ramparts of Georges Island in Halifax Harbour came alive to the tramping of thousands of feet. In a rare move, Parks Canada (in conjunction with a number of public and private partners) opened the island to the rank and file, allowing folks a different perspective of Halifax Harbour.

A Metro Transit ferry carried about 2,000 people to the island over the 2 days. Parks Canada employees and private security guards respectively guided visitors through Fort Charlotte and kept the curious away from steep slopes and other hazards.

The weekend event was a homecoming of sorts for at least two visitors. Dale (Matthews) Veinot and



GEORGES ISLAND: HALIFAX HARBOUR'S "DOWNTOWN" LIGHTHOUSE.  
*CHRIS MILLS*

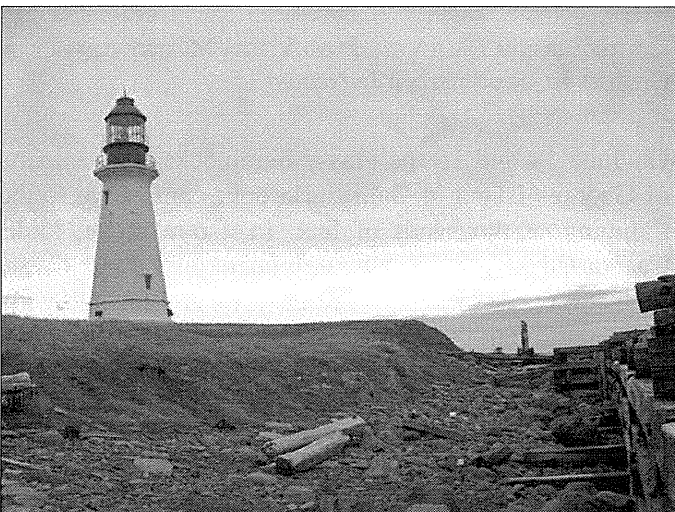
Venita (Edwards) Murphy are both the daughters of island lightkeepers – Dale made herself available to visitors, and shared her memories of life on the island in the 1940s, along with Venita, whose father E.J Edwards kept the light in 1946.

EastLink Television interviewed Dale for a feature about the island, which will be broadcast sometime this fall. For more information, call EastLink's Barbara Anderson at 446-3288.

## Heritage Canada Foundation Conference

NSLPS President Barry MacDonald will participate in Heritage Canada Foundation's annual conference to be held in Quebec City September 24-27. 2008 marks Quebec's 400th anniversary and Barry has been invited to showcase the important part that lighthouses have played in the rich maritime history of the province, as well as the role Bill S-215 will play in preserving that history.

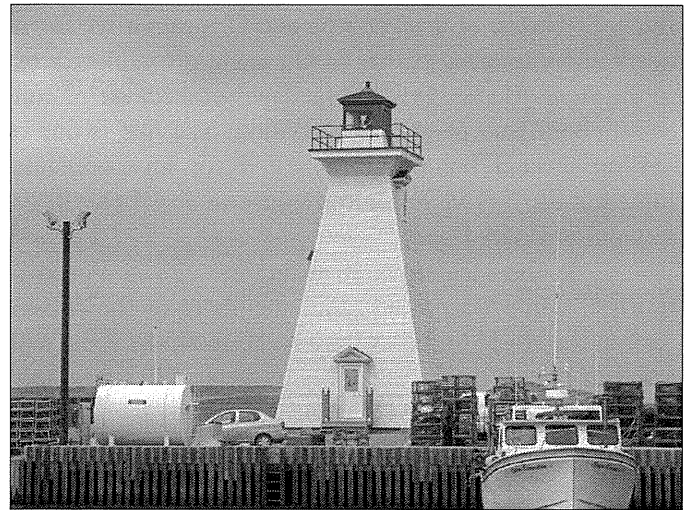
## Low Point Erosion



EROSION THREATENS THE LOW POINT LIGHTHOUSE. *BARRY MACDONALD*

First it was vandals. Now, erosion threatens the stately Low Point lighthouse near New Waterford, Cape Breton. The gnawing of the sea at the gravelly bluff in front of the light also presents a major impediment to divestiture of the site, because if the expense of re-establishing a sea-wall. On the plus side, the re-occupation of the keeper's bungalow by the Fort Petrie Historical society means that so far, there have been no new incidents of vandalism at the station. A couple of years ago, someone smashed lantern windows and caused other damage at the site. Low Point has Nova Scotia's only remaining circular iron lantern still in service.

## Mabou



MABOU. DFO/CANADIAN COAST GUARD

The weather-beaten and crumbling Mabou Harbour light in Cape Breton has received a new lease on life, thanks to DFO's remediation program. Recent work at the site caps the end of a long and rocky road to save the structure.

## Painter Passes Through

Acclaimed Nova Scotia painter Tom Forrestall spent part of a day on Sambro Island in mid-July. Tom has very kindly offered to make paintings of Sambro Island light available to the NSLPS for fundraising purposes. As Tom painted the light on the afternoon of July 17th, painters hired by the Coast Guard were busy with their own brushes, sprucing up North America's oldest operating lighthouse. We'll have more information about Tom Forrestall's paintings, and how you can get one, soon.

## Peggy's Cove Shines Red!

After shining much less brightly over the winter and spring months, the Peggy's Cove is back to full intensity, with a new colour. Back in November, post tropical storm Noel damaged the lighthouse and tore up the hydro cables that

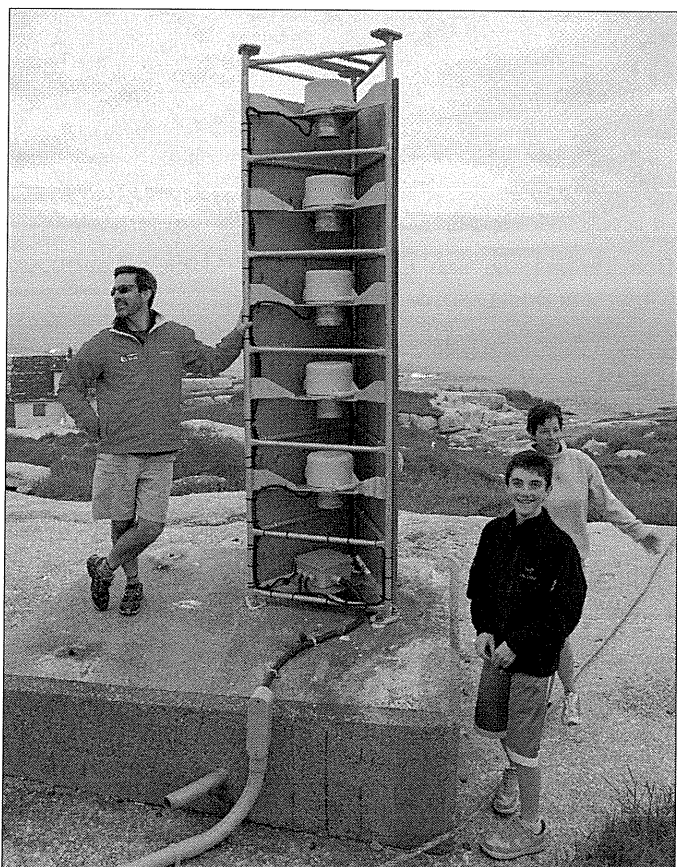


brought power to the bulb in the 4th order Fresnel lens. Coast Guard technicians placed a green LED buoy light in the lantern as they waited for word on the next move.

In mid-July, the Coast Guard completed laying new power cables and installed a red, rotating light. This is the colour Peggy's Cove should have been all along, given the old marine mnemonic "right, red, returning." Kudos to the Coast Guard for restoring the Peggy's Cove light back to full power! To see the new and improved lighthouse in action, check out <http://www.peggyscovewebcam.ca/live/> or take a drive to the village!

## Sambro Horn Troubles

It's not so much trouble with the new horn on Sambro as with a constant "whiner" ashore. Someone in the Sambro area has been griping about the noise level (or the sound) of the new horn (which is considerably higher-pitched, but much less powerful than the AGA horn removed this spring.) We understand that as a result of the complaint(s) the Coast Guard has placed sheets of plywood on 2 of the 3 sides of the triangular horn tower, in an apparent attempt to direct the sound away from the mainland. This is a questionable solution to a non-problem, and it completely defeats the purpose of this new, omni-directional horn. At least one fisherman from the area shook his head



ONLY ONE SIDE OF THE NEW OMNI-DIRECTIONAL HORN ON SAMBRO ISLAND IS OPEN TO THE SEA. CHRIS MILLS

with disbelief and wondered what the hell was up, when he saw the alterations to the horn.

## Sambro Dinner Theatre Pays Tribute to Sambro Light

Leslie Harnish of the Mainland South Heritage Society writes to say that the current plight of the Sambro Island light and upcoming celebrations were incorporated into St. James United Church's annual dinner theatre event in early May, in Sambro. Leslie says organizers and actors did "a great job incorporating this piece of history into the show, along with other tidbits of local history.

"Two songs written by local talented people were also featured. The first was written by Rita Clarke and called the *Lightkeeper's Lament*. It sums up the state of Sambro Island beautifully. The other is called *Sambro Beside the Sea*, written by local artist, the late Jim Duthie. Both songs are very moving. Lastly, they also included an announcement at the end about the NSLPS and the efforts to have a celebration this summer."

*Ed's Note: The Sambro Dinner Theatre presentations are very well done and extremely entertaining. It would be worth your while to check out the event next spring.*

## Sandy Point Spruce Up

Nova Scotia's one-of-a-kind crib light at Sandy Point in Shelburne Harbour is looking better day by day. In April, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) announced \$38,000 in funding to help repair the 1880 lighthouse. The province contributed \$20,000 to the project, while, the Municipality of the District of Shelburne came up with \$10,000. The NSLPS was pleased to contribute \$6,600 for the work.

Last fall, a contractor repaired the tower's crumbling concrete base (a \$40,000 job) and this year, workers re-shingled the structure after replacing rotten sheathing. Bernice Goodick of the Sandy Point Community Recreation Group says they're about \$27,000 short of the amount needed to complete the project.

Work to be done yet includes replacing the ladder on the tower crib with a set of stairs, new railings for the base of the tower (around the crib decking), and interpretive panels. Please contact Bernice at 902-875-2919 if you'd like to help out in any way.

## Walton Birthday

The Walton Lighthouse is 135 years old this year. Johanna Hudson of the Walton & Area Development Association says "lots" of visitors have made their way to the lighthouse since Ted Burgess opened the park the end of April. This 1872 lighthouse with its lovely Fresnel lens

and clockwork system is well worth a visit. The light is located in the village of Walton at the end of Weir Road, on the Minas Basin shore.

## Swallowtail Keepers' House Not on the Block

In the March/April, 2008 *Lightkeeper* we reported that the keepers' duplex at Grand Manan's famous Swallowtail lighthouse would be sold by the village of North Head. This was disappointing news, after the failure of a community-run Bed and Breakfast at the site. But there are reports now that the village has decided not to sell the dwelling. An American man who runs a holiday rental home on the bluff overlooking Swallowtail tells me the Village of North Head discovered that selling the property to private interests "is prohibited in the Deed." Paul Bakke says the duplex "may be a Visitor Centre at a later time, but [it is] doubtful it will open as a B&B due to septic problems."

The Swallowtail lightstation is a world class site with great potential for a marriage of tourism and preservation. Let's hope the folks of Grand Manan can rise to the occasion and develop the site in a responsible way which will also allow them to stay out of the hole.

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## WEBSITE CHANGES AND ADDITIONS

*Kathy Brown, Website Content Editor*

The "buttons" at the top of the NSLPS Website pages have been split up. Note that the "Home" and "Contact" buttons are at the top right of the page. In the button row, we now have "News," "Events," "Research" and "Preservation" as separate sections so you can reach what you are interested in more easily. "News" covers NSLPS News and Community News, "Events" is what is going on like programmes, trips and the like; "Research" is how to find out about your lighthouse, definitions of terms, and the Reading List.

The biggest changes have come under "Preservation." With the passage of Bill S-215 "An Act to Preserve Heritage Lighthouses" the section became far too big, so we have divided it up. The top page is about the Act itself: latest information and a backgrounder, plus the Act in PDF format; next you will find the records of the passage of the Act in 2008; then, we have the campaign for the Act; The Doomsday List 2008; and the original Doomsday List of 2000. We plan to update the page about the Act whenever more information becomes available. It is worth reading now because though the Act has been signed into law it does not come into force for another 2 years and the information on the website outlines how those 2 years will be spent.

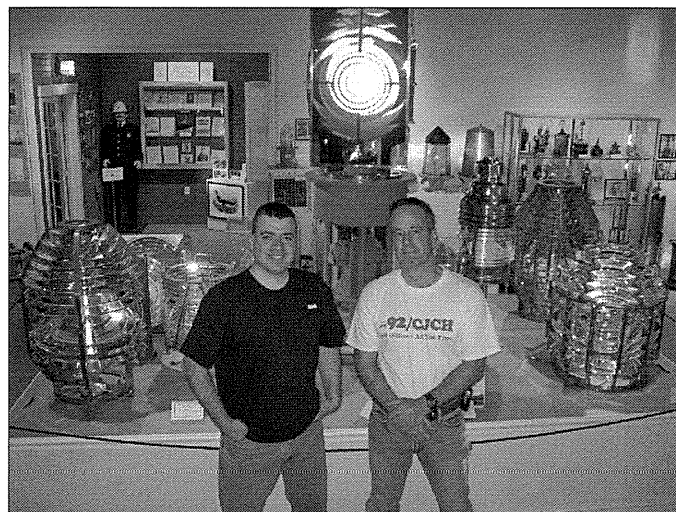
We need copy! For the News and Events pages we need to highlight what is going on around the province. If you know of some news or something happening at your lighthouse send it in! You just have to click "Contact" and type an email and I'll get it. If it's lengthy, send it as an MS Word or .rtf attachment! Photos are welcome, too.

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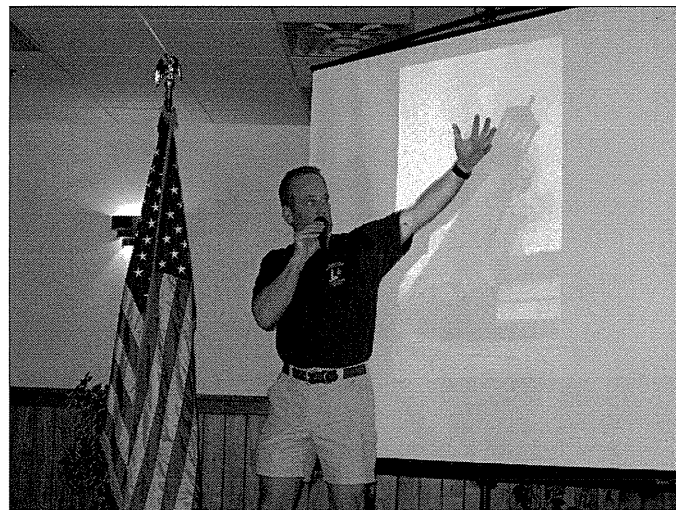
## American Lighthouse Foundation Enjoys A Little "Can Con"

*Chris Mills*

It's not every day that a Canadian lighthouse keeper gets to spread the gospel south of the border – but that's just what the American Lighthouse Foundation invited me to do in mid-May. Author and lighthouse historian Jeremy D'Entremont had contacted me before Christmas to see if I'd be interested in attending the ALF's Spring Spec-

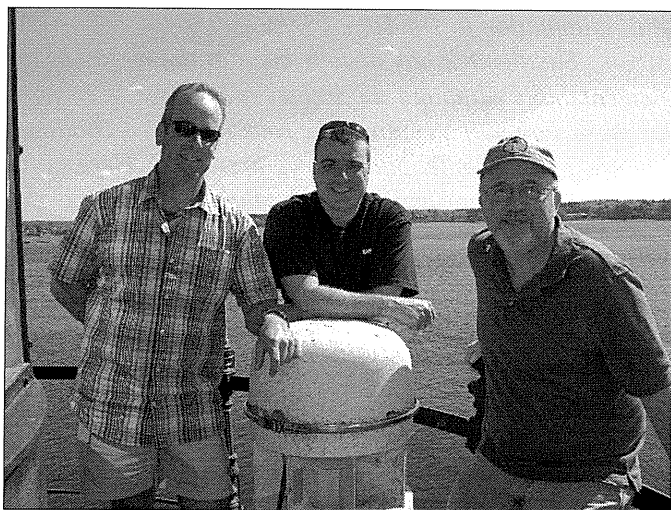


BOB TRAPANI, JR. AND CHRIS MILLS AT MAINE'S LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM IN ROCKLAND. ANN-MARIE TRAPANI



CHRIS MILLS SPEAKS ABOUT CANADIAN LIGHTHOUSES AT THE AMERICAN LIGHTHOUSE FOUNDATION'S "SPRING SPECTACULAR" IN NEW HAMPSHIRE. BOB TRAPANI, JR





CHRIS MILLS, BOB TRAPANI, JR. AND LIGHTHOUSE HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR JEREMY D'ENTREMONT AT THE PORTSMOUTH HARBOUR LIGHT IN NEW HAMPSHIRE. *NINA TRAPANI*

tacular fundraiser in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and of course, I did not hesitate in accepting.

On May 16th I headed for Rockland, Maine where I met the ALF's executive director, Bob Trapani,



LONELY BOON ISLAND, OFF YORK, MAINE. *CHRIS MILLS*

Jr. Bob and I began corresponding via e-mail last summer, and we soon discovered a common interest in lighthouse preservation and well, all things lighthouse. Bob gave me a tour of Maine's Lighthouse Museum on the Rockland waterfront and we caught up on our respective lighthouse news. ALF takes care of 21 lighthouses throughout New England and has a long list of chapters and affiliates. Lights under the foundation's growing umbrella include Rockland Breakwater and Boon Island, Maine; and Portsmouth Harbour, New Hampshire.

The Spring Spectacular event included a Jeopardy-style lighthouse trivia night, numerous raffles, silent auctions and lighthouse merchandise sales, an amazing 5 hour boat tour of five lighthouses in New Hampshire and Maine, as well as a dinner and talk by the Canadian keener (and former lightkeeper and founding member of the NSLPS).

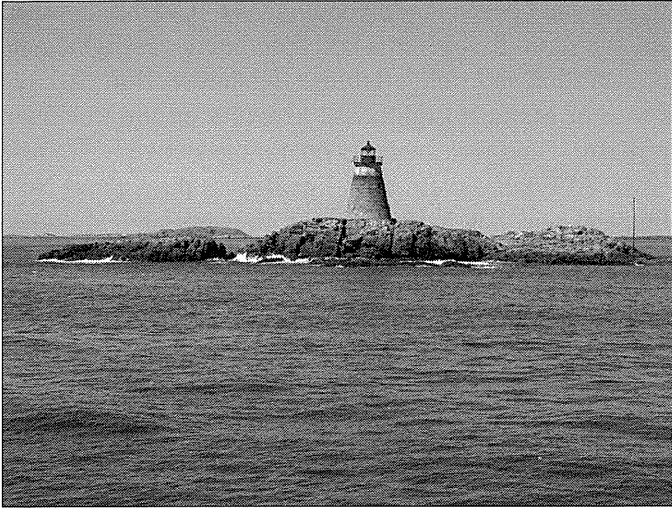
The event was extremely well-organized, although Bob and Jeremy say they had hoped for more participants. For me, it was a thrill to meet like-minded lighthouse enthusiasts and to have the opportunity to see lighthouses I have read about for more than 30 years. Also, thanks to Bob Trapani, I was able to enter and climb my very first U.S. lighthouse, at Owl's Head, near Rockland.

My trip stateside also gave me a better idea of the challenges faced by our American counterparts as they strive to preserve and protect their guiding lights. Our struggles are much the same, and I thank Jeremy D'Entremont, Bob and Ann Marie Trapani (and their children!), and other ALF members for allowing me to share the Canadian lighthouse experience with lighthouse lovers south of our border.

## A MODERN DAY LIGHTKEEPER

**B**ob Trapani is executive director of the American Lighthouse Foundation. As such, he's a lightkeeper...but there's more to Bob's involvement with his country's guiding lights. Bob also volunteers with the United States Coast Guard out of Rockland, Maine, helping to service the dozens of buoys, lighthouses and fog signals along the state's rocky coast.

Recently, Bob and members of the Coast Guard's Aids to Navigation (ATON) team aboard the USCGC Tackle landed on a little desolate mound of rock in Maine's East Penobscot Bay. The Saddleback Ledge lighthouse was built in 1839, and amazingly, its first keepers and their families lived inside the 42-foot granite tower. Watson Hopkins had the honour of being the station's first keeper...and his family numbered nine(!!!) in total. Years later, the U.S. Lighthouse Service added a wooden dwelling to the tower, which served as a home to its keepers



THE INHOSPITABLE SADDLEBACK LEDGE LIGHTHOUSE IN MAINE. BOB TRAPANI, JR.



BOB TRAPANI SERVICES THE BULB CHANGER INSIDE SADDLEBACK LEDGE'S ML-300 LENS. BOB TRAPANI, JR.



EVEN ON A CALM DAY, THE SEAS ARE TREACHEROUS AT SADDLEBACK LEDGE. BOB TRAPANI, JR.

until automation in 1954.

*Saddleback has always been at the mercy of the elements, and although the lightkeepers have been gone for more than half a century, the rock remains a challenging place, as Bob Trapani knows first-hand. Here is his account of a recent trip to service the Saddleback Ledge light:*

The second try was the charm for us trying to service Saddleback Ledge Lighthouse. After bad weather forced us to change plans back in April, we were able to pull off a successful visit to Saddleback on May 7th in beautiful sunshine during a two-day ATON trip on East Penobscot Bay.

We made Saddleback the first stop after departing Rockland at 9 am on the 7th since the seas and weather were forecast to turn sour on us the next day, which they did. When we arrived at the lighthouse about an hour and a half later, it was "iffy" as to whether we'd actually try and land on the ledge. The seas were about 2-feet on the bay, but as we made a reconnaissance trip completely around the ledge aboard the Tackle, the surge caused by the seas meeting the ledge appeared to be problematic.

The *Tackle's* officer-in-charge examined the situation and said to give it a try, but to be safe and check things out more closer in the 14-footer before trying to disembark. Once up to the ledge, we identified one good spot that would present the boat its best chance to come up to the ledge bow-in and not have the surge push the boat up on to the rocks. Thankfully the tide was perfect to effect the landing, and even the seas seemed to cooperate at the moment of landing.

Over the past few years, ATON crews have only been able to land on the ledge twice -- it couldn't be done last year when the crews tried due to rough sea conditions. They even tried helicopter trips at one point, but apparently the pilots do not like hovering over the ledge while trying to lower ATON techs in the "basket." So, successfully and safely landing on the ledge was a huge win. We ended up spending about two hours on the ledge servicing the light, changing out the batteries and removing old batteries and solar panels stored inside the lighthouse over the past decade.

It's funny -- we thought going into the trip that the landing at Saddleback Ledge was going to be the most troublesome aspect...a make or break situation. As it turned out, the troublesome aspect was inside the lighthouse. Based on Coast Guard records, a tight, contemporary spiral staircase was installed in Saddleback Ledge back in 1987. Over the last twenty years, salt water intrusion and damp conditions have taken a heavy toll on this staircase -- to the point where we had serious about its strength.

Our situation was complicated more because we

had to each carry 80-pound batteries up...as well as our tool bags, so we made multiple trips up the tower. Interestingly, the light had been reported as discrepant (not operating correctly, or at all). We discovered immediately upon entering the lantern was that the light was NOT extinguished, but rather a wire supporting a cone-like ventilation piece that hung above the light in the cupola had broken loose...causing the metal piece to obstruct the focal plane of the light all along the southeast, east and northeast side of East Penobscot Bay.

The lighthouse itself is in bad shape. A lot of water appears to be getting inside the structure. As for the exterior, many of the granite blocks are in need of new mortar. It's probably been an awful long time since the lighthouse has been re-pointed...if ever. Sadly, Saddleback Ledge Lighthouse will probably never be the benefactor of a caretaking organization. Its remoteness and near-impossible landing conditions on most days will probably prevent any preservation group from taking on this project.

After servicing the light, I walked around the ledge -- it is a grim and unforgiving place to say the least. I noticed a dead bird on the floor as we entered the lighthouse, which at that moment, added to the foreboding feeling of the location. History tells us of the harsh environment at Saddleback Ledge and as I looked around, I could only image the utter bleakness of this location during the winter -- not to mention the harrowing experiences that must have been encountered by keepers during serious storms when waves swept across the entire ledge.

On that one day, my three comrades and I "touched" the lightkeeping past at Saddleback Ledge. Though our efforts to "keep a good light" are hardly recognizable to the duties and sacrifices of bygone keepers -- coupled with the fact that our visit was only 2 hours versus living months and years on end out on this mysterious place, there was still an ever-so-brief connection that we felt from the experience.

I will not forget Saddleback Ledge Lighthouse. The location inspires a rush of emotions, as if the mystery of days gone by still hangs in the air out there, with inescapable feelings of eerie isolation, danger and the unknown cascading down in one's mind while walking across the ledge. No matter how hard the sea tries to sweep clean the history of Saddleback Ledge Lighthouse from atop the foreboding ledge, it will never succeed, for everything Saddleback Ledge represents to Maine's lighthouse history and the service its keepers rendered, is profoundly and forever etched emotion-wise in the storm-scarred ledge.

*Bob's account shows that Canada and the U.S. face similar issues in maintaining and preserving their remote lighthouses...whether towers are built of stone or*

*wood. But it is heart-warming to see that some of these lights remain in service as a testament to their keepers and for the safety of those who travel on the sea. Ed*

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## RETURN TO CAPE SABLE

Roxanne Smith

In May, the only Saskatchewan member of the NSLPS, my



FOG ENVELOPS THE CAPE SABLE LIGHSTATION IN 1976. ROXANNE SMITH

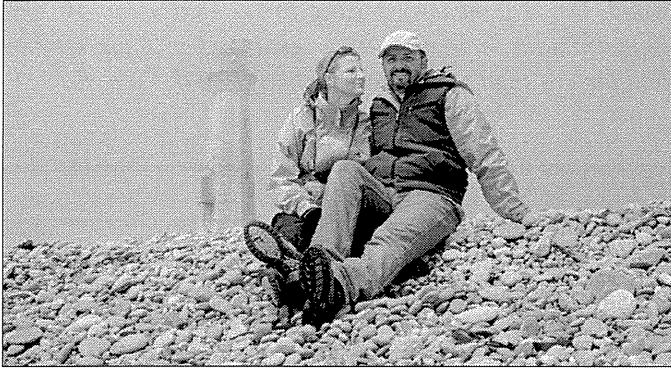
brother Jeff Smith and his wife Karen, arrived in Halifax for a scenic lighthouse tour of Nova Scotia. After visiting and viewing several lighthouses around the province we went to visit The Cape light. It was the highlight of and reason for the tour. Our father, Gerald, had grown up there with his brother Sid Smith, who would later become principal keeper after their father Benjamin F. Smith retired from service.

On the day we planned to go onto the Cape the weather was far too windy for the little boat Locke Smith would take us over in. Jeff and Karen went to the shore and watched the huge breakers that were rolling in instead. The next morning was raining, but not windy. We prepared to go across the channel in case the weather cleared. We sat at the Tim Horton's in Barrington Passage and then split up to visit family.

Soon the call came, the weather was changing and we all piled into our vehicles and headed down to The Hawk. By the time our party of 12 arrived at The Cape the weather had indeed changed for the better. Our first excursion was down to the lightstation. The light is in bad need of some paint. But the windows have all been replaced and the cable from shore had been repaired and the horn is not running on diesel generator 24-7 anymore.

We all stayed overnight in Locke's (Sid and Betty June Smith's son) camp and there was some spill-over to





JEFF AND KAREN SMITH AT CAPE SABLE. *ROXANNE SMITH*

another camp on the island. We read in the guest book that in 2006 some people from the Coast Guard were seen inside of the light getting ready to paint the interior. We hope they will get to painting the outside soon.

The coastline at the station end of The Cape is changing dramatically. Rocks that only 20-30 years ago that were on the inside of the beach wall are on the other side, seemingly creeping further out to sea each time I visit. When the lightstation was operated by the Smiths, after each storm had thrown rocks onto the station's lawn Benjamin, Sid and my father would go around with a wagon pulled first by oxen and later by a tractor, and pick up all the rocks and return them to the beach wall. Now, with no-one holding back the wall, it is slowly creeping in. The floor pad of the former steam and engine rooms are still visible but they are slowly being buried by the beach wall.

After enjoying the beach and watching the new-born lambs we all went ashore and to Sid and Betty June's home for a big turkey dinner.

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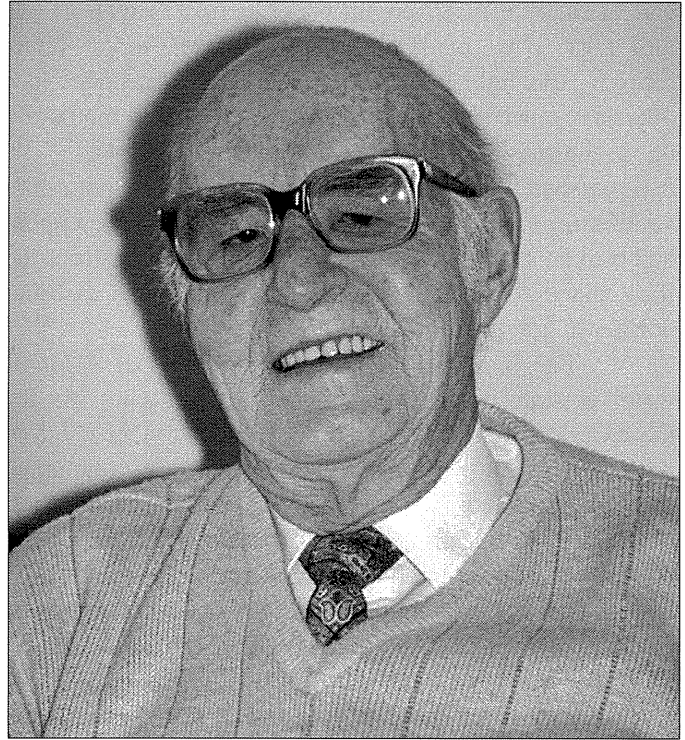
## FAREWELL

### Russell Latimer

**T**he lightkeeper's son who enjoyed a "rugged and healthy" lifestyle on a remote Cape Breton island has died at the age of 87. Russell "Russ" F. Latimer passed away on April 27th in Dartmouth General Hospital. Russ was the eldest son of the late Irving and Dorothy (Clode) Latimer. Although Russ was born in Saskatchewan, his father moved east and because of his service in the First World War, he was successful in getting a job as the keeper of the Jerseyman Island lighthouse, off Arichat on Cape Breton's Isle Madame.

The family moved out to the island in 1930. In an interview with Chris Mills in 2002, Russ described his memories of the primitive conditions at the lighthouse:

"We found it was terribly unkempt when we arrived, and it needed a lot of cleaning up. I don't think anybody ever thought about people comforts when they



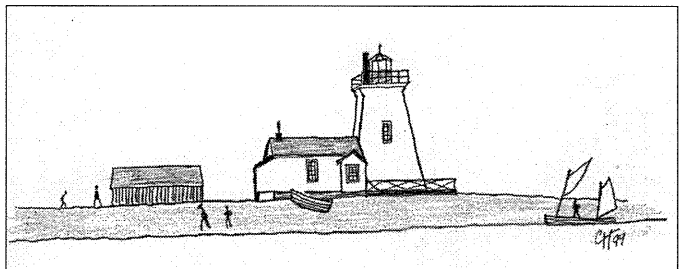
RUSS LATIMER IN 2002. *NSLPS/CHRIS MILLS*

built those [lighthouses]. It was thinly-sheathed on the inside, with rough boards they had wallpapered. And because the tower part was tapered, the wallpaper had a habit of leaving the wall and then flapping in the wind, so it was a pretty breezy place to live!"

With a smile, Russ also related that despite making the best of a dodgy situation, his mother Dorothy always described the Jerseyman Island lighthouse as "that god-forsaken hole!"

But for young Russ, moving to Jerseyman was a "novelty". He loved the water, rowing to school each day after and hauling lobster traps early each morning:

"At age 13 (in 1933) I wanted a bicycle. That spring I fished 50 lobster traps before leaving for school each morning and by season's end I had earned the price of my bike, called a 'Canadian Winner', purchased from Eaton's catalogue. The cost was \$21. This indeed was a highlight of my life, after having arisen at 4-30 each day, developing a ravenous appetite and great muscles.



RUSS LATIMER'S HOME ON JERSEYMAN ISLAND, FROM AN OLD PHOTO. *DRAWING BY CHRIS MILLS*

Looking back I consider it was a rugged and healthy life-style."

In 1939, when he was almost 18, Russ joined the crew of a British registered cableship. After 3 years, he joined the Canadian Merchant Navy as a radio officer, where he remained until 1954. Russ later established his own pioneering business, manufacturing marine inflatable liferafts.

In later life, Russ was keen to recount memories of his days on Jerseyman Island, and his experiences at sea. I was fortunate enough to spend time with Russ – he was true gentleman and a fount of knowledge about many things marine. I like to remember what Russ told me as I interviewed him for the NSLPS Oral History Project:

"I was always a bit of a loner, and I wonder if that came upon me as a result of living [on Jerseyman Island]. That's why I enjoyed going to sea so well. I remember a time we were on a beautiful T-2 tanker. She was done up so nice, and I joined her in Portland, Maine. We sailed via the Cape of Good Hope to Abu Dhabi in the Persian Gulf, and I remember standing alongside the skipper on the bridge one beautiful day in the Indian Ocean.

He said "God, Sparks, wouldn't it be nice to see the end of this?"

"Sir," I says, "This is so beautiful it wouldn't matter to me if we ever arrived in port!"

"Something wrong with you!" he said.

Russ smile at me and said "I suppose that's why I enjoyed Jerseyman's Island and the boats."

Russ Latimer is survived by his son, Richard, his daughter Nancy, and grandchildren, Jason, Brian and Alanna, as well as his brothers, Eric and Lloyd. He was predeceased by his wife, Erma, his brother Ted, and his sister Marjory.

PHOTO RIGHT: BON PORTAGE ISLAND IN 2004. CHRIS MILLS

## Sidney Nickerson

We are sad to report the passing of Sidney "Bubby" Rupert Nickerson on Thursday, March 13, at Roseway Hospital in Shelburne. Bubby kept the Bon Portage light, off Shag Harbour, for a decade, beginning in 1970. His family described the posting as Bubby's "most significant job", which in time saw him promoted to Head Keeper.

Bubby's family says "his love of family and friends was reflected through his warm embrace and welcoming smile to each and everyone who walked through his door." It also appears that Bubby had a patient approach to the ups and downs of life. Family members recently recalled an incident which happened while the keeper was painting at the lightstation:

"Standing high on the ladder, the bucket of paint he had attached to the ladder somehow managed to fall, landing completely on Bubby's head. Drenched in yellow paint, looking like a yellow canary, [his wife] Helen asked that he remain on the ladder while she ran to the house to fetch a camera. Hoping not to be mistaken for a fellow yellow bird, he willingly obliged."

Bubby is survived by his wife Helen Pothier, son Dale and daughter Donna.

*\*Ed's note: Bubby must have been painting the lightstation diesel tanks at the time of the accident, since the standard colour for tanks back then was bright yellow. It was later changed to red.*



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**NSLPS MEMBERSHIP FORM: January 1 - December 31, 2008**

\_\_\_ New \_\_\_ Renewal: Membership # \_\_\_\_\_

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Single - \$20.00

Institutional/Group - \$30.00

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Foreign - \$15.00 U.S. Funds, or equivalent.

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Please make cheques payable to the 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, Nova Scotia, B3J 1S3



*Sincerest thanks  
for your interest  
and hard work.  
Layla Hearn*

2nd Session, 39th Parliament,  
56 Elizabeth II, 2007

THE SENATE OF CANADA

## BILL S-215

An Act to protect heritage lighthouses

*Congratulations!  
This has been  
a great  
team achievement  
Best Regards,  
Kym  
Hinchey*

### Preamble

WHEREAS lighthouses have long graced Canada's rugged coastlines and majestic shores, providing and symbolizing direction, hope and safe harbour to generations of mariners;

AND WHEREAS lighthouses form an integral part of Canada's identity, culture and heritage, and are of historic and aesthetic interest and significance to our communities and our nation;

AND WHEREAS the Parliament of Canada recognizes that measures must be taken to preserve and protect our heritage lighthouses;

NOW, THEREFORE, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows:

### SHORT TITLE

#### Short title

1. This Act may be cited as the *Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act*.

### INTERPRETATION

#### Definitions

2. The following definitions apply in this Act.

"advisory committee"  
« comité consultatif »

"advisory committee" means the advisory committee established by the Minister under section 9.

"alter"  
« modifier »

"alter" includes to restore or renovate, but does not include to perform routine maintenance and repairs.

"established criteria"  
« critère établi »

"established criteria" means the criteria established by the Minister under paragraph 15(a).

"heritage lighthouse"  
« phare patrimonial »

"heritage lighthouse" means a lighthouse designated as a heritage lighthouse under this Act, and includes any related built structure that is included in the designation.

"lighthouse"  
« phare »

"lighthouse" means a tower or other structure, including its fixtures, that was built to contain, contains, or once contained a beacon light or other signal to warn or guide marine vessels, whether or not it is now in use as an aid to navigation.

"Minister"  
« ministre »

"Minister" means the Minister responsible for the Parks Canada Agency.

"related built structure"

"related built structure", in relation to a lighthouse, means any built structure on the site on which the lighthouse is situated that contributes to the heritage character of the lighthouse.

*Bury  
Congratulation  
on a job well done.  
This would not have  
happened without  
you.  
Harold Kelly*