



The Octagon

Newsletter of the Faulkner's Light Brigade

February 2010



Photo by Don Zimmer Aug. 31, 2008

Lighthouse Restoration Pending

The Grand Dame of Long Island Sound—Faulkner's Island Lighthouse—cries for attention again. It was twelve short years ago that the Faulkner's Light Brigade collaborated with the Town of Guilford to restore the historic structure. Since then, the harsh island environment has taken its toll. Maintenance restoration of the 208-year-old lighthouse is vitally needed.

On an inspection tour last May '09, FLB Board member Russ Santora, an architect, found a dingy, gray lady, despite the tower's bright white appearance from the water, Russ was assisted by John Saunders, a restoration contractor, and fellow Board member Gary Lyon.

Russ concluded that more than 25% of the tower's great tapering walls have lost their coating, revealing patches of the dark chatham (brownstone) blocks. Heavy biogrowth (lichens) on all sides of the tower has hastened the process of deterioration. There are many voids in the masonry jointing between courses of stone. The mortar loss has led to heavy

The great tapering masonry walls of Faulkner's Light rise to a height of 80 feet above sea level.

The name Octagon refers to the shape of the historic lighthouse on Faulkner's Island, a beacon to mariners since 1802.

efflorescence inside the tower as water enters the cracks and leaches minerals and salts from the mortar.

Maintenance restoration of Faulkner's Lighthouse will involve re-pointing of the brownstone joints and new application of an exterior paint coating. It is recommended that a cement emulsion breathable paint, known as "BMC2", be used. It is also recommended that additional venting be installed to pull out excessive moisture. Other repair work can hopefully be performed at the same time.

The restoration pending is a capital project that must be approved by the U.S. Coast Guard as the owner of the lighthouse. Most assuredly, the Brigade is under no obligation to provide tower maintenance for a U.S. government aid to navigation. However, the organization's original agenda of historic preservation and its mission statement heartens the Brigade to assist the Coast Guard with tower maintenance, whenever possible.

In June 2009, the U.S. Coast Guard met with Town of Guilford and Faulkner's Light Brigade officials to discuss a renewal license for limited lighthouse entry and use. Mary-Ellen Wilczynski, Real Property Specialist with the USCG Civil Engineering Unit, Providence, Rhode Island, met with Guilford First Selectman Carl Balestracci and representatives from the FLB, including Chairman Jeff Heinrich, Marie Pohlman, Elliot Wilcox, Fred Farnsworth, and Joel Helander. Since then, the original license executed with the Town has been renewed in the name of the Brigade, which will allow access to the lighthouse for the annual "open house" and select maintenance activities.

The Brigade is fortunate to have in-house professional consultants like architect Russ Santora and others, including architect Fred Vogt and George Gdovin, the clerk of the works for the 1998-'99 tower restoration. Russ is the designer of the pau-lope stairway constructed and financed under direction of the Faulkner's Light Brigade as its first major island project (1995).

Summer Internship on Faulkner's

By Carly Congdon

Interning on Falkner Island (a/k/a Faulkner's) this past summer was an amazing and a truly unique experience. The daily routine was to wake up early, eat breakfast, and then conduct rounds. Rounds consisted of counting tern eggs, weighing chicks, and banding new chicks. We would count a sample size of common terns as well as all of the roseate terns on the island. Later, in the afternoon, our next job was re-sighting. I would sit in the blinds with a scope and read roseate tern bands.

I learned so much this summer—from driving a boat to shooting a gun for the first time in my life. I also learned about sea birds, but mainly about the common and roseate terns. They are such interesting birds. The chance to live with them helped me gain a new found respect, not only for them as a species, but all animals in general. One thing I enjoyed most was sitting on the docks in the evening watching the birds and the sunset. Falkner Island is truly an amazing place and I am thankful for the summer that I spent there.

Editor's Note: Carly was a junior at Lasell College and resides in Clinton, CT.



Carly holds a tern chick.

Message from the Front Office

The Faulkner's Light Brigade (FLB) continues to address preservation of the historic lighthouse and the wildlife habitat on Faulkner's Island. The common tern and roseate tern nest, breed, and fledge their young on its rocky shores from early May to late August each year.

The annual meeting of FLB took place in March 2009. Fred Farnsworth was acknowledged for his many years of service and as the outgoing chairman. Fred has continued to be active as Chairman Emeritus. Also recognized for their years of service on the Board of Directors were Ann Delaney, Demie Kufta and Jack Pohlman.

The Board of Directors recognizes the great opportunity to build on the solid foundation established by the past Board and membership. The Board's four priorities in 2009 were preparing for the restoration of the exterior of the lighthouse, improving public access to the island, establishing the 501(c)(3) IRS tax exempt status and increasing communication with the membership by publishing a quarterly newsletter. The Board is proud of these accomplishments.

The weather was beautiful on the weekend of September 12-13 for the annual open house on Faulkner's, when more than 300 people landed for a visit. The US Fish & Wildlife Service provided free transportation to the general public by using their landing craft, embarking from Guilford Harbor. Visitors had plenty of time to enjoy the island and climb to the top of the lighthouse. Three U.S. Coast Guardsmen from Group Long Island Sound graciously provided tours of the historic lighthouse. Private vessels were also welcomed. Upon arriving at Faulkner's Island, all dinghies, kayaks, canoes, inflatables and other small vessels beached their crafts on the shore just north of the boat basin on the west side of the island.

Establishing the 501(c)(3) IRS tax exempt status was a huge step forward this past year. Local attorney and friend of the Brigade, Matt Peterson, was extremely helpful in seeing this through to completion. The FLB received its IRS approval in November 2009. Since 1991, the Guilford Preservation Alliance has been very generous in allowing the Brigade to function under their IRS umbrella, but the time had come for us to make the transition to a free standing organization.



Jeff Heinrich, Chairman

The FLB is currently exploring the possibility of forming a Junior Light Brigade for the younger members of the shoreline communities. Two boy scout groups and one cub scout group have expressed interest. We would like to involve the girl scouts, too.

FLB was well represented in the Guilford Citizens' Fair Day Parade on Saturday, September 19, 2009. Brigade Board members rode in a 1932 Ford pickup truck and a 2004 Ford Mustang convertible. They were joined by staff from the US Fish and Wildlife Service in a police car and an official USF&W pickup truck towing one of their many boats.

Visit our website for new features and videos. Steve McGuire, a Board member, continues to enhance the website. The website can be found at <http://www.lighthouse.cc/FLB/>

Your renewal membership is vital to FLB's continued operation. When renewing your membership, kindly include your email address for updating the membership base.

Reminiscences of a Coast Guard Lightkeeper Gene Carney's Stint on Faulkner's, 1956-1957

By Joel Helander

Eugene J. Carney of Melbourne, Florida is an alumnus of Station Faulkner's Island in Long Island Sound, the government light station established in 1802. Gene and his wife, Eileen, maintain a Guilford connection through their good friends, Lee and Frank Granger, who made a stopover at Guilford Town Hall with the Carneys this past July. Gene is a living link to the romantic—and often dramatic—lightkeeping days of yore. His reminiscences of Dear Old Faulkner's capture the spirit and sense of duty displayed by lightkeepers in the middle of the last century.

Gene was born and raised in New London, CT—an old seafaring community with its U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (formerly known as “the Moorings”) and U.S. Naval Submarine Base on the Thames River. As a junior in high school, young man Carney joined the U.S. Coast Guard Reserves. During the summer of his senior year he attended training at Camp May, New Jersey, which excused him from boot camp at the time of his enlistment after high school graduation in June 1956. His commitment to the Coast Guard was for two years of active duty, followed by four years of inactive duty.

At the Coast Guard Station in Staten Island, New York, Gene was assigned to Curtiss Bay, Maryland for construction work on a 95-foot vessel. The new vessel was home-ported in New London, where Gene went out on patrols, but not for long. The captain asked him if he wanted to transfer to a post on Faulkner's Island, but he declined. Other enlistees declined, also, so the men “cut cards” to determine who would go. Gene lost. One foggy day in November 1956, the 95-footer delivered Gene to his island post. On the approach to the landing wharf, the sound of the foghorn seemed

foreboding. He recalls disembarking with his little seabag and being greeted by the island's chief officer, who gruffly ordered Gene to “come here, I want to show you something.” The chief brought Gene to the edge of the island's east embankment and admonished him, “If you're a screw-up like the last man who was here, I'll throw you down this embankment!”

After that intimidating cordiality, Gene made a serious commitment to his island duties, which was to assist the “engineman” with maintenance of the electrical generators in the power house. This masonry building still stands as the dormitory/office for U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service personnel. Gene reminisces that occasionally, the beacon light malfunctioned by remaining in a “stuck on” position. The remedy for this was sandpapering electrical points on a circuit board in the power house.

Gene believes that he acclimated quickly to his island home and found that “it really wasn't that bad.” “After all,” he quips, “I wasn't bouncing around on a ship!” He watched Dick Clark's *American Bandstand* on a 17” black and white television during down time. Four personnel stationed on Faulkner's during Gene's stint included Officer-In-Charge Chief Carlisle, First Petty Officer Lee, a cook named Fennessey, and Gene Carney, whose rank was Seaman Third Class. The men rotated their assignments so that one was always “off” or on mainland leave. Gene had his own bedroom on the second floor of the mansard roof dwelling house. Other bedrooms were on the third floor.

Lobster luncheons were no rarity for Gene and his island comrades. In exchange for watching the local lobstermen's pots, which dotted the waters

around the island shoals, the lobstermen gave the Coast Guardsmen blanket permission to “help themselves.” This arrangement stands in stark contrast to the rascal lightkeepers of the 1920s who poached pots and got into trouble with the law.

Besides his duties in the power house, Gene remembers hanging over the light tower in a bosun’s chair while painting its great tapering walls of brownstone. There were two “watches” for the duty crew, when the men patrolled the island 24/7, i.e. one watch from midnight to 8:00 a.m. and then another from 8:00 a.m to midnight. Two times a day, the Coast Guardsmen were required to contact their headquarters at The Moorings via a radio transceiver in the radio room. This wireless communication relied on a relay through Cornfield Lightship at Long Sand Shoal because the distance between Faulkner’s Island and New London did not permit reliable radio reception.

Although Gene reports the absence of rabbits on the island (a continuing 21st century menace), he recalls that the pet animal population was an interesting mix. During his one year stint there,

a dog, a cat, and two goats romped everywhere. As for the goats, they were mean and had to be exported. As for the dog, Gene placed it in his parent’s home in New London. When Gene’s mother brought the dog outdoors without a leash, it ran off, frightened, because it had never been exposed to such things as automobiles or other civilization—only idyllic island life.

Gene Carney left Faulkner’s Island Light Station in November 1957 to accept a post as radio operator at The Moorings headquarters in New London. After his discharge from the Coast Guard, he passed a 38-year career at Electric Boat in Groton, CT, starting as a pipe fitter apprentice and ending up as the ship’s manager of construction, overseeing two fast attack nuclear submarines, *The Hartford* and *The Springfield*.

Faulkner’s Light Brigade is grateful for Gene’s reminiscences of the government light station at Faulkner’s. Hopefully, an arrangement can be made for his return visit to the island in the near future.



Seaman Gene Carney stands on the launching rails of the landing wharf, 1957.

Photo courtesy of Gene Carney

Faulkner's Light Brigade Membership

New Members and Renewals during 2008 and 2009

GUARDIAN OF THE LIGHT (\$1000 AND ABOVE)

Barry & Rochelle Kaplan
John F. Maher
Julie & Robert Schaffer

BENEFACTOR OF THE LIGHT (\$500-999)

Mr. & Mrs. Gustaf R. Bodin

PATRON OF THE LIGHT (\$250-499)

Mary Kelly & Richard Amerling
Cedar Island Marina
Eileen & Andrew Eder
Grace & Fred Farnsworth
Bill & Elaine Lincoln
Jane Marcher Foundation
(In honor of Joe Arnold)
Patricelli Family Foundation
Everett MacLeman
Eric Ploumis
Tom & Susan Salice
Robert F. Schumann

LIGHTKEEPER (\$100-249)

John Augustyn
Margherita & Walter Bacon
Joan Ames Berkowitz
Dave & Carol Bredbury
Frederick F. Bruening
James & Patricia Calhoun
Joan & William Cameron Jr.
Carol & Dwight Carlson
Irene & Arthur Daly
Russell & Sarah Davidson
Robert Donahue
Susan & Robert Gnida
Joe Goldberg
Joseph & Cynthia Golderg
Louise & Henry Graver
Guilford Funeral Home
Suellen & Jeffrey Heinrich
John & Barbara Henningson
Herzog Family Fund
Catharine Hopkins
Raymond & Barbara Jacobsen
Mr. & Mrs. Brooks M. Kelley
Ricardo Kimball
Jenny & Kevin Lampus
Marie Landry
Kate & William Lee
Richard T. Lohr
Art Lundeberg
Cynthia Magee (In

memory of John Magee)
Linda J. McDowell
Jen & Mike McNiff
Mr & Mrs. Thomas Mitchell
Barry Natale
Russell H. & Patricia M. Norman, Jr.
Ray & Becky Ortega
John K. Reiss
Peter & Betsy Russell
Lindley & Robert Sawyer
Pamela E. Searle
Diana M. Sattelberger & James Sligar
David W. Smith
Howard Tuttle, Jr.
Dorothy Volosin
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew D. Weaver
Mrs. Howard D. White
Pat & Gary Widlitz
Cynthia T. Wommack
Jean Young

BEACONER (\$50-99)

Gerard & Kathy Abbatello
Dorothy & Vincent Amore
Barbara & Richard Angle
Carl & Linda Balestracci
Albert L. Brahm (In memory of David Lee)
Bill Bussman
Peter J. Butler
Salvatore & Anita Catardi
Curtis Chittenden
Edward Chittenden
Marcella Davidson
Marjorie H. Davis
Kim Howland & Michael Dewar
Helen & Steve Downing
Anne & Chris Duhaime
Jim & Cynthia Dwyer
Cynthia & Richard Eckstrom
Nancy & Philip Elderbaum
Roger & Gail Fabian
Charles Fascia
Hans and Dorothea Flink
James & Barbara Francese, Jr.
Byron & Emily Gardiner
Phyllis Gilbert
Robert B. Gordon
Mr. & Mrs. Robert W. Hard
Joel Helander
Edward & Charlotte Holahan
Donald B. Hyatt
Marilyn Brown Janeway (In memory of Frank Brown)
Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Johnston
Barbara Ann Kiesel
Elizabeth & Frederick Kingsbury
Carolyn Kirmss
David W. Knapp

Barbara & John Koelle
Charlene Kulisch
Jane White Lewis
Carol & Ralph Linsley
Dwight & Maureen Lopes
Stuart M. Low
Patty & Cliff McGuire
Senator Edward Meyer
Kathy & Don Milnes
Margaret & Whitney Morse
Ruth & Tom Nardini
Robert Oppel
Stephen & Elizabeth Page
Marie Pohlman
Susan & David Priest
Doris M. Reimels
Jan Russo
Kathleen Santucci
Dr. & Mrs. Winthrop Smith
Richard & Toni Sonet
Priscilla Sperry
Cathy Stewart
Simon Stewart
Karen & Richard Stoll
George B. Uihlein
Fred Ulbrich, Jr.
Pam & Tim Visel
Claudia Bemis & Bob Weinstein
Barbara & Jack Wells
Joan & Stewart Fritts Wells
Lawrence Delponte Welsh
Elliot & Nancy Wilcox
Sandra G. Wildman
John E. Woodward, Jr.

MARINER (\$25-49)

Mary & Ned Ahearn
The Amatrua Family
Mr. & Mrs. G. Ernest Anderson
Carol & Adam Ashman
Loraine Ashman
Humbert A. Astredo
Lesley & Paul Bailey-Gates
Virginia & Charles Baltay
Elizabeth Barnes
Nancy Barr
Laura & James Barrow
Cynthia A. Becce
Robert & Janet Beer
Alyce S. Benson Family Trust
Trudy & Edward Bishop
Sally Brown
Susan & Herbert Burstein
Robert A. Cairns
Patricia Chapman
The Chiamonte Family
Clarice Chomich
Pat & Phillip Clarkin
Nancy and Scott Conover
Margery & Harry Cordts
Janet & R. Michael Cosgrove
Mr. & Mrs. Erskine Crossley

Pamela Daddio-Bradley
Nicholas Day
John & Elizabeth Delemarre
Jeremy D'Entremont
Myles & Carol DuBay
Marjorie Dudley
Antoinette L. Dupont
Anna Dwyer
Arthur Ebbert, Jr.
Judith Fine
Sandra & Fred Flatow
Susan & Michael Foley
Elizabeth J. Fox
Samuel Fuller
Dr. George W. Gilbert
Louise & William Gilpatrick
Mary & Pete Greenvall
Cynthia Grey
Arlene Hackbarth
M. John Hamer
Mr. & Mrs. Robert W. Hard
John Heinrich
Carolyn Helander
John & Barbara Henningson
John E. Herzog
Michael Hintz
Elizabeth V. Horowitz
Lois B. Hubbell
Gail A. Jewiss
Frederick & Deborah Journalist
Brenda & Frank Karsmarski
Gerlinda & Emil Kehlenbach
Kennedy & Perkins Inc.
Barbara Ann Kiesel
Peter J. Kindlmann
John Kirby
Robert & Lorraine Kirby
Priscilla Kirby
Madelyn Kmetzo
Pam & Gary Knowles
John Kreider
David B. Lee
W. Harmon Leete
Elizabeth Lowe
Mr. & Mrs. Walter Mahon
Mannix Chevrolet-Pontiac
Ann & Tim McCann
Sarah McCulloch
Steve McGuire
K. Stephen & Helena Meader
Frances Metzler
Mierz Family
Laurel & Walter Mills
Mr. & Mrs. Norton Morrison
Charlotte B. Mousch
Don & Marcia Mozzochi
Ruth & Marshall Neale
Edith B. Nettleton
Barbara & Joseph Nugent
Catherine Offredi
Margaret Palmieri
Deborah Peluse

Joan Platner
Arlene & Tom Pregman
Susan & David Priest
Mary & Ron Repetti
Douglas Roberts (In memory of his wife Janet Elizabeth Vernon Roberts)
Adam & Nancy Ross
The Scialla Family
Robert & Connie Scott
Janet Scranton
Joan & Ralph Schoemann
Charlie Shelley
Ann E. Sottery
Sharon Shay
Robert Taylor
Thomas Terrible
Judy & Jerry Theise
Elizabeth N. Theiss
Nancy C. Thompson
Henry & Evelynne Tichy
June Torino
Richard Wardell
Beryl B. Weinstein
Richard & Carol Werle
Bonnie & Thomas Williams
Ruth Woodruff
Ruth Kimberly Young
Susanne M. Zdanowicz
Roger Zerillo
Beverly & Marvin Zimmerman

FRIEND(\$10-24)

Nick & Mary Ala
Helen E. Anderson
Paul & Helen Blanchard
Donna Porritt & Sam Bromage
James Carleton
Joan L. Carroll
Charles & Ginny Carter
Mae Bergen Christie
Chris Collins
Ruth & Peter Connal
Linda M. Curry
Ron & Marianne DeMartino
Marlene P. DeSanto
Lucia Dexter
May-Elinor Dudley
Doug & Audrey Eisenlohr, Sr.
Ida Etherington
Joyce Galehouse
Elizabeth Gardner
Nina Garrett
Elizabeth & Erwin Griffiths
Guilford Library Association
Tom Hettinger
Vida L. Holzinger
Leland & Madeline Hubbard
Fran & Tom King
Robert H. Knight, Jr.
Barbara Kobs
Lori & Walter Kostich

John V. Leffingwell
 Anna Luciano
 Gary Lyon
 John F Maher
 Frank Maiale
 Harry H. Mark M.D.
 Dorothy Maynard
 Jean G. Meiselman
 Frances Metzler
 Priscilla D. Morse
 Charlotte Mowrey
 Ruth A. Nettleton
 Pauline Newton
 Carl Olovson
 Betty Page
 Joan P. Platner
 Harding Reemsnyder
 Priscilla & Ray Rensis
 Sandra J. Ruoff
 Mary Russell
 Shirley Sabine
 Russ Santora
 Jen H. Scott
 Linda Shay
 Janice G. Teft
 Beverly Waters
 Amy M. Wininger
 Margaret Iacobellis
 Luella Daniels Landis
 Priscilla D. Oliver
 Mrs. Harrison Stevens
 Tim & Pam Visel
 Allan Wilcox
 Susanne M. Zdanowicz

SENIOR & STUDENT (\$5-\$9)

Henry P. Bakewell, Jr.
 Ellen Bernstein
 Theresa & Raymond Burke
 Janet R. Cooper
 Eileen Cordts
 Lucian & Phyllis DeLucia
 Marshall & Lois Dudley
 Charles Greene
 Raymond W. Hencir
 Joan Churchward Jenkins
 Linda & Albert Mignone
 Wilford Parker
 Elizabeth A. Regan
 Betsey Stevens

In Memoriam

John Magee
from Cynthia Magee

David Lee
from Albert L. Brahm

Frank Brown
from Marilyn Brown Janeway

Janet Elizabeth Vernon Roberts
from Douglas Roberts

Faulkner's Light Brigade 2010 Calendar

The 5-part lecture series is co-sponsored by Faulkner's Light Brigade and The Friends of the Guilford Free Library and held at the public library, 67 Park Street, Guilford. The public is cordially invited. Refreshments will be served. Call 203-453-8282 to reserve your place.

Tuesday, January 19, 7:00 p.m.

A Colony on the Edge: the Struggle to Save Connecticut's Only Roseate Tern Colony

Rick Potvin is the Connecticut Refuge Manager for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, overseeing all of the activities on several islands on the Connecticut shoreline, including Faulkner's Island. In his talk, Mr. Potvin describes the struggle to save an endangered species on Faulkner's, the roseate tern. The island once had the third largest roseate tern nesting colony in the Northeast.

Tuesday, February 16, 7:00 p.m.

The Ancient Mariners In Concert

The Mariners play and sing a variety of traditional music, from up-tempo hornpipes and jigs to the work songs used on board ships, as their way of telling the story of colonial seamen. This fife and drum corps was founded in 1959. One of their celebrated songs is "Don't Let The light Go Out," which is a tribute to the work of the Brigade.

Tuesday, March 16, 7:00 p.m.

The Life & Times of Captain Oliver N. Brooks

Town Historian Joel Helander presents a slide lecture on the life of Captain Brooks, keeper of Faulkner's Island Light for the long period, 1851-1882. Together with his family, the Captain lived in virtual solitary confinement on the island, facing deprivations of all kinds. The Brooks Family practiced subsistence farming and learned to develop interesting hobbies.

Tuesday, April 27, 7:00 p.m.

Tern, Tern, Tern

Columnist Mark Lender is a self-taught writer and nature photographer. He is known in New England for his column, *Salt Marsh Diary*, which was syndicated to 100,000 Connecticut households. Mr. Lender now has his own segment on Public Radio's Living Earth. His talk addresses how terns communicate and the problem of habitat loss.

Tuesday, June 1, 7:00 p.m.

Second Annual Writing Contest: Presentations & Awards

Faulkner's Light Brigade is proud to be sponsoring a writing contest for fourth graders, featuring stories (fact or fiction) relating to the sea. The top three story submissions will be read and awards presented.

Saturday, September 11

Sunday, September 12

Annual Open House on Faulkner's Island

Mark your calendars now for this celebrated event, when the visiting public will have the rare opportunity to experience the beauty of an island wildlife refuge and historic lighthouse. Public transportation to the island may again be available. Watch for forthcoming details.

FLB Annual Membership Meeting

Monday, May 10, 2010, 7:30 pm

Greene Community Center

