

Boston Light "Update"

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The Boston Light Blitz of a Season!!!

2016 - It was a banner year visitors to the island this season. NPS-BHN Increased tour group size from 40 to 50 visitors with two categories: those climbing the lighthouse and - for a reduced ticket price - non-climbing. An increase of 50 visitors per tour and the amazing media coverage drawing attention to the 300th anniversary resulted in over 5,000 visitors --- an increase of 36% --- compared to an average of 3,400 per year.

TUE, 26 JUL 2016: Lands End - the nationally renowned retail mail order company - facilitated by the U.S. Lighthouse Society (USLHS) non-profit preservation organization, donated \$30,000 for a forthcoming restoration project of the Boston Light Boathouse in recognition of the light station's 300th anniversary. The donation was accepted by Boston Harbor Now on behalf of the Coast Guard and the National Park Service. The unveiling of the check occurred onboard the very elegant 97 foot commercial vessel, VALIANT. It was presented by Land's End CEO Federica Marchioni assisted by USLHS Executive Director Jeff Gales and accepted by Kathy Abbott, CEO of Boston Harbor Now. Representing CG Sector Boston were CDR David O'Connell and LCDR Ronaydee Marquez with many CG personnel in attendance. Unexpectedly, the captain of the VALIANT announced an attempt would be made to moor the vessel at Little Brewster's 50 foot - at low tide - for passengers to have a brief island experience. With short notice, AUX Assistant Keepers Jay Thomson and Brendan Henry set out the interpretive stations materials in preparation for the passengers to meander the grounds. The Keeper was the first off the vessel with the dignitaries to escort them to the lighthouse for a private tour. Two park rangers onboard availed themselves to assist with grounds tours for 50 passengers. The boathouse project is currently in its infancy phase of development by NPS and CG. The anticipated cost for the restoration is hundreds of thousands of dollars with this \$30,000 being the "seed money."

SUN, 21 AUG 2016: Boston Light - Edward Rowe Snow Day - Partnership Event at Georges Island was a fun-filled family day of activities from 1100-1500 sponsored by Boston Harbor Now (BHN), Mass Department of Conservation (DCR) - owners of Georges Island, and the National Park Service (NPS). The 25 knot winds did not appear to deter visitors from enjoying the activities, compensated by a warm, sunny day, however, the Hull Lifesaving Museum rowing boats cancelled due to unsafe beach landing conditions.

- The opening ceremony speakers were Susan Kane - DCR Manager of the Harbor Islands; CDR David O'Connell - USCG Sector Boston; Giles Parker - Superintendent of Boston Harbor Islands National & State Park; and Kathy Abbott - President/CEO of BHN.
- Immediately following was the arrival of **Flying Santa** in a helicopter along with the Brian Tague, President of *Friends and Flying Santa* and pilot Evan Wile (safely landing in 25 knot winds).
- Adding to the festivities was a four foot **Boston Light Little Brewster Island cake** made by the renowned Montilio's Bakery that also provided the catering staff. It was ceremoniously cut by George Montilio, Dolly Snow Bicknell (Edward Rowe Snow's daughter), and the Keeper.
- Twenty-six **Three Sheets to the Wind** shanty performers sang for two and one-half hours with the performers taking turns for breaks.
- Information tables were provided by The Friends of Boston Harbor Islands (FHBI), Hull Lifesaving Museum (HLM), New England lighthouse historian Jeremy D'Entremont (as well as Edward Rowe Snow's biographer) with Dolly Snow Bicknell, the Waller family of Graves Light, and Boston Light.
- The Waller family provided a fabulous Graves Light display with explanations of the workings of a Fresnel Lens. Their adolescence son's Wyatt and Emmitt designed a miniature model of Boston Light to scale utilizing 4,000 Lego's with opportunities for children to assemble and disassemble it by sections.
- Hull Lifesaving Museum (HLM) had a crafts table for younger children to color/ cut/assemble lighthouse and lighthouse and nautical activities.

The Boston Light Blitz of a Season Continued

Georges Island - 21 AUG 2016 Continued

- Activities offered by DCR: vintage baseball game, children's Civil War lawn games, and mid-nineteenth century contra dance performances.
- Over 550 free Boston Light 300th anniversary logo pins were given away to visitors.

A heartfelt THANK YOU is given to the following for their support: NPS and BHN, DCR for hosting the event on their island and their staff, and the speakers of the opening ceremony. Seventy volunteers helped to make this an incredibly successful family day on Georges island from the following: AUX, FBHI, Friends of Flying Santa, Hull Lifesaving Museum, *Three Sheets to the Wind* shanty performers, Waller family; and transportation for the staff from Little Brewster via the coxswain/crew of the AUXFAC 201-292 and the Weymouth Harbormaster Police boat.

In the meantime on Little Brewster ... the regularly scheduled NPS-BHN tours to Boston Light were occurring staffed by AUX Assistant Keepers Audrey Tessier, Richard Tessier, & Dave Cross; Interpreters AUX Jim Stevens & FBHI Lenny Alberts; and two NPS Rangers.

A VERY busy day indeed!!

WED 14 SEPTEMBER:

1. 300th Ceremony at Long Wharf

The Coast Guard Band performed pre-ceremony calling forth the dignitaries and attendees. Master of Ceremonies, CAPT Gelzer - Commander of Sector Boston, provided the welcoming and introductions of each of the speakers that included the Commandant of the Coast Guard - Admiral Paul Zukunft, Superintendent National Parks of Boston - Michael Creasey; President and CEO of Boston Harbor Now (BHN) - Kathy Abbott; and Mayor of the City of Boston - Martin Walsh presenting a citation. The Coast Guard Honor Guard and Drill Team brought closure to the event followed by a ceremonial cake cutting of another Montilio's Bakery creation by Admiral Zukunft, NPS Michael Creasey, and BHN Kathy Abbott.

2. 300th Ceremony at Little Brewster Island

Immediately following the Long Wharf event, dignitaries and special guests were escorted to the M/V RENDEZVOUS (95 foot vessel against Boston Light's 50 foot dock) to witness an unveiling of the 300th anniversary bronze plaque. The ceremony took place on the grounds by the cistern building where a brass quartet from the CG Band played assembling the attendees. Speakers were Admiral Paul Zukunft and Rear Admiral Steven Poulin for the unveiling as well as presenting the Keeper with a *USCG Commander's Award for Civilian Service*. There was a total of 108 guests/CG/NPS/BHN/media on the island including COMO Philip Kubat and COS Charles Grossimon representing 1st NR AUX District. Later, the plaque will be affixed on the interior of the tower below the 200th anniversary plaque.

Shortly after the M/V RENDEVOUS departed the island, the M/V COLUMBIA POINT arrived at 1400 with 40 visitors and NPS-AUX-FBHI staff for a typical NPS-BHN tour. For this special opportunity for a tour on the 300th anniversary, the ticket price was discounted to \$3.00.

3. 300th Anniversary Coast Guard Band Concerts

TUE, 13 SEP evening at Quincy High School: AUX Jan & Jay Koleszar FL 96 provided a pre-concert history of Boston Light history to an audience of 750 attendees - the full capacity of the auditorium.

WED, 14 SEP evening at Hull High School auditorium limiting to 450 attendees.

4. 300th Boston Light Symbolic Relighting

The 157 year old optic that provides a 2,000,000 candle power 10 second flash was extinguished by the Keeper at 1715. Proceeding to Pemberton Pier via the AUXFAC 201-292, she arrived at Hull High School to provide an abbreviated version of Boston Light's 300th years of service, and then returned to the island in time to re-activate the light at sunset (1855). In a perfect world, the CG band would have been playing outside on the football field in view Boston Light while playing Happy Birthday accompanied by the audience singing and witnessing the re-lighting. However, on this rainy night, the AUX on watch and the media accompanying the

300th Symbolic Relighting Continued

Keeper to the island were the only observers while *Happy Birthday* was played and sung indoors at the school. The Keeper made it back to Hull as the concert was concluding providing attendees the opportunity to meet her. AUX 292 made its last trip for the day to the island at 2200 - wet boat ride with northeast wind-driven choppy seas and rain - conditions for which a lighthouse was deemed necessary for safe passage into the harbor 1716. It was an appropriate ending for the very long, non-stop, exuberating 16 hour day - always to be remembered.

Numerous "behind the scenes" supporters provided a wide variety of services. Assistant Keepers on-watch on the 14th were Adele Childress D7, Colleen Kloster Fl 53, Audrey Tessier Fl 12-5, as well as Jim Healy Fl 53 and Jay Thomson 12-5 who accompanied the Keeper to Long Wharf courtesy of the Quincy Harbormaster. Brendan Henry Fl 12-5 was the primary runner for whatever was needed at any given time, such as fetching needed equipment, assisting on the dock, mingling with the visitors, and crewing on the AUXFAC 201-292 throughout the day and into the evening. Todd Isherwood Fl 53 was instrumental in networking with the City of Boston's Mayor's office for many months in acquiring a 300th Boston Light citation. AUX ushers at Long wharf were Dave Cross Fl 12-3, Art Daly Fl 12-3, Jim Healy Fl 53, Todd Isherwood Fl 53, Lisa Kalfin D1S, Jan & Jay Koleszar Fl 96, Paul & Joe Medina Fl 4-15, Herm Messmer Fl 12-3, and Jay Thomson Fl 12-5. AUXFAC 323-088 with Alan Missel & crew and AUXFAC 261-271 with Rick Young & crew augmented transportation to Little Brewster for the plaque unveiling ceremony. Please accept the Keeper's apologies for any oversights.

Tid-Bits

- **Caution ... Geese abound:** The island was finally rid of the pesky muskrats that were notorious for digging holes in the ground to access the roots for the past 12 years. Their replacement: Geese ... and lots of them. Their poop makes quite the mess needing to be frequently removed from walkways and the grass - just as tedious as filling in muskrat holes.
- **Little Brewster** was evacuated and remained unmanned MON-WED, 5-7 SEP due to the potential threat of Hurricane HERMINE. It was re-staffed on 8 SE with NPS-BHN tours resumed on FRI, 9 SEP.
- **Rats have returned** after 12 years of having them gone from the island. What has brought them back: an endless food source - geese poop. Rats have re-established nests under the porch of the Keeper's House, Boathouse, and Cistern Building. For many years, they have kept to the peripheral of the island such as in the foundation of the pier and on the rocky shore line. Now in "off-season" mode, the geese poop literally everywhere on the grounds with the rats enjoying daily feasts.
- **Arcadia "Images of America"** commemorative *Boston Light* book has recently been published containing 180 graphics and photo representing 300 years of history as a major aid to navigation at the entrance to Boston Harbor, available via on-line sources.
- **Mike McDevitt**, founder/owner of Acushnet Marine in Hull has the NPS-BHN contract for installing/removing/maintaining the Boston Light seasonal dock as well as regularly receiving contracts for transporting contractors to Little Brewster. Mike's parents resided on Peddocks Island - located in close proximity Hull - raising their four children 1960-1980's. A book entitled *An Island in the Family* authored by Tom Martorelli was released 16 DEC 2016. It is a fascinating read with reflections and reminiscings of the McDevitt family island living - where Mike continues to reside, today.

Looking Ahead: 2017

- **SUN, 7 MAY 2017:**
 - 0830 - 1245 Newbee Historical Interpreter Training.
 - 1300 - 1530 Returnee "Update" for AUX/FBHI/NPS-VIP Interps and AUX Assistant Keepers.
- **Tall Ships:** FRI-THU, 16-22 JUN 2017
- **SUN, 18 JUN:** NPS-BHN Tours begin
- **SAT, 24 JUN:** New "On-island" Orientation - 0930-1630 departing from Boston with NPS-BHN tour
- **SUN, 1 OCT:** Last NPS-BHN Tour day
- **SUN, 22 OCT:** Tentative date for 18th Annual Boston Light Appreciation Day

BEST WISHES FOR THE HOLIDAYS AND A WONDERFUL NEW YEAR!!!