

# KEEPER'S KORNER

Tidbits and Editorial      Comments from the Tower

BY KATHLEEN FINNEGAN-HARRISON



## Betty Parrish, OBLS and Volunteer, Passes

Mrs. Betty Burge Parrish, aged 88, peacefully passed away on January 11, 2024, in Carolina Shores, North Carolina. Betty, born on June 29, 1935, has joined her loving husband Billy Dorton Parrish in eternal rest. She was a proud member of the Daughters of the American Revolution and volunteered countless hours as a board member of the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society and as a lighthouse volunteer. Our condolences to her family and friends. She will be missed by many.



## Bruce Keene, Maine Light Keeper Dies

Bruce Gilman Keene, 86, died unexpectedly on December 26, 2023. The son of lighthouse keeper Thomas Keene, he followed in his father's footsteps and enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard and served for over 20 years, where he achieved the rank of Master Chief Boatswain's Mate. He was stationed overseas in Okinawa, Kwajalein and Saipan. He served aboard the USCGC *Coos Bay* and was stationed at several Maine lighthouses, including West Quoddy Light, Little River Light, St. Croix Island Light, and Cape Neddick (Nubble) Light. After retiring from the Coast Guard, he continued to work on the sea as a merchant marine. Our condolences to his family and friends. He is shown here at age 14 with his lighthouse-keeper dad Thomas L. Keene, at Ten Pound Island Lighthouse near Gloucester, Massachusetts. It was from here that Bruce had to row himself to school. (*Lighthouse Digest* archives)



## Farewell, Debra Baldwin

The start of the new year signifies changes for many of us, and our historian Debra Baldwin is no exception. Over the past year, Debra has pursued different aspirations and planned to conclude her role as a historian with us before Tim's unexpected passing. She will continue to do research for the Lighthouse History Research Institute on occasion. We wish to sincerely thank her for her many hours of researching, writing, editing, and proofing for the magazine these past several years, in addition to her work on grave marker ceremonies and speaking engagements. We wish her well in her future lighthouse endeavors! As Tim would have said, "Nice job, Debra."



## Lighthouse Bed & Breakfast

For \$900 a night, you can stay in The Lighthouse, an Airbnb in Alaska. The Lighthouse was constructed in 1983 by Burgess Bauder, who spent a year and a half building the lighthouse by himself; it was remodeled in 2018. Located on a one-acre island in Sitka, the vacation rental can accommodate up to six people, has 1.5 bathrooms and a pretty spectacular view. For more info go to [www.SitkaLighthouse.com](http://www.SitkaLighthouse.com).



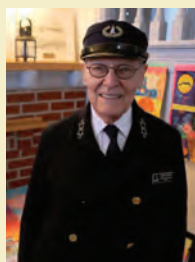
## Buddy Grover, NJ Lighthouse Keeper Dies at 96

The light at the Absecon Lighthouse in New Jersey shone not just from the lens in the tower, but also from George "Buddy" Grover, the longtime and beloved lighthouse keeper who died in January 2024.



Grover had been a volunteer at the lighthouse since 2009. Dressed in his lighthouse keeper uniform, he greeted and instructed thousands of people who climbed the 228 steps to the lantern. He continued to greet people downstairs at the

tower's base every week over the last year, despite recent health issues that affected his mobility. Before serving as a volunteer lighthouse keeper, he served in the Army and the Marine Corps, and was a postal carrier for 22 years. He was married for 47 years until his wife's passing in 2008. Our condolences to his incredibly wide circle of friends and family.



## Keeper Sally Snowman Retires

The last lighthouse keeper in the United States has retired. After more than 300 years, America's oldest light station will no longer have a keeper. No longer will the Boston Lighthouse have the day-to-day care of its long-time keeper. Sally Snowman had become the keeper of the 1716 lighthouse in 2002. She was its 70th keeper. "The first 69 were all men," she proudly admits. Boston Light, the last manned lighthouse in the United States, lost its keeper on New Year's Eve 2023. (Photo courtesy Sally Snowman)



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## **Lighthouse Keeper Laura Hecox Day**

California's Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History presented Phil Carpenter of the Santa Cruz Fungus Federation with the Laura Hecox Award, which is given to extraordinary community members who help connect people with nature and science. Lighthouse keeper Laura Hecox had donated a collection of about 2,000 artifacts and specimens, which became the foundation for the museum in the early 20th century.



Born in 1854, Laura was the youngest daughter of keeper Adna Hecox. Adna Hecox had survived a harrowing wagon train journey to the West Coast with his wife and four children in 1846-1847. After holding several local government offices, Hecox was named the keeper of the new local lighthouse – the original Santa Cruz Lighthouse in late 1869. During Laura's childhood, she collected shells, rocks, minerals, fossils, and other curiosities from the shore near the lighthouse. Before long, the front room of the six-room keeper's dwelling became a makeshift natural history museum, with items displayed in cherrywood cases her father had built. Laura corresponded with prominent scientists and even had at least two species of mollusks named in her honor. Early on, Hecox's youngest daughter, Laura had helped her father trim the wicks in the lighthouse, so when Adna Hecox died in 1883, Laura knew all there was to know about the proper running of the light station. She was swiftly named the new keeper, a post she held for 33 years. (Courtesy Santa Cruz Museum, *Lighthouse Digest* archives)



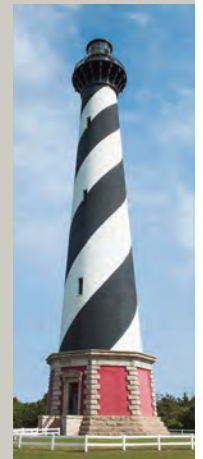
## **St. George Reef Tours**

The St George Reef Lighthouse Preservation Society of Crescent City, California, is preparing for tours once again. Last fall they led their first tours after a four-year hiatus. Labor Day 2023 brought 121 people out to the lighthouse. Tour dates for 2024 are May 25, May 26, May 27, June 1 and June 2. The tour includes transport to and from and a guided tour of the lighthouse. Your ticket also covers a one-year membership to the Society. Ticket price is \$380 (save \$30 by prepaying) For tour information, please call (707) 273-1905 or (541)254-3851. (*Lighthouse Digest* archives)



## **Cape Hatteras Lighthouse Limits Access**

As work begins at the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, limited visitor access to the site is expected to last until at least mid-2025. The first phase of the \$19.2 million project is underway. The site will have limited access for visitation and viewpoints; the park store and restrooms are expected to remain open during the project. Access to the Cape Hatteras Light Station will vary throughout the project, and temporary closures will occur. Additionally, the exterior of the lighthouse will be scaffolded for the duration of the project. The project, a collaboration between the National Park Service and Stone and Lime Historic Restoration Services, Inc., of North Brookfield, Mass., will rehabilitate the interior and restore the exterior of the lighthouse, repair and replace deteriorated materials and finishes and provide landscape improvements to enhance the visitor experience. A temporary beacon will be installed on the exterior of the lighthouse, though there will be periods when the light is turned off due to construction. The fabrication and installation of a replica 1st order Fresnel lens is also part of the project. The Keepers of the Light Amphitheater stones will be removed and stored in a secure location until the project is completed, when the stones will be placed back on site, to honor the keepers and educate the public about their role in caring for the lighthouse. For updates as the project progresses, see [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov). (*Lighthouse Digest* archives photo by Don Williamson)



## **Cape May Lighthouse Nighttime Climbs**

The Cape May Lighthouse in New Jersey is again offering their highly popular climbs for 2024. The 2024 Full Moon Climb dates are: April 23, May 23, June 21, July 21, August 19, September 17, October 17 and November 15. Their Stairway to the Stars climbs (on new moon dates) are May 7, June 6, July 5, August 2, September 2, October 2, and November 1. Tickets are available onsite: \$20 for adults and \$10 for children. (*Lighthouse Digest* archives)



## **Patos Lighthouse Marks 130 Years**

It's been 15 years since the Keepers of the Patos Lighthouse first started to rescue Patos Island Lighthouse which had fallen into deep disrepair. It has been 130 years since the U.S. Lighthouse Service began operations on Patos Island in 1893. The year 2023 welcomed 726 guests to the lighthouse made possible by the nearly 1,100 hours of volunteer time keeping the rich history alive the lighthouse open, clearing invasive plants, and removing trash and debris from the island. Over the winter, they are working on plans to make 2024 another bright year for the lighthouse. Visit [www.keepersofthepatoslight.org](http://www.keepersofthepatoslight.org) to find out more. (*Lighthouse Digest* archives)



## **Ida Lewis Lesson Plans**

The Steamship Historical Society of America has a new lesson plan now available: "Ida Lewis – Lighthouse Keeper." It is suggested for Grade 4, but we think you will find it interesting for both adults and kiddos alike. It is available free online at [www.shiphistory.org/2023/10/19/IdaLewis/](http://www.shiphistory.org/2023/10/19/IdaLewis/) (*Lighthouse Digest* archives)

