

KEEPER'S KORNER

Tidbits and Editorial Comments from the Tower

BY KATHLEEN FINNEGAN-HARRISON



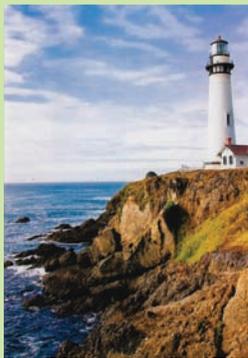
Inside the Sabine Pass Lighthouse

Volunteers at the Sabine Pass Lighthouse in Louisiana are working to replace the stairwell inside the tower. See story “What Ever Happened to Sabine Pass Lighthouse?” from our November/December 2023 issue, detailing much of the work that is being done at the lighthouse. We thought these photos of the inside of the tower were pretty telling about why they need a new staircase. (Photos by Wendy Harrington and Andrew Tingler)



Pigeon Pt. Getting \$16M Makeover

Pigeon Point Lighthouse is the tallest operating lighthouse on the West Coast. This year it will receive a \$16-million makeover with the hopes of reopening the landmark to the public. Construction is slated to be completed within two years, according to California State Parks. The lighthouse has been closed to the public since late 2001, when it was deemed unsafe after two large pieces of brick and iron fell from the top. The lighthouse’s closure dragged on for more than two decades because of several obstacles, including a lack of funding and the COVID-19 pandemic, park officials said. (Courtesy of Pam Winegar)



Climb to the Top

The historic lighthouse offering “spectacular views of sunrises over Lake Huron and sunsets over Tawas Bay” will once again welcome visitors this summer. Located in Tawas Point State Park, the lighthouse was closed for 2023 for renovations, which consisted of reversing the exterior deterioration of the lighthouse tower, as well as the lantern room and gallery. The tower remains white; however, the lantern and gallery colors are now black to reflect what was present at the lighthouse circa 1895. Officials at the lighthouse said that contractors had completed repairs to the lighthouse last fall. The grand reopening was held on May 2, 2024, 147 years after a light first shone from the current tower’s lantern onto Tawas Bay and Lake Huron. The lighthouse will be open for tours Wednesday through Monday, from noon to 5 pm until October 20th. (Photo by Alan Culley)



Plans to Restore Chesapeake Lighthouses

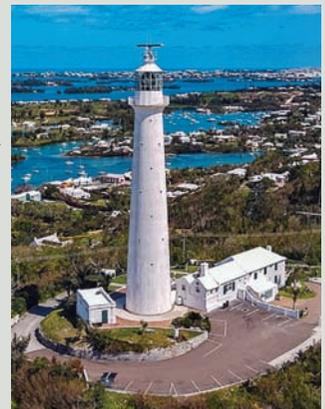
Richard Cucé became the owner of the Hooper Island Lighthouse in September 2022 with a purchase price of \$192,000. He is now the owner of another Chesapeake Bay lighthouse when he was high bidder on the Wolf Trap Lighthouse in 2023 for \$125,000. After a recent visit to the lighthouse in late 2023, he finally got a look inside. He is very optimistic about the lighthouse’s future, despite being on the Lighthouse Digest Doomsday List for a number of years. Above: Hooper Island Light, Maryland. (Lighthouse Digest archives) Left: Wolf Trap Light, Virginia. (Courtesy Nick Korstad)



Gibbs Hill Lighthouse Mechanical Failure

In February, the Department of Marine and Ports Services in Bermuda reported they were “working on repairing the electric drive gearbox motor at the Gibbs Hill Lighthouse. The light had ceased rotating due to the mechanical malfunction of the motor, which prompted its immediate shutdown.

The Department of Marine and Ports Services removed the motor and began rebuilding it while procuring parts from overseas distributors. They are also completing some painting and other maintenance while they are closed. Due to the motor’s age, the Department was unable to provide a definitive completion date; however, efforts are underway. At press time, the lighthouse was still closed to the public, but the park, gift shop and restrooms were open. (Lighthouse Digest archives)



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Howling at the Moon at Thomas Point

If you are lucky enough to get close to the Thomas Point Lighthouse, you'll find something unexpected. A life-sized, rather realistic looking coyote decoy has moved in to the screw-pile lighthouse. Like many structures that sit out in the middle of the water, Thomas Point is a prime target for birds, and those birds leave a lot behind. The guano has been a problem for years. Let's hope it works! (Courtesy Chesapeake Chapter, US Lighthouse Society)



Nantucket Lightship Open for the Season

Serving on a lightship was considered one of the most hazardous duties of the U.S. Lighthouse Service and the U.S. Coast Guard. The floating lighthouses were anchored miles offshore to guide vessels in places too dangerous and impractical to build a lighthouse. Lightships had to remain on station through all kinds of weather, dense fog, and even hurricanes; plus, there was constant risk of being struck by the very vessels it was there to serve. The U.S. Lightship Museum is located in



Maryland Lighthouse Sold

Craighill Channel Lower Range Front Light Station has been sold again at auction for \$115,000. The caisson-type lighthouse was first lit 150 years ago in 1873. There is a 1.5-story keeper's quarters with a deck all around. The lighthouse was auctioned in 2017. The nonprofit owner group, Historic Place Preservation, Inc., was unable to raise the funds required to preserve the lighthouse, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. (*Lighthouse Digest* archives)



the *Nantucket Lightship* LV-112 in Boston, Massachusetts. According to its Founder and President, Robert Mannino, Jr., "The Nantucket Lightship station was called the 'Atlantic Gateway into the United States.'" The lightship was outfitted with two duplex Fresnel lenses – 500,000 candle power to be seen from 20 miles at sea. Nantucket Shoals was the last station to be discontinued and four years later, in 1989 the *Nantucket Lightship* LV-112 was designated a National Historic Landmark. The Museum has restored 95% of its exterior; over eight tons of marine growth were removed from the bottom of the ship, rivets repaired/replaced, and the vessel was sandblasted. The Museum is now focused on refurbishing the infrastructure, plumbing, heating, ventilation, and engines. Over \$2.5 million has been invested with another \$2 million needed to complete the project. The U.S. Lightship Museum is open Saturdays, 10am-4pm through the last Saturday in October. Individual and group tours also can be arranged by appointment throughout the year or on other days. For more information visit www.NantucketLightshipLV-112.org or call (617) 797-0135. (Photo by volunteer group "The Dirty Dozen" from the late 1990s, courtesy Doug Bingham)