

Thacher & Straitsmouth Island News

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A Unique Collaboration

In 1967, Mass Audubon acquired all of Straitsmouth Island except for the light station and its immediate surroundings. As recounted in Paul St. Germain's 2020 history *Saving Straitsmouth Island*, a gift from the family of William F. Gibbs after his death in 1967 mandated that the island be "established and maintained as a wildlife sanctuary" for "plants, birds, and animals." The mandate also allowed "appropriate observa-



Turkey Poults

tional, interpretive and educational facilities ... to further public knowledge and appreciation." However, the island was almost entirely off-limits to the public until 2019, when one of the Thacher Island Association's launches added service to Straitsmouth.

Mass Audubon's collaboration with the TIA is unique. Mass Audubon owns two other islands off Essex County's shores: Kettle Island and House Island. House Island is small with no safe landings. The public may view wildlife on Kettle Island from small boats and kayaks, but landing on the island is discouraged to prevent disturbance of rare nesters like Tricolored and Little Blue

(continued on page 4)

Poetry by Suellen Wedmore, Inspired by Heroine-Keeper Maria Bray

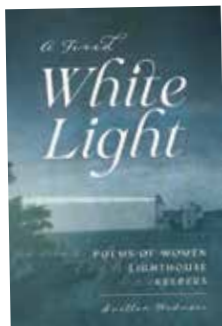
"It feels like the right place to read my work," remarked poet and lighthouse keeper Suellen Wedmore, standing in front of Thacher Island's First Order Fresnel Lens. The lens now stands in a place of honor at Gloucester's Cape Ann Museum (CAM) where Wedmore, a docent there, was offered an opportunity to read her poem "Polishing the Fresnel Lens" from her book *A Fixed White Light*, at the museum's First Friday tribute to lighthouses.

The First Order Lens, one of only 39 in the country and among the largest and most powerful, came to the museum in 2013 at the instigation of historian Paul St. Germain, and through a collaborative effort by the CAM and the Thacher Island Association. Originally installed on the island in 1861, it was decommissioned in the 1980's and displayed at the U. S. Coast Guard Academy Museum in New London, Connecticut. The CAM constructed a gallery for its display and today visitors are rewarded with a stunning view of its rainbow-refracting light.

"Considering Thacher Island's heroic effort to bring the Fresnel Lens to the Cape Ann Museum, I think it's important that we continue to celebrate its unique history and its beauty," Wedmore stated when interviewed at her reading's conclusion. ■



Suellen Wedmore reading from her book of poetry at Cape Ann Museum. Photograph Courtesy Miranda Aisling, Cape Ann Museum.



A Fixed White Light, published by Down East Books, celebrates the heroism of Thacher Island's Maria Bray. In 1864 in her island-keeper husband's absence, Maria kept the lights of the twin towers burning for three days and nights during a life-threatening blizzard, warning imperiled mariners to avoid the rocks and find safe harbor nearby.

The book is available on www.thacherisland.org, at the Cape Ann Museum, at The Bookstore in Gloucester, and online at Amazon. This summer it will be available for purchase on the island.



Far Left: Once the entry cabin and walkway are finished this summer, the structure will be restored to its original design.
 Near Left: The Straitsmouth tower with entry cabin and walkway as they looked after being rebuilt in 1896.
 Below: By the mid-1960's, the tower and entry cabin had lost their windows and were in need of a coat of paint and the walkway was gone, but the entry cabin was still attached; The hurricane-force winds of the October 1991 "Perfect Storm" destroyed the entry cabin that had been standing for 95 years.



Entry Cabin to Complete Straitsmouth Lighthouse Historic Restoration

The current Straitsmouth lighthouse is the third to stand on the island. The first tower was built in 1835 and was replaced in 1857. The present tower was built in 1896 and featured an entry cabin that protected the lighthouse door, and a wooden walkway ten feet above the rocky ledge that facilitated the keepers' access to that cabin. By 1910 the wooden walkway had fallen into complete disrepair, and the entry cabin was destroyed during the October 1991 "Perfect Storm."

Although the tower itself has been repaired and repainted multiple times over the past 126 years—most recently in 2013—nothing was done to address the absence of the walkway and entry cabin until 2018. That summer the Thacher Island Association's Wednesday work crew cleared the path to the lighthouse and began recovering the original walkway's granite posts. This was the start of rebuilding 200 feet of walkway from the Keeper House to the tower. The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated building supply shortage slowed the walkway reconstruction until 2022, when the project welcomed additional volunteers and gained momentum. It is on track to be completed in 2023 along with the construction of an entry cabin, which will return the lighthouse to its old appearance.

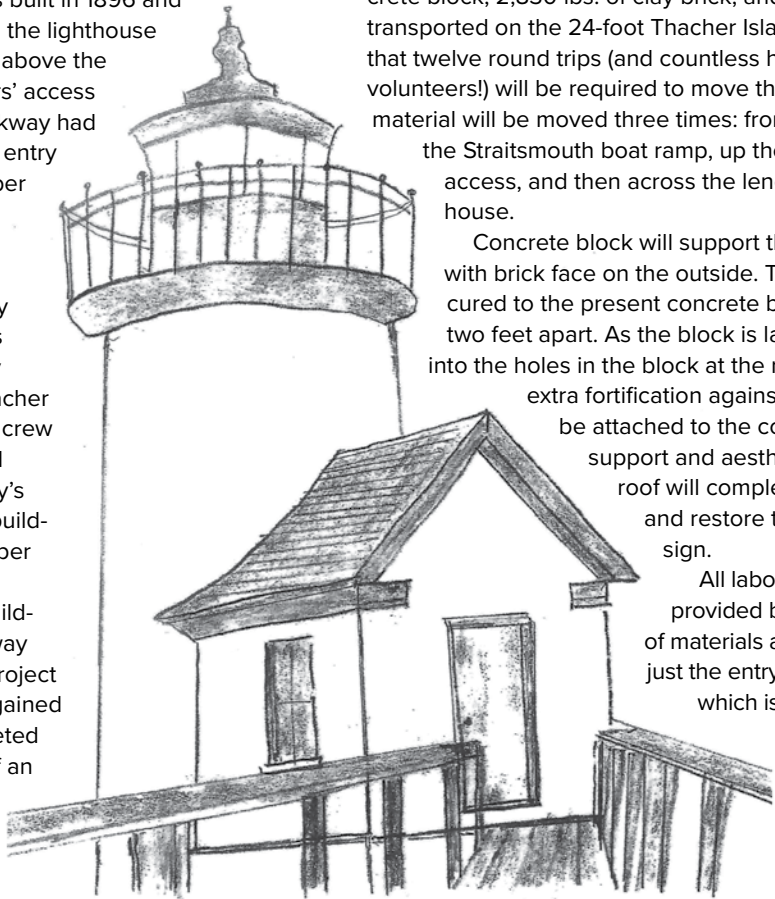
As with every project undertaken on Thacher and Straitsmouth

Islands, transporting the required materials from the mainland will likely be the most challenging part. Altogether 13,680 lbs. of concrete block, 2,830 lbs. of clay brick, and 4,800 lbs. of cement will be transported on the 24-foot Thacher Island I launch. It is estimated that twelve round trips (and countless hours of heavy lifting by our volunteers!) will be required to move the 21,310 lbs. of material. The material will be moved three times: from Rockport's Granite Pier to the Straitsmouth boat ramp, up the steep hill to reach vehicle access, and then across the length of the island to the lighthouse.

Concrete block will support the structure on the inside with brick face on the outside. The concrete block will be secured to the present concrete base with steel rebar spaced two feet apart. As the block is laid, concrete will be poured into the holes in the block at the rebar locations to provide extra fortification against storm surge. The brick will be attached to the concrete block for additional support and aesthetics. A window and wooden roof will complete the entry cabin project and restore the structure to its original design.

All labor for this project will be provided by TIA volunteers. The cost of materials and transportation to rebuild just the entry cabin is estimated at \$6,900, which is twice the \$3,427.12 it cost to build both the tower and cabin in 1896! ■

—Paul Sena
 Once the entry cabin and walkway are finished this summer, the structure will be restored to its original design.



Thacher & Straitsmouth Islands: At the Doorstep of a Changing Gulf of Maine

The waters that surround Thacher and Straitsmouth Islands are part of a semi-enclosed sea, the Gulf of Maine (GOMe), which is bounded on the north and west by Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine and the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia (see map). The Scotian Shelf and Georges Bank comprise the northeast and southeast boundaries of the gulf. A complex series of geological features including deep basins (~650 feet), channels, and shallow banks shape the gulf.

The GOMe is fed by numerous rivers and basins that drain 25 watersheds and 11 coastal drainage areas. The total land area of the GOMe watershed is nearly 70,000 square miles.

All these unique features contribute to this highly productive ecosystem. The base of this ecosystem, often described as "an invisible forest," includes small plant (phytoplankton) and animal (zooplankton) organisms that have supported the historic New England fisheries. In addition to supporting fish and crustacean populations, the GOMe provides a vital source of food and habitat for whales, porpoises, seals and seabirds.

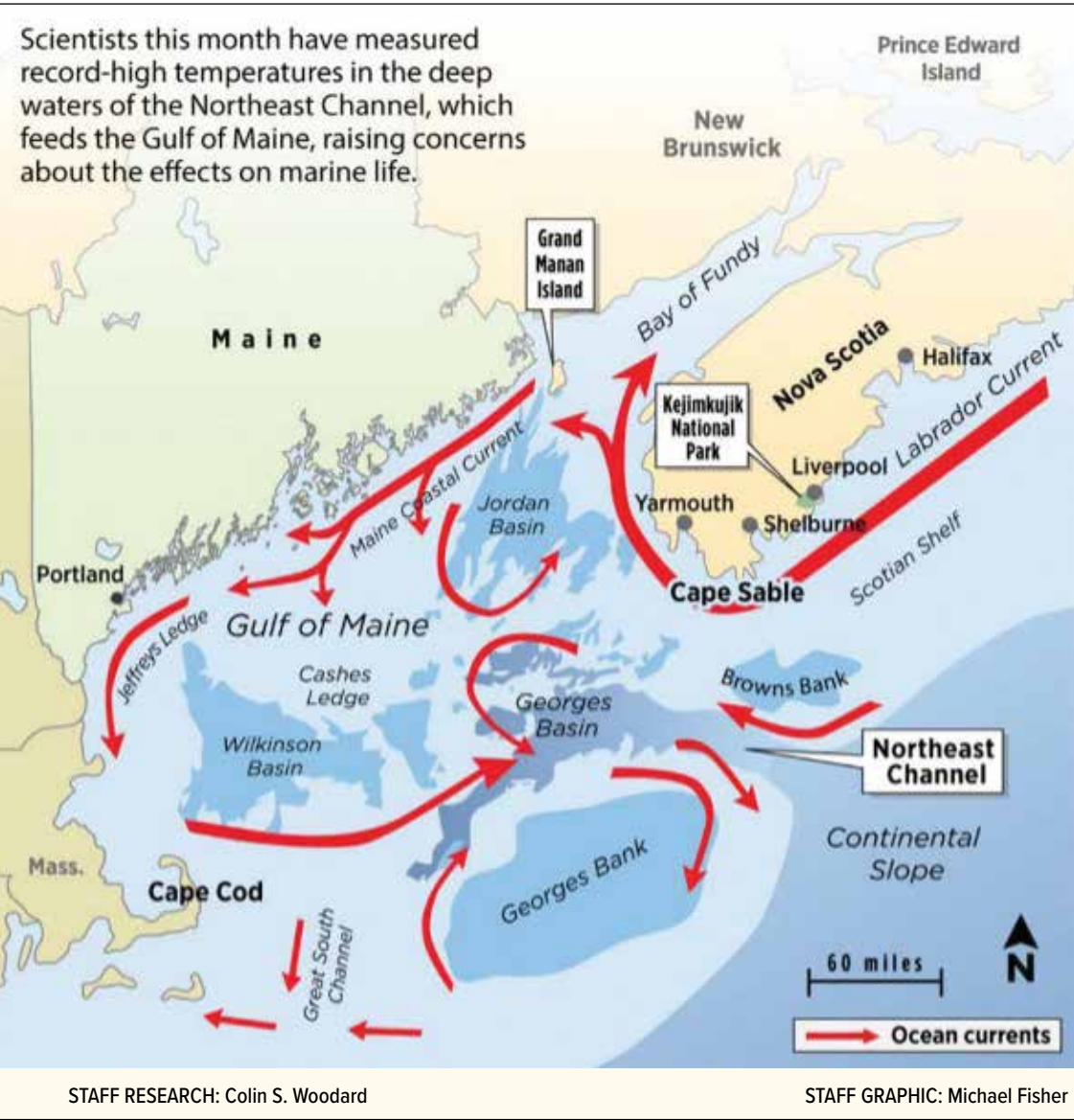
Key features that drive this rich ecosystem are the unique ocean currents that flow to and through the GOMe from many miles away. A large-scale coastal circulation that affects the GOMe originates from the Labrador Sea, north of Newfoundland, and flows south to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. Cold seawater enters the gulf from the east over the Scotian Shelf, Browns Bank and through the Northeast Channel. Within the GOMe, the current flows around Nova Scotia and into the Bay of Fundy. The coast then deflects currents southwest towards Thacher and Straitsmouth Islands. A portion of this flow forms the counter-clockwise Gulf of Maine Gyre. Tidal fluctuations and shallow waters over Georges Bank form a second, clockwise gyre. Completing the journey, the current flow exits the gulf through the Great South Channel and over the eastern portion of Georges Bank.

Another important influence on the GOMe ecosystem originates in the Atlantic Ocean. The North Atlantic Oscillation (i.e., a weather occurrence, caused by fluctuations in atmospheric pressure at sea level) influences the relative location of warm Gulf Stream waters that approach the GOMe from

the south, and the colder Labrador Current waters that flow toward the area from the north.

Changes are appearing to the GOMe ecosystem. Earlier this year scientists from Maine's Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences announced results from their studies that examined chemical changes in the GOMe since 1998. They discovered that the microscopic plants (phytoplankton) are approximately 65% less productive than they were two decades ago. Intrusions of warm water from the North Atlantic have created warmer and saltier conditions that are unfavorable for phytoplankton. A decline in phytoplankton productivity may have significant consequences and trigger shifts in the distribution of the marine species. Additional studies are underway to examine these changes in an effort to improve our ability to forecast future changes. Understanding these changes will be instrumental in adapting to the future GOMe. ■

—Margaret (Peg) Brady



GOME Map from Portland Press Herald, 24 April 2018.



Oystercatcher Pair

A Unique Collaboration *(cont. from page 1)*

Hérons and major populations of Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, and Glossy Ibis. By contrast on Straitsmouth, since 2010, TIA has collaborated with the town of Rockport and Mass Audubon to create public access that furthers appreciation of the island's natural and human history.

With the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss confronting conservation efforts, Mass Audubon announced a five-year strategic plan in 2021 titled “Go Wild,” introducing “an era of bold and urgent action.” What will this mean for Straitsmouth Island? Hopefully, the unusual collaboration with TIA will provide the opportunity for Mass Audubon to focus on the island's natural environment

while TIA continues with the mission of providing public awareness and access.

There may be additional synergies in areas where TIA volunteers could assist with habitat and species conservation goals. During the summers of 2021 and 2022, Mass Audubon began an inventory of flora and fauna on Straitsmouth to inform their management plan. In cooperation TIA stopped maintaining short sections of trail that led to sensitive habitat that Mass Audubon preferred to keep undisturbed. Lush, mostly native regrowth quickly obscured those sections. Mass Audubon has also identified some areas needing invasive plant control and plans to meet with TIA before the 2023 season to discuss how volunteers could assist with their highest-priority invasive plant control efforts.

Last summer, Mass Audubon observed and monitored the American Oystercatcher, which has begun to nest on neighboring Thacher Island. A few years ago, I was first alerted to an oystercatcher flyby on Straitsmouth by the distinctive whistling

flight call. In my time on Straitsmouth in succeeding years, I have observed these colorful birds foraging daily east of the lighthouse at low tides. Mass Audubon hopes to hire a field technician to document species on Straitsmouth this summer and is also interested in recruiting and training some TIA volunteers to assist.

Island keepers and other volunteers who might enjoy being the eyes and ears of conservation science this summer, watch your email for contact information! ■

—Harry Newell

The Islands as Creative Muse

For some, the islands off the coast of Rockport inspire creativity. Consider these samples of artistic expression; some are functional, some are educational, some are silly or humorous, but each artist has been inspired by their experience on Straitsmouth or Thacher Island.



An old bench has a new life as a bus stop sculpture; imagine such a thing on an island. Donna Cusick and Susan McGrath were among those who modified and refreshed this installation.

When you provide supplies and ask people to make art, you can transform a composting toilet into a gallery of decorated found materials. Visit this gallery and find an artist's name on each piece.



Look closely and you will see these lights shine as yellow but they do not blink. Donna Cusick designed this tattoo of the twin lights for her leg. The list of volunteer projects Cusick has supported is even longer than that leg. Photographer: Donna Cusick

Perhaps you are not on the island but its aura has found its way into your imagination. Work crew volunteer Fred McGrath carved this design on his Halloween pumpkin.



Thacher Island Volunteer Work Crew Profile

Nathan Ives

Nate Ives refers to the islands as “places I love” and “such treasures”, but it took time before seeing the islands merged with the experience of being there.

Nate grew up in Rockport, recalling that the islands were “imprinted” on town life, the town seal, and artistic images everywhere, yet the islands were “unreachable”. At age 17 in 1981, Nate remembers a group of Rockport residents completing a transition of ownership from the federal government to the town, making the islands somewhat more accessible, but without boats or landing ramps.

In 2014 Nate was invited by Doc Wedmore to visit Thacher Island to help two others roof the campground pavilion. One volunteer began to slide off the roof and “in a flash” was grabbed by the other avoiding a serious fall. He thought, these people may not know each other, but they “fall into sync” when they work together. On that same trip, Doc handed Nate his keys and suggested he climb one of the lighthouses. From the top Nate thought, “no one gets views like this”. And so began Nate's routine to take every summer Wednesday as vacation from

work, traveling from Connecticut, to “swing a hammer”. After many years away, Nate returned to Rockport in 2018, and regards these volunteers as friends, affectionately referring to them as “characters, all of them”.

Nate refers to himself as spiritual and has felt the call of God for many years, but it was 2004 when he began his formal training part time, leading to ordination as a minister in 2014. Seminary was an amalgam of Christian, Muslim and Jewish students, good preparation for becoming the rector of St. Peter's-San Pedro Episcopal Church in Salem Massachusetts. Fluent in Spanish, Nate is proud to have united Latino and Anglo congregants at the church by placing everyone on “equal footing”.

Nate is a self-proclaimed “birder”. One more reason to love the islands is the abundance of bird life. Osprey are one of his favorite species, for their flying patterns/migration, their hunting behavior and in admiration of their resilience in returning from DDT poisoning. Nate had been an osprey nest watcher in Connecticut. So, finding ideal conditions on Straitsmouth Island, Nate organized a team to build an osprey nesting platform. A remote camera allows the plat-



Nate relaxes on the Straitsmouth keeper house porch. Nate commutes by kayak to Straitsmouth Island on Wednesday work crew days.

form to be monitored throughout the year. With disappointment in his voice, Nate says, “no one has come to my open house” meaning no couple has nested there, admitting it takes time. There have been “users”, albeit for other purposes. Nate recounts seeing a bird of prey using it to devour an eider duck. When the bird extended its wings, it was a large snowy owl, a noteworthy sighting.

Nate has expanded his volunteer involvement by being a regular annual keeper on Straitsmouth Island and a member of the Thacher Island Association board of directors. Nate is still working and lives in Rockport with his wife and daughter. Thank you Nate for your service. ■

—George Langer



Nate commutes by kayak to Straitsmouth Island on Wednesday work crew days.

In Memoriam

Barbara Fisher

December 1937–November 2022

Barbara Fisher was “bright, capable, and did not hesitate to try new things,” recalled Dr. Sydney Wedmore, who met the assistant director of nursing for Den Mar Nursing Home in the mid-1970s. Wedmore offered to sponsor her enrollment in Massachusetts General Hospital's new nurse practitioner program and provide an internship in his Rockport practice after she completed the course. That began a 24-year medical partnership.

Concern that a damaged landing ramp had prevented Thacher Island keeper Sylvia Whitaker from receiving medical care led to a dicey launch landing and yet another adventure for Cape Ann's first nurse practitioner. Barbara Fisher loved the island, became a volunteer, and persuaded her husband, George, to serve as president of the Thacher Island Association from 1990 to 2000. At the end of that decade, Barbara managed rentals of an island apartment. She had a soft spot for veterans returning from the Gulf and Balkan wars, always moving them to the top of the reservation list.

“There's one thing I'd like people to know about Barbara Fisher,” Wedmore said. “She served the island during its darkest time. The Whistle House was damaged; the ramp was a ruin; boat landings were dangerous; and people who supported the island had melted away like summer soldiers. She and her husband were part of a small group that continued to breathe life into the flickering beacon of Thacher Island.”



Salute to Volunteers



Thacher Island Association depends on many valuable volunteers. The effort and results produced by work crews, boat crews, docents and keepers—all volunteers—amounted to 5,786 hours in 2022.

Their work is most visible when visitors see the condition of the buildings and grounds and experience the care that the boat crew offers. Island visitors often express appreciation for the efforts to provide access to, restore, and maintain these historical assets.

There is a small group of volunteers whose efforts are carried out behind the scene and thus less visible, but of equal importance in supporting the TIA. We offer special thanks to these individuals.

Christine Lovgren manages all TIA merchandise. When orders are placed, Christine packs and ships the merchandise to its destination. Christine also ensures merchandise is available for purchase at the Rockport farmer’s market booth, on the islands, and on our sunset cruises. Christine is a TIA board member and a work crew volunteer and island keeper.

Kristy Rudel, Secretary of the TIA, manages membership and communications to our large database of over 1,000 members and 1,823 non-members. Kristy acknowledges donations on behalf of the TIA and is an island keeper as well.

Camille Glick is the helpful person who answers the launch and cruise reservation telephone. In 2022 she personally assisted many of the 1,184 visitors who purchased tickets for the visitor boats and sunset cruises. Camille and her husband are island keepers as well.

Karen Wise is the person behind the TIA website. Karen responds to the steady flow of inquiries to info@thacherisland.org and assists with accounting activities for orders placed on the website. Karen is a TIA board member, a docent, and an island keeper.

Thank you to all our volunteers.

Above, left to right: Christine Lovgren, Kristy Rudel, Camille Glick, Karen Wise.

Searching for Volunteers

Are you searching for a rewarding volunteer opportunity?

Do you enjoy writing? Look no further.

Volunteers are needed to serve on TSI News editorial board!

TSI News is an official publication of the Thacher Island Association. TSI News is published twice a year in April and November and is distributed to over 1,000 members and contributors.

As a volunteer member of the editorial board, you will work collaboratively with other volunteers to explore topics. Once the board determines the topics each volunteer will research and prepare their assigned articles. This volunteer activity can be accomplished remotely. Articles are generally 300–500 words and may include photos and/or graphics. Volunteers work about 10 hours twice a year in February and September. The editorial board meets virtually via Zoom, about 2–3 times for each issue. The editorial board includes 8–10 volunteers who work collaboratively by reviewing each other’s articles. Your article(s) will include your byline. This volunteer work is rated as fun and rewarding. No one is harmed in the process.

Respond to info@thacherisland.org, to the attention of George Langer.

Left: North Tower on a foggy morning, Thacher Island.

Picture This! 2024 Calendar Photo Contest

We are most fortunate to visit, or live in, the unique and beautiful landscape of Cape Ann. This year we are once again sponsoring a photo contest to collect spectacular images of Thacher and Straitsmouth Islands. Along with the iconic lighthouses, the islands provide breathtaking scenes of natural beauty. The winning photographs will be used to produce the Thacher Island Association calendar for 2024 and will be featured on our website. In addition, we hope to display the top photos in a public space in Gloucester or Rockport.

You are invited to submit up to two images that reflect the beauty of Thacher and Straitsmouth Islands. All images must be submitted by August 15, 2023, be in landscape format, and high resolution. For contest rules and entry forms go to www.thacherisland.org, and click on Events. There is no entry fee.

Winners will be notified in early September, and the calendars will be available in November. For more information, please contact photocontest@thacherisland.org.

Happy clicking!



Be Careful What You Ask For

What happens when you ask Thacher and Straitsmouth volunteers if they have any ideas for improvements on the islands? When Town Committee Chairperson Syd Wedmore and Thacher Island Association President Bill Whiting send such a solicitation each winter, we soon see a long email thread jam-packed with great ideas. We are reminded how much our volunteers care about visitors’ and volunteers’ experiences. And we witness their creativity, commitment, and passion. On the downside, we are reminded that there is a never-ending amount of work to be done.

This year, Syd and Bill’s email resulted in over two dozen potential projects and equipment upgrades. Examples ranged from replacing an aging weed whacker to a major construction project to replace all the windows on the Thacher Keeper Houses. Other suggestions included improving Internet service, installing a rainwater collection system (for cleaning paint brushes and watering plants), clearing invasive weeds from indigenous plant species, and adding a water purification system at Thacher (to eliminate the need to transport jugs of drinking water from

the mainland). Ideas that would directly improve the overall visitor experience included building new trails and improving existing ones, moving the campsite reservation sys-



Visitors Enjoying the Shade from a Volunteer-Initiated Project.

tem online (like the boat reservation system), encouraging visits to the museums, and somehow enhancing or reducing the time visitors spend at the boat house waiting for a ride back to shore. We have a few ideas for the latter and welcome your suggestions next time you find yourself sitting there.

You might be wondering whether all of these volunteer suggestions will become reality. Like any non-profit volunteer organization, we are limited by available budgets and volunteer labor. And long-term planned improvements and unplanned essential repairs compete for resources. Proposed projects are vetted against a philosophy developed over many years with the following primary criteria: does it improve visitor safety; does the project best utilize volunteer skills; does its size challenge but not overwhelm.

None of these projects could happen without the ongoing financial support of our members and the Town of Rockport, especially the Community Preservation Committee, as well as our volunteers’ energy, enthusiasm, and initiative. Given all that, it’s a fair bet that some of these suggestions will become proud accomplishments that we will chronicle in next fall’s newsletter. ■

—Norm Delisle



Volunteers Hard at Work on a Planned Project.

Summer 2023 Projects will make Thacher . . .

SAFER

- » An older defibrillator unit will be replaced, and a new unit purchased for the South Tower.
- » Emergency kits will be updated, and a new kit supplied to the South Tower
- » Propane gas manifolds will be replaced at both Keeper Houses.

SHIPSHAPE

- » Third floor bedrooms in the Assistant Keeper House will be plastered and repainted.
- » Guest Apartment will get a bathroom renovation and other plumbing upgrades.
- » The Whistle House will get a fresh coat of paint.

MORE INDEPENDENT

- » Electrical service will be extended to the cistern to power an electric pump.
- » A Triple Clear filter will be installed in the water system and a second pressure pump put on line.

MORE CLIMATE FRIENDLY

- » More work will be completed on upgrading the solar power array.

MORE COMFORTABLE

- » Seating will be built and installed near the Whistle House.

BETTER UNDERSTOOD

- » Additional interpretive signage to be installed will describe: the Londoner Reef and Pole; the succession of light towers from 1771 to 1865; the foundation of the old Whistle House; the cistern; the water supply for the original steam whistle; flora of the island; and shore birds to look for.

IN APPRECIATION

By the time you get to this point in the Newsletter I hope you have a good understanding of all the wonderful (and necessary) projects that we have planned on Thacher and Straitsmouth for the 2023 season.

While we are exceedingly lucky that we can rely on our over 100 volunteers to contribute their time and effort readily, untiringly, and cheerfully, accomplishing anything on an island presents some unique challenges. Transporting all the work crews and necessary materials back-and-forth to two different islands, and providing utilities and water to the keepers, volunteers, and island visitors takes a lot of organization and effort. While our volunteers provide almost all of the necessary labor, we occasionally have to hire contractors to handle the specialized work. Obtaining competitive bids for those jobs has become quite difficult.

And certainly, raising the funds necessary to pay for all of this activity is also challenging. We have been very fortunate over the years to benefit from the loyal support and generosity of over 1,000 Thacher Island Association members and volunteers as well as local businesses and foundations. I cannot say it enough: many, many thanks to all of you who have given so very generously for so many years.

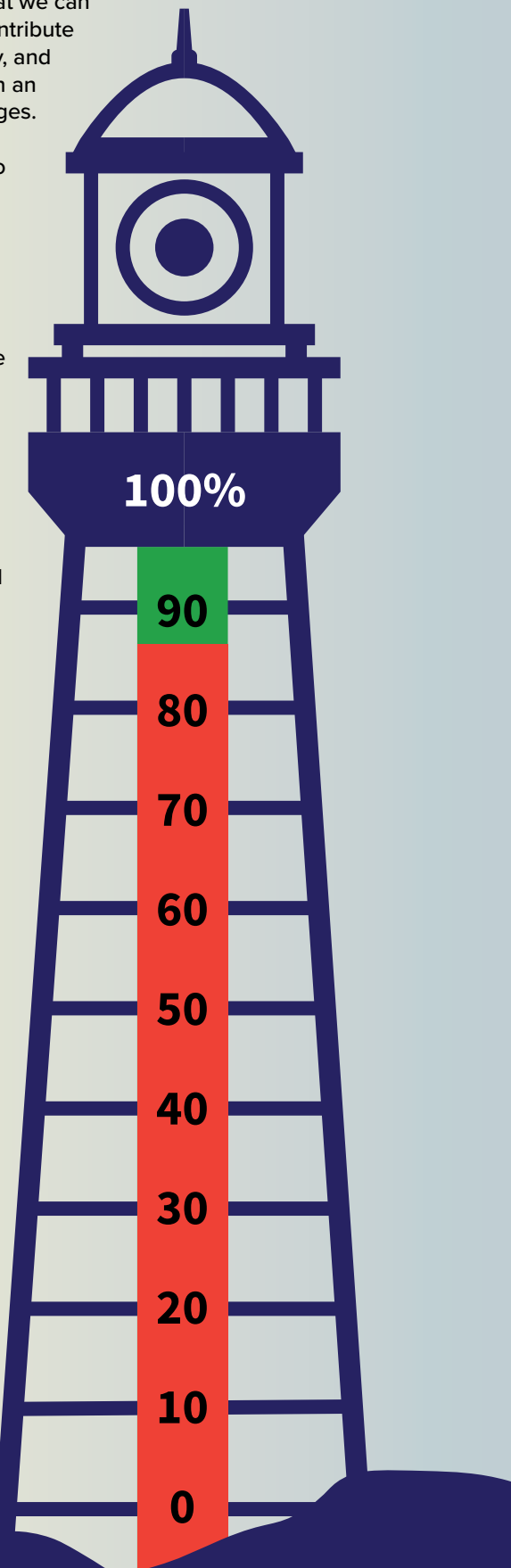
The critical infrastructure repairs on the summer 2023 project list for both islands are estimated to cost over \$175,000. Next year we expect to need \$400,000 to stabilize the South Tower. We are pleased, as you will see on the adjacent graph, that we have raised 87% of that goal.

If you have already responded to our recent appeals ... THANKS!

If, however, you haven't yet had a chance to show your support for the TIA's important work to preserve—and make it possible for visitors to experience the beauty of—these two nationally historic islands please consider making a donation today! You can do so by using the enclosed envelope or accessing our website www.thacherisland.org. A donation of any size is always much appreciated.

Warm regards,

Bill Whiting, President



Recording of the Thacher Island Association Annual Meeting

You can be in the know if you listen to the recording of the Thacher Island Association annual meeting held November 9, 2022 at Spiran Hall in Rockport. Recognizing that many of our valued volunteers do not live in Rockport, the leadership team decided to hold this meeting by Zoom and record it. So, have a listen and let us know what you think.



SCAN TO
LISTEN / VIEW

Scan the QR code with your smartphone camera or type this link into your browser:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mbS4rMHrAE



2023 Launch Access to Straitsmouth & Thacher Islands

Our boats, Thacher Island I and Thacher Island II, will be back in the water with our able captains and crew beginning Tuesday, June 6, 2023. We expect to transport more than 900 visitors to the islands during the summer season ending with the last launch trip on Wednesday, August 30, 2023.

Launch trips are available to Straitsmouth Island on Tuesdays and to Thacher Island on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Tickets, which become available on May 13, 2023, can be purchased using Eventbrite (www.eventbrite.com). Scan the QR Code in this article with your smartphone camera for instant Eventbrite access to tickets on the day and island of your choosing. For those experiencing problems with Eventbrite you may call 617-599-2590 for assistance.

There are some important considerations for the 2023 season:

- » COVID: Massachusetts COVID guidelines at the time of each scheduled departure will be enforced.
- » Fare increase: The "Adult Non-member" round trip boat fare has increased to \$40. However, a Thacher Island Association individual membership (\$40) entitles the holder to two free launch seats and a family membership (\$75) entitles the holder to four seats per

season, as long as the reservations are available. Because reservations fill quickly, the most cost-effective way to see the islands is to join or renew TIA memberships and make reservations as early in the season as possible.

The TIA boat launches make the islands accessible to everyone. We hope you will join us.



TUESDAYS
STRAITSMOUTH



WEDNESDAYS
THACHER



SATURDAYS
THACHER

Sunset Lighthouse Cruise 2023

The very popular sunset lighthouse cruise returns in 2023. This is the most important fundraising event on the Thacher Island Association annual calendar. With your support TIA preserves and provides accessibility to Straitsmouth and Thacher Islands including their 15 or so buildings. Your cruise ticket purchase helps to maintain these historic assets.

The cruise route departs from Gloucester Harbor, traversing Cape Ann counter-clockwise to the Annisquam River as it meets Ipswich Bay, where we come about for our return to Gloucester Harbor. The boat will approach all six Cape Ann lighthouses from Ten Pound to Annisquam. Other sites include the Londoner Reef, the Dry Salvages, Avery Ledge, and the old breakwater of Sandy Bay.

The 2023 cruise is scheduled for Tuesday, July 11 (alternate date Thursday, July 13). Look for details on our website (www.thacherisland.org), in email communications to members, in a Gloucester Daily Times print article, socially on Good Morning Gloucester, and via flyers posted in shops around Cape Ann.

Tickets go on sale Monday, April 10, 2023, using Eventbrite (www.eventbrite.com). Scan the QR code in this article with your smartphone camera for instant Eventbrite access to tickets.

Once again this trip will be underwritten by corporate sponsors: companies committed to our communities on Cape Ann. A list will be out by early June. Please show your appreciation by supporting these businesses.

Bring your own food and make a picnic on board or buy light food and drinks at the galley on board the boat. Oh, and please no pets.

This cruise is hugely popular so tickets go quickly. Don't wait to get yours! We look forward to seeing you on the boat.



SCAN TO
BUY TICKETS



Heidi Delisle and Bruce Perkins discussing the design of the new Thacher Island merchandise cart.

Olde Tyme Merchandise Cart

Readers of this newsletter already know about the wonderful branded merchandise available on our website. Current selections include clothing with Thacher Island or Straitsmouth Island logos, books, a calendar with contest-winning photos, and collectibles such as commemorative coins.

This same merchandise is available on both islands. On Thacher Island, visitors used to select and purchase these items inside the boat house. This arrangement was awkward because the boat house was never intended to host visitors. And for safety, it is closed during boat operations—a prime time for visitors to browse through our selections.

Two of our volunteers collaborated to solve this problem by building a portable display cart during the off-season. Bruce Per-

kins did the custom woodworking, and Heidi Delisle fabricated the canopy. The design is inspired by vintage street vendor carts with two oversized spoked steel wheels, a beautiful turned-wood handle, and a scallop-edged, striped fabric roof.

Docents load the cart and wheel it outside the boat house on visitor days. During its first two summers on Thacher Island, merchandise sales increased due to the convenience and visibility of available items.

Bruce and Heidi are at it again this winter, building another cart for Straitsmouth Island. We are all curious to know whether they will make an exact clone or add new unique touches. Stay tuned.

—Norm Delisle

New Book by Paul St. Germain, *Three Bridges to Paradise*

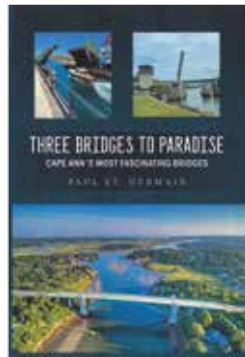
There are over 600,000 bridges in America. They continue to do their job over the years, and many have intriguing stories.

America's oldest seaport, Gloucester, Massachusetts, has sixteen bridges but only three of them have a significant impact on the history, culture, and social wellbeing of the residents. Their unique function is to provide access off and on the island for thousands of people a day. This is a history of their reason for being, construction, maintenance, failures, and successes over the years since the Blynman Drawbridge and Canal were built in 1643 to the Gloucester Railroad Drawbridge in 1911 and the giant 800-foot steel arch span A. Piatt Andrew Bridge built in 1950 as part of the completion of Route 128.

As Gloucester celebrates its quadricentennial in 2023 this book will be part of the 400 years of unique memories that only these three bridges can provide.

Order now on the Thacher web site at www.thacherisland.org/product-category/books/ or at Dorrance Publishing's e-commerce bookstore at www.dorrancebookstore.com or on Amazon. The book will also be available in Amazon's Kindle digital reader and Barnes and Noble's Nook reader later this summer.

All proceeds go to the Thacher Island Association.



Price \$26.00
230 pages
Over 100 photographs



Dry Bag *NEW*

Features Thacher Island Association logo, clear window, roll top and buckle closure, 210T ripstop polyester and PVC plastic.

\$15.00



Denim Keeper's Shirt

This 100% cotton, soft denim shirt is a key item to own. It proudly shows off the Thacher Island Twin Lights embroidery.

Comes in S, M, L, XL, 2XL

\$44.50

Featured Thacher Island Association Merchandise

As always ... FREE shipping



NEW

Mesh Hats

Unstructured hats feature Thacher Island Twin Lights logo, Royal Blue, Charcoal and Nantucket Red, adjustable, washed cotton twill and soft khaki mesh.

\$25.00



Thacher Island Short Sleeve Panorama T-Shirt

Blue or White, 100% cotton, comes in S, M, L, XL, 2XL

\$27.00



Classic Keeper Hats

Show off the Thacher Island Twin Lights logo

Nautical Red, Faded Blue, Khaki and Graphite, adjustable, 100% cotton, washable

\$25.00



Straitsmouth Island Short Sleeve Panorama T-Shirt

White, 100% cotton, comes in S, M, L, XL, 2XL

\$27.00



Straitsmouth Island Short Sleeve T-Shirt

With graphic of the island logo front and back

Mist, 100% cotton, comes in S, M, L, XL, 2XL

\$27.00

For more available items, please go to our web site
www.thacherisland.org and click on Shop.



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YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE IS ABOVE THE ADDRESS LABEL.

IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

We depend on Membership Dues and Donations to help fund our vital mission of preserving and promoting public access to Thacher and Straitsmouth Islands. Please check the address label on this newsletter to see if your membership is due to be renewed. Renewing is easy! Simply return the attached reply envelope with your check or credit card information. Or if you prefer, renew online at www.thacherisland.org/join-us. If you'd prefer not to worry about annual renewals ever again, perhaps consider becoming a Life Member.

Thank you for your support.



A THACHER ISLAND ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP MAKES A GREAT GIFT!

Thacher Island Association memberships make a great gift! A thoughtful gift for friends and relatives, membership comes with two issues of this newsletter each year, stickers for your car/boat, free rides to Thacher and Straitsmouth Islands, and the knowledge that you are helping to preserve two unique National Historic Sites. To order, go online at www.thacherisland.org and provide the lucky recipient's info in the "Order Notes" box.

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