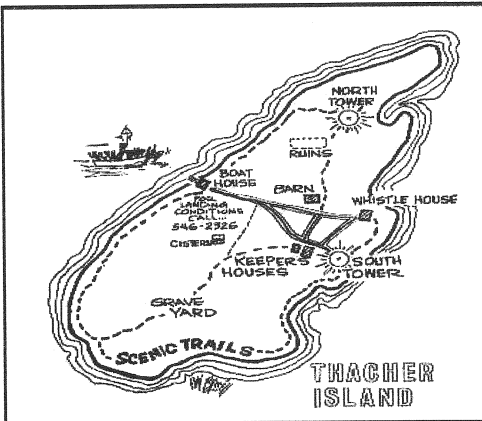


Thacher Island Association Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 3

October 2001

Coast Guard turns Island over to the Town.



After six years of negotiation, planning and discussion, the Board of Selectmen in Rockport officially accepted the southern 28 acres of Thacher Island from the Coast

Guard as part of the Town of Rockport. The deed was signed on July 24. The process was overseen by the Thacher Island Town Committee as well as the Thacher Island Association, which began with letters to U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy in the early part of 1993, and a unanimous Town Meeting vote that same year to acquire part of the island.

Their signature means Rockport will take on the responsibility of the south tower, two keepers dwellings, whistle house, oil house, utility house, boathouse and ramp, and cistern.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will continue to own the northern 22 acres including the north tower as a wildlife refuge. The Town will continue to abide by a memo of understanding with Fish and Wildlife to help manage and maintain the north tower and trails. The Town Committee also maintains the light as a private aid to navigation. Both TITC and TIA will begin to search for grant money and other funds to restore the historical buildings. The brick keepers house built in 1861 and the principal keeper's house built in 1875 need significant repairs and rehabilitation to bring them back to their original historical look and condition.

Costs have been estimated in the three to four hundred thousand dollar range.

Island opens to throngs of visitors this summer.



Kayakers flock to Thacher Island this summer.

After being closed to the public for the past 6 years throngs of boaters, kayakers, and members have dropped by to visit this summer.

Saturdays during the summer the TITC and TIA offered 2 hour trips to the island from Rockport harbor. Dottie Carroll who has been coordinating reservations reported "we have filled the Thacher Island launch every weekend, sometimes twice". Only one weekend was rained out. The launch holds 15 passengers plus a crew of three. "We are very thankful to the launch Captains who have volunteered their time this summer to take folks out" said Dottie. "One trip included members of the Council on Aging, many of whom have lived in the area their entire lives and had never had the opportunity to visit the island."

To date we have had over 700 people visit many of whom came from other parts of the country not just Rockport or Gloucester. Camping is also available and we have had many campers this summer and fall as well.

Next season we hope to make the keepers guest apartment available for rent. We are in the process of refurbishing

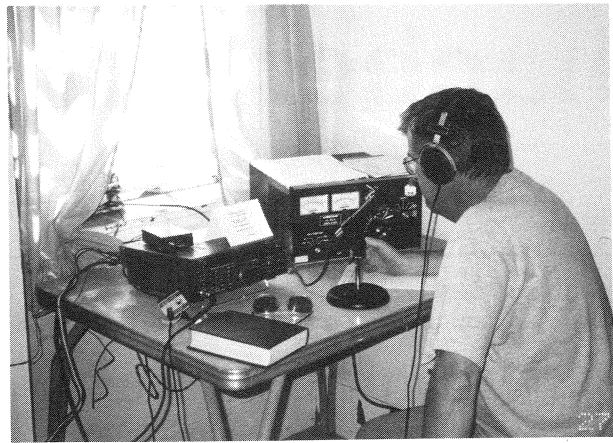
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bishing it now and hope it will be ready by spring. We will let all members know when -and if- the apartment will be ready for rental.

TIA Annual Meeting results in record turnout.

The Thacher Island Association held its 20th Annual Meeting at the Peggy Brenner room of the Rockport Public library on June 25th. We had the largest turnout in years, with over 75 people attending. President, Paul St. Germain, presented a slide presentation reviewing the past years accomplishments with the assistance of Les Bartlett, a new member and a skilled photographer and computer expert. A silent auction was held in which a variety of art pieces were auctioned raising add-totover \$600 for the Association. Refreshments were provided by Eileen and Bob Smith and the annual "lighthouse cookies" prepared by Dottie Carroll were enjoyed by all. Later in the proceedings Steve Kesselman, Superintendent of the Salem Maritime National Historic Site and a National Park Service representative presented to the Town and the Thacher Island Committee the official bronze plaque confirming the designation of "Cape Ann Light Station" as a National Historic Landmark. "This is an honor for the Town of Rockport and a recognition that this light station goes back to our colonial roots in 1771. It is historically significant to this country and played a key role in the early growth of our nation", said Paul St. Germain in accepting the plaque. Plans were also discussed for the coming year including the possibility of renting the keeper apartment and re-roofing the houses and other fund raising activities. Officers and Directors were also elected. Paul St. Germain, President, George Fisher, Vice President, Dick Douglas, Secretary, Bob Eirich, Treasurer. New Directors include Dottie Carroll, Pat Dawson, Andy Heinze, Peter Bergholtz, and Cynthia Peckham.



Tony Spino works the radio from the kitchen of the keepers house for 12 hours straight and contacts over 2000 radio operators around the world.

Ham Radio operators make over 2000 contacts around the world from Thacher.

This past July ham radio operators Tony Spino and Lou Cables from Prospect Ct. spent two nights on the island and set up their radios in preparation for two different radio operator contests. One sponsored by the Radio Society of Great Britain's "Islands on the Air" program and second a U.S. sponsored program of the Amateur Radio Lighthouse Society which seeks to promote public awareness of the roll ham radio and light beacons have played in assisting and maintaining safety at sea; to preserve the heritage and history of lighthouses and lightships and to aid in preserving those lights in danger of destruction or decay. Tony and Lou are new members of the Association and have broadcast from other lightstations including Isles of Shoals, Appeledore Island, Sheffield Island, Thimble Islands (CT) and Long Beach Island site of Barnegat Light. Tony tells us the Thacher's is a particularly rare North American Island to broadcast from as listed in RSGB's Directory of the Worlds Islands and ARLS' World List of Lights. The object of their quest is to contact as many distant islands around

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the world as possible. They then exchange post cards, via the mail, that confirm the details of their radio contact. These cards are then submitted to RSGB and ARLS and when verified, earn the operators various certificates and plaques.

Tony and Lou made 2031 contacts during the 3 days of broadcasting from Thacher. The farthest point around the world from Thacher is Perth, Australia. They made a contact there! They were able to contact all continents but Antarctica. They reached Singapore, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, USSR, Israel, Siberia, Hong Kong, and Africa to name a few.

Anyone interested in contacting them can put out a call to Tony at WFIN or Lou at WIDIG. I am sure they would love to hear from you.

Island Skiff repaired.



Thanks go out to Bob Smith for a great job in repairing the island's 16 foot skiff.

Bob re-

placed the gunnels with solid mahogany all around. The boat looks great and has been used numerous times this summer by the keepers as they need it from time to time to come ashore, do a little fishing or some lobstering.

Request for furniture.

In order to be able to open up the keeper's apartment for rental next summer we are in need of the following donations.

- Two recliners or easy chairs
- Upright freezer
- Three full size or queen size mattresses and box springs
- Television in good condition.

These items are all tax deductible since we are a non-profit organization. Anyone in the area who may have access to any of these items can call us at 978-546-7214 or 978-546-7697. We will make arrangements to pick them up. Thanks in advance for your help.

Island of Romance for Two



On August 20th new member, Bill Masterson called us to ask if he could possibly visit the island with his girlfriend for a special occasion. We said "Bill as long as you are a member we would love to have you and your date for a visit to the island." Bill's plan was to propose to Samantha Rugg at the top of the North tower. Two days later Bill called again to tell us that he purchased the ring and it was due in 2 weeks. Bill planned to come out on September 1. On Thursday August 30 he called again to say that the ring was lost by Federal Express and he would call to let us know if they found it. Saturday morning he called again to say he had the ring. So off we went at 9:00 am bound for "Fantasy Island" on the "Love Boat" otherwise known as the Thacher Island launch.

By 10:00 AM Bill and Samantha were engaged just as he planned it.

Bill moved from Florida recently to Framingham MA. He just purchased a home in Medway and plans to live there with Samantha soon. Bill recently wrote to tell us he and Samantha will be celebrating future anniversaries on Thacher. Good luck to the soon to be married, Bill and Samantha. If you need a honeymoon location maybe we could work something out. Do you know how to be a lighthouse keeper?



Thacher Island...An adventure with keeper Russell Grubb.
115 pgs. Soft cover, many b/w photos.

In December of 1980, Russell Grubb became the first volunteer civilian keeper at Cape Ann Light Station on Thacher Island. This is the story of the first 5 years that made him part of Thacher history. Gives great insight as to what a keeper faces on a day-to-day basis.

\$8.00 including postage and handling.



Denim Keeper Shirt.

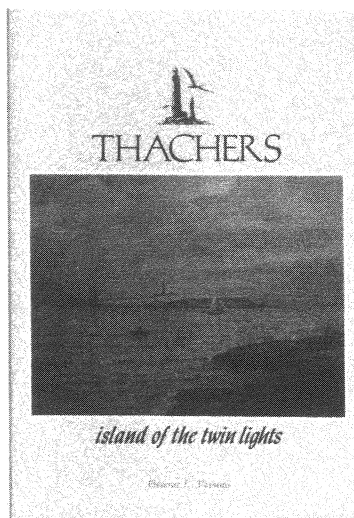
This 100% cotton, long sleeve, soft denim shirt proudly shows off the Thacher Island twin lights just like the hats below. Great Christmas present for those lighthouse lovers. Comes in S,M,L,XL.

\$40.00 incl. postage and handling.

New Hats for the Fall.

Shows off the Thacher Island Twin Lights logo in bright summer colors. Yellow, Periwinkle Blue, Lime and Tangerine. Adjustable, 100% cotton washable.

\$20.00 incl shipping and handling.



Thachers... island of the twin lights
149 pages with many b/w photos.

Book by Eleanor Parsons. The definitive book on the history of Thacher Island.

\$22.00 incl. postage and handling

**To order make checks payable and send to:
Thacher Island Association
Box 73, Rockport MA. 01966.**



Thacher Island Town Committee Honors Past Co-Chairpersons.

This past July, John and Mary Bennett announced that they would be stepping down as Co-Chairs of the Thacher Island Town Committee. Both have been vitally involved with Thacher since the days of Ned Cameron in 1980. They have each held a variety of positions on both the TITC and TIA. Mary and John have been involved and responsible for many key projects during this time including, the design and building of the Thacher Island launch, restoration and relighting of the north tower, rebuilding of the boat house and ramp (at least 3 times), the designation of the island as a National Historic Landmark, and finally the turnover of the island by the Coast Guard to the Town.

In honor of their dedication, perseverance and hard work the TITC has named a trail on the southeastern side of the island as "Bennett's Trace". Signs are being made now to commemorate their trail. Although stepping down, Mary will still be on the Committee as archivist while John will continue to be "Commodore" in charge of the launch.

Syd Wedmore was elected as new Chairman and Seth Cutter as Vice Chairman by the TITC. Good luck to all and congratulations.



George Carroll takes another load of rubbish down to the ramp for shipment to the town transfer station.

Work Crews achieve significant progress.

Work crews headed by Syd Wedmore once again forged ahead to complete many key projects this summer. First on the list was to make ready, repair and clean the keepers house for the incoming volunteers who would be staying on the island .

Next, trail signs were reinstalled around the island for visitors. New regulations for the island and the north tower were posted. The winch in the boathouse was repaired and made operational to enable us to pull the launch up the ramp. The boat house was sanded, primed and repainted, a new threshold and screen door installed on the keepers apartment, the cellar entry to the principal keepers house was rebuilt and reroofed, southeast trail was graded and filled so a tractor can mow it. Sewer system repaired, telephones and radios made operational, water system upgraded, new washer and dryer purchased and installed. Six walking trails were widened, poison ivy controlled, a revised camping site was established. And finally tons of rubbish, old oil tanks, water heaters, pumps, and other materials taken off the island.

Thanks go out to our volunteers Syd Wedmore, Seth Cutter, Peter Bergholtz, Dick Morris, Ted Tarr, George and Dottie Carroll, Bob Smith, Dick Douglas and our keepers, John and Vi Materkowski, Merrell and Nancy Beebe, Andy and Kathy Heinz, and Alan Tomaska and Ann Hernandez.

Thacher Island Association

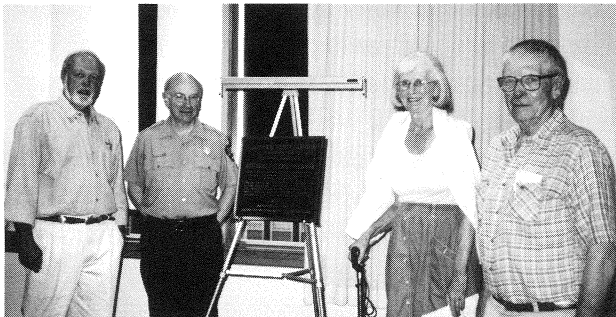
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Newsletter



Non-Profit Organization
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Permit No.19

National Historic Landmark Plaque Presented to TITC and Town.



From left to right are Association President, Paul St. Germain, Steve Kesselman, Superintendent of the Salem Maritime Historic Site of the National Park Service, Mary and John Bennett, Co-chairpersons of the Thacher Island Town Committee.



At the Annual Meeting, Steve Kesselman, Superintendent of the Salem Maritime Historic Site of the National Park Service presented us with this 20"x20" bronze plaque confirming the designation of Cape Ann Light Station as a National Historic Landmark. Thacher is now one of only 2500 sites so designated joining the ranks of the USS Constitution, Faneuil Hall and the U.S.Capitol Building.