



# FRIENDS OF SEGUIN ISLAND Light Station

[www.seguinisoland.org](http://www.seguinisoland.org)

MISSION STATEMENT

Celebrating 25 years

Fall/Winter 2011

*To distinguish Seguin Island as part of Maine's heritage,  
fostering connections with our area history for generations to come.*

Issue #54

## "SEGUIN"

By Manley H. Pike

She washes her sides in the cross-ripped tides  
At the mouth of the Kennebec;  
She's solid rock, 'n' if ever ye knock  
On her ye are safe for a wreck.  
She's picked 'n' jagged, 'n' wicked 'n' ragged,  
'N' blacker 'n' original sin –  
But it a'most come to bein' to hum  
W'en the Maine man sights Seguin.

Fur she is the mark we hunt in the dark,  
To show us the straight-up path;  
'N' the beacon by day that pints the way  
We wan' to travel to Bath.  
There's reefs to stabbard 'n' reefs to labbard,  
Where the offshore currents spin,  
But we don't care, ef we see up there,  
The light'ouse thet's on Seguin.

A feller that ain't case-hardened haint  
No business hereaway;  
'N' ye will find thet that Yankee kin'  
Is the kin' to stick 'n' stay.  
Ye don' feel nice, a-kivered 'ith ice,  
'N' col' 'ithout 'n' 'ithin—  
It takes a man to stan' his han'  
On a schooner off Seguin.

It blows 'n' blows, 'n' it snows 'n' snows,  
'N' you're blinded 'n' choked 'n' friz,  
Then all the coas' looms up like a ghos' –  
Jerusalem!—There she is!  
Though ha'f your face is a raw red place,  
Thet prickles ye like a pin,  
Ye soon thaw out w'en ye hear the shout,  
"Hoy, fellows, we've made Seguin!"

We may be rough, 'n' we hev to be tough,  
Ez it's nateral to be,  
But we do our bes' 'n' we leave the res'  
To the Lord who made the sea.  
He's a port aloft we have read it oft,  
'N' w'en we're sailin' in,  
We hope we'll sight his harbor light,  
Ez we ust to sight Seguin.

## "Seguin"

by Manley H. Pike  
appears in "The  
Maine Book",  
published in 1920  
as an historical  
account of  
Maine's poetic  
History. It was  
originally pub-  
lished in the late  
1800's in an  
edition of the  
Youth Companion.  
<—<



Celebrating 25 years of  
Historical Preservation

"The Enchanted  
Island" first ap-  
peared in the  
1926 publication  
of Taxis and  
Toadstools  
Verses and  
Decorations,  
a children's  
compilation writ-  
ten by the author.  
Contact us to find  
out how to obtain  
a copy.  
>—>

## "The Enchanted Island"

By Rachel Field

If you have once slept on an island  
You'll never be quite the same;  
You may look as you looked the day before  
And go by the same old name.

You may hustle about in street or shop,  
You may sit at home and sew,  
But you'll see blue water and wheeling  
gulls

Wherever your feet may go.

You may chat with the neighbor of this or  
that

And close to your fire keep,  
But you'll hear ship whistle and lighthouse  
bell

And tides beat through your sleep.

Oh, you won't know why, and you can't say  
how

Such a change upon you came  
But – once you have slept on an island  
You'll never be quite the same!

From the book *Taxis and Toadstools*

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## *A Message from our President*

This first message has to begin with the very successful Summerfest II that our outgoing President, Dee Perry and Chairperson DeDe Morong stage this past summer. The event bubbled with more people, more conversation, great auction items, great food and great music! It was...you guessed it...GREAT!!

As you will see elsewhere in this newsletter, we have a new Executive Committee: President, Ken Young, Vice President, Fred Kahrl, Secretary, Sherry Owen and Treasurer DeDe Morong. We thank all of our outgoing officers for a job well done, Thank You!

The excitement has been building all season. The On-Island Committee, chaired by Cyndy Carney, has put endless hours into working on the window sills, lawn mowers, electrical, plumbing, window salvaging, finishing the summer with adding a mooring to the cove for a grand total of six...much more was carried out by our dedicated and energetic caretakers: Nate and Amy Powers, whom are recent newly weds, congratulations and good luck. All and all an A+ of a summer.

We were aided by a very talented Morse High school intern, Lauren Crosby. Lauren contributed grace and efficiency to everything she was tasked to do. Ethan DeBery and others ferried visitors to and from the island, thank you both. We have had over 3,000 visitors this summer. Next season we will be adding a fourth to our captains list, Joe Sinibaldi. Visit our website for more information of ferries and tours.

We've had several organizations filming on the island. We will be featured in pieces from the Maine Board of Tourism and The Weather Channel. Plus watch for a forthcoming feature article in the Boston Globe. In Octobers' issue of the Coastal Journal we had a four page article about the island and its on-goings as well and a few articles in the Times Record, we appreciate all the coverage.

We had a hiccup along the way in the office this summer – after 11 months of exceptional service and dedication, Judy Reeves, our Office Manager, resigned to travel the world with her husband, effective Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>. We thank Judy for her enthusiasm and thorough work. We picked up where we had left off in the interview process and are fortunate to have Eric Dolbec come on board as our new Office Manager. Our biggest challenge now is keeping up with all the creative ideas that spill forth from him, “to promote membership and commitment to Seguin!”

We were honored to have Mike Johnson of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission spend several hours with us on Seguin. He was quite impressed with the way we have preserved and maintained the structures on the island. He made several helpful suggestions on projects on the main building. He also was pleased with the work we have done to locate historical buildings, including the site of the original 1795 light tower, commissioned by George Washington.

I look forward to working hard for all our members, dedicated volunteers, diligent board members and the many Friends of Seguin Island, without whose support and financial efforts, we would be lost at sea. I would also like to take this time to announce the caretakers for the 2012 season David and Beverly Ramsey, Welcome aboard!



And remember the light is always  
shining at Seguin Island Light Station.

Sincerely,

*Kenneth H. Young*

President



## A Tribute to Seguin's Youngest Member

Here at Friends of Seguin Island we work hard every year to foster a wider awareness of this beautiful and historic lighthouse and island. This year we would like to honor youth and remind ourselves of the importance of ensuring the preservation of fragile, moving places like Seguin Island.

Jessica age 10, is a shining light in an age of the "rebuild this, tear down that" attitude that concerns us all. Jessica represents a glimmer of hope that others behind us are motivated and involved in insuring that future generations learn and grow to appreciate national historic treasures, such as Seguin Island.

Jessica's Great-Great-Grandfather was Edwin M. Wyman, Assistant Keeper from 1886 to 1889. He lived on Parker Head, Phippsburg, ME.

Jessica's Mom—"Jessica has been interested in Seguin Island and her Great-Great-Grandfather since she was 7 when we told her of him and has been wanting to become

a member of Friends of Seguin Island and visit the Island ever since.

Jessica has been coming to Phippsburg every summer since she was born, as has her family down through the generations. (Sternberg-Bassett-Wyman).

Jessica lives in Nottingham, NH and will be starting 5th grade this year."

Our future is the youth of today. Help us help them to see the light. Get involved, stay involved, donate today and feel better forever.



## Early "Friend of Seguin"

By Capt. C.F. Pat Moffan

When the coast guard decided that Seguin was to be closed, Ann Webster got the first word. Ann confronted me as she knew that I had many friends in the Coast Guard.

I first contacted the commanding officer at Group South Portland. He told me to contact the commandant first district in Boston Massachusetts. I also knew him from years ago when Seguin was over run with rabbits. The commandant used to come to Maine and hunt rabbits on Seguin Island with us. The commandant told me that for all the hard work I had done over the years he would be more than happy to "GIVE" Seguin to me, but the Coast Guard would not go along with that. He then suggested starting a non-profit organization to save the island.

This is where Sewall Webster came in. He seemed to have endless contacts with a will and a wallet to help. It wasn't long before the "Friends" was born.

Later on the governor of Massachusetts decided he wanted the first order Fresnel lens. The friends were nervous! The only way to stop the governor was a law saying that the only way to take the lens was an act of congress. I knew that and told the "Friends".

There are many fond memories on that island for me, but those will be for another time.

- Pat M.

The lens is still in place and we now have bullet proof glass protecting it, thanks to Pat's efforts.

## Seguin Island Ferry Service Update

We had another fantastic season aboard the *Leeward*! We surpassed our numbers from last year, no one got "too soaked" getting in and out of the dingy, and we didn't leave anyone on the island! Like I said, a great year! All joking aside, we couldn't be more delighted to be able to offer this service to the area's residents and guests. Seguin Island is an absolute blessing and we have yet to find a guest who disagrees. The schedule will likely remain the same in 2012 with service on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Sundays at 11a.m. from Fort Popham. Monday or Saturday service may be added. Contact us if you have a preference. Call us anytime, year round at (207) 841-7977 or on the web at [www.fishntripsmaine.com](http://www.fishntripsmaine.com). Members still get a \$5.00 discount on scheduled runs.

**"Get in the boat!"** - Captain DeBery

Alternate Tour Options

Atlantic Seal Cruises (207) 865-6112 | River Run Tours (207) 504-2628 | Joe Sinibaldi Tours (207) 837-7636



## Historical Notes

### *A Summer of Discovery on Seguin*

This summer was full of historical discovery. It all started when we obtained a copy of an 1870 survey of the island. With the aid of a range finder borrowed from Brian Race and with Nate Power's (Caretaker 2011) expertise, we were able to locate the site of the original 1795 tower and the barn. We have marked the perimeter of the original octagonal wooden tower with granite plugs, provided by Al of Mid-Coast Marble & Granite, that are installed at ground level for mowing. The tower was originally 40 feet high, 26 feet wide at the base, with a 10-foot high lantern at the top. We also have identified the sites of the first assistant lighthouse keeper's quarters, the adjoining workshop, and a privy. This structure dates back to 1878 and will be marked with identifying corners provided by George Race and me.

These sites and future discovery sites will be marked with museum quality bronze markers. Each marker will include pictures of the structure and a brief history. We will be installing them before the next summer season (2012) and are currently looking for donations to fund the expansion of these discovery sites.

Next summer we hope to identify the area where the original barn stood and start to reassemble the 1920's steam engine that ran the tram. We will continue our adventure by trying to locate the blacksmith shop and other original island structures. We are also in pursuit of the Coast Guard fog bell that was on the island from 1857 until its removal in 1985.

As noted above and elsewhere in the newsletter, we are calling on any and all volunteer mechanics and/or mechanical engineers who would like to help us survey and develop a plan to reassemble the steam winch for static display.

We are pleased to report that arrangements were made for Mike Johnson of Maine Historical Preservation to visit the island for a day. He met with Cyndy Carney (On-Island Committee Chair) about various aspects of preservation of the buildings and rules of discovery of historical structures. He made helpful suggestions on procedures and complimented us on the care and maintenance of all the island's structures.

We were invited to two speaking engagements this summer on historical facts about the island: one with the Phippsburg Historical Society and another with the Lighthouse Lovers Association.

Notes provided by Museum/Education Chair – Ken Young



Historic Plaque  
cast in Bronze



1857  
Tower &  
Quarters



### ON-ISLAND COMMITTEE NEWS

In an effort to capture all the volunteers who want to help on the island, the on-island committee is trying to organize work groups to go out to the island on the caretakers' day off (usually Wednesdays). The idea is these groups will ride out to the island when the caretakers are picked up and will be brought back when the caretakers are returned. These long days will allow us to tackle many of our high priority projects. There are still many details to work out regarding this plan. Get in touch with the office for developments and to inform us of your availability. Also, do not forget that we are always looking for more volunteers with boats!!!

### **Seguin Lighthouse Keepers Extend Season in 2011**

FOSIL had caretakers through Columbus Day, a second year of extended keepers. Special thanks go out to France Cousin, Cyndy Carney, Ethan Debery, Drew, Jim Bennett, Molly Mulhern, Michael Boonstra and Tim Mount and Lynne Maaco. This team of prior keepers and tenacious volunteers provided unforgettable visitor experiences all the way through Columbus Day. Not only did this allow for visitors to enjoy the island for an extended season, it gave a local film crew from Nomad Pictures, time to shoot a spot for the Maine Tourism Board and a short film about the ghastly events of a keeper, his wife and a piano. Thank You all for your time and dedication.



### **We are Celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

It does not seem possible that 25 years of dedication, planning and countless hours of hard work have passed so quickly. Since that day when Anne Webster and Pat Moffatt lead the charge to preserve the light station, hours of labor and networking among lighthouse enthusiasts have helped us to achieve our historical preservation goals. People like Barbara Paiement, who has been on the board practically since its inception ... and who served as treasurer for many years ... are an example of our dedicated membership.

Over the past 25 years many renovations have taken place. The entire 64-acre island was deeded to the Friends of Seguin Island in October of 1996. This was accomplished with help from Phil Jermain and a well-received signing of the petition to do so. The Coast Guard completed a restoration of the "First Order" Fresnel lens in 2006, revitalizing its effect for hundreds of passing mariners. In 2008 the interior of the main building was totally renovated, providing overnight guest quarters for members on the second floor of the east wing. A fully functioning and historically accurate museum was established on the first floor of the east wing in 1989-90. There are now five scenic hiking trails covering the island as well as six guest moorings in the landing cove. And then there was the construction, in 2005, of what some have called the finest privy on the Coast of Maine.

This coming season (2012) we hope to attract a team of volunteer engineers and mechanics to re-assemble the 1920's steam engine used to run what is now Maine's only working tram.

We would like to thank the 25 years of caretakers who have spent their summers on the island ... each bringing his or her unique gifts and understanding to meet the demanding task of the island's upkeep and preservation. Add to that guiding over 3,000 annual visitors, providing them with memorable experiences and an unforgettable trip into Maine's history.

The cadre of devoted people who have stood by us for these past 25 years are too numerous to mention. Each of them has left footprints on the island and many still continue to work to preserve this oasis of history. This important Aid to Navigation has been maintained and preserved through the hard work and consummate dedication of volunteers, memberships and donations!

A hearty thanks to each and every one of you as we celebrate the past 25 years of Seguin's preservation, and as we look forward to future accomplishments.

### **Annual Summerfest II • • • What a success!**

We are proud to report that our Second Annual Summerfest held at the Maine Maritime Museum was a great success, mainly due to the efforts of our special events coordinator, DD Morong, and her helpers. Seguin Friends and area businesses produced a diverse array of silent and live auction items, and sponsorships provided by First Federal, Bath Savings, Wilson's Drug Store, J.R. Maxwell's and Byrnes Irish Pub helped to offset event expenses. Thanks to the many donors and sponsors, we raised over \$8,000, surpassing last year's figures.

During the silent auction ... and the delicious buffet provided by Byrnes Hospitality ... the Roberts Band, who donated their time, entertained us with their music, keeping everyone in a festive mood.

Our 2011 caretakers, Nate Power and Amy Powers, gave an interesting presentation with glimpses into their daily life on Seguin Island. We really got an idea of the hard work involved being lighthouse caretakers, even with the help of some modern conveniences.

Live auction bidding was fast and entertaining, under the direction of volunteer auctioneer John Bottero, assisted by our Morse High School summer intern, Lauren Crosby. Mr. Bottero did a wonderful job getting the bids high and the Friends are thankful he was also able to raise money for two mooring balls, mooring lines, and five replacement windows for Seguin Lighthouse.

Thank you all involved for a favorable fest, see you next year!



## Friends of Seguin Island Gift Ideas



BW of Light and Quarters - #122-A  
On Sale \$30.00 / Reg. \$38.00



Old fashion Rocks Glass #115  
\$7.00 ea. or 4 for \$25.00

Give the gift that gives twice, give the gift of membership! What better way to acknowledge a special occasion or person!

We have many other great gift ideas.

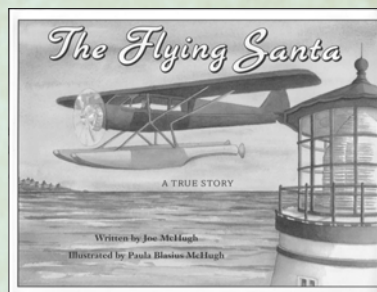
Visit us online!

[www.seguinisland.org](http://www.seguinisland.org)

Happy Holiday Season!

Friends of Seguin Island have great gift items for the Holidays and beyond! Remember as a member you get 10% off the list price of any gift shop items. Visit our store online to check out other great gift ideas!

[www.seguinisland.org](http://www.seguinisland.org)



The Flying Santa  
A True Story - #163-C \$14.00



Sounds of Seguin CD — 70 mins  
#183-CD \$5.00



## Memories ?

Do you know any  
U.S. Coast Guard  
serviceman who served on  
Seguin Light Station ?

\*\*\*\*

*Friends of Seguin Light Station  
hopes to hold a reunion  
for former Coast Guard  
Lightkeepers.*

*Can you help us find them?*

[keeper@seguinisland.org](mailto:keeper@seguinisland.org)

## Thank You for Your Support !

- To all members and donors
- To volunteer keepers
- To all board members
- To all volunteers that assisted
- To the Window Warriors
- To all involved in Summerfest
- To local business and vendors
- To all grant contributors
- To the time and effort of all
- To the visitors and friends
- To the US Coast Guard



## Words From Lauren the Intern of 2011 ...

This Summer I volunteered for FOSIL as a student intern. Seguin is in my hometown, Georgetown! My grandfather spent his first 2 years of life on Seguin from 1948-1951, while his father **Clyde T. Whittaker** served as the assistant keeper. So when I first received the information about the summer internship opening from my guidance counselor at Morse I was filled with excitement! I spent a couple hours a week at the office in Bath sorting through and organizing a massive drawer that was filled with 40 years worth of pictures, letters, documents, maps, stories, news paper clippings, magazines, and data. I learned so many facts and stories that I fell in love with the island all over again. One of my favorite memories of my summer was when my sister and I spent a day out on Seguin giving tours to people that came from all around the world. We met a family from New York, a man from Australia, and a couple who simply sailed around the world in their boat. It's crazy to think how many people are connected to the island, it really is a special place and I'm so glad I was able to help out this past summer. I plan on continuing to help out and embrace the beauty of Seguin my whole life, and hopefully become a keeper out there for a summer :)



## A BRIEF PRIMER ON LIGHTHOUSES FOR VOLUNTEER "KEEPERS"

By Jack Graham

(2005 Caretaker at Seguin Island, Maine)

Continued from issue #53

**Lighthouse Jurisdiction.** The oversight of U.S. lighthouses was originally assigned to the Treasury Department and, until 1820, they fell under the jurisdiction of several different Treasury offices. In 1820, an official with the auspicious title of "Fifth Auditor of the Treasury," a man named Stephen Pleasonton, became the head of what came to be called the Lighthouse Establishment. There were some seventy lighthouses in the United States at this time. Pleasonton had little or no technical or engineering experience, but he would reign supreme over American lighthouses for three decades. Giving himself the unofficial title of "General Superintendent of Lighthouses," Pleasonton was apparently an autocratic and thrifty bureaucrat. He contracted out the construction and repair of lighthouses, plus the purchase and installation of lamps and oil to light them. New Englander Winslow Lewis held these contracts for many years during Pleasonton's rule. By the 1830s, American ship captains began to tout the superior brightness of lighthouses in Europe, but Pleasonton resisted using the newer, brighter, more efficient Fresnel lenses, claiming their purchase was too expensive. The beauty of the Fresnel lens was twofold: It needed only a single lamp as a light source; and it converted more than 80% of that light to a useable beam to guide mariners. Yet, they were expensive, even in that day. There are unproven allegations that Pleasonton was somehow related to Winslow Lewis – at least in business dealings if not by family – who provided lamps and fuel to our lighthouses and that this relationship had something to do with the hesitancy to obtain the new Fresnel lenses.

In 1838, Congress mandated that the new French Fresnel lenses be tried. Two lenses, one a fixed type and the other a revolving/flashing type, were imported and installed at the twin Navesink lighthouses in New Jersey, near the shipping entrance to New York Harbor. The installation was completed in 1841. (The fixed lens at Navesink, manufactured by the firm of Louis Sautter, was subsequently moved to the Cape Disappointment, Washington, lighthouse, and later still to the North Head lighthouse, also at Cape Disappointment. It is now on display at the Lewis and Clark Museum at Cape Disappointment State Park.) They did in fact prove to be far superior to previous light mechanisms and were much less expensive and time-consuming to operate because only one lamp per lighthouse was needed. Despite these tests, Stephen Pleasonton continued in charge of U.S. lighthouses and to resist the introduction of Fresnel lenses until he was ultimately removed from his position in 1852. A report by the Navy after an 1845 study of European lighthouses recommended many changes in the American lighthouse system. In 1851, a congressionally mandated panel made a total review of lighthouse operations and administration. The report compiled by this panel was adopted by Congress the following year. Legislation soon decreed the "placement of Fresnel lenses in lighthouses as rapidly as the Secretary of the Treasury thought best," specifically requiring that a Fresnel lens be installed at the Brandywine Shoal lighthouse (New Jersey), making it the third U.S. lighthouse to have such a lens (Sankaty Head Light in Massachusetts was the second one.) This act also created the Light-House Board, which would oversee U.S. lighthouses until 1910.

The United States Light-House Board, under the Treasury Department, became the governing body responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of all lighthouses in the United States in 1852. The term *U.S. Light-house Establishment* continued to be used when referring to the agency, and the term *U.S. Lighthouse Service* crept into use. There were 331 lighthouses plus several "light ships" in service when this Board was created, following complaints by the shipping industry of the previous administration of lighthouses. The single administrator, Stephen Pleasonton, was replaced by a Board consisting of nine members: two Army Engineer officers, two Army Topographical Engineer officers, two Navy officers, two civilian scientists, and the Secretary of the Treasury. The Board moved quickly in applying new technology, particularly in purchasing and installing new Fresnel lenses and constructing lighthouses in offshore locations. By the time of the Civil War, almost all lighthouses had Fresnel lenses. The nation was divided into twelve "Lighthouse Districts," each with an engineer and an inspector. More districts were created as the number of lighthouses, particularly on the West Coast, increased during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The Board also oversaw the construction of the first lighthouses on the West Coast, the first of which was built in 1853 on Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay. (The word *Light-House* was hyphenated in official document references to this Board, reflecting the grammatical usage of the day.)



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2011-2012**

Ken Young, President   Fred Kahrl, Vice President  
Sherry Owen, Secretary   Deanne Morong, Treasurer  
Ethan Debery Jim Bennett   Dee Perry   Clark Labbe  
Cyndy Carney   Joyce Pye   Susan Victor  
Nat Hicks   Barbara Paiement   Ellen Womer  
Peter Bacon   Steve August   Tom Morong

**PLEASE HELP US REDUCE COSTS!**

We are going green and saving the trees, as well as the island. In one effort we can reduce postage and paper by emailing you the newsletter.

Contact us at: [membersemail@seguinisland.org](mailto:membersemail@seguinisland.org) with your email address.



Thank



You!



**Call to Mechanics  
and  
Mechanical Engineers**

We are searching for mechanics and/or mechanical engineers who would be interested in re-assembling the 1926-27 steam engine that first ran the car on the tram at Seguin. We have uncovered many if not all of the parts of the engine including the tank and we thought it might make a great static display if someone knows how to put it together next summer. If you have any interest in this project please contact the Office Manager at 443-4808 or [keeper@seguinisland.org](mailto:keeper@seguinisland.org)

**FRIENDS OF SEGUIN ISLAND, INC.**

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Office Manager—Eric Dolbec

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**FIRST CLASS MAIL**



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