



# FRIENDS OF SEGUIN ISLAND Light Station

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

MISSION STATEMENT

Celebrating 155 years

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

Fall/Winter 2012

Issue #56

Beverly and "The Chair"  
Tuesday, 04 September, 2012

## Day 101 – "Reflection Day"

*Here is Bev's blog entry on her last day as  
2012 summer keeper with her husband Bo.*



Bo has written all the blogs since our arrival, but I have chosen to write this one.

As much as I hate to say these words, it was time to bid farewell to Seguin Island Light Station. But we will never say goodbye.

Bo and I have loved each and every minute being here, and it will not be easy for us to leave. There is a certain magic on Seguin that can't be found anywhere else. Being brought here at six days old and this being my very first home made this experience all the more special for me.

I can't think of a lot who may actually have Seguin Island listed on their birth certificate as their parent's place of residence. I feel as though I have come full circle.

There were days I thought about my parents living here and what their life was like. I think about the cold and wintery night of my parent's arrival back on Seguin, coming from Florida with an infant, and the walk my daddy took up the tramway holding me, and hurrying to get me inside. I have sat in the living room of our quarters imagining my daddy having night duty and him sitting in the same living room rocking me all through the night. I think of all the laughter that must have gone on when all of the Coast Guard keepers, including my daddy, came marching through the house, starting at the front door and going out the back door.

Due to my daddy's passing this past October some of the days here on Seguin were difficult for me. There were so many times I wanted to call and ask him questions, but I couldn't. He did know we were selected to be the keepers for 2012 and he was very excited.

There will be so many memories of our time spent here. We will be able to look back, reflect, remember, and we will miss them. The front porch with a cup of coffee; The view of Cobblestone Beach with the waves roaring against the rocks; The absolutely beautiful views from anywhere you stand or from any window you look out; The morning sunrise and the evening sunsets, both amazing.

The sound of the fog horn; All those Wednesdays we were up at 5:30 to meet Ethan in the cove by 7:00 for our chore day on the mainland; Starting our chore day with the delicious coffee cake that Anne made and awaited us on Ethan's boat; Those conversations with Ethan in the early AM and back again in the PM; Passing the "Window Warriors" in the cove and our quick hellos and hugs; Laughing with Cyndy about the graceful way we get on and off the boat, and getting wet every time we do it.

The morning and evening walks down to the cove just to watch the small waves roll back and forth.

We have also certainly enjoyed all of our many visitors: Our family, our friends, and the many strangers that came up to the lighthouse to experience this special place. Some of them chose to spend the night in the cove and we would be invited to come aboard their sailboat later in the evening. We would enjoy conversation, laughter, and telling a small amount about ourselves. Then the next morning we would see their sailboat leaving the cove to never see them again.

I almost forgot my seagull friend that makes his appearance each afternoon. He usually sits on the tall rock with me.

Once we have returned home, later on those days at work, or any other place I may be, and I need a peaceful place to reflect back on, it will be Seguin Island Light Station and the summer I spent there. I never knew how special Seguin Island was to so many people until being here and seeing it for myself.

It has made me proud to say my daddy was in the United States Coast Guard and served on Seguin Island. And it also makes me proud to know my mother was here and for all the hard work she did as well.

It is our honor to say we were the Seguin Island Light Station Keepers for the summer of 2012.

Thank you.

## Presidential Year-End Report

We have had an exciting season as we transitioned from winter mode into high season with the opening of the island the weekend before Memorial Day. Former keepers Harry Danker and his daughter Rachel joined Cyndy Carney and other member volunteers for almost the whole week completing the opening chores.

2012 Keepers Beverly and Bo Ramsey and dog Rambo arrived on the island safely, met by a crew to help them unload and settle into their summer quarters.

We had a visit from Michael Johnson, from the Maine Historic Preservation Society, who commended us on our preservation work on the structures on the island. A number of other guests have given us many helpful suggestions on how best to proceed with improvements and maintenance to our structures.

The Board produced three valuable policy papers: On Island Operations Manual, Caretakers Job Description, and Guest Quarters Guidelines. Our Web site has been enhanced and we have produced two well-received newsletters, had a very successful year with our third Morse student intern, Clayton Race. We have also welcomed four new members to our board: Clark Labbe, Sherry Owen, Anne Morong, and Kevin Crossman.

We can't say enough how much we have appreciated the energy and dedication with which our summer caretakers, Bev and Bo Ramsey, carried out their responsibilities. It has been an honor to work with them and to have them on board. Bev ... as you remember ... came to the island when she was six days old, when her father was stationed there. They have an unsinkable spirit about them and accomplished great PR for us with all the summer visitors.

For the second year in a row we have had keepers on the island till Columbus Day, which has been a wonderful experience for people touring into the fall.

AmeriCorps young adults participated in building our float for the Fourth of July parade under the direction of Fred Kahl. We have moved to a program of workdays and keeping the island open to a number of visitors (one day 60) on the Keepers' day off. We had a volunteer recognition night in March, thanks to DD Morong and her committee, when we recognized our "Window Warriors".

Plaques were installed marking the location of the original light tower and Assistant Keepers' House. New windowsills have been installed and 14 windows scraped, re-glazed and painted twice on most of the main building. The work of re-pointing the exterior bricks on the north side of the two ells, and capping the two chimneys has been done.

The Coast Guard re-installed the lightning rod grounding wire on the tower.

Thanks to Nancy Perkins we had a 18-painting art show in the museum for the month of August, a ham broadcasting weekend from the island, a fall/winter Halcyon Yarn catalogue shoot on the island with a Sequin sweater designed for the occasion. All four of the moorings have been serviced and are safe for boats to moor. Clark Labbe, a skilled SCUBA diver, raised the fifth one.

The Friends of Seguin Island Light Station had a very successful Summerfest this July 27 with record attendance, wonderful spirit and returns. The island top and trails are being well-maintained and direction signs were refreshed for the benefit of our scores of visitors.

Our Guest Quarters were especially enjoyed by members this summer, reaching our season goal of nine overnight stays.

We had coverage from the Boston Globe, articles in the Bangor News, Coastal Journal, Times Record, and BIW Newsletter. And CNN Money just this fall interviewed Lynne and Tim Mount, when they were lighthouse keepers (they spent a summer with us). Our Administrative Coordinator, Eric Dolbec, has done a good job tracking our activities and being supportive to the total enterprise.

I especially, want to thank Anne Bridgman and Ethan DeBery, co-chairs of the on-island committee, and their committee members, for their countless hours of preservation and improvement on the island. And thank you Ethan for the many people you bring to the island through your excellent marketing efforts.

On behalf of the Board of the Friends of Seguin Island Lighthouse I want to thank you all for your spirit of cooperation and your hours of volunteer effort and support you give our cause.

Sincerely,

*Kenneth H. Young,*

FOSILS President



## How many Volunteers Does it Take to Close Up?

Closing the island at the end of the season is a bittersweet undertaking made easier by the many hands of volunteers, some of whom you see below. Having an Indian Summer day in mid-October helps ... a definite mix of work and pleasure.



Back row L-R ... Clayton Race (2012 Summer Intern), Cyndy Carney, Anne Morong, "Window Warriors" Rick Mayo and Jeff Jacobs; Front row ... Ethan DeBery, Ken Young, Anne Bridgman and DD Morong. (Annie –not pictured– DD's "Little Sister")

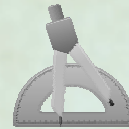


L-R ... Anne Bridgman and husband Greg, Lynne Macco (Autumn Keeper), Carney Hamilton and Erik Blanch (also Tim Mount - not in picture).



### On-Island Committee Report

## Working Wednesdays



Wednesday Work Parties were again a great success this past season.

Nearly every week, a group of dedicated volunteers would gather at Fort Popham to catch the boat going out to pick up the "summer" caretakers for their day ashore. When the boat returned later in the afternoon with the caretakers, the happy, weary workers would head home again.

The volunteer group continued its window renovations, performed some museum upgrades, helped run our first (and happily successful) art show, did yard work, and began upgrading the Oil House into a volunteer barrack ... not to mention the many other tasks that led to a smooth season.

Also, these volunteers were on island to greet guests that would otherwise have arrived on their own boats at the time when the regular caretakers were ashore doing wash and buying groceries.

This led to guiding many tours, receiving donations, signing up new members, and gift shop sales.

The Wednesday work party strategy will be in full effect next season and the OIC is always looking for more volunteers, so contact the Seguin office and ask to be put in touch with the OIC to join in the fun.

*Ethan Debery – On-Island Committee co-chairman*

### 1st Annual Art Exhibit

20 artists and 24 pieces contributed to the event. The premise was to capture varying perspectives of the island and the light station. We raised \$230 during this first annual exhibit. We would like to thank Nancy Perkins for organizing the event, the Ramsey's for being gracious hosts and we cannot forget the artists. Thank you all and see you next summer for the 2nd showing.



### 2013 Appeal for Funds

*These projects are planned for the 2013 season*

Fascia and Gutters \$2,000

Bathroom Windows \$1,000

Masonry Restoration \$5,000

Oil House Renovations \$1,500

Tramway Study for Renovation \$500—We have raised these funds, Thank You!

*Please visit the website to contribute today and be part of history forever.*

## ***Celebrating Our Maritime History***

The physical space at the museum in the keeper's quarters received a thorough cleaning in preparation for summer visitors. It was wonderfully maintained by keeper Beverly Ramsey who provided a Coast Guard uniform for display, similar to ones worn in the past.

In August the museum was transformed into an art Gallery by Nancy and Paul Perkins, displaying about 18 works of local artists and featuring Seguin as the theme. Four of these paintings were acquired by visitors and the endeavor was well received! We appreciate all Nancy's efforts on our behalf.

We also thank Sherry Owens and Cyndy Carney for setting up Halcyon Yarn's Fall/Winter catalogue shoot on the island. We took Halcyon, Gretchen and Rachel on a tour of the island before the shoot and they were very excited about the island's history and the many interesting places to display their products. We had a great day and they came later for the official shoot with some 20 staff members!

DD Morong made two apron boards for the two front windows in the museum which had been missing for some time. DD cut, sanded, painted and installed them, putting some much-needed finishing touches on the inside appearance of the room.

I am reluctant to say much because everything has not been brought to a final conclusion but it would appear that after much research, affidavits from Coast Guardsmen, phone calls and e-mails with Boothbay Station, the CG properties supervisor in Providence, R.I., the Maine Preservation Society, and historic artifacts person for the Coast Guard in Baltimore, Md., we may have secured the lease of the station's original 19<sup>th</sup> century fog bell for display on the island. The actual transport of this 4000-pound bell will be accomplished as we open next summer. Watch for further news in the spring newsletter!

Another significant happening is in regards to the twin piston steam-powered "Donkey Engine" in the lower field on the island. This machine operated the tram at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is a classic. Most of the parts are there. Michael Bell, an engineer, spent a lot of time researching steam engine history and studying the pictures of our engine. Ned Simmons also responded to our appeal in the last newsletter and offered to make parts for the engine in his machine shop. After much thought and study it was decided not to activate the engine nor sandblast it as this would present another ongoing maintenance project for us. Instead we are going to jack it up next summer and put a cradle, designed by Fred Kahrl, under it and have another historic bronze plaque made with a picture, courtesy of Ralph Lewis, of when it was operating beside the tram.



At the last minute we were contacted by CNN Money reporter Spencer Scott to do a report for their series on Unique Residences. They were transported to the island on Monday Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>, given a tour of all the facilities and acquainted with the history of our island. In the afternoon, he interviewed Tim Mount and Lynne Mayko who were on the island as Autumn caretakers, and who were summer keepers four years ago.

With the help of our intern, Clayton Race, we were able to pack away the vulnerable artifacts in the museum and number them and their places on the walls so that the displays may be assembled easily in the spring.

On our Wednesday workdays, covering for the Keepers on their day ashore, we were able to give tours and history talks to as few as four and as many as 64 visitors. These days were very good outreach times for us.

Plans are underway for working with Chris Hall, curator of Maine Maritime Museum, to be part of an historic light-house exhibit next summer at the museum in Bath.

To say the least, the history of Seguin is enriching and unfolding and it is a thrill to be a part of this vibrant island.

We also want to thank the U.S. Coast Guard for their care of the mechanics of the light and fog signal apparatus on the island. – *by Museum Director Ken Young*

## Keepers are Special Guests at Shipyard

*Our summer keepers are afforded a small-world surprise courtesy of BIW, a General Dynamics division in Bath, Maine and of an alert BIW employee who is also a longtime FOSILS committeeman and volunteer. Here follows an excerpt from the BIW Employees Newsletter, with permission.*

In late August, just days before the departure of Michael Murphy (DDG 112), **David “Bo”** and **Beverly Ramsey** from Fayetteville, North Carolina visited BIW and the ship. Mr. and Mrs. Ramsey spent a little over three months in Maine this summer as the volunteer lighthouse keepers on 64-acre Seguin Island located 2.5 miles from the mouth of the Kennebec River and accessible only by boat or helicopter.

Bo retired from the U.S. Army about five years ago and now works for GDIT (*another division of General Dynamics – ed.*) at Fort Bragg. Both he and his wife were very happy to be here because Beverly is the daughter of ... a Coast Guard lighthouse keeper who was stationed at Seguin in 1959. Beverly spent the first year of her life on Seguin with her parents.

Returning as volunteer lighthouse keepers was a dream come true for the couple.

On a different note, Bo was part of the U.S. Army team inserted into the Korengal Valley in Afghanistan in 2005 following the battle led by (Navy SEAL) LT Michael Murphy against an over-whelming Taliban force. (*Murphy received the Medal of Honor posthumously for his efforts to save his SEAL team – ed.*)

The only survivor of the fight, **Marcus Luttrell**, was rescued by Bo’s Army Special Forces Operational Detachment (Alpha) team.

For all of those reasons, the Ramseys were pleased to accept an invitation from **Greg Bridgman**, BIW Facilities Engineer. He and his wife, Anne, are members of the Friends of Seguin Island Light Station (FOSILS) which has owned the island since 1986 and oversees its maintenance and upkeep.

When Greg learned of Bo Ramsey’s connection to LT Murphy and realized that the Ramseys would leave the island and Maine just a few (days after) the ship was to sail by Seguin, he arranged a brief tour of the shipyard and a chance for them to see the ship that would soon carry the name of LT Murphy and the story of his Seal Team into Navy service.

Bo said, “We absolutely loved our visit and thank Greg and several others who said hello for taking time to do that for us.”

*(Editor’s Note – Anne Bridgman is Co-Chairman of the on-Island Committee and husband Greg is an indispensable member of the same committee.)*



Bev and Bo pictured at the bow of the Michael Murphy just before taking a tour of the new Navy guided missile destroyer. (BIW photo)

←



Guided Missile Destroyer Michael Murphy makes its turn around Seguin after leaving the Kennebec River and beginning trip South to New York City for the Commissioning Ceremony that officially made it part of the Navy fleet. (BIW Photo)

→



## FOSILS Holiday Gift Giving

Remember your friends and relatives this Holiday Season with unique Friends of Seguin Island Light Station gifts. Giving one of our special gifts is so important in helping this organization to support, maintain, and preserve Seguin's history and continuing mission.

An array of gifts can be found on our website or in the FOSILS office at 72 Front Street in Bath. During December a display table will also be set up in Bath's First Federal Savings Bank office for purchasing that one-of-a-kind present.

New items include: knit caps, hooded sweatshirts, fleece blankets, and check out our unique selection of latitude/longitude jewelry as well as other accessories made in Maine.

Another way to help keep Seguin's magnificent light shining is to give the gift of a Membership. What better way to give a gift without the worry of size or color. Do not forget that as a FOSILS Member, you can take a 10% discount off any gift shop merchandise and you are eligible to sign up for a stay in the Seguin Guest Quarters!

We wish you and yours "Happy Holidays!"

### Item Descriptions

Seguin T-Shirts in 5 colors—\$9.00  
Hand Painted Seguin Ornaments—\$15.00  
Ceramic Coffee mug w/logo—\$5.00  
Seguin Key Ring w/logo—\$9.00  
B/W Framed Photograph—\$38.00



Visit [www.seguinislnd.org](http://www.seguinislnd.org)  
To view full color images and  
additional gift ideas!

Give the gift that gives  
twice, Membership.  
Gifting a membership  
simply is a gracious  
gesture.



## Summerfest III Thank You!

A wonderful success, Summerfest III took place on Friday July 27<sup>th</sup> in the beautiful Long Reach Hall at the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath.

Summerfest is the event of the year and Friends of Seguin Island Light Station's (FOSILS) major fundraiser, outside of our membership dues, so we appreciate all the support we received from those who volunteered to work on the event, those who attended and especially our sponsors: J.R. Maxwell's & Co., Bath Savings, First Federal Savings, Wilson's Drug Store and Byrne's Catering.

The evening got off to a great start with Alison Lee Freeman providing music as folks arrived and mingled, looking over the live auction merchandise (knowing that once John Bottero began the live auction they needed to be prepared or risk missing out on wonderful merchandise). The silent auction items were displayed as well with attendees strategizing their bids, returning to ensure they didn't lose their opportunity.

All in all we had over 90 items donated by area merchants, FOSILS Members and Board Members. Byrne's Catering did a wonderful job providing mouthwatering choices at the buffet table and brought a special beverage of the evening to add to the festivities ... "Seguin Sangria!"

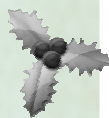
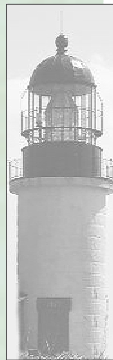
Presentations were made by our 2012 Keeper's, Bo and Bev Ramsey, complete with slide show and highlights of their time on Seguin. The Bat Man, Steve Pelletier also provided a presentation on bat data he collected on and off the island.

This event raised over \$9,000.00, including a donation of trim boards for the island.

A great success with record attendance!

We hope to see you next year for Summerfest IV!

*D.D. Morong – Events Chairman*



### Friends Of Seguin Island Membership Form

NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my (our) contribution for continuing (new) membership in the Friends of Seguin Island, a non-profit corporation, organized for the purpose of maintaining and preserving Seguin Island Light Station and its historic structures.

#### Membership Levels

First Mate (16yrs or younger) ( ) \$ 10.00

Captain ( ) \$ 30.00

Seguin Family ( ) \$ 55.00

Assistant Keeper ( ) \$ 100.00

Lighthouse Keeper ( ) \$ 250.00

Commodore ( ) \$ 1,000.00



Thank you very much for your support!

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Yes, I would like my newsletter emailed

*Revised June 2012*

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

By Jack Graham

(2005 Caretaker at Seguin Island, Maine)

Continued from issue #55

Some lights had solid screens that rotated around the lamp or lens; thus, the light would be seen for so many seconds and then appear to be dark for so many seconds. The ways to change the appearance of the lights were limited only by the technical and mechanical vision of lighthouse designers and staff.

Fresnel lenses, particularly the large ones, are tremendously heavy. Some rotated on a bed of liquid mercury; others had a complicated gear-box system, driven by various designs of clockwork-like mechanisms using a heavy weight that slowly descended from the top to the bottom of the lighthouse. Thus, another of the many lighthouse keepers' jobs often involved "winding" the weight back to the top.

In addition to the differences in their lights, lighthouses had to be discernable during the daytime, when they served as landmarks to passing ships. Painting the towers to make them more identifiable was an innovation of the Light-House Board. Thus, some lighthouses are all white, some are colored, and some are a combination with striped, block, or diamond shapes of various designs. These painting schemes are referred to as the lighthouse's *daymark*. Sometimes the design of the light itself was sufficient to distinguish it from others in the area, as was its location on an island or a high bluff, for instance.

**Lighthouse Architects.** Lighthouses were designed and built by many different people, as evidenced by the great variety of shapes and building materials found in those that still stand. During the period of the Lighthouse Establishment headed by Stephen Pleasonton, the contractor Winslow Lewis either designed new ones or perhaps incorporated plans of those built before, often subcontracting the actual construction. The early lighthouses were plagued by poor design and often poor quality of workmanship as well, and many simply did not withstand the harsh environments in which they were built. The earliest lights, usually made of wood, often succumbed to fire. In the 1840s, Congress mandated that Army engineers design and build new lighthouses, but it was not until 1852, when the Light-House Board was created, that trained engineers and architects became completely involved with lighthouse construction. Many were officers in the Army Corps of Engineers, graduates of the military academy at West Point. It might seem that the military would have "standard plans" for construction, but apparently this was not the case.

Many different army officers designed and supervised lighthouse construction. George Meade (1815–1872) of Civil War fame, Hartman Bache (1798–1872), and Orlando Poe (1832–1895) are just three of particular note. They probably used some original design elements combined with the proven designs and materials that had been used before them. The Light-House Board also employed civilian architects and draftsmen to help prepare lighthouse plans and specifications.

The *screwpile* lighthouse, built out in the water where the bottom was soft, was a new innovation during the Light-House Board era. Most of these were in the Chesapeake and Delaware Bays and along the reefs of the Florida Keys. Pilings were actually "screwed" down into the soft bottom and then braced together to support the lighthouse structure that would be built on this platform. Alexander Mitchell (1780–1868), a blind Irish architect, is credited with devising and patenting the screwpile technology. George Meade, in particular, gained fame for adapting Mitchell's ideas in the construction of lighthouses in the Florida Keys.

**Lighthouse Foundations.** Many of the country's light towers are constructed on the solid rock of the coastline or offshore point where they stand. As noted previously, lighthouses in some areas are built on foundations screwed or otherwise driven into the softer bottom of bays and coral reefs. Tall lighthouse towers on the sandy shores of the Mid-Atlantic States and along portions of the Great Lakes often have extensive foundations of timber cribbing and pilings. For example, Little Sable Lighthouse on Lake Michigan sits on a foundation of several feet of granite blocks atop timber cribbing, which itself is above approximately 100 timber piles driven down into the sand. Likewise, the Sand Island Lighthouse in Alabama sits on a double course of timbers resting on 171 piles. There are numerous other such examples.

**FOSILS Board of Directors • • 2011-2012**

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**2014 Caretakers and Beyond**

The On Island Committee is looking ahead to find exceptional candidates for future caretakers. We accept applications year round. The cut off date is October 1st for the following year's caretakers. Applicants should apply in pairs, be in good health, have a variety of people friendly/ island friendly skills, and possess a willing attitude. For more information, please email us at : [keeper@seguinland.org](mailto:keeper@seguinland.org)

Thanks for your interest!

**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@seguinland.org](mailto:membersemail@seguinland.org) with your email address.



Thank



You!



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