

Maryland begins here!

the finer points

*A newsletter from the Friends of the
St. Clement's Island and Piney Point Museums*

Fall 2011

The Friends support historical interpretation, educational programs and special needs of the sites managed by the Museum Division of St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks: St. Clement's Island Museum, the Little Red Schoolhouse, the Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum and Historic Park, the Drayden African-American Schoolhouse, and the U-1105 Black Panther German submarine shipwreck preserve. A non-profit organization, the Friends sponsor special events, assist with acquisitions and publish this newsletter to broaden understanding of and interest in these important historic sites.

Inside: Weddings, Murder Mystery Fundraiser, Summer Photo Album, Friends News and more!

Piney Point Preservation Project to Move Forward

By Kimberley Cullins

As different phases of site enhancements and parkscaping at the Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum and Historic Park reach completion, a new project will soon begin. A \$90,000 grant awarded by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, matched by St. Mary's County Government, will fund a preservation project to stabilize and restore the masonry, windows and door of the lighthouse and keeper's quarters.

The Piney Point Lighthouse and Keeper's Quarters were built in 1836, the year Abraham Lincoln began practicing law and Davy Crockett faced the Mexican army at the Alamo, and long before construction began on architectural icons such as the Washington Monument, the Eiffel Tower, or the Brooklyn Bridge. To preserve structures like ours, which have witnessed the sweep of 175 years of history while being constantly beaten by wind and water, presents quite the challenge!

The St. Mary's County Museum Division, as steward of these historic landmarks, constantly monitors the condition of these buildings to respond to issues as they arise. In 2005, staff noticed that large paint blisters had begun to appear on surfaces of the lighthouse and keeper's quarters – a red flag.



To understand why this was happening, the staff referred to records from the last preservation project. In 2003, the Maryland Historical Trust had approved the removal of lead paint from the lighthouse tower and keeper's quarters and repainting the structures with a latex-based paint. An unintended consequence was that

the paint prevented the natural "breathing" of the structures, trapping moisture wicked up from the ground with nowhere to go. Water became trapped beneath the paint on the bricks, mortar, wooden window sills, and original lighthouse tower door. The Maryland Historical Trust was unsuccessful

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Photo: Peeling paint is visible on the Piney Point Lighthouse surface.

**The Friends of the
St. Clement's Island and
Piney Point Museums**

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Giving Thanks...

By Sheila Gibbons Hiebert, President

Many of you are probably already planning how to celebrate Thanksgiving next month – whom to have around the table, what to serve, or what trip to take to be able to share the day with loved ones. Wherever you are, you'll doubtless have a list of things for which you're grateful.

We do, too. And this is as good a time as any to give thanks for them:

For the St. Mary's County Museum Division staff and their energy and dedication to keeping our doors open, the programs lively, and the interaction with the public at a high level – even while they are short-staffed because of budget constraints;

For the Friends Board of Directors, their hard work as volunteers and their wise and careful stewardship of funds we raise to assist the Museum Division with its work;

For our Volunteers, who devote thousands of hours as tour guides, administrative support staff, museum store assistants and doers of myriad other tasks, just for the love of it;

For you, our Members – individuals, families, and corporations -- that stand with us year after year, providing the resources the Friends Board invests in museum enrichment projects that benefit us all.

This issue of the *Finer Points* will tell you about the highlights of our summer season and point to the fun ahead as winter approaches (Remember: though the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum is closed January through March, the St. Clement's Island Museum is open Wednesday through Sunday 12 noon to 4 pm.) Please know that we're grateful to everyone who contributes time, talent and treasure to our effort to help make our museum group one of the best in the region. Thank you all!



10% Off Museum Store Merchandise!

Use your 10% Friends membership discount when you make purchases at the Lighthouse Lens and Crab Claw Museum Stores! Each store is a treasure trove of unique gift items, home décor, apparel, children's books and toys, cookbooks, history books, jewelry, and so much more! Call Museum Stores Manager Carol Cribbs for special orders or for more info at 301-769-2222.

Gift Membership!

The Friends remind you that a tax deductible gift membership is available for everyone on your holiday gift list and offers year-round benefits with free museum admission, museum stores discounts, special event notices and discounts, and the *Finer Points* Newsletter. Spend where your dollars make a difference!

Fill out the form on this newsletter or call Carol Cribbs at 301-769-2222 with Mastercard or Visa.

Fresh Paint

Continued from page 1

in resolving the problem. Museum staff then looked for advice from expert historic preservationist and conservator John Greenwalt Lee, who had previously restored the lighthouse tower steps and Newell post. Mr. Lee recommended that the latex paint be allowed to “weather” away naturally without pulling, scraping or dissolving the paint, which he believed would exacerbate damage.

With funding now in place, the preservation project can move forward. A first step is to secure the services of a Maryland Historic Trust-approved preservation/restoration specialist who will develop a detailed scope of work and manage the project. A contractor will be hired to strip what remains of the latex paint, using a special solvent, and the brickwork will be re-pointed as needed. The structures will be repainted with an environmentally-friendly lime-based whitewash.

Why go through all this trouble and expense? Why wouldn't we! These structures were built in 1836 by the master lighthouse builder of the Chesapeake Bay, John Donahoo, and are the oldest on the Potomac River. The lighthouse and keeper's quarters offer architectural and historic contexts for the river's maritime navigation service and cultural heritage. The site is on the National Register of Historic Places, and because of its inclusion as a Target Investment Zone within the Southern Maryland Heritage Area, is eligible for capital funding. This preservation initiative will ensure that these structures will remain open and available to the public today, tomorrow and for years to come!

A Letter From Debra

Dear Friends,

This has been a great season for museum events! Both sites experienced great turnouts for events and activities this summer, with some events attaining all-time high attendance and sponsorship participation. We thank everyone for your continued support!

The museums came through the late-summer storms and earthquake with some damage to the new boardwalk nearest to the Piney Point Lighthouse and some rain leakage in the museum buildings. With the help of W.M. Davis, Inc., building contractors we are reviewing our options for repairing the boardwalk and hoping that sealing the Piney Point museum building can be completed in the not too distant future. The St. Clement's Island Museum was unscathed. Overall, we were fortunate.

The Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) '09 grant project was completed with the addition of a new pavilion for the Piney Point south campus. A MHAA award of \$90,000, to be matched and augmented by St. Mary's County with \$100,000, will get the Piney Point Lighthouse and Keeper's Quarters preservation project well under way. We hope to get that started in Spring 2012. For details, see Kim's cover story in this issue!

Both the Piney Point and St. Clement's Island museum sites are preparing for our annual Christmas festivities. In addition to our regular December schedule we'll be open Monday through Friday (12 noon to 4 p.m.) both weeks the students are on winter break. Please bring your friends and family to our museums for a pleasant holiday visit and be sure to visit our museum stores to shop for those out-of-the-ordinary special gift needs on your list.

My best wishes to all,

Debra Pence



Museum Division Manager Debra Pence, a master gardener, displays and interprets colonial gardening to visitors during the St. Clement's Island Heritage Day June 11. Photo by Kim Cullins.



1. Completion of the Piney Point Lighthouse Parkscape Project culminated in a ribbon cutting May 14 during the Piney Point Lighthouse Waterfront Festival. From left to right: Commissioner President Francis Jack Russell, Sue Gough, Commissioner Todd Morgan, Shirley Leyland, Helen Dorsey, Debra Pence, Steve Dunlap, April Havens, Chris Bologna, Phil Rollins, Wayne Davis, David Hamilton and Ellie Slater. *(Photo by Kim Cullins)*

2. The impending arrival of Hurricane Irene in August called for intense preparations at both the Piney Point and St. Clement's museum sites. Staff and volunteers boarded up windows, covered electronics, and lifted items off the floor. The mural at the St. Clement's Island Museum was covered with plastic by workers from the St. Mary's County Detention Center. *(Photo by Kim Cullins)*

3. The sold-out 2011 Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival at the St. Clement's Island Museum July 9 brought the audience to their feet at the jammin' jazz finale! *(Photo by Kim Cullins)*

4. The Friends co-sponsored the St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours at the Piney Point Lighthouse in July. Laurel Benoit (BB&T) and Anne Lewis (Old Line Bank) dressed for the 1940s Club U.S.O. theme as a Navy sailor (or maybe Nellie Forbush from "South Pacific"?) and Rosie the Riveter. *(Photo by Sheila Hiebert)*

5. Piney Point Lighthouse Site Supervisor April Havens (center) led a new Pirate Day program July 30. Her eager crew of ruffians practiced walking the plank, competing in the costume contest, and finding buried treasure. *(Photo by Kim Cullins)*

6. Volunteers make our museum world go 'round! Here, volunteers Agnes Shelton (standing) and Myra Butler help kids create bead bracelets and necklaces in the Little Red Schoolhouse at the St. Clement's Island Museum during August's Children's Day event. *(Photo by Kim Cullins)*

7. Museum marketing specialist Kim Cullins enjoyed a spontaneous moment with Fillup the Frog, mascot for Community Bank of Tri-County, during the 44th Annual Blessing of the Fleet event at the St. Clement's Island Museum in October. *(Photo by Erin Brown)*

**Did we have fun
this summer?
You bet!**



Destination of Love

The most important decisions of wedding planning are simply deciding when and where. All the other details usually flow from those two decisions. The “when” might hinge on a personal preference, on relatives’ ability to attend, or sometimes simply on the availability of the venue. The “where” can play a larger role if a house of worship is involved, but if not, “where” is often dictated by sentimental reasons or the ambiance of the setting.

This summer, two couples chose St. Clement’s Island as their very special wedding destination. On July 4, Laura Reed and Jamie Emery exchanged vows on the steps of the Blackistone Lighthouse in the presence of their closest friends and family. Laura and Jamie had known each other since middle school, reconnected via Facebook following the Blessing of the Fleet event in 2009, and had their first date on St. Clement’s Island. The relationship blossomed and eventually they rented a house together in Colton’s Point, overlooking the Island. For Laura and Jamie, St. Clement’s Island held precious memories of love and romance and was the perfect place to pledge their “forever” love to each other. They still live in that house in Colton’s Point and enjoy looking out on the Island where their love began.

In later summer, Sharon Winkler and her fiancé, Tom Doughty, contacted the St. Clement’s Island Museum about having their wedding on St. Clement’s Island, too. Arrangements were made to charter the water taxi for the afternoon of September 20, with a back-up plan to marry inside the museum in the event of inclement weather. This was a second marriage for Sharon and Tom, and they wanted to forego a large wedding in favor of the simplicity and intimacy of a ceremony that included just them, the officiant, a photographer and a special friend. When asked why she chose St. Clement’s Island for their marriage, Sharon said, “I thought, how appropriate! My roots are deep in Southern Maryland. The first Catholic mass was said there, and it symbolized the beginning of life in St. Mary’s County, so what more appropriate way to begin our new life? The symbolism and location were the perfect choice.”

On September 20, with the weather calling into question the use of the water taxi, they decided to marry inside the museum. However, as their moment neared, the sun peeked out from the clouds and the river calmed. They decided to exchange vows at the water’s edge with St. Clement’s Island as their backdrop. Their wedding was still meaningful, still intimate, and totally filled with love.



Left: The newly wed Laura and Jamie Emery ring in their new life together at the bell tower on St. Clement’s Island. (Photo by Cindy Dixon) Right: Sharon Winkler and Tom Doughty exchanged wedding vows officiated by Deborah Curtis in a waterside ceremony overlooking St. Clement’s Island. (Photo by Kim Cullins)



Barbour Brings History to Life

Article/photos by Sheila Gibbons Hiebert

Three women whose lives were intimately connected with St. Clement’s Island came to life this summer, thanks to the interpretive skills of Christina Barbour, St. Clement’s Island Museum Site Supervisor.

As part of the St. Mary’s County Library’s summer reading program called “One World, Many Stories,” Chris visited the libraries in Charlotte Hall, Leonardtown, and Lexington Park. She portrayed Elizabeth Gerard, from the 17th century; Josephine Freeman, from the 19th and 20th; and Mary Butterfield, from the 20th. Chris used period reproduction costumes and vintage accessories from the Museum Division collections to help recall the women and tell their stories. Each woman

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Murder Mystery Fundraiser: Moo-re Fun Than Ever!

"Murder at the County Fair" drew an enthusiastic crowd Sept. 9 to the Friends' popular interactive dinner theater fundraiser. This year's play had 25 speaking parts, ably performed by scenery-chewing patrons and anchored by museum division staffer Kim Cullins, who played the central character, transplanted New Jersey housewife and TV reporter Daphne

DiMarco. Many guests came dressed as typical county fair patrons (or animals), as seen here. Afterwards, all the performers gathered for a cast photo. Mark your calendars: next year's play will be Friday, Sept. 14, 2012, again at the Olde Breton Inn in Leonardtown!



Left: These 16 lovely ladies came (in costume!) for "girls night out." (Photo by Susan Smith) Right: The entire cast of this year's murder mystery fundraiser poses for a group shot. (Photo by Sheila Hiebert)

UP AND COMING . . .

Set a course for these exciting events

Visit www.stmarysmd.com/recreate/museums or call 301-769-2222 for more information on these events.

Dec. 1 through Dec. 31 – 26th Annual Christmas Doll & Train Exhibit

The St. Clement's Island Museum continues this much-loved holiday tradition guaranteed to thrill kids from one to 101. This year's theme, "Our Nation's Heritage," will showcase an array of antique dolls, collectible toys and working miniature trains displayed with a lovely holiday flair. This exhibit is open Dec. 1 to Dec. 16 – Wednesday through Sunday – noon to 4 pm. To coincide with the holiday recess of schools, this exhibit is available daily Dec. 17 to Dec. 30 from 10 am to 4 pm. Closed Christmas and New Year's Weekends. Admission. Free for Friends members.

Dec. 1 through Dec. 31 – Piney Point Lighthouse Holiday Exhibit

The Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum and Historic Park will present "It's a Story Book Christmas" holiday exhibit. Each room of the historic keeper's quarters will highlight a popular holiday story book. Kids will enjoy a holi-

day craft/activity inside the museum. This exhibit opens Dec. 3 and will be available Friday through Monday noon to 4 pm until Dec. 16. Also open daily Dec. 17 to Dec. 30, 10 am to 4 pm, to coincide with schools' holiday break. Closed Christmas and New Year's Weekends. Admission. Free for Friends members.

Dec. 10 – St. Clement's Island Museum Holiday Open House

Enjoy holiday cheer and free admission to the Christmas Doll & Train Exhibit from noon to 4 pm. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be on hand from noon to 2 pm. Bring your camera! The 7th District Optimist Club will offer a boy and girl's bike for a free raffle! Need not be present to win! Enjoy holiday refreshments and shopping in the museum store and more!

December 11 – Piney Point Lighthouse Museum Holiday Open House

A holiday gift to you – free admission! Kids and parents alike will enjoy "It's

a Story Book Christmas" exhibit in the keeper's quarters, a visit from Pinch, mascot of the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs baseball team, holiday refreshments and more! Museum store offers unique gifts and souvenirs for all ages.

Jan. 28, 2012 – Appraiser Fair

"What's it worth?" Bring your family heirloom, yard sale curiosity or antique treasure for an expert's evaluation! The St. Clement's Island Museum will feature expert appraisers from 10 am to 3 pm to estimate item values or provide background information about your treasures. Appraisal categories include jewelry, antique dolls, U. S. coins, and fine art items such as ceramics, glassware, pottery, paintings, small hand-carried antiques and more. Fees and limits apply. Call the museum at 301-769-2222 for more information.

SAVE THE DATE!
March 25, 2012 – Maryland Day
Commemorate Maryland's birthday at the St. Clement's Island Museum!

Barbour

Continued from page 4

she portrayed interacted with the library audiences, answering questions and displaying and explaining artifacts from her time.

Elizabeth Gerard (1636-1716) inherited St. Clement's Island and what is now Colton's Point from her father, Thomas Gerard. Much of that land came to Gerard through the dowry of his wife, Susannah. As Elizabeth, Chris demonstrated children's games from the time – a ball one would toss up, then try to catch in a cup, and a game called “deck quoits,” which she said was like present-day horseshoes. She also answered questions about the challenges of early colonial life, the design of colonial clothing, and the religious tensions of the time, which were mirrored to some degree in her own family. Elizabeth's father was a Catholic and her mother, Anglican. Through Elizabeth's husband, Nehemiah Blackstone, St. Clement's Island for a long time was known as Blackstone Island.

Josephine McWilliams Freeman (1843-1912) was one of only a handful of women across America to work fulltime as lighthouse keepers. From 1876 to 1912, she was the lighthouse keeper on Blackstone Island. She raised her family there, with her children learning to farm and work the water for food. Josephine kept a journal in which she recorded not only her lightkeeping duties, but the activities of her family and, of course, the weather, which could be harsh and dangerous. Christina depicted Josephine making entries in her journal, through which we have come to have a unique understanding of life on the Island between the Civil War and World War I.

Mary Butterfield (1899-1994) arrived on St. Clement's Island in 1916 as a new bride, scarcely 17 years old. By then her husband's family owned the Island. She delighted in the food yields from rich soil, including wild asparagus, which still grows on the Island today. In 1918, when the lighthouse keeper went off to war, she moved into the lighthouse and helped tend the light. In 1925, the Butterfields moved to Colton's Point so their children could attend school, Mary said through Christina. They lived within sight of the Island until turning their home over to St. Mary's County for use as the first St. Clement's Island Museum.

“Encouraging people to explore their local history is the part of my job I enjoy the most,” Christina says.

“One World, Many Stories” is a program of the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP), a grassroots consortium of states working together to provide high-quality summer reading program materials for children at the lowest cost possible for their public libraries. Libraries customize the program to suit their patrons' needs and their own goals, and encourage reading and storytelling as a family activity.

Member News

Welcome Aboard, New Members!

Individual

John Weiner, Leonardtown, MD

Senior

Rose Benson, Woodstock, GA

Robert Greenwell, Waldorf, MD

Alyce M. Roach, Abell, MD

Family

Paul and Mary Kukla, Leonardtown, MD

Friends News and Thank You's!

Summer events were incredibly successful, thanks to the large part played by sponsors who contribute to those events. We'd like to thank the following for their generous contributions:

Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival

Brothers Johnson, Inc., Bozick Distributors, Café Des Artistes, Community Bank of Tri-County, W. M. Davis, Inc. General Contractors, Gutter Helmet, A. Shane Mattingly, Planned Power Systems, Inc., Paige's Promotions, Rehoboth Beach Jazz Festival, The Show Place Arena, Sleep Inn & Suites/Lenny's Restaurant, TownePlace Suites by Marriott, Zahniser's Yachting Center and the St. Mary's County Arts Council.

Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours

Liz Ellis and the BB&T Bank branch of Wildewood Shopping Center, California, MD.

Children's Day

Avenue Flags & Flagpoles, Checkers Restaurant, Chesapeake Custom Embroidery, Community Bank of Tri-County, Combs Drury Reeves Insurance Agency, Cullins Pool Water, Elite Beatz Entertainment Service, Tidewater Dental, and Delegate Johnny Wood.

Murder Mystery Auction

A wagonload of gratitude goes to the generous donors who provided wonderful items for the live and silent auctions at “Murder at the County Fair,” our interactive murder mystery dinner fundraiser held Sept. 9: Sandra Cheseldine (Pampered Chef), Kim Cullins, Frame-A-Lot, The Hair Company, Life Coach Nancy Hickman, Sheila Hiebert, Cynthia Rosenblatt (923 Designs), Nekadesh Farm B&B, Morris Point Restaurant, Mary Hyatt, Rosemary Jarvis (The Remington), Notti Bianche Restaurant, Lori Harbrecht (Lilybird Designs), Lydia Wood, Shelby's Custom Framing and Art, Port Tobacco Players, Brictoria Cottage at Charlotte Hall, Carole Thieme, Carol Cribbs, Maertens Fine Jewelry and Gifts, Kimberly Harbrecht (Knit Julep), Johnny Wood, Christina Barbour, Ann Davis, Island Inn and Suites, Antoinette Wilson, and Melissa Carnes. We also thank auctioneer AJ Bussler of AJ's Auction Service.

Wedding Donation

Many thanks to Sharon and Tom Doughty for their generous donation to the St. Clement's Island Museum on the occasion of their September wedding!

FRIENDS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

__MC __Visa Card #: _____ Expires _____

Make checks payable to Friends of the St. Clement's Island and Piney Point Museums. Your membership is tax deductible.

__New Member __Gift Membership

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- Corporate Patron (\$200)
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