

Maryland begins here!

the finer points

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

June 2009

Preserving Our Heritage

Why Our Museums' Collections Need a Permanent Home

By Sheila Gibbons Hiebert, President

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: Photo Album, Maryland Day Launches Celebrate 375!, Friends News and more!

A weathered decoy. A treasured oyster can that once held the river's delicious bounty. An antique timepiece. Colonial pottery. Native American tools.

At our museums, these artifacts, and nearly 5,000 others, are carefully catalogued, packed and boxed to the standards of the American Association of Museums. But we come up short of the standard in a significant way: We do not have a building where they can be safely stored in a humidity- and temperature-controlled environment. And without that building, our museums cannot expand their collections when new acquisition opportunities present themselves.

Will you help us build that building?

We have the plans, drawn up for a 2,500-square foot collections management facility. It will house shelving, storage units, a conservation work area and a staff work station.

We have the site, an ample open area behind the workshop at the St. Clement's Island Museum.

We have a portion of the funds, allocated by the St. Mary's County Commissioners with the

understanding that the Friends would oversee development of the project and raise additional funds to complete construction and equip the building.

We have a builder, CMI General Contractors of Charlotte Hall. We've applied for a building permit. Our site plan is finished.

We're on our way, but we need you, our members, to join with us to ensure that this important project can be completed!

2009 marks the Friends' 25th anniversary as the organization supporting the St. Mary's County Museum Division. What better way to celebrate than to make this much-needed collections management facility a reality! Please help us accomplish this by giving to the 2009 Museum Collections Building Campaign. You will be publicly recognized for your gift on the donor plaque that will be installed at the building when it is finished. Details on donating are on page 7 of this issue.



Please help us protect what is precious. Thank you!

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

38370 Point Breeze Rd.
Colton's Point, MD 20626
301/769-2222 FAX: 301/769-2225
www.stmarysmd.com/recreate/museums

Museum Staff

Debra Pence
Museum Division Manager

Lydia Wood
Historic Sites Coordinator

Christina Barbour
St. Clement's Island
Site Supervisor

April Havens
Piney Point Lighthouse
Site Supervisor

Kimberley A. Cullins
Marketing and Development
Specialist

Carol Cribbs
Museum Stores Manager

Greg Mora
Exhibits Fabrication
Specialist

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Kimberley A. Cullins
Newsletter Editor
kim_cullins@co.saint-marys.md.us

Night of the Stars: Museum Volunteers Take Center Stage

By Sheila Gibbons Hiebert, President

The glass-enclosed banquet hall at the Harry Lundeberg School of Seamanship in Piney Point was the setting for the 19th annual volunteer night April 28, when we celebrated the best bunch of museum volunteers any organization could ask for.

We thanked those who give their time to the museum sites in Colton's Point (25 volunteers, including coordinator Jean Hoffman) and Piney Point (29 volunteers, including coordinator Shirley Leyland).

We clapped for those who had volunteered more than 100 hours in the previous year: Eileen Amole, Duff Bailey, Steve Dunlap, Grace Hutchinson, and Margaret Slingerland.

We cheered those whose cumulative hours vaulted them into the 250 Hour Club (Steve Dunlap, Sheila O'Brien-Fisher, Ann Hoover and Mary Jane Palmby) and the veterans in the 1,500 Hour Club (Eileen Amole) and the 2,000 Hour Club (Jane Turner).

We got really excited about the Volunteers of the Year: Duff Bailey at the St. Clement's Island Museum and Steve Dunlap at the Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum and Historic Park.

The Friends' President's Award went to leaders of the Southern Maryland Doll Club and the Black-eyed Susan Doll Club for mounting the splendid annual Doll and Train Show that draws more than a thousand visitors to the St. Clement's Island Museum each December: Mary Dent, Linda Fry, Trish Guy and Linda Neeley.

Joining in offering congratulations and special citations to the volunteers were St. Mary's County Commissioners Jackie Russell, Tom Mattingly, Kenny Dement and Larry Jarboe; State Senator Roy Dyson; and Delegate Johnny Wood.

Working tirelessly behind the scenes and during the awards ceremony to make the event special were Museum Division staffers Christina Barbour, Lydia Wood, Carol Cribbs and Kim Cullins.

To all of you, on behalf of all of us, thank you!



(Left) A very surprised Duff Bailey accepts her award for Volunteer at the St. Clement's Island Museum. (Right) Steve Dunlap, just awarded Volunteer of the Year at the Piney Point Lighthouse, delights in his new parking privileges! Photos by Kim Cullins.



Our Photo Album

*All photos by Kim Cullins
Clockwise from upper left:*

1) Students from the King's Christian Academy in Callaway, MD, enjoyed learning about 17th-century garments during their field trip to the St. Clement's Island Museum.



2) St. Mary's County Commissioner President Francis Jack Russell (green shirt in center of photo) leads the Potomac River Wade In at the waterfront festival.



3) Tina Fratanuono sang the national anthem during Maryland Day ceremonies at the St. Clement's Island Museum.

4) The Aqua Squares of Calvert County performed a square-dance demonstration at the Piney Point Lighthouse Waterfront Festival.



5) The revetment project was completed this spring and now protects against erosion behind the Piney Point Lighthouse and the southern end of the Piney Point peninsula.



6) Students from the King's Christian Academy in Callaway, MD, performed a little spring cleaning at the St. Clement's Island Museum as well as other duties during a community service day at the museum.

7) Piney Point Lighthouse Museum volunteer and movie star look-alike Bea Anderson enjoyed the Volunteer Appreciation Night at the Harry Lundeberg School of Seamanship in Piney Point.

For a Decade, St. Clement's Was Her Home

This article appeared in The Enterprise newspaper March 23, 1984 in a special edition marking the State of Maryland's 350th anniversary. With Maryland celebrating its 375th this year, and the Friends marking their 25th anniversary, we are pleased to bring you this article published 25 years ago. We are grateful to Enterprise Editor Rick Boyd for granting permission to reprint this article.

By Jayne M. Blanchard

Mary Butterfield was scarcely 17 when she arrived at St. Clement's, a thickly forested, wind-tossed island on the Potomac River. The year was 1916 and Mary was a new bride from Washington, D.C. "I've always tried to adjust myself to conditions over the years. I was in love and I just didn't think of anything else," says the sharp, funny, 85-year-old St. Mary's County resident.

St. Clement's Island over its 350-year history has also been called Blackistone Island and "the birthplace of Maryland," named after the first celebration of the mass by Father Andrew White, S.J., for the newly arrived English passengers from the Ark and the Dove in March 1634.

But for nearly a decade, Mary called Blackistone Island – as it was known then – home.

"It was a lovely island," she recalls, her tiny hands flinging and fluttering as she releases the memories like a precious bird. "I loved it. Frank and I were married a year after we got there. My husband's father had had a stroke and we just went to visit for two weeks. When his brother left one day without a trace, my husband turned to me and said, 'What can we do?' So we stayed."

This began a 68-year love affair with St. Clement's Island and St. Mary's County that has not diminished with time. "My husband's people owned the island and subdivided it into lots

for friends. It had wonderful soil – we grew beautiful things and we raised cows, horses, chickens and pigs. There was a huge cedar forest and orchards of apples, figs, peaches and pears."

St. Clement's Island was much bigger in Mary's day, encompassing about 96 acres. Today, it has shrunk to less than 40 acres.

Although life on a private island with a lighthouse looming on one end seems idyllic, life was far from easy. "You had to do everything by boat. We bought supplies by the barrel in November for the winter and lived off the hogs in the cold months. Everything you wanted came by steamboat or you rowed over to the mainland," she says.

There were no paved streets, just roads of dirt and crushed oyster shells. "We had one horse, but we just walked everywhere. We had the steamboats and sailboats for travel, otherwise my husband rowed to Colton's Point and walked through the woods to get to the general store. My sister-in-law and I used to row across the river to get the mail."

To keep foods cool, they used ice from the pond, which was stored in a covered pit heaped with sawdust. For light, there were gas lamps and it wasn't until the arrival of the Navy in 1918 that residents received "running water that really ran."

Then there was the cold. "We got the wind in every direction. The winter of 1917-18 was so bad the Norfolk river steamers



Sadie & Mary about 1920



(Left) Mary Butterfield and her sister-in-law Sadie on Blackistone Island in 1920. (Above) St. Clement's Island, early 1900s. Photos submitted by Marilyn Butterfield.

didn't run. The ice would pile on the rocks in front of the lighthouse so high you had to stand on your upper porch to see out."

In the warm weather, however, there was the beach, trips to the cedar forest to "pick asparagus as big as your thumb" and lots of people around the summer cottages.

Entertainment on St. Clement's centered around reading and music from Mary's Victrola. "We read and always had family around us, so we didn't really need anything else. The only thing I missed when I was young was Mr. Kopel had a hotel with a pavilion out over the water. On still nights I could hear the music while sitting on the beach. How I wished I was there!" she remembers.

In 1918, Mary lived in the lighthouse when the former keeper went to fight in World War I. "It was cold up there, but I liked living in the lighthouse, especially with the coal stove," she shivers. "I used to help out – filling the lamps, shining the lenses and the brass. It wasn't unusual for women to run the lighthouse."

Mary never found life inconvenient except during the birth of her daughter. "She was born on Christmas morning. My husband knew something was happening but I kept putting him and the labor pains off by fixing my turkeys and banking my pies. It was a cold night and I didn't want to trouble him.

"At the break of day, I said, 'You'd better go,' and in a terrible storm, he rowed across the river to get the doctor. By the time he reached the shore, I had had the baby."

In 1925, the Butterfield family moved off St. Clement's to a waterfront house on Colton's Point where they had a clear view of their beloved island. Their home is now the site of the St. Clement's Island-Potomac River Museum.

Mary looks to the upcoming 350th celebrations with interest, having participated, with her daughter, as a "Dancing peasant" during the 300th observances in St. Mary's City in 1934.

"I enjoyed living on the island. It was a delightful place. There were no luxuries but since I had a lonely childhood, I was glad to know a family. We knew everybody on the island."

Attention Lighthouse Lovers!

This **NEW** model of the Blackistone Lighthouse, manufactured by Harbour Lights, is part of their Little Lights collection and stands 3 ½ inches high. This is a **LIMITED EDITION** and once they are gone, they are gone forever! This can be purchased at the Lighthouse Lens or Crab Claw Museum Stores for \$27.95. Get yours today!
Photo by Kim Cullins.



A Letter From Debra

Dear Friends,

Although the spring weather has been somewhat challenging, the plans and projects for the 2009 season are moving right along. Thanks to a generous private donation and a gift from the St. Clement's Hundred, the St. Clement's Island Museum is completing a new audiovisual room with an orientation film to come shortly. Artifacts from Jim Banagan's collection of watermen's tools will be the highlight of a new exhibit for the room.

The Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum and Historic Park site development plans are more than halfway through the county and state permit process. We will breathe a sigh of relief when we get that wrapped up and can start working on enhanced parking, walkways, and gardens for the site. In the meantime, the Potomac River Maritime Exhibit Building exhibits are right on schedule; two new phases were open during the waterfront festival held May 9 and 10.

The Friends Board assumed a strong leadership role to build the new collections management building to be located at the St. Clement's Island Museum this year. This project will take the museum division to the next level of American Association of Museums (AAM) standards for collections care and management.

All in all, it is a productive spring with all staff multi-tasking and volunteers and preservation partners working together to give our visitors the best possible experience at each of our sites. The staff thanks all of our Friends and partners for their continued encouragement and support as we strive to fulfill our mission.

Very Sincerely,

Maryland Day Event Launches "Celebrate 375!"

The St. Clement's Island Museum and about 250 of its closest friends – politicians, historians, educators, preservationists, military personnel, community leaders, students, and beloved citizens – celebrated Maryland's birthday on March 25, a gray, chilly Wednesday.

But there was nothing gloomy about the people or the Maryland Day program that underscored the importance of St. Clement's Island and recalled the hardiness of the colonists who arrived at her shore 375 years ago that day. The keynote speaker, Dr. Julia King, associate professor of anthropology at St. Mary's College of Maryland, gave us moments of reflection, moments of gratitude, and a lighthearted look at how far we've come since those earliest days.

Maryland Day was also the kick-off event of the St. Mary's County tourism initiative – Celebrate 375 – which serves not only our visitors but also our community with special Celebrate 375 events, themed weekend packages, incentives, and more, designed to entice people to the historic sites, attractions, hotel and restaurant amenities, cultural events, and scenic natural resources within St. Mary's County.

The St. Mary's County Museum Division is a proud Celebrate 375 tourism partner and will include anniversary elements in programs and activities throughout 2009. For more information about the Celebrate 375 program, log on to www.Maryland375.com or call the St. Mary's County Tourism Office at 301-475-4200 x 1404.



Designed by Debra Pence and created by Charm City Cakes of Baltimore, the 2009 Maryland Day cake was a "must see." Debra incorporated the Celebrate 375 logo into her design. Photo by Kim Cullins.

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.

July 11 – Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival

Now in its 10th year! And to Celebrate Maryland's 375 tourism program, the festival will present the best of Maryland jazz artists and seafood delicacies! Join us riverside for three dynamic jazz performers: Jazz/blues vocalist Ruby Hayes at 4 p.m., Smooth Jazz sax man Jaared at 6 p.m., and white hot Smooth Jazz/R&B artist Art Sherrod, Jr. at 8 p.m. Friends members enjoy a discounted price of \$45. Buy early! A sellout leaves no tickets available at the gate. No coolers, large umbrellas, or pets, please.

July 25 – St. Clement's Island History and Heritage Day

Bring a picnic lunch and your camera for a scenic visit to St. Clement's Island! Free water taxi available on a first-come, first-served basis. Come

early for the walking tour at 10:30 a.m., and visit the reconstructed Blackstone Lighthouse. Kids will enjoy the free watermelon and heritage games! Enjoy a walk on the beach, hiking trail, riverside picnic tables, and historical programs to entertain and inform. Event hours are from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wear comfortable walking shoes, sunscreen, and insect repellent. Water is a must! Celebrate Maryland's 375th birthday with a visit where Maryland's earliest history begins!

August 8 – Children's Day

On your mark! Get set! Go! Go to the St. Clement's Island Museum for fun and games, free t-shirts for the first 100 kids, hands-on activities, demonstrations, magic show, music and great food! Meet our community heroes from the Sheriff's Department, fire and rescue squads, St. Mary's

Hospital and more! Free bike raffle! Kiddie tractor pull! Free admission for kids and parents and free water taxi for kids to St. Clement's Island! Event hours are from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Don't forget a hat and some sunscreen!

September 12 – Interactive Murder Mystery Dinner

SAVE THE DATE! This Friends fundraiser takes place at Olde Breton Inn, Leonardtown, where the murderer could be YOU! Scripts will be handed out to willing participants who inevitably "ham" it up and play their parts to the hilt! It's hilarious! It's unrehearsed! It's unforgettable! The evening offers a cash bar/social hour, live and silent auctions, buffet dinner and dessert, and 30-minute murder mystery performance. Tickets go on sale August 1. Get your tickets early – tickets are limited!

Member News

Welcome Aboard New Members!

Family

Marie Guidry and Jim Putman, Colton's Point, MD

SPECIAL THANKS!

Donations

A HUGE thank you goes to the Chesapeake Bay Running Club for its donation of \$2,500, proceeds from the annual Lower Potomac River Marathon held in the Piney Point area every March. Race director Liza Recto shared this: "Our marathon continues to attract a diverse group of runners from all over the world. This year we were delighted to host Congresswoman Jean Schmidt of Ohio, as well as runners from almost 30 states and South Africa....The Chesapeake Bay Running Club is honored to present the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum with the enclosed donation of \$2,500. We hope we can continue to work together to preserve the Potomac River's oldest lighthouse with our annual marathon...."

Memorial Gift

Former Friends president Louanne Cosimano Bailey and her husband Bo donated \$25 as a memorial gift in memory of John V. Baggett. John was the former director of St. Mary's County's Department of Recreation and Parks and also a former Friends president.

Membership Gift

Thank you, Helen Dorsey, for new members Marie Guidry and Jim Putman! Helen purchased a gift membership for her Colton's Point friends!



Piney Point Lighthouse Museum junior volunteer Grant Havens hands off water to runners of the Lower Potomac River Marathon. The museum supported the event with staff and volunteers to cover three of the many water stations needed for the 26.2 mile run through the Piney Point and St. George Island area. Photo by Kim Cullins.

Collections Management Facility Building Campaign . . .

Thank You, Donors!

Donations are coming in for the Collections Management Facility Building Campaign. It is so gratifying to see the response to our request for support. Our heartfelt thanks to the donors whose names are listed below. Their names, and those of donors whose gifts we've yet to receive, will be displayed on a plaque at the site and on the Museum Division's web site.

Your support is vital to this fundraising campaign. Please help us build this urgently needed facility by making a donation today! Please mail your check, payable to The Friends, to the Collections Building Campaign, 38370 Point Breeze Road, Colton's Point, MD 20626.

Gable (\$500 and up)

James Banagan
Dave Decker
Susan and Julian Gilman
Ray and Sheila Hiebert
Walt and Shirley Leyland
Mechanicsville Optimist Club
NuStar Energy LP

Beam (\$250 - \$499)

Peter Verburgt

Plank (\$125 - \$249)

Sam and Vicki Brown
Sonny and Peach Burch
Helen Dorsey and John Windolph
Dyson Building Center
John and Mary Freeman
Guy Distributing Co.
Mel and Edith Rogers
Fred and Lori Wallace

Foundation (up to \$124)

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Marc and Ilene Cohen
George A. Guy
Mike Harris
Al and Kay Hayden
Helen Hewitt
Sheila Hiebert (in honor of Conni Leigh James)
M. Kiplinger Hine, Jr.
Robert and Mary Hughes
Bob and Inky Kopel
Claudia McAuliffe
Sarah Pingleton
Jean Quinnette
Phil Rollins
Frank and Margie Rubala
Frank and Jean Toth
Bob and Anna Yates

You are Invited!

The St. Clement's Island Museum invites you to attend the premiere and ribbon cutting of the Potomac River Room orientation film and watermen's exhibit.

Light refreshments will be offered.

Please join us for this members-only and VIP event on Friday, June 19, 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

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

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

Senior (\$25)

Individual (\$35)

Family (\$50)

Heritage (\$100)

Patron (\$200)

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St. Clement's Island and Piney Point Museums
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