

South Fox Island Review

www.southfox.org

FILA P.O. Box 851, Traverse City MI 49685 FILA is 501c3 Non-Profit Donations Tax Deductable

Winter 2012



FILA is a 501c3 Non Profit

The Fox Island Lighthouse Association, in conjunction with other sources, will restore and assist in the over-all management of the South Fox Island Light Station and connecting grounds for the public good, while maintaining good stewardship.

To learn more about the South Fox Island Light Station, please visit:

www.southfox.org.

2012 Season *Island Update*

Four trips were made to the island this past summer and through hard work, sharp clippers and able bodies, paths were cleared and brush cut back away from the buildings. During the first trip to the station, we had hoped to mow (with the new mower that we carried out with us) and spray the poison ivy. However a quick assessment of the situation, lead to a full team press on reclaiming the previous years perimeters. Out came the clippers, brush cutter and the new Puller Bear. We kept the mower busy all afternoon while the other 3 cut back and pulled the larger vegetation that had invaded the lawn edges.

During the following visits, volunteers were able to complete the mowing around the Fog Signal building, the sidewalk edges and the trail to the beach. Good news: we are making progress on the poison ivy control, only needed 4 gallons to spot spray this year's crop!



New dinghy works great!



John Nelson lopping away



FREE TREE to Supporters of FILA!

FILA is once more offering balsam fir and spruce trees as well as cedar for holiday decorating. We have all sizes of trees including some up to 16 feet. All **FREE** to friends and supporters of FILA.

Call Phil at 231-386-7922 or by e-mail

philvon@chartermi.net to arrange pick up or delivery.

Light station material to be archived at two locations

Since 2004 FILA, members and friends have come across many photos, articles, government papers and other material that tell us the history and story of the Light Station. In order to have an organized and easy to reference research base to draw upon, two locations will soon archive material that has been located in many locations. Old photos, newspaper articles, U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Government reports and written correspondence, oral histories (both transcribed text and recorded interviews), maps, drawings, etc. will be housed for public access. The two locations will be the Leelanau Historical Society Museum in Leland, Michigan and the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. Both facilities will have over 1,200 pieces of material to draw upon. The location in Leland will make it easier for researchers, writers, students and other to have a local access site to learn more about the Light Station. The Bentley Historical Library was founded in 1935 and is a premier research center focusing on Michigan and University of Michigan history. Both locations offer professional archive management, secure storage, year round access and an efficient mechanism to research the Light Station and its unique history.



203 East Cedar Street, Leland MI
info@LeelanauHistory.org
231 256 7475 www.LeelanauHistory.org

BENTLEY HISTORICAL LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
1150 Beal Avenue Ann Arbor, MI 48109
Phone: (734) 764-3482
<http://bentley.umich.edu/>

Attitude of Gratitude....

In the beginning, a few key people help set the stage and guided some major projects. We are grateful to the following for their time, resources and commitment to the station:

Jerry Spears and Chris Young: Boat house excavation and landscaping.

Jerry Spears and Chris Young: Lighthouse over-roofing and fog signal structure stabilization.

Dick Parker and family crew: Workshop re-roofing.

Greg Nickerson and family: re-roofing boat house.

Dick Parker and Team Nickerson: Truing up and supporting boat house.

Harold Carlton: webcam and 911 radio installation and maintenance.

Bill Collins: Boat house engineering assessment.

Andy Batteiger: Old Town Construction, Boat house doors

Dan Nickels: Black Rock Forge, door hinges and cane bolts

Jerry Spears and Matt Young: Renovation of well and donation and installation of well pump.

Mirada Ranch: Transport of excavation equipment.

Jack and Kathy Snedeker: Piping Plover survey.

Jay Berry, NMC instructor for CAD, drew up the plans for the Boat house doors

Ken Czapski, Sanders & Czapski Associates, did Historic Structures Report

Heather Landis, Graduate Student, Eastern Michigan University, assisted Ken Czapski

Leonard Coombs, Acquisitions, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. Advising on archive file of the Station.

Julie Rhodes, Business Manager, Leelanau Historical Society, Advising on archive file of the Station. A second file will be placed at the Leelanau Historical Society Museum in Leland.

Grace Johnson, Dickinson Gallery, Empire, MI, donated old Record Eagle newspaper clippings about the Station.

Coast Guard Air Station Traverse City: spring fly over to inspect for possible winter damage to the Station also to check water level at the shore line.

Appeal from the President

Dear Friend of South Fox Island,

As 2012 comes to a close, FILA can look back on another successful and productive season. We participated in 6 festivals or presentations and made 4 work trips to the station. The Historic Structures Report (HSR) has been completed and as we study the priorities it becomes apparent we are at a critical point to preserve the Assistant Keepers roof, repair drainage around the 1867 Lighthouse and save the summer kitchen on the back of the lighthouse. Your donations and support are needed to complete these important tasks.

Estimates from the HSR to complete these tasks is \$5000 for the roof, \$2500 for drainage and the attached kitchen will be a long term project expected to take years to complete.

Your resources are needed, financially and physically. Do you have time, or leadership skills to help coordinate the projects? Please contact me or attend one of our monthly board meetings held the 2nd Monday evening of each month. Check us out on Facebook for current activities or leave a comment; we would love to hear from you.

Thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,

John McKinney, President FILA
231-947-1926 Mckinne8@msu.edu

Visit us on Facebook!



For the first trip the crew opted for access to the station from the west side.



John Wells and John McKinney painting boathouse rails. Thank you Rustoleum for donating the paint!



Path to station from west beach cleared



Chris Young



Chris and Jerry Spears.



Bill Collins



UPDATE

FILA was in the 5 finalists but was not chosen as the winner. We would like to thank everyone who voted for us! And the national exposure can only bring new opportunities! Thank you for your support.

FESTIVALS

This past season FILA was present at 6 festivals/presentations including:

- Beaver Island History Festival
- Inland Waters Festival Suttons Bay
- Port Oneida Fair
- Northport Fall Festival
- Leland Heritage Celebration
- Charlevoix County History Preservation Society

Over \$1100 was raised through donations and the sale of photo prints. Donald Stauffer contributed his glass bead making talents as well as set up and managed each event. Thank you to all who came out for support.



John Wells and Sandra Bradshaw answer questions during festival

Awareness to our cause is the first step in completing the task.

Funny Stories from the past.

Special thanks to John Wells for collecting the oral stories and keeping history alive!

THE TREE AND THE DUCK

When FILA set out to do oral history interviews with former U.S. Coast Guard personnel who lived and worked seasonally at the light station, we were not sure exactly what stories and tales we would hear. Over the 18 months of searching for these former "Coasties" and light keepers, traveling and arranging for interviews, transcribing the recorded interviews, and staying in touch with them for additional information, we heard some amazing and interesting tales.



Bob Harris, USCG 1953

One such story had a humorous note. Bob and Rheda Harris were newly married in 1953. Bob and his new bride went to South Fox that same year for the shipping season. The Harris' were kind enough to be interviewed about their experiences about life at the light station. Mr. & Mrs. Harris related many stories about their stay but this one is unique.

"A routine that we followed after a night of high winds and low visibility was to pick up dead birds that had died by flying in the light (tower). On one of these occasions, the 40 Coast Guard patrol boat from Charlevoix was to deliver the grocery order that we had radioed in.

I pick up a dead duck that had died flying into the light, and cut off its head near its body. After carefully pulling back some of the neck feathers, I nailed the neck bone and skin to a tree, about 5 feet off the ground near the front of the old light house. I replaced the feathers over the nails so the nails were not visible. When the crew of the 40 footer arrived, I commented about the high wind the previous night and showed them the ducks head sticking straight out of the tree.

The crew walked around the tree several times looking for the back end of the duck until I finally told them what I had done. They felt pretty foolish, but got a good laugh out of it."

"All work and no play" was not necessarily the rule on South Fox!



Search South Fox Light Station
Regular postings on trips, new photos,
project updates etc.
Become a FAN, LIKE & SHARE!



PLEASE RENEW!

If you have not already done so, please renew your membership. Your donations make a big difference in the success of the mission.

www.southfox.org



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Fox Island Lighthouse Assoc.
PO Box 851 Traverse City MI 49685

MINI MEMBERSHIP FORM

DATE _____

___ New ___ Renew

Name (please print)

Address

City, State, Zip

E-mail

Phone

_____ \$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 ___ Other

Membership includes subscription to "Fox Island Views" Newsletter and the opportunity to join work crews on the island, participate at festival events, as well as knowing that YOU are a part of preserving this historical treasure. Thank you!

Mail to: FILA

PO Box 851 Traverse City MI 49685
President John McKinney 231-947-1926

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HELP WANTED

Looking for
nominations to the
Board.

We have a plan for the future,
can you bring something to
the table?

Board meets 2nd Monday of each month

Committees include:

Executive
History
Promotion
Membership
Island Projects

Contact
Pres John McKinney
231-947-1926
Mckinne8@msu.edu



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231-947-2626
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Traverse City, MI 49684

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