



Celebrating
20 Years of Light
for OBLHS



Noting Accomplishments,
Events, and
Those Making It Possible

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Outer Banks Lighthouse Society Twenty Years and Still Going Strong

by Cheryl Shelton-Roberts

In the Beginning

It has been said that during times of need in life that most often the right person comes along at the right time. For North Carolina lighthouses, we can say that the right *people* have come along at the right time. Just a few of the names include President Bill Clinton, Senator Marc Basnight, Senator Lauch Faircloth, the National Park Service (NPS), and the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society's board of directors and members.

And there are key independent nonprofit organizations that work to preserve individual lighthouses including Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc. (Currituck Beach), Old Baldy Foundation, Friends of Oak Island Lighthouse, Edenton Historical Commission (1886 Roanoke River Light Station), Washington County Waterways Commission (1866 reproduction Roanoke River Light Station). The Outer Banks Lighthouse Society (OBLHS) communicates with all these organizations to offer assistance. And there's even that brave individual repurposing the Frying Pan Shoals Light Station into a B&B. Lighthouse preservation has come a long way.



Looking back: OBLHS and friends celebrated 200 Years of Light at Cape Hatteras October 18, 2003, at the circle of stones marking the original location of the lighthouse. Keepers' names from both the 1803 and 1870 towers were read and the bell from the Carol A. Deering was struck for each name. The relocated lighthouse is seen in the background.

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Bruce Roberts and I shared admiration and enthusiasm for lighthouses from the time we met a quarter century ago. He had already created a book *Southern Lighthouses* and was working on subsequent lighthouse books because public interest in them was growing by leaps and bounds. But something bothered us: despite increasing visitation to our great lights, the towers and keepers' quarters were crumbling. Our favorite place was at Bodie Island Light Station. We enjoyed every part of the area, especially how the light station appeared much as it did when it was completed in 1872. However, few people knew of this beautiful lighthouse. I could imagine hearing travelers comment in surprise as they passed it on Highway 12 headed for Cape Hatteras, "Oh, look, dear, there's another lighthouse. I wonder which one *that* is?"

It would be several years and a lot of work before word would get out that Bodie Island Light Station was one *not* to miss.

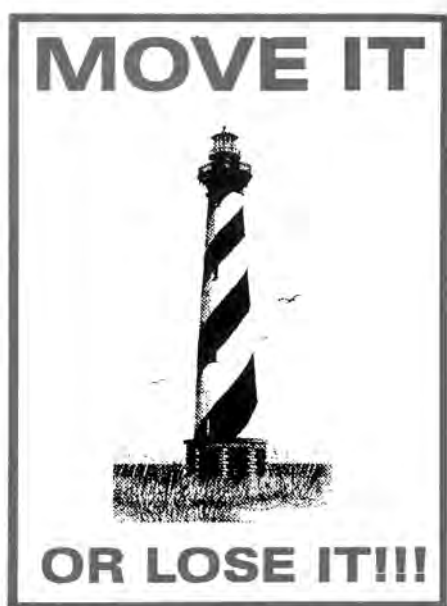
Until the 1990s, there were scarce resources to get information on lighthouses. And several factors were against these beautiful architectural masterpieces getting restored: Politicians were unaware of lighthouses' contributions to local economies; the US Coast Guard, stewards of lighthouses and their Fresnel lenses after 1939, often didn't have sufficient staff or money to maintain them; the National Park Service took ownership of dozens of them including our tall coastal lights here in North Carolina, but it also suffered from reduced federal funding; and, respect for historical structures in America had yet to mature to the point that lighthouses became prioritized as American treasures to be saved. Three decades ago, the Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc. was the lone preservation group focused on preserving a NC light station by exploring how to revive the Keepers' Quarters at Currituck Beach Light Station.

Case in point: During the early 1990s, Cape Hatteras was touted as one of the world's best and most popular lighthouses, yet there it sat precariously on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean. Although monies had been earmarked for its relocation around 1989, it remained in place awaiting its watery grave. We knew we had to do something because it looked like no one else would.



This is the view from behind the crowd in attendance at the 200 Years of Light Celebration at Cape Hatteras. The circle of stones demarking the original site of the 1870 lighthouse have been tossed about like toy building blocks and nearly buried. Exactly four weeks earlier Hurricane Isabel struck the East Coast and caused considerable damage. This picture is a reminder of why the lighthouse had to be relocated further from the brunt of the sea's energy.

Bruce Roberts and OBLHS members attended the April 8, 1998, public meeting to debate the relocation project. There was anger expressed by large groups of people against the move who had been bussed into the Manteo meeting. Instead of talking his allotted three minutes, he simply held up a big poster of the lighthouse sitting on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean to let the picture do the talking for him. It hit the front page of the Raleigh News and Observer.



One response to those against moving Cape Hatteras Lighthouse was to display this bumper sticker.



Bruce Roberts, who favors moving the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, lets a large photograph that shows the proximity of the Atlantic Ocean argue his case.

STAFF PHOTO BY JIM BOUNDS



The Joyner father-daughter team took responsibility for creating the molds with 83 Cape Hatteras keepers' names to be engraved on the face stones left from the below-grade, first granite plinth. Once the relocation was complete in 1999, people began to settle into the fact that the relocation was inevitable and a boon to the local economy. Hundreds of thousands of people have come expressly to see "the lighthouse that moved." The stones quickly became a place of reverence. (See note on the stones' relocation on page 7.)

Outer Banks Lighthouse Society is Founded

After much consideration, Bruce and I decided to relocate to the coast and start a lighthouse shop in 1994. This was to give us income in order to begin a nonprofit organization focused on North Carolina's lighthouses. Never did it dawn on us that what we were undertaking was a daunting task, one that would span two decades. Never did it occur to us that not everyone wanted Bodie Island Light Station restored or Cape Hatteras moved to safety. The struggle was long and tedious, but with the help of state and US representatives and their aides, NPS, and a dedicated OBLHS board of directors, members, and friends the team effort proved worthy and successful.

That same year, we registered OBLHS with the secretary of state. We volunteered at Bodie Island—even paying our employees to stand at the lighthouse door to greet visitors. I began immediately searching for stories that would become the first edition of the *Lighthouse News*.

The first article I wrote was about the Roanoke River Lighthouse that sat on a spit of manmade land in Edenton and was owned by Emmett Wiggins. In failing health, people approached him about its purchase, but he never completed a deal. After his death, a relative held it hostage for an exorbitant amount of money. It sat “rotten as a pear,” one Plymouth resident observed. When the town of Plymouth couldn't raise the one-half million dollars demanded by the light's owner, the OBLHS was asked in 1996 to share its copy of the original 1866 architectural plans gathered on one of many trips to the National Archives for lighthouse materials. The dedicated group led by Harry Thompson and Doward Jones worked for years to build the replica as near perfect and original as possible on Plymouth's riverfront. And, as they say, the rest is history. (Facing page the Roanoke River Light in Plymouth.)



If you've been by Edenton's Colonial Park recently, which is the perfect location to view the Roanoke River Lighthouse, you'll notice that the old river light has been restored and is again resting over water. This is a picture of what the demure light station looked like just a few years ago before the Historic Edenton State Historic Site relocated it to Edenton's waterfront and restored it. An amazing transformation has taken place. Exhibits and furnishings are being put in place including cast-iron stoves and other furniture to portray the lighthouse as it would have been in the early 1900s when a keeper and an assistant keeper lived and worked in the light station. The light station burned and was rebuilt at least twice. This is the final station as it was partially rebuilt at that site in 1886. Note the differences in it and its predecessor (facing page).



This beautiful reproduction of the Roanoke River Lighthouse is located on the town of Plymouth's waterfront about halfway between the northern and southern Outer Banks off Highway 64. New boat docks adjoining the lighthouse grounds bring boaters while the road brings admiring landlubbers. There are added exhibits in the lighthouse as well as the maritime museum across the street, projects of the Washington County Waterways Commission. (Below left) The Society paid a visit to the lighthouse in 2008 during one of our special event weekends. (Above) OBLHS volunteers took part in a "workday" at the light doing some "light" house cleaning and painting. (Below right) Judy Rosson works on the railing while husband Ed ("Eb") happily takes a break on a hot day. The blob of paint on his shirt was worn like a badge of honor. We shall miss you forever, Ed.



The Newsletter

The *Lighthouse News* debuted the following summer as a way to get news on North Carolina lights to visitors. We gathered members slowly through contacts at our shop in Nags Head and by word of mouth. We have always been a small but muscular group because of our passion for all things maritime. Membership rolls were kept by hand, the newsletter folded and collated by hand on our living room floor. Copies were taken to local motels and restaurants and given out at area lighthouses. Our business paid for the first three years of newsletters that served as our sole source of contact with lighthouse enthusiasts. To name just a few of those who helped us from the beginning: Drs. Jim and Mabry O'Donnell, David Stick, Edward Greene, Cullen Chambers, Bill and Betty Parrish, John McPherson, Charlie and Shirley Votaw, Lloyd Childers, Sandy Clunies, and, a bit later, Bett Padgett. My mom and daughter, Courtney, folded and stuffed many issues. We had our first meetings, fashioned by-laws, and held our first annual Keepers Weekend events. As with most nonprofit groups, a core group of dedicated people took on the workload. It's the same today but with fresh faces bringing their great talents to further our care for lighthouses. The newsletter "is the bond that ties," Betty Parrish once said. I have continued my search for stories based on her sincere encouragement.

The newsletter has always been a way to showcase keepers' descendants. To enjoy the experience of speaking with family members who lived at these light stations and hearing stories of growing up there was fascinating. I found their resourceful, resilient, unbroken spirits uplifting, and I felt they deserved credit as much as any celebrity. Daily chores, loneliness, growing up at a young age with great responsibilities, leaving their fathers during winter to live on the mainland and attend school, days upon days of only salted fish and fatback to eat, weathering harsh storms—it all captivated me. But I also envied the closeness of family, feeling of community, and joy in living with Nature at her rawest. Often, just surviving each day was an accomplishment. And the pride. The pride in knowing their duty each day that broke over the horizon; the sense of loyalty to that duty and mandatory strictness in following procedure. I have met third and fourth generations of keeper's descendants, and they are chips off the old block.

The newsletter became expensive to print, so we have adjusted the number of copies for two editions each year and have begun to send it via E-mail to consenting members. It has served as a great resource for teachers and students requesting educational materials from OBLHS. The issues will be supplemented once or twice during the year with updates or special announcements.



The Outer Banks Lighthouse Society's success is in part due to a hard-working board of directors. Currently on the board in 2014: back row l-r, Bett Padgett (far left), Jim O'Donnell, Bob DaVia, Cheryl Shelton-Roberts, Richard Meissner, Bruce Roberts, Kelly Waller; middle row l-r, Mabry O'Donnell, Judy Moon, Nicole DaVia; front row l-r, Diana Chappell, Gayle Keresey, John Havel. Not pictured are Virginia Howell and Bill Padgett.

Accomplishments

Here is a brief summary of our actions to date. Remember, volunteers are behind each listing. And the elbow grease applied, communication, and dedication by our volunteers/members are at the root of each success. It wasn't always easy, but members' voices collectively helped to encourage the care for our state's lighthouses.

Our Mission Statement:

The Outer Banks Lighthouse Society (OBLHS) was organized in fall 1994 to aid in the preservation of the lighthouses and maritime history of North Carolina and to work with the National Park Service and other agencies, both government and non-profit groups, to achieve the safe keeping of the buildings, artifacts, and records of the U.S. Lighthouse Establishment, aka Lighthouse Board, aka Bureau of Lighthouses and U.S. Lighthouse Service.

Our 501 (c) 3 organization is supported by modest donations and membership fees from our members. The OBLHS board meets once a year and maintains continuous communication via email, text, and phone.

Some of the Society's successful projects include:

- Publication of an award-winning newsletter that is distributed to members and interested lighthouse enthusiasts.
- Support was given to the NPS for the long-term protection plan focusing on the relocation of the Cape Hatteras Light Station.
- NC Lighthouse information continues to be posted at <http://www.outerbankslighthousesociety.org> and other networked sites.
- Educational literature is mailed free of charge to educators and students across the nation when requested.
- Materials are provided upon request for queries from (but not limited to) the public visiting Outer Banks lighthouses, interpretive rangers at Outer Banks lights, and keepers at lighthouses nationally.
- An educational (full color) brochure is distributed at no charge to all who request it and at NC Visitors' Centers. Up to 20,000 of these informational brochures are given away each year. Ralph Burroughs has been instrumental in the design, printing, and distribution of these.

–Engraving of the foundation stones with keepers' names at the original 1870 Cape Hatteras Lighthouse site was achieved through research and planning with assistance from the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau. These stones were uncovered from storm-driven sand overwash and moved for cleaning. They are scheduled to be reset as an amphitheater near the lighthouse in 2015. OBLHS has played a key role in the project's planning phase.

– OBLHS, NPS, and local community residents and businesses together hosted the successful Hatteras Keepers' Descendants Homecoming. Over 1,100 Keepers' Descendants attended at the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse May 2001.

– The commemorative *Hatteras Keepers: Oral and Family Histories* by Cheryl Shelton-Roberts and Sandra MacLean Clunies was published and is based on interviews with Cape Hatteras keepers' families, keepers' journals, and family photographs. Each Homecoming attendee received a copy. The OBLHS and the NPS cosponsored the event with the help of major donations from Bank of America, WRAL-TV, Lighthouse Digest/Depot, and the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau; all proceeds funded the Homecoming.

– "Two Hundred Years of Light" event was held at the Circle of Stones, Cape Hatteras Lighthouse October 2003; special addresses by park staff and authors Homer Hickam, Kevin Duffus, and David Stick made the event memorable.

– OBLHS holds an annual members' event that includes lighthouse visits and dinner.

– OBLHS Prism Awards are presented to those deserving of recognition within the lighthouse community.

– A donation was made to the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum for the restoration and exhibition of the 1854 first-order Fresnel lens from the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse; members volunteered during a four-week project to clean and polish the prisms for display.

–*Growing up at the Lighthouse*, a 40-minute video, was created in September 2002 by Ken Mann featuring the surviving children of Keepers Vernon Gaskill and Julian Austin formerly of the Bodie Island Lighthouse. This is now available in CD. Contact info@oblhs.org.

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OBLHS sponsored a second homecoming, this time at Bodie Island in October 2013. One of the special parts of the event came when the NPS allowed keepers' descendants to climb the lighthouse after regular climbing season had ended. Both young and elderly climbed, both equally delighted with the experience of the climb and to see the lighthouse restored and healthy again. The lighthouse is an American treasure, and the view from the top is memorable.

–Working with the NPS, an invitation was extended to bring John Gaskill, son of Keeper Vernon Gaskill, to Bodie Island. He greeted thousands of visitors over several years sharing stories of living and working at the light station.

– Enthusiastic support was given the Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc. in their successful quest to gain permanent stewardship of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse.

– A purchase of architectural drawings was made of the NC lights with a grant from the Frank Stick Fund, now housed in the Outer Banks History Center in Manteo.

– A gift was given to the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau of a seven-foot-tall model of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, engineered by Ed Chiasson of Sea-Lites.

– OBLHS donated a U.S. Coast Guard lens equivalent to a fourth-order Fresnel lens that is exhibited in the reproduction of the 1866 Roanoke River Lighthouse in Plymouth, NC.

– Sponsorship of two structural engineering reports by lighthouse preservation experts was made to aid in the restoration of Bodie Island Lighthouse.

– Funding for scaffolding at Bodie Island was given to determine the extent of needed restoration under the lantern room at the gallery deck level.

– A donation was given to the NPS for repairs to Bodie Island Lighthouse.

– OBLHS partnered with the NPS for the preservation and maintenance of the Bodie Island first-order Fresnel lens; OBLHS successfully campaigned to prevent its permanent removal.

– Volunteers helped clean and crate the Bodie Island Lighthouse lens for storage during the restoration of the tower.

– Lowe's Home Improvement, Mooresville, NC, donated (at our request) paint for Cape Lookout.

–Three separate donations have been made to Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station following storm damage and to aid in general funds and upkeep.



OBLHS invited John Gaskill to Bodie Island several times to speak with visitors. The park agreed that visitors would take away many more memories after hearing John talk about growing up at the lighthouse than had they visited on a self-tour basis. As a teenager, John helped his dad, the keeper, during summers with many of the daily chores required to take care of a large light station. Today, interpretive tours are offered several times each day between Good Friday and Columbus Day.

John Gaskill holds a group of OBLHS members spellbound as he explains how he painted the 165-foot-tall lighthouse during the 1930s with a simple pulley system, a wooden box, paint he mixed himself, and a paint brush. The entire tower was painted by hand. He also explained how the double keepers' quarters were laid out, furnished, and that a keeper was mighty lonely especially during cold winter months. Life was punctuated with helping wealthy hunters coming from the North to hunt waterfowl or the occasional visitor that ventured driving on the beach at low tide. And, John explained, "We had to mow this entire yard with a push mower. That was a lot of grass." He always shook his head and laughed when he told this story. Thank you for all you did for the Society, John. We and thousands of others will remember you fondly always.



– A grant to Harkers Island Elementary School in 2010 provided transportation of students to Cape Lookout Lighthouse.

– Six grants to date have been awarded to the Old Baldy Foundation to host school children from Southport Elementary School to visit the lighthouse.

– Bodie Island Lighthouse Keepers' Homecoming was held in October 2013 where 300 descendants and 50 volunteers learned and celebrated. Genealogical research and interviews with keepers' descendants

were published in *Bodie Island Lighthouse Keepers: Oral and Family Histories* by Cheryl Shelton-Roberts with research assistance by Sandra MacLean Clunies (2013). To order a book contact info@oblhs.org.

– OBLHS members have served as consultants for educational programs for PBS, The History Channel, The Discovery Channel, schools, organizations, and other media.

And, we shall carry on with the support of our members.

Some of OBLHS's board of directors climbed the Bodie Island Lighthouse while it was still encased in scaffolding during the first phase of its restoration. That half dome in the middle is the ball of the lightning rod at the tip-top of the lighthouse. The spiral we're holding onto is the lightning rod. The park invited us for this exciting experience—one we are sure to never forget. It was a thank you for all that the Society has done to help the restoration project become reality.





Each time our annual events take place near Cape Hatteras, we always try to visit Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station. The year this photograph was taken, James Charlet, Site Manager, gave a talk about all the unsung heroes of the US Life-Saving Service. We were also treated to a breeches buoy drill by the US Coast Guard. Across Highway 12 from the life-saving station is the former Rodanthe School that is now the Community Center. James uncovered the truth that the building was originally the (relocated) North River Light Station. James and wife Linda Malloy always impart their knowledge and senses of humor when the Society visits, making each visit great fun. OBLHS has made donations to the historically significant site for repairs and its maintenance.



Meghan Agresto presented a brief history of the light station to visiting OBLHS members. Full of enthusiasm, Meghan is a fervent historian. She is the person who oversees daily operations at the lighthouse for stewards Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc. She wrote, "Each week from Memorial Day to Labor Day about 55,000 new visitors arrive and together Luis Garcia, lighthouse keeper, and I, the Site Manager, make sure that they feel a connection to the work that the keepers who carried oil to the top had to do." The magnificent restoration of the original keepers' quarters is a sight to behold. And of course, the climb of the tower is exhilarating. Interpretive exhibits inside the tower are informative and entertaining.

The following appeared in Volume XXX Number Three 2014 of The Log. I was asked to be the guest editorialist to open this issue focusing on lighthouse preservation in America. For our members who do not receive this fine publication by the US Lighthouse Society, it is important that you read it because you are part of the success story.

Lighthouse Preservation in North Carolina

by Cheryl Shelton-Roberts

We have come a long way.

Slowly but surely lighthouses in North Carolina have been brought back to life after having lingered in neglected states of repair for decades after the end of the old US Lighthouse Service.

Our coastline is legendary for its dangerous 301 miles of barrier islands with their ever-changing shoals and inlets that have snagged many a ship and brought them to a tragic end. Therefore, our tall coastal lighthouses as well as river and sound lights were born of pure necessity to stop the mass demise of ships and souls as well as forfeited fortunes from lost business.

Like the phoenix rising, some of the best lighthouse preservation efforts to date continue into the twenty-first century. Ownership and funding of lighthouses have become diversified within the public and private sectors nationwide.

The list of restored lighthouses in North Carolina is impressive; in fact, every existing lighthouse is under the ongoing care of an organization. Currituck Beach, Bodie Island, Cape Hatteras, Ocracoke Island, Cape Lookout, Oak Island and Bald Head Island Lighthouses are listed on the National Register of Historic Places with Cape Hatteras Light Station having earned National Historic Landmark status. Thanks to the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act 2000, the private nonprofit Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc. was allowed to take possession of and beautifully restore the Currituck Beach Light Station. The most recently rescued lighthouse is the Roanoke River Light operated by Historic Edenton State Historic Site. Further, three North Carolina lights retain their original Fresnel lenses. Volunteers' invaluable work can be found at the root of each success story.

Our lighthouses have been repurposed into wildly popular heritage tourism destinations. It's a win-win situation in that we are preserving history while supporting our coastal communities and introducing newcomers to this state's great maritime heritage.

Case in point: In 1994 when I first volunteered at Bodie Island Lighthouse that is within Cape Hatteras National Seashore, it was merely a pipedream that this lighthouse could be returned to its former vigor. There was only the occasional car and handful of visitors. However, after its restoration by the National Park Service and the lighthouse opened in April 2013, nearly 40,000 climbed the lighthouse in a six-month period and thousands more roamed the fee-free grounds. Today, many curious explorers and lighthouse admirers continue to arrive—or return—each day.

Yes, we've come a long, long way.

Man has always been fascinated with all that is connected to the sea. Genetically, it is said that we came from the deep; indeed, our bodies are predominantly water. We find mystery, romance, dramatic stories, entertainment, and role models in maritime history. And since the earth is two-thirds water and man has no gills, we must travel on the surface of it, putting us at the mercy of the elements. The sea is ruled only by ancient and eternal laws; therefore, while mariners travel on it, they, too, are controlled because they are contending with the most powerful force on earth.

For sea travelers, lighthouses demark the line between safety and danger. Although they are primarily made of masonry and mortar, lighthouses have come to represent far more than just the materials of which they are made, just as each of us represents far more than merely skin and bones. As technology has rendered lighthouses outmoded, they have become icons of beauty and wonder for many. They have passed from being major aids to navigation to largely objects of study and enjoyment. Lighthouses are situated in beautiful spots along our coastline where the ancient mariner in all of us is allowed to emerge. As visitors and pharologists, or students of lighthouses, we are once more pioneers in search of our connection to the sea.

Thank you to each of you who are onboard.



Looking like a corked bottle of champagne wrapped in chicken wire, the Bodie Island Lighthouse had finally realized the beginning of its return to strength. Cracked and splintering ironwork, peeling interior paint, and a sinking gallery deck that threatened the loss of its first-order Fresnel lens were all repaired and bolstered during two phases of restoration work. The scaffolding and shroud at the top allowed workers access to every inch of the tower. The light station is always surrounded by dramatic skies and water.

Leadership Role Changes Hands

Bett Padgett has handed the gavel as president of the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society over to Diana Chappell, our former treasurer. Our wise secretary team, Jim and Mabry O'Donnell, challenged Bett to some questions about OBLHS. Here are our former president's replies:

What words would you use to describe Our Society? The Society is made up by its members who share dreams common to our purpose. In getting to know many members through emails and phone conversations through the years, I think that members are infatuated with lighthouses, and the Outer Banks of North Carolina. They genuinely have an interest in making sure that the lighthouses of North Carolina are preserved and cared for. OBLHS being an “umbrella” advocate for all lighthouses in NC, we carry out the wishes of our members. Our purpose in our bylaws says it best: (See page 7). Our members support us in this statement.

What goals do you believe we have for the future? We must make sure that the lighthouses in NC continue to be cared for by future generations. I feel we need to engage with younger people to make them aware of our fabulous maritime history and the roles that lighthouses and their keepers have played and the perils they endured. Reading about lighthouses in books is one thing, but visiting a lighthouse is another. Children (of all ages) will appreciate something they see and experience much more readily than something they read about or see in a photo. Our lighthouses in NC are impressionable and leave a mark in young minds that will last forever. We will need their help to continue OBLHS's mission.

How have our goals changed? Now that our towers are in good hands and are cared for, repairs are made, restorations have taken place and they are open to the public, OBLHS will always need to help these stewards in goals to make sure our lighthouses and lenses are safe and that the public is safe in viewing them. We should continue to support any restorative work to be done as accurately as possible. This being said, I believe that making the public aware of the history of our lighthouses and their families should be a priority. Preservation is the key and the key is in the hands of our citizens and younger generation. As

I mentioned in a previous question, visiting an actual site is much more impressive than reading a book. To make lighthouses available to our young people to instill an appreciation may inspire lighthouse preservationists in the future. The stories within the bricks and mortar run much deeper than words on a page. I would love to see more interaction with the Society and NC educators. It will take a long time, but we have a grand start with our grant program and ongoing teachers' package. Educating the public of all ages about our lighthouses may bring more lighthouse enthusiasts to OBLHS who are willing to carry our mission forward. Our public outreach program, hopefully, will travel statewide to inform citizens about NC's lighthouses, maritime history and the need to keep them “alive”.

How in the world have we accomplished all that we have accomplished? Because these accomplishments needed to get done. Although the Society was formed to aid Bodie Island Lighthouse (BILH), many, many other needs for other lighthouses came to our attention. Being advocates of all NC lighthouses with a mission to keep the learning about our maritime history ongoing, we advocated for the relocation of Cape Hatteras Lighthouse (CAHA), Outer Banks Conservationists' stewardship for Currituck Beach Lighthouse, saw the need for comprehensive studies to be made for BILH's restoration, preservation of CAHA lens, keeping BILH open to the public after pieces of iron fell by donating money for emergency repairs, donations to aid Chicamacomico Life-Saving-Station to restore buildings and keep the Station open, hosting two major lighthouse keepers' reunions, publishing their families' oral histories, and on goes the list. It is our mission, and that's why our dedicated board and officers have worked hard to carry it out.

Why have you given so much of your life, wisdom, talent, and money for the organization?

I believe in it. History came to life for me when I started learning about our lighthouses and maritime history. I was a lousy history student.....couldn't stand the subject (shhhhh!). I studied in Durham England the summer after high school graduation and my class visited every historic building, cathedral, castle and Roman ruins in England and many in Scotland. I became enthralled with the architecture and events that took place in each one. When I returned to the US I began to look at our historic structures in a different way and with a deeper appreciation. When I began writing my "If a Lighthouse Could Speak" song I needed to research the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and became enamored with its history and the outpouring of concern over its predicament. Being an environmentalist and preservationist, and seeing that OBLHS were proponents of its relocation, I jumped right in and never looked back. If someone has a passion for something, they should pursue it.

Being married to Bill, we support and encourage each other's dreams and interests. We are both fortunate to be able to devote time, talents and financial contributions to the things we believe strongly in.

Why would you suggest that others do the same?

Everyone has a gift or talent they can share with an organization they support. It could be through computer skills, grant writing, letter writing, artistic skills, economic studies, or volunteering time in other ways. Many of these are needed for the Society to continue doing our work at some time (not all at once), or off and on at some level. Not everyone is cut out to serve, and financial contributions are needed to help carry on the needs of the Society's publications and work. People who care will find a way to let an organization know they do by volunteering time and through donations. We have wonderful members, many of whom help in many ways.



Bett Padgett has often entertained us with wonderful music that she composed. She has written songs that she sings from the perspective of a keeper working in the lantern room, children growing up at a lighthouse, and the sound of light—if it could be heard. She served as president of OBLHS for 10 years and continues to represent the Society to congressmen, plan special events, assist with the Society's website, and work as a team player on the board of directors. Bett's effective communication has enabled the Society to keep in touch with members, political contacts, and organizations with whom we cooperate on projects.



Sandra "Sandy" MacLean Clunies (at left) is a former board member and long-time friend of OBLHS. A certified genealogist, she has given untold hours in research for two books published by the Society of keepers' oral and family histories for Cape Hatteras and Bodie Island. An excellent speaker, Sandy delighted us with presentations on keepers' family charts (one ran some 30 feet long) and introduced us to the fact that the great Bache men who were influential in the Coast Survey's establishment during mid-nineteenth century were Benjamin Franklin's grandsons. (Above) Diana Chappell (left) and Janice Thomas team up to clean a panel of prisms from the Bodie Island first-order Fresnel lens. The lens was then wrapped in plastic and stored. Following the lighthouse's restoration, the lens was reassembled and put back into the lantern room. Visitors once again enjoy its brilliant flash each night.



Betty Parrish (left), former board member and steadfast Society supporter, is cleaning a panel of prisms from the Cape Hatteras first-order Fresnel lens. Prisms that have been recovered are within a framework resting on its original pedestal and are on display at the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum. The Society visited the site as part of its special Annual Keeper's Dinner this year. (Right) Bob and Kathy Paisley hail from Ohio, but on any given weekend when there's an event being held by OBLHS, you'll find them present. They are two reasons the Society has accomplished a great deal—great volunteers.



Top Left: Kevin Warneke and Courtney Whisler climbed the newly opened Bodie Island Lighthouse in April 2013.

Middle Left: If you cannot find OBLHS board member John Havel, check Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. It's the subject of his research for years for his ongoing, personal project. He generously shares his graphic artist expertise with OBLHS.

Bottom Left: Leslie and Ed Tourigny and Roy and Bettye Jones prepare to climb Ocracoke Lighthouse. Roy is a descendant of Hatteras Keeper C.C. Miller.

Top Right: This is where the annual dinner events started in 1995. Bruce Roberts (left) shakes Dane Alden's hand after he delivered our first guest speaker's remarks. Dane (USCG retired) and his late wife, Judy, did many things for the Society over the years. He retrieved a USCG modern optic equivalent to a fourth-order Fresnel lens, donated it to OBLHS, and in turn it is now working in the Roanoke River Lighthouse in Plymouth.

Bottom Right: Richard Meissner is a long-time board member and our auctioneer!



Thanks to all who have helped...

Appreciation to photography contributors throughout this issue: Bruce Roberts, Diana Chappell, John Havel, Judy Moon, Bob DaVia, Doward Jones, Cheryl Shelton-Roberts, Bill and Bett Padgett, Janice Thomas, and the National Park Service.



Top Left: Not beekeepers—mosquito dodgers at Portsmouth Village after rainy weather.

Top Right: We traveled to Oak Island to climb the light. Across the road, we heard about range lights in Judy and Gary Studer's home, the restored Oak Island Life-Saving Station.

Left: Bodie Island keepers' descendants arrive at the homecoming held for them in October 2013. The park had just reopened less than 24 hours earlier due to a government shutdown. We had to scramble, but how glad we were to be able to hold the event at the lighthouse!

Bottom: OBLHS presents 1859 BILH plans to NPS.





Top Left: Diana gives historian and tour guide Earl O'Neal a helping hand. The gate was locked and our group couldn't get in to climb Ocracoke Lighthouse. We got there!

Bottom Left: John and Kim Gottshall have fun at Cape Lookout during its 150th celebration. They are great volunteers who pitch in and do just about anything,

Top Right: Mike Booher, official photographer for the relocation of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, wrote on the back of this picture, "There's more than one way to move a lighthouse."

Middle Right: Nicole DaVia is at the top of BILH in this picture. She's tentative about heights!

Bottom Right: On a boat headed for Portsmouth Island: Bev Fawcett is at right and the third person is Virginia Howell, granddaughter of Rev. RN Fitts, a preacher who served Ocracoke and Portsmouth churches. She does graphic work for the Society among other things.



...and who have made our work fun.



***Above:** Henry and Chris Gonzalez, old friends, are leaders in the Chesapeake Chapter of the US Lighthouse Society and Henry is a leader within the parent organization.*

***Below:** Good supporters, Dana Garrett and JJ Cuff enjoy one of the many annual Keepers Dinner weekends they've attended.*



***Below:** Bruce Roberts presented the Bodie Island Prism Award in 2004 to (l-r) Paula and Lauren Liebrecht and Jane Morgan. They've driven from the Washington DC area to volunteer there many times. They are also volunteers with the Chesapeake Chapter of the US Lighthouse Society.*



***Below:** Marilyn Meads, daughter of BILH Keeper Julian Austin Sr., talks with Outer Banks historian David Stick at an annual Keeper's Dinner. David, we shall always remember you.*





Top Left: The USCG Color Guard opens ceremonies at Cape Lookout's sesquicentennial celebration 2009.

Bottom Left: Judy Moon is the bag lady. Each cleaned panel of the BILH lens was wrapped in plastic for storage while the tower underwent restoration. Beside her is Meghan Agresto, Site Manager at Currituck Beach Lighthouse.

Top Right: Long-time board members share in a toast at a recent board meeting. (l-r) Jim and Mabry O'Donnell, Bett Padgett, and cofounders Bruce and Cheryl Roberts.

Bottom Right: Former board member Audrey Conner (left) with Keeper Vernon Gaskill's children at the Bodie Island Light Station during the late 1990s. John is standing with sisters Dorothy and Erline (at right). John and Dorothy, you are missed!





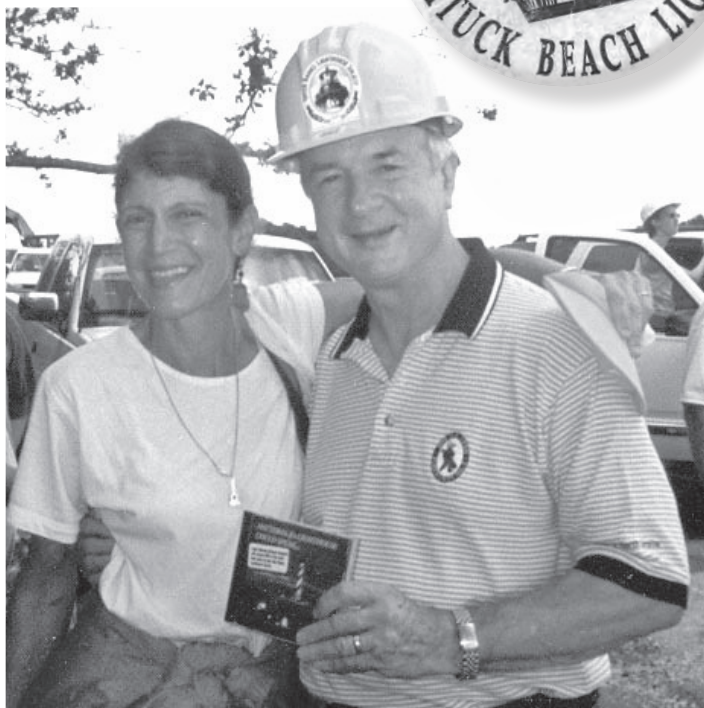
Top Left: Bodie Island Lighthouse shines on for all of us. Thank you.

Middle Left: Each person taking on the challenge to climb the lighthouse proudly earns this "I Climbed Currituck Beach Lighthouse" sticker.

Bottom Left: Bett Padgett is pictured here with Gov. Jim Hunt. He was given a hardhat used during the move of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse.

Top Right: A patch was made from the design of the lighthouse crossing sign that was placed at the halfway mark during the move of the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse in 1999.

Bottom Right: (l-r) Cheyenne the Dalmatian, Leslie Moon, Judy Moon, Bett Padgett and friend plan a walking tour of Ocracoke during a retreat weekend in 2004. Cheyenne and Leslie, we miss you!



Mabry O'Donnell debuted the Bodie Island Lighthouse Descendants Homecoming poster created by artist Glenn Eure. The poster was part of each attendee's welcome bag stuffed with goodies provided by the Society. Mabry has been a board member since the Society's inception. Her smile represents her energetic approach to projects. She oversees applications for two grants given for special lighthouse-related projects and travel for students to a lighthouse. Mabry and husband Jim are co secretaries; together, they have kept meticulous minutes for two decades.



Bett Padgett steps down as president and passes the gavel to incoming president Diana Chappell at the May board meeting on Harkers Island at the home of Richard Meissner. Richard is replacing Cheryl Shelton-Roberts as vice president. It cannot be emphasized enough how well the board works together to tackle tough projects. Diana is an organized, enthusiastic leader with great ideas for future projects. She has been treasurer and helps with every project the Society takes on. We have new projects in the making, so stay tuned....

The Outer Banks Lighthouse Society is pleased to announce its Fresnel Prism Awards for 2014



Each year the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society sponsors Awards to individuals within the lighthouse community who have contributed significantly to the preservation of lighthouses and their history. These awards were presented at the Annual Keeper's Dinner October 2014.

PRESIDENT'S AWARD:

Bob and Kathy Paisley • Barbara Basnight Rawl
East Clayton Elementary School 4th Grade Teaching Team

FOUNDERS AWARD:

John M. Havel

CAPE HATTERAS AWARD:

Congressman Walter B. Jones Jr.

BODIE ISLAND AWARD:

Diana Chappell • Sandra MacLean Clunies
Bruce Roberts and Cheryl Shelton-Roberts

OAK ISLAND AWARD:

E. Gifford Stack

LIGHTHOUSE NEWS OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE OUTER BANKS LIGHTHOUSE SOCIETY

PURPOSE OF THE OUTER BANKS LIGHTHOUSE SOCIETY

The purpose of the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society is to aid in the preservation of the lighthouses and maritime history of North Carolina and to work with the National Park Service and other agencies, both government and non-profit groups, to achieve the safe keeping of the buildings, artifacts and records of the U.S. Lighthouse Service.

The Lighthouse News is the official publication of the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society.

Editor – Cheryl Shelton-Roberts, Design – Bruce Roberts

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