

Maryland begins here!

the finer points

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



September 2008

The Friends support historical interpretation, educational programs and special needs of the sites managed by the St. Mary's County Department of Recreation, Parks and Community Services' Museum Division: 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: Summer Sentinels, Students' Journey of Discovery, Friends News and more!

Events Add Up to Sizzlin' Summer Fun Museums Enjoy a Banner Summer Season

By Kimberley Cullins

Our museums rode a wave of summer activity and enjoyed a banner season with plentiful visitation at both St. Clement's and Piney Point museums. Despite the rising gas prices and this summer's oppressive heat, people were still on the move and looking for fun things to do. The Museum Division offered interesting, educational and entertaining events to attract visitors and provide them with an enjoyable and memorable experience.

The kick-off of summer events at the St. Clement's Island Museum began in mid-June with a thunderous rumble of bikers participating in the **American Motorcycle Festival Poker Run** sponsored by Maryland International Raceway (MIR). The museum served as one of seven "rump rests" for over 160 bikers who cruised into Colton's Point to pick up their poker card for a chance of winning a cash prize at the festival. The bikers delighted in the riverside setting and many lingered to enjoy the museum and the scenic view.

Also in June, the St. Clement's Hundred hosted the long-awaited **opening of the Blackstone Lighthouse** on St. Clement's Island, a replica of the original built in 1851. The invitation-only opening ceremony drew hundreds who had anxiously anticipated the completion of a structure that would be a monument to the his-

tory and heritage of St. Clement's Island. State and local officials, Department of Natural Resources staff, former Governor Marvin Mandel, descendants of the original light keepers, project donors and volunteers, and community leaders celebrated the completion of this project, so passionately supported by all in attendance.

The recreated lighthouse will serve as a centerpiece for local maritime history and become a destination for lighthouse lovers for years to come.

The annual **Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival** in July was a sellout for the second year in a row as jazz lovers came from as

far as Connecticut, North Carolina and Florida. More than 800 ticket holders, sponsors and guests soaked up the sun and a refreshing riverside breeze while grooving to three dynamic jazz groups who brought many to their feet to dance. This was a happy crowd. You could see it in the way they danced, made second and third trips to the food vendors, or relaxed in their

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Photo: Gal pals Skylar Hepner of Colton's Point, MD and Katie Griffith of Morgantown, PA, chill out on Children's Day with cool snow cones. Photo by Kim Cullins.

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Piney Point Museums**

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Love Your Mother... and Her Descendants, Too!

By Sheila Gibbons Hiebert, President

There's no one like Mom. Yours. Mine. Nature's. Everyone's.

Here in St. Mary's – Maryland's mother county, with a colonial birth date of March 25, 1634 – we are keenly aware of, and grateful for, the privilege of being involved in preserving the history of Maryland's birthplace.

Next year, our mother county (and our state) will turn 375. She gets better with age.

And one of her descendants – the Friends of the St. Clement's Island and Piney Point Museums – will turn 25 – a youngster by comparison, but a kid with a record of devotion to our state's early history and accomplishments in her name. We owe deep gratitude to the energetic Friends board members, Museum trustees and volunteers who have, over the last quarter century, given of their time and talent to help our Museum Division staff tell our mother county's wonderful stories to thousands of visitors.

In the months ahead, we'll be telling you about plans to mark this 25th anniversary with projects that will strengthen our museums' service to the public and maximize the support you've offered as members of the Friends.

We'll continue to need your help as we begin our next quarter century. So when we ask you for support during our anniversary year in 2009, please remember: it's all about Mom!

Summer Sentinels

By Christy Carter-Bright, Park Manager, Point Lookout State Park

There are approximately 2,000 nesting pairs of osprey, sea or fish hawks, found in the Chesapeake Bay region — about 25 percent of all the osprey in the United States. Osprey return to the same nesting site and rebuild or construct their nests on tree snags, manmade nesting platforms and even navigational markers. The young, which look much like the adults, have white on the tips on their feathers, giving them a speckled look. Leaving in mid-September for their migration to the uppermost portion of South America, their absence will soon be noticed. They will return around St. Patrick's Day.



(Left) A pair of mature osprey guards their nest in a tree snag. (Right) A mature osprey rests with adolescent offspring on one of several nesting platforms on the island. Photos by Kim Cullins.

Students from The Heights School prepare to conclude a journey of...

Cycling, Swimming and Self-Discovery



Photo by Kim Cullins

It's become a tradition. For the past six years, the 11th-grade students of The Heights School in Potomac, MD, make a springtime pilgrimage to St. Clement's Island. This is not any ordinary student visit nor are these any ordinary students.

The Heights School is a private, independent, preparatory school for boys in grades 3 to 12. The School's mission is to assist parents in the intellectual, moral, physical, and spiritual education of their sons.

Under the direction of their teacher Chris Breslin, accompanied by their headmaster Alvaro de Vincente, and chaplain Javier Del Castillo, the students arrive on a scheduled day at the end May. They ride bicycles from Cobb Island, MD to the Museum in Colton's Point – about a 38-mile journey! They rest, eat, and as teenage boys always do, find time for some horseplay.

By 2 p.m. the young men are ready for the next leg of their journey – the half-mile swim from the museum to St. Clement's Island. At this point, it's serious business. Mr. Breslin coordinates with the 7th District Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad to oversee the safety of the more than 30 boys in the water. Fire department rescue boats from the 7th District, Hollywood, Leonardtown and Ridge accompanied the boys, some of whom had difficulty in managing the strong current between the shore and the island.

Once on the island, they settled in for their overnight stay and gathered together for a celebratory Catholic mass lead by Father Castillo. The next morning, the students left with a sense of self-confidence, accomplishment and camaraderie, products of a journey of self-discovery.



Yesterday in Old St. Mary's County, written by local historian Robert E. T. Pogue, has just been reprinted and is available at both the Crab Claw and Lighthouse Lens museum stores. This 450-page soft-bound book retails for \$30 and makes a wonderful gift for any St. Mary's County resident, old nor new, who would like to learn more about the history and lore of this area. The book can be purchased at either location or by calling museum stores manager Carol Cribbs at 301-769-2222 with a Mastercard or Visa. Shipping and handling charges will apply.

A Letter From Debra

Dear Friends,

The Museum Division had a successful grant season with more than \$261,000 awarded from both state and federal funding for 2008-2009 projects. The grants have been matched with St. Mary's County capital funds.

- The Maryland Historic Trust awarded \$25,000 to be used for the \$50,000 project to replace the Piney Point Lighthouse Keeper's Quarter's metal roof and repair the shingled porch roofs. We hope to initiate work this fall.

- The Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, a program of the National Park Service, awarded the Museum Division a \$43,500 matching grant to replace the creek-side pier at Piney Point. The project includes incorporating a kayak launch to the pier and erecting environmental and boating safety interpretive panels with laminated brochures.

- An award of \$92,500 came from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority and will be used to continue work on Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum and Historic Park parking, walkways and landscape projects.

- Program Open Space awarded \$100,000 to help with the grounds enhancements as well.

We are currently working on getting the permits approved to initiate the \$80,000 MHAA matching grant award (2007) to begin the Piney Point parking and walkway project. We hope the combined awards will produce walkways, parking facilities and bay-wise gardens that will serve as an example of critical area sensitive construction and landscaping. The 2008 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority award of \$70,000 will help fund the \$140,000 worth of exhibit work to complete the interior of the Potomac River Maritime Exhibit building. This project is up and running with staff currently researching history and securing copyright permissions for graphics.

There are a lot of projects in progress and many changes will materialize over the next 18 months or so. Please keep an eye on the St. Mary's County Museum Division as we bring our exhibits and parks to a new level of presentation and professionalism.

Sincerely,



American Motorcycle Festival Poker Run — (Left) Motorcycles line the parking lot as riders head to the St. Clement’s Island museum store to pick up their poker card. (Right) Friends members Mike and Sandy Norris enjoy a summer ride on their brand new Harley-Davidson as they head to the next stop.

HIGH FIVE FOR A SUCCESSFUL SEASON!

Five Major Happenings Rock the Summer for Museum Visitors

Summer, continued from page 1

chairs with toes tapping. This event has put the St. Clement’s Island Museum on the map.

The following week, the **St. Clement’s Island History and Heritage Day** (formerly known as Black-eyed Susan Day) drew more than 220 people to the island for a tour of the Blackstone Lighthouse and live music by local musician Joe Norris, heritage games for kids, an educational exhibit about the pre-colonial Woodland Indians provided by Historic St. Mary’s City, an exhibit of the 17th-century Maryland militia by Museum Trustee member Frank Maio, and costumed interpreter Mike Barbour portraying Dr. Thomas Gerard, 17th-century proprietor of St. Clement’s Island. Free watermelon slices were a welcome touch of hospitality on a hot summer day.

A favorite summer event took place the first Saturday of August – **Children’s Day at the St. Clement’s Island Museum**. More than 350 children and parents enjoyed a fun-filled program of hands-on activities, giveaways and community

organizations. The highlights of the day were the K-9 demonstration by the St. Mary’s County Sheriff’s Office and the comedic magic of Reggie Rice, also known as Super Magic Man, who captivated and amazed his audience.

At the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum visitation has been great! According to site supervisor April Havens, “We have found more local people are ‘staycationing’ but are still seeing an increase in out-of-town visitors despite the increase in gas prices. Now that the museum is open 7 days a week, our visitation at Piney Point is up! In the month of July we only had one day without a paying tour and that was due to 98-degree heat!”

As summer ebbs and fall approaches, life around the museums may appear to be slowing down, but the staff plans and prepares for future events, educational programs, guided tours, and new exhibits that keep our museums interesting and educational – always offering something new to see and do!



Children’s Day at the St. Clement’s Island Museum — (Left) A contestant launches a super blow during the watermelon seed spitting contest. (Center) A brave volunteer receives a little abracadabra from Reggie Rice during his Super Magic Man magic show. (Right) Kids hop, stop and flop to the finish line during the sack races.



Blackstone Lighthouse Opening — (Above) Words of support and enthusiasm for the lighthouse project are given by former Governor Marvin Mandel and Delegate Johnny Wood. (Right) The lighthouse is adorned with colorful bunting as Dick Gass of the St. Clement's Hundred welcomes celebrants of its grand opening.



Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival — (Left) Members of the Urban Jazz Coalition tear up the stage with a dynamic performance. (Center) The music was just too good to not get up and dance! (Right) One jazz lover finds her "happy place" as she relaxes on the lawn.

Photos by Kim Cullins



St. Clement's Island History and Heritage Day — (Left) One young lady learns how the Woodland Indians ground corn with a mortar and pestle. (Center) Local musician Joe Norris strums tunes of the Chesapeake Bay and St. Clement's Island. (Right) Mike Barbour and daughter Virginia provide the colonial perspective by portraying Dr. Thomas Gerard, the 17th-century proprietor of St. Clement's Island, and his daughter.

Friends Co-Host Chamber of Commerce Event

The Friends co-hosted more than 100 members of the St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce at the St. Clement's Island Museum, along with co-hosts BB&T (Branch Banking & Trust) and the Blackistone Lighthouse Foundation for a "Lighthouse Lover's Luau." Delicious food and refreshing beverages, provided by Lenny's Restaurant, were the perfect complement to this outdoor summer setting.

To highlight the evening, excursions to St. Clement's Island were planned so chamber members could tour the recently completed Blackistone Lighthouse. The museum water taxi was put into service for this event as well as the *Samuel M. Bailey* piloted by Capt. Steve Bailey. A summer storm whipped up quickly and the excursions to the Island had to be canceled but not before everyone got to enjoy food, drink and networking with fellow chamber members.



Dan Rebarchick, owner of Lenny's Restaurant, serves up quite the spread for a summer luau for the Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours event. 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.

Maryland Lighthouse Challenge – September 20 and 21

Plot your course and start your engines! The challenge: to see all the land-based lighthouses in Maryland in two days! The Chesapeake Bay Lighthouse Society will once again present this challenge to lighthouse lovers everywhere that includes the Piney Point Lighthouse and new this year – the replica of the Blackistone Lighthouse on St. Clement's Island! Whether you choose to visit all or just one, the weekend promises to offer much fun. Maryland lighthouses open to the public, both days, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information, log on to the Chesapeake Lighthouse Society's website at www.cheslights.org.

Blessing of the Fleet – October 4 and 5

Now in its 41st year, the Blessing of the Fleet event is steeped in tradition and remains a destination for folks looking for great food, entertainment,

and a heritage experience. Presented by the Seventh District Optimist Club, this event takes place on the lawn of the St. Clement's Island Museum in Colton's Point. The weekend includes a parade, fireworks, children's activities, live music, arts and crafts vendors, boat rides to St. Clement's Island and more! Other highlights include the colorful drumming and dancing of the Piscataway Indians and a Roman Catholic Mass on the Island. For more information and program schedule go to www.7thDistrictOptimist.org or call the museum at 301-769-2222.

Lower Potomac River Ten-Mile Run – October 12

The Chesapeake Bay Running Club will host a competitive run to benefit the Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum and Historic Park and the Chesapeake Bay Field Lab. The race begins at 7:45 a.m. at the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum, winds through St. George Island to the Chesapeake Bay Field Lab

turn around and back to the museum. Join us to run, volunteer, or cheer on the participants! For more information and downloadable entry forms, log on to the Chesapeake Bay Running Club website at www.cbrcmd.org or call the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum at 301-994-1471.

St. Clement's Island Museum Winter Hours – October 6 through March 24

The museum will be open Wednesday through Sunday, 12 noon to 4 p.m. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum & Historic Park Winter Hours – October 1 through December 21

The museum will be open weekends only 12 noon to 4 p.m. After Christmas, the museum will be closed to the public but available for tours by appointment until March 25. Please call site supervisor April Havens at 301-994-1471 to make your appointment.

Member News

Welcome Aboard New Members!

Senior

William Poole, La Plata, MD

Individual

Peter Romero, Leonardtown, MD

Tom Tudor, Leonardtown, MD

Heritage

Jon and Pam Baake, Tall Timbers, MD

Bob and Anna Yates, Colton's Point, MD

SPECIAL THANKS!

Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival

The Friends would like to thank the following individuals and businesses who sponsored the 9th Annual Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival: The St. Mary's County Arts Council, The Show Place Arena, Bozick Distributors, Lenny's Restaurant & Sleep Inn & Suites, Maryland Life Magazine, W. M. Davis, Inc. General Contractor, Café des Artistes, Century 21 New Millennium – Karen Brooks and Lucy Barbour, Community Bank of Tri-County, and The Law Office of A. Shane Mattingly. We would also like to thank the food vendors who offered delicious culinary concoctions as memorable as the music: Lenny's Restaurant, Bear Creek Open Pit BBQ, Circle "C" Oyster Ranch, Hawaiian Joe's, Bruster's Real Ice Cream, and the 7th District Optimist Club.

St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours

The Friends thank co-hosts BB&T (Branch Banking & Trust) and the Blackstone Lighthouse Foundation for their contributions to the St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours held at the St. Clement's Island Museum in July.

Children's Day

The Friends thank the generous sponsors of Children's Day who funded the free t-shirt giveaway: Checkers Restaurant of California, Chesapeake Custom Embroidery, Cullins Pool Water, Combs & Drury Insurance Agency, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Robin Owen Photography, and Tidewater Dental. Thanks also to the 7th District Optimist Club for donating two bikes and offering an affordable food menu. All the participating organizations, volunteers and museum staff deserve a standing ovation for making this event such a success!

Birthday Gift

Louanne and Bo Bailey of Colton's Point made a donation of \$25 in honor of the 80th birthday of Margaret Breck of Leonardtown.

NuStar, Inc.

On May 30, our Piney Point neighbors at NuStar (formerly Valero, LP) conducted an open house during which a presentation of a \$2,000 donation was made to the Friends. The check was presented by John R. Funk, NuStar East Region Senior Area Terminals Manager and Piney Point Terminal Manager Ford Connelly and accepted by Lydia Wood, Museum Division Historic Sites Coordinator. The check was presented to the Friends to continue museum enhancement projects and educational programs. Thank you, NuStar!



Historic Sites Coordinator Lydia Wood accepts the \$2,000 donation from NuStar representatives John Funk and Ford Connelly. Photo by Melissa McNeal.

Friends Fund Summer Intern

Olivia Cribbs of Lusby, MD, completed a 112-hour summer internship funded by the Friends of the St. Clement's Island and Piney Point Museums. A student at Point Park University in Pittsburgh, PA, she worked under the supervision of Chris Barbour, site supervisor at the St. Clement's Island Museum. She was tasked with packing nearly 5,000 conservation boxes with artifacts, managing their inventory status, and photographing those artifacts that needed visual documentation.



The water-resistant conservation boxes will help protect the artifacts from possible water and humidity damage. The boxes will also consolidate artifacts and their listings so that an inventory can be done expediently to prepare for emergency situations such as hurricanes. Any time artifacts are moved, an inventory to track them must be done. Collections management is of vital importance in maintaining the integrity of all artifacts and adhering to the standards set by the American Association of Museums, which is the key to maintaining our accreditation.

Olivia demonstrated great attention to detail and organizational skills for a job well done!

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)

Benefactor (\$500)

Corporate Patron (\$200)

Corporate Benefactor (\$500)



ADF South, Inc.

PROUD CORPORATE BENEFACTORS

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