

Maryland begins here!

the finer points

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

December 2007

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: Time Well Spent, Farewell to a Special Friend, Partnerships and Projects, Friends News and more!

Museum Division Hosts Maritime Museums Forum at Piney Point

By Kimberley Cullins

Despite the dismal day, and for some a very long drive, 17 maritime museum professionals trekked to the Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum and Historic Park for the annual Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museums Forum held inside the Potomac River Maritime Exhibit on October 25.

They came from Baltimore, Maryland's Eastern Shore, Washington, D.C., as well as Southern Maryland, representing a who's who of museums, organizations, and vessels with a unique and significant role in maritime history. Representatives came from the U.S. Navy Museum, Fell's Point Maritime Museum, Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, the USS Constellation, the Baltimore Museum of Industries, the Baltimore Steam Tug, the Maryland Historical Society, Cultural Resources Management, Calvert Marine Museum, Historic St. Mary's City, and the Point Lookout Lighthouse Preservation Society.

The highlight of the forum is the roundtable of news, events, special projects, and specific challenges that each professional shares about their institution or organization. As always, there was a showcase of diverse challenges such as keeping wooden vessels afloat; photographing, archiving, and storing thousands of vessel documents and blueprints; preparing for re-accreditation; repairing and preserving a tug boat; coping with budget cuts; finding new quarters for collections; and fundraising for special projects and exhibits.

Stuart Parnes, director of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michael's, MD, shared an exciting announcement. As the Secretary General for the International Congress of Maritime Museums (ICMM), he told the group that the ICMM is slated to hold its 2009 meet-



Photo above: On the tour to the lighthouse, April Havens points out the pier facilities that make the Piney Point site accessible by water.

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**The Friends of the
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Piney Point Museums**

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Together, We Accomplish So Much

By Sheila Gibbons Hiebert, President

As 2007 comes to a close, I want to thank all our members for their support – and explain how Friends membership works and why it's so important.

Membership is important because your dues provide us with the core income we need to plan our budget and set priorities for the programs and activities we can support. Membership also connects you with our region's exciting history.

We send membership renewals out in batches each spring and each fall – one mailing to half our members, the second mailing to the other half – with several reminders should we not hear from you. It's gratifying to see renewals come back, sometimes with instructions to upgrade the member to the next level.

If you choose not to renew, please tell us why. If you believe we need to improve, we want to know!

We also ask our members to contribute to our Annual Appeal each fall, a request for funds that is separate from our request for your membership renewal. Appeal funds are used to offset the rising cost of operations and to build our endowment, which is dedicated to special, education-related projects.

However you choose to support us – through membership, our appeal, donations and "in honor of" gifts – please know that we are extremely grateful!

Sheila with one of the plaques recognizing Patron, Benefactor and Corporate members. They are being installed at the St. Clement's Island and Piney Point museums.



Time Served is Time Well Spent

For the men and women sentenced to the St. Mary's County Detention Center, time can't pass quickly enough. For a few, however, time has new meaning.

The use of inmate labor isn't new; our local detention center has provided the Museum Division with it for many years. The detention center staff look for skilled workers or tradesmen to determine who can offer skills for museum projects, follow staff instruction, and be trusted not to jump ship. It's a privilege to be chosen.

For many, the experience is a personal evolution. At first, they come just happy to be out. As time goes by, they get to know the staff, are assigned more duties, and enjoy the satisfaction of working on and completing complex projects. They become part of the museum team and find pride in their work: setting up for events, maintaining buildings and grounds, and assisting Exhibits Fabrication Specialist Greg Mora with the creation and installation of new exhibits.

For those who leave, they can look back – and come back – to see the valuable and long-lasting contributions they have made and feel that the time they served was time well spent.



Detention center workers recently refurbished the “Doris C,” a Potomac River dory boat built in 1919, on exhibit at the St. Clement’s Island Museum. Dennis Vanthof (left) and Joseph Haas make the finishing touches by attaching the bow strip and cleaning the exhibit platform area. Their work included replacing rotten wood, caulking, refurbishing the brass port holes and painting her to a pristine finish. Great job!

Building Associations, Partnerships, and Projects

By Debra L. Pence

Developing and maintaining relationships with some of the many professional organizations is crucial for staff development and institution health. Museums are similar to all other industries with technology, methodology, and professional protocol changing regularly. It is imperative that museum staffs and volunteers have and take the opportunities to keep their skills and knowledge of their work as current as possible.

Over the past few years the Museum Division has become increasingly involved with other cultural institutions and initiatives, including:

- **The Southern Maryland Museum Association**, a loose forum of museum staff and directors representing sites from Anne Arundel, Prince George's, Charles, Calvert and St. Mary's Counties. The meetings are generally held every other month at different sites around the region. Plans for events, exhibits, financial and political issues are brought to the table and openly discussed over a lunch-time format. We seldom solve problems but everyone listening gets a plethora of ideas based on the attendees' professional experiences.

- Our seat on the **Maryland Historic Trust's Museum Enhancement Advisory Board** gives participants a firsthand glimpse at projects and plans being pursued by institutions around the state. Generally 12 museum professionals meet 3-4 times a year with the Division's Director, Mary Alexander, to review grant applications, develop application guidelines and rating criteria and in separate committee discuss state funding issues.

- As Museum Division manager, I am often invited to participate with key county officials such as Teri Wilson, our Historic Preservation Planner; Carolyn Laray, our Tourism Manager; and Roz Racanello, Executive Director of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium on a variety of advisory boards. Among our tasks have been planning the SMC Charlotte Hall Welcome Center to devising methods to preserve and interpret the two remaining buildings left in the Flat Tops area of Lexington Park. Most recently, I sat on an advisory committee to develop an application for funding to institute a National Freedom Byways trail through Charles and St. Mary's Counties.

Former museum director Mike Humphries was instrumental in building an excellent working relationship with the **American Association of Museums**, often serving the national museum organization in the capacity of an advisor. I brought a good working relationship with the **Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network** to my current position, serving as a volunteer on several advisory panels for that organization. All these connections help us develop greater expertise to better serve you.

Heritage Area Funds Provide Help in Many Ways

An initiative passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 1996 to stimulate economic development through tourism has given a terrific boost to museums and historic sites such as ours.

The initiative ultimately gave rise to the Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium, a catalyst for obtaining state funding for historic places and museums, recreation facilities, cultural events and projects in Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's counties.

The Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium (SMHAC) is managed by representatives from the tourism industry, business, museums, historic preservation groups and cultural organizations who work with SMHAC's dynamic executive director, Roz Racanello. SMHAC fields funding requests for up to \$100,000 for capital projects and smaller amounts for non-capital proposals. Its mini-grant program awards up to \$1,000 for smaller projects – a significant supplement to the budget of an organization needing to install signage, create a brochure or support a cultural event.

"I know that every Southern Marylander believes our shared heritage is of the greatest importance, not just for ourselves, but for future generations," Roz says, "It's my job to ensure that today's children and *their*

children have every opportunity to experience the stories of the land and the water and the struggles of those who came before us."

SMHAC evaluates and prioritizes grant applications and then sends them on to the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA), the government unit overseeing support for certified heritage areas, for the final evaluation and awarding of funds. SMHAC achieved the "certified status" it needed to be eligible for these precious state funds in 2003.

SMHAC has been a steady supporter of the Museum Division's grant applications to MHAA. In 2005, the Museum Division received \$25,000 to assist with the construction of the Potomac River Maritime Exhibit building at Piney Point. In 2006, \$80,000 was awarded to assist with the construction of parking, walkways and a Dory boat shelter for the Piney Point complex. In 2007, MHAA, with SMHAC's endorsement, awarded the Museum Division \$75,000 to proceed with fabrication and installation of exhibits in the Potomac River Maritime Exhibit building.

Mini-grants awarded directly from SMHAC – each for \$1,000 – have included funds to the Friends for a self-guided brochure for Piney Point; a grant to the United Committee for Afro-American Contributions that, through a partnership with the Museum Division, resulted in new interpretive signs for the Drayden African American Schoolhouse; and a grant to the Friends to support continuing work on the St. Clement's Island signage project.

Brick by Brick, Potomac River Landmark Returns



Sunday, January 3, 1904: Bright and cold, ice... out as far as the flats. Bitter cold this morning. Strong breeze N.W. Willie H. and Willie F. went around shore this p.m. after ducks. Shot twice but didn't kill any.

So wrote Josephine McWilliams Freeman, the Blackstone Island lighthouse keeper, in her diary as a new year began more than one hundred years ago. The lighthouse she managed diligently for nearly 37 years later was ruined by fire and had to be demolished in 1956.

Its distinguished shape, what is known as an "integral lighthouse" — a two-story brick residence with a center entry, and windows and a porch across the front, whose light sat atop a tower smack in the middle of the house — reappeared last summer near its original location on what we now call St. Clement's Island, just one-quarter mile offshore from Colton's Point.

Members of the St. Clement's Hundred who are spearheading the rebuilding, are suspending most activity for the winter. They'll resume work as weather permits. Look for a dedication ceremony next summer.

The brick-by-brick return of the lighthouse has been thrilling to watch! Keep up with the story at www.blackstonelighthouse.com.

A Letter From Debra

Dear Friends,

A quick note to let you know all is well on the museum front! Projects are going well. All of the September and October events were successes for all parties involved from the Osprey Gala to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museums Forum. Although dry, the fall weather was great for tourism and visitors and many of them have traveled through.

The Friends received a \$1,000 mini-grant from the Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium to continue fabricating signs for St. Clement's Island. Plans are to design and fabricate panels for the three sided framed kiosk and several lighthouse and nature trail signs.

The first two exhibit panels for the Potomac River Maritime Exhibit building should be installed before Christmas. The parking and walkway specifications for the Piney Point complex are being developed and prepared for Critical Areas reviews. The Piney Point shoreline stabilization project is almost ready to go through the St. Mary's County Department of Land Use and Growth Management review process.

The Blackstone Lighthouse is amazing to see even if it is still under construction. We hope you will join us next season as many of these projects evolve from concept plans to tangible exhibits and park features.

Be sure to come by to see this year's "Ginger Bread Fantasy" doll and train exhibit at the St. Clement's Island Museum in December and mark your calendars for the January Appraiser's Fair! We look forward to seeing you!

Happy Holidays,

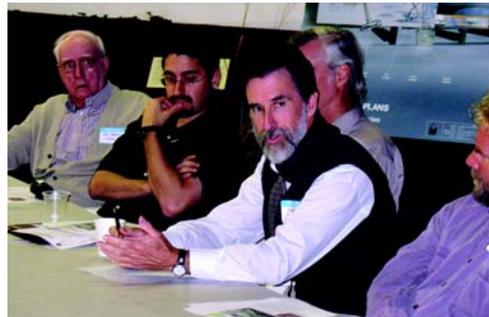


Maritime Museums Forum

Forum: continued from page 1

ing in the United States in the Chesapeake Bay region. About 150 members and spouses from around the world are expected to attend.

The forum group later enjoyed a presentation by Historic Sites Coordinator Lydia Wood, who gave a brief history of the Piney Point Lighthouse, the evolution of the site and the proposed plans for development. April Havens, Piney Point Site Supervisor, then took the group to visit the museum and the lighthouse. Lydia then led them to the Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education where they visited the Research Library and Maritime Museum and received an overview of history and current operations of the school.



Stuart Parnes (center) shares an update of the activities and projects at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michael's, MD.



Deb Pence chats with Andy Shaw (center), and Will Gates (right), both maritime specialists from Historic St. Mary's City.



Forum members listen to Lydia Wood as she offers an overview of the wooden boat collection housed in the Potomac River Maritime Exhibit building.



Lydia Wood shows the design consultant's illustrations of new exhibits planned for the Potomac River Maritime Exhibit.



DIVE IN TO SHOPPING!

Piney Point Lighthouse volunteer Marilyn Grace displays U-1105 German Submarine souvenir items at the Lighthouse Lens Museum Store.

Use your 10% membership discount when you make purchases at the Lighthouse Lens and Crab Claw Museum Stores!

Take advantage of our special holiday hours, free gift wrapping, and assistance for children shopping for Mom and Dad!

Don't forget gift memberships for the "one who has everything!" Shop where your dollars make a difference!

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.

Christmas Doll & Train Exhibit – December through January 6

This 22nd annual event at the St. Clement's Island Museum will enthrall the young and young-at-heart with the spirit of the holidays! The museum will be filled with antique and collectible dolls and toys, with holiday decorations and music. The Little Red Schoolhouse will become a miniature train station where little hands can take the controls and power the trains around the tracks. Your mouth will water at this year's theme – Ginger Bread Fantasy!

Ladies' Shopping Night – December 7

The Lighthouse Lens Museum Store at the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum will offer a special night for women and children to shop for the special men in their lives. Many unique nautical gift items to choose from! The store will be open from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

St. Clement's Island Museum Christmas Open House – December 8

Free admission! Don't miss this opportunity to see the Christmas Doll & Train Exhibit! Santa and Mrs. Claus will listen attentively to children's holiday wishes. Visit the Crab Claw Museum Store for unique gifts for the "one who has everything." Free cookies and punch. 12 noon to 4 p.m.

Piney Point Lighthouse Museum Christmas Open House – December 9

Free Admission! Stop in to shop at the Lighthouse Lens Museum Store for one-of-a-kind gifts and souvenirs! Enjoy holiday music and warm hospitality! Free gift wrapping and refreshments! 12 noon to 4 p.m.

Gentlemen's Shopping Night – December 14

It's the guys' turn to shop for the ladies! Come alone or bring the kids and

shop for Mom! Free wrapping and refreshments! The Lighthouse Lens Museum Store will be open from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Appraiser's Fair – January 19

Once again, it's time to dust off that family heirloom you've always wanted to have appraised and bring it to the St. Clement's Island Museum between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Come early and bring your jewelry, small antique furniture, glassware, pottery, artwork, music boxes, dolls and U.S. coins.

Fine arts items are \$5 per item with a two-item limit. Other items are \$5 each for the first two items and \$10 per additional item. Space is limited and items are viewed on a first-come, first-served basis. There will be a free soup, coffee & tea tasting sponsored by Shoreline Creations and the Chincoteague Seafood Company.

Member News

Welcome Aboard!

The Friends welcome these new members:

Senior Citizen

Diana Watkins, Swan Point, MD

Family

Ed and Pat Cole, Cole Travel,
Lexington Park, MD

FAREWELL, MISSALICE

Alice McWilliams, a much-loved presence at the St. Clement's Island Museum, whose footbridge is dedicated to her, died in November at 95. Her volunteer work began the day the museum opened in 1975 and continued until early this year. Visitors enjoyed her recollections of her St. Mary's County girlhood and tales of the family she married into, the McWilliamses, who were lighthouse keepers on St. Clement's Island for more than 100 years. How lucky we were to have had her warmth, sparkle and loyal service.

DONATION TAX TIP

The Charitable Rollover rule expires January 1, 2008. It allows an individual aged 70 1/2 or older to contribute money to a charitable cause directly from an IRA. Donors would not recognize the contributed amount as income, so they would save the 10% to 35% that would have been owed as income tax. If you are in this category, this is a great way to make a donation to the Friends' annual appeal.

SPECIAL THANKYOU

The Friends wish to express our gratitude to corporate member **Heritage Printing and Graphics** and **Jerry Bohle** for donating a substantial portion of the printing costs of this issue of the *Finer Points*.



HAPPY DOLLIE-DAYS!

Don't miss the annual Christmas Doll & Train Exhibit at the St. Clement's Island Museum! Exhibit hours are Wednesday through Sunday, 12 noon to 4 p.m. until January 6. Enjoy the spirit of the holidays and the warm hospitality of your staff and volunteers!

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTION

The Friends are grateful to **Karen and Robert Van Dyken** of Olney, MD, and Colton's Point, for their memorial gift in honor of Karen's mother Mary Smith. Mary was a beloved volunteer at the St. Clement's Island Museum for many years. We also thank the Van Dykens for upgrading their Friends membership to the Patron level.

MEMBERSHIP UPGRADE

Three cheers to **J.F. Taylor, Inc.**, an electronic engineering and software systems firm in Lexington Park, for upgrading its membership to Corporate Patron! J.F. Taylor, Inc., was founded by John and Helen Taylor.

Show your ZEAL during our Annual Appeal!



Remember the Friends
in your year-end
charitable giving.

Thank you!

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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