

*Maryland begins here!*

# the finer points

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



Summer 2010

*The Friends support historical interpretation, educational programs and special needs of the sites managed by the Museum Division of St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks: St. Clement's Island Museum, the Little Red Schoolhouse, the Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum and Historic Park, the Drayden African-American Schoolhouse, and the U-1105 Black Panther German submarine shipwreck preserve. A non-profit organization, the Friends sponsor special events, assist with acquisitions and publish this newsletter to broaden understanding of and interest in these important historic sites.*

*Inside: Quilt Donation, Kayak Launch, Friends News and more!*

## The Personal Touch

*Museum visitors enjoy one-on-one experiences*

*By Kimberley Cullins*

In the institutional world of museums, one can find amazing state-of-the-art exhibits, high-tech video presentations, and galleries of artifacts behind glass and out of reach. In our increasingly impersonal world of phone texting, online shopping, and endless menu choices when dialing for services, human contact seems to be going the way of the dinosaur. The St. Mary's County Museum Division, however, still strives to provide the personal touch and hands-on experiences that make history and education real and memorable.

At the St. Clement's Island and Piney Point Lighthouse Museums, it is the staff and volunteers who greet each visitor personally and provide outreach programs and guided tours with enthusiasm, expertise, and a lot of fun.

"Go on. You can hold it," said Piney Point Lighthouse site supervisor April Havens during a recent outreach program at Mechanicsville Elementary School. April shared a collection of fossils and a "how-to" of fossil collecting

with a class of wide-eyed 4th graders. As the children gathered around her in their classroom, April fostered wonder and excitement as they held objects millions of years old.

A personal guided tour at the Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum and Historic Park is a routine event but there is nothing "routine" about the tour. Visitors are lead by enthusiastic staff or volunteers to the south campus where they not only learn about the oldest lighthouse on the Potomac River, but are encouraged to climb to the top and retrace the steps of light keepers who trekked up that tower since it was built in 1836! The climb, the view, and the history are elements of the tour that never get old no matter how many times you experience them.

On the walk back to the north campus and the Potomac River Maritime Exhibit,



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*Above: April encourages 4th graders at Mechanicsville Elementary School to hold the millions-of-years old fossils during a recent outreach program. (Photo by Reid Silverman. Reprinted by permission of The Enterprise Newspaper.)*

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

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Specialist

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# Best Wishes to One of the Best

*By Sheila Gibbons Hiebert, President*

Longtime Museum Division employee Lydia Wood is retiring this summer. A tireless worker and a superb designer, Lydia has made enormous contributions during her tenure.

At the Volunteer Appreciation Night in April, Vice President Lewie Aldridge Jr. presented Lydia with the Friends' President's Award, prefacing it with these remarks:

"As you know, the Friends' President's Award is given annually to an individual who has done extraordinary things to support the goals of the Museum Division. It's always a special pleasure to pay tribute to the people who have earned this award. Each one has given us so very much.

"This year's recipient has been dedicated to the work of the Museum for more than 20 years. Without this person's participation, our museum sites would very likely not look as professional or as interesting as they look today. A known multi-tasker, this person has juggled projects that range from exhibit design to facility repair to boat restoration. Her work has not been limited to the museum sites themselves; she is often out in the community as a Museum Division representative and as a guiding hand in special events for the community.

"She has stepped in during a leadership vacancy and has stepped up when asked to steer new initiatives on top of what she already had on her plate.

"It's not possible to list every contribution she has made over her time with us. Let's just say there is no one like her and no one can replace her.

"It's my privilege, on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Friends, to present the 2010 President's Award to Lydia Wood."

Best wishes, Lydia. We will miss you.



*Friends Vice President Lewie Aldridge, Jr. presents Lydia Wood a gift along with the prestigious President's Award for 2009. (Photo by Kim Cullins)*



*Members of the St. Mary's Quilters beside the commemorative quilt they created. (Photo by Kim Cullins)*

## Handmade Quilt on Display

The St. Mary's County Quilters were looking for a good home. Not for the group to gather, but for a commemorative quilt the group had made in 1984 to celebrate Maryland's 350th birthday. They approached Delegate Johnny Wood for help. That's when we got the call.

Delegate Wood, a Friends board member and longtime supporter of the museum, jumped at his first thought – the St. Clement's Island Museum – and contacted the staff to see if there was a chance the quilt could be displayed and preserved there.

This isn't just any quilt. The size and design are more than impressive. Its dimensions are 105" x 83" with a central diamond-shaped block featuring the Ark and the Dove surrounded by official symbols of Maryland.

Each stitch was made by loving and talented hands, and there must be a million of them!

The quilt seemed to be a perfect fit and the quilters agreed to donate their work of art to the museum. It is now proudly displayed on the wall of the museum entry room and is greeted daily with "oohs" and "ahhs" of the many visitors who walk in the door. This exquisite tribute to the State of Maryland made of fabric and thread has a new home. Thank you St. Mary's County Quilters!

## A Letter From Debra

After a very snowy and slow winter tourist season, things are picking up. Individual and group tours are coming through at a steady pace, the fishermen are fishing and school field trips are keeping staff and volunteers busy. We are looking forward to this summer to complete several major capital projects.

The Piney Point Site Enhancement Plan is ready to go. New walkways, parking, gardens and informational signage are to be constructed and installed through the summer months. Chris Bologna of CSBI (Christopher S. Bologna, Inc.) will be the project manager and Wayne Davis of W. M. Davis, Inc. will be the contractor.

The new collections management facility at our St. Clement's Island Museum complex is well under way. The walls and roof trusses are up and we are discussing placement of electrical fixtures and thinking about landscaping. Volunteer and Friends member Larry Hyatt is our project manager, acting as the representative for the Friends Board of Directors and working with CMI General Contractors, Inc., our builder. Christina Barbour has been busy auditing the collections inventory and repacking all the artifacts into appropriate acid-free archival containers so we'll be ready to move when the doors open!

The staff is putting final touches on the summer events and it looks like it will be another season with lots to do! Our job is to preserve our history and make it accessible to you! Please bring friends and family and join us this season!

Very sincerely,

*Debra J. Pence*



*Carl Kopel*



*Margaret Slingerland*

## Remembering Special Volunteers

We would like to remember two amazing volunteers who gave so much time and talent to the St. Clement's Island Museum, forging a special place in the hearts of staff and fellow volunteers. Carl Kopel was involved with the museum since its opening in 1975, offering his remarkable skills as a woodworker for museum projects and special events. Margaret began volunteering in 1991. She logged 2,068 hours of service before her death, assisting with student tours, museum store operations, and visitor services. All of us will miss both of them very, very much.

# Museum Staff Passionate About Sharing History

*Personal Touch, continued from page 1*

one might hear about how Piney Point was a hot spot for vacationers who traveled by steamboat, and that the light keepers and their families witnessed the arrival of many Washington dignitaries and even a few U.S. presidents who enjoyed leisure time in this area. The one-on-one experience with a museum guide yields answers to a myriad of inquiries about the lighthouse, the Chesapeake Bay, watermen, even the petroleum pipelines visible from anywhere on the museum grounds. It's not just service with a smile. It's the sharing of information with people – our tour guides – who are so passionate about the history and heritage of this area.

St. Clement's Island Museum site supervisor Christina Barbour offers a variety of education programs for visiting students, depending on the students' curricula and grade level. But it's her two-pronged approach that makes the lesson personal – and effective. Chris likes to visit the students in the classroom a few days before they arrive at the museum. In the classroom setting, the children connect with Christina as she discusses the museum and their lesson topic, which she usually augments with a Power Point presentation or with hands-on items. Christina's outreach in the classroom prepares them for what to expect, how to behave, and how to connect their lesson to their visit, which often includes taking the water taxi over to St. Clement's Island.

But outreach programs don't begin and end in the schools. Christina regularly presents programs at the community senior centers with topics ranging from 17th-century fashion to one-



*Chris Barbour prepares students for boarding the St. Clement's Island Museum water taxi about to depart for an island tour. (Photo by Kim Cullins)*

room schoolhouses. Sometimes she arrives dressed in colonial garb, portraying a colonial character. She brings history to life in so many ways!

Museum Division manager Debra Pence also accepts speaking engagements from time to time. Recently, Debra shared her expertise with several garden clubs on adapting the uses and preservation of traditional/colonial herbs for the contemporary gardener or cook. Debra carried with her the samples and tools needed to demonstrate fully the art of using herbs. Her audience received a sensory lesson, utilizing taste, touch and smell, totally unlike anything one can experience with a book or on the computer.

Walk in the door of either museum and you will receive a vibrant smile and warm welcome. The museums are attentive to hospitality and to visitor services. Front desk personnel can tell you a great place to eat, where to stay overnight, directions to the next destination, or the closest car repair shop. And if they don't know the answer to a question, they will find out for you.

Oftentimes, it's not just the journey we remember, but the people we meet along the way. We hope that museum staff and volunteers will be some of those memorable people that our visitors will never forget. And when they say, "Thank you for coming! Please come again!" – they really hope you will.



*Chris Barbour uses a student volunteer to demonstrate how colonial garments were fashioned and to explain the purposes of design. (Photo by Kim Cullins)*

## Deb Pence's Recipe for Basic Pesto

- 1 cup fresh basil leaves
- 3 tablespoons of pine nuts or walnuts
- 3 tablespoons of grated parmesan cheese
- olive oil
- 2-3 cloves of garlic

Puree together in a food processor, adding enough olive oil to create a smooth paste. Use with oil and vinegar for dressings or marinades, as a seasoning for pasta or rice or to flavor soups, vegetables, lamb or fish.



*The old pier is removed (top photo) to make way for the new kayak launch slated to open in June. (Photos by April Havens)*

## Kayak Launch to Open this Summer

The Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum and Historic Park is about to check another item off of the “to do” list of site enhancements: a kayak launch. Located near the Potomac River Maritime Exhibit on the north campus, the kayak launch is positioned on Piney Point Creek and replaces the decrepit U.S. Navy pier used since the torpedo testing era of World War II.

Earlier this year, the old pier was removed, and the construction of the kayak launch began. The launch consists of a solid platform with a “floating” deck extension for easy entry and exit of a kayak or canoe. The launch will be gated and access will be available during the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum’s hours of operation. There is no fee to use the launch.

Kayakers will have access to the quiet, sheltered waters of the Piney Point Creek which extends from Tall Timbers to the Potomac River. It is anticipated that this form of “green recreation” will attract seasoned and beginner kayakers and provide a splendid opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty found in this St. Mary’s County water trail.

A ribbon cutting ceremony will take place on June 18 to officially open this new recreational element of the park. Consult the calendar on page 6 for details.

## 2009 Annual Appeal Donors

Our heartfelt thanks to these donors who contributed \$5,820 to our Annual Appeal

Karen Abrams and Jim Kenney	Ann F. Lawrence
Dorothy Bailey	John and Annette Madel
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Julia King	
Bob and Inky Kopel	
Carl and Monika Kopel	
Anthony and Patricia Lavato	



## New Building Rises in Colton's Point

Construction of the 2,500-square foot collections management facility on the grounds of the St. Clement's Island Museum is well under way.

This building will house the collections of the Museum Division in a climate-controlled environment that will provide proper storage of artifacts. The facility also will open up space inside the museums that is now used for storage, making way for new exhibits.

The Friends are managing this project on behalf of St. Mary's County and have been raising funds to pay for a portion of the construction. If you would like to contribute to this project, please contact Carol Cribbs at the St. Clement's Island Museum (301-769-2222). Donors' names will be posted on a sign at the building. Many thanks to Lydia and Carlton Wood and N. Lynn Erwin for their recent donations of \$100 each.

*Photo: Trusses are lowered into place on the new collections management facility being built at the St. Clement's Island Museum. (Photo by Kim Cullins)*

## UP AND COMING . . .

### *Set a course for these exciting events*

Visit [www.stmarysmd.com/recreate/museums](http://www.stmarysmd.com/recreate/museums) or call 301-769-2222 for more information on these events.

#### **June 4 - 5, 19 and 26 – Water Taxi Schedule**

The St. Clement's Island Museum water taxi will operate on the above dates with regular departures from the museum pier beginning at 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. with return trips from the island to the museum from 3 p.m. until 4 p.m. The reconstructed Blackstone Lighthouse will be staffed with volunteers and open for tours 10:45 a.m. to 3 p.m. on June 4, 5, and noon to 3 p.m. on the 19th and 26th. The extended summer water taxi schedule is still being planned.

#### **June 12 – St. Clement's Island Heritage Day**

Moved ahead from its original July date, this event will take place on St. Clement's Island with free boat transportation from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The historic oyster buy boat, *Samuel M. Bailey*, will take visitors to the island from the St. Clement's Island Museum pier for a day of history and recreation. The Blackstone Lighthouse will be open for tours from 10:45 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be children's heritage games, educators, and the folk music of Joe Norris from noon to 2 p.m. Bring a picnic lunch, camera, walking shoes, and plenty of water. Enjoy the walking trail around the island or a

stroll on the beach. It's free and fun for the whole family! The St. Clement's Island Museum offers free admission from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., so stop in for the 13-minute orientation film and a full overview of the island's history.

#### **June 18 – Ribbon Cutting Ceremony**

The St. Mary's County Museum Division invites Friends members to attend a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum and Historic Park to officially open the new kayak launch and completed exhibits in the Potomac River Maritime Exhibit. Join the St. Mary's County Board of Commissioners, staff, and volunteers as we celebrate the completion of these exciting projects. The ceremony begins at 3 p.m. Those attending are asked to RSVP to the Museum Division at 301-769-2222 so the staff can plan for parking and seating needs.

#### **July 10 – Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival**

Now in its 11th year -- with the last three being sellouts -- be sure to buy your tickets early! All tickets are by advance sale and only 800 are available! Friends members receive a discounted price of \$45 per person (limit

4 tickets per member). The lineup for this year is Matt Marshak at 3 p.m., Plunky & Oneness at 5 p.m. and saxman Jackeim Joyner at 7 p.m. Don't miss this outstanding lineup of artists and amazing seafood! We start and end one hour earlier this year!

#### **August 7 – Children's Day**

The St. Clement's Island Museum will be bustling with children's games, crafts, demonstrations, and hands-on activities! There will be free T-shirts for the first 100 kids and a boy's and girl's bike giveaway! Free water taxi to St. Clement's Island for kids as well! Many local organizations participate. Don't miss great food and the kiddie tractor pull sponsored by the 7th District Optimist Club! 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

#### **September 18 – Interactive Murder Mystery Dinner**

SAVE THE DATE! This popular Friends fundraiser will take place at Lenny's Restaurant in California, MD. Enjoy cocktails, live auction, dinner, and wacky performances by scenery-chewing audience members still dreaming of a Tony Award-winning career! Watch your mail for details and ticket information or contact the St. Clement's Island Museum for information.

# Member News

## Welcome Aboard New Members!

### Senior

Barbara Thompson – Hollywood, MD

### Individual

Stephanie Waikart – Piney Point, MD

### Family Level

Mary Leigh Harless – Lexington Park, MD  
Jim and Christine Lumpkins – Piney Point, MD  
Douglas and Charlotte Waikart – Rockville, MD  
John and Helen Wilson – Leonardtown, MD

### Heritage Level

Vivian Kay Zimmerman – Valley Lee, MD

## DONATIONS

**Chesapeake Bay Running Club.** The Chesapeake Bay Running Club conducted the 6th Annual Lower Potomac River Marathon in March with approximately 140 runners challenging the 26.2 mile course that wound its way through the scenic St. George Island, Piney Point and Valley Lee areas. The club generously donated \$2,000, proceeds from the race, to benefit the Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum and Historic Park. This is the sixth consecutive year that the club has donated funds supporting the effort to preserve and interpret the history of the oldest lighthouse on the Potomac River.

**St. Mary's County Garden Club.** The Friends would like to thank members of the St. Mary's Garden Club for their \$500 donation to the Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum and Historic Park. The funds will be used to interpret the function of the environmental impact of the bio retention pond and rain gardens being built on the site this summer.

## GRANT AWARD

**St. Mary's County Arts Council:** A Community Arts Grant of \$1,000 was awarded to the Friends to support the July 10 Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival. Many thanks go to the Arts Council for their continued support of this very popular cultural event.

## MEMORIAL GIFTS

A special thank you to Bo and Louanne Bailey for their contributions in memory of their dear friends, Francis E. Taylor, Sr. and the Reverend Monsignor Michael F. Farina.

## GIFT DONATION

Special thanks go to Helen Dorsey for purchasing a family gift membership for friends John and Ellen Wilson of Leonardtown.



*Friends President Sheila Hiebert (center) accepts a \$1,000 grant for the Potomac Jazz & Seafood Festival from St. Mary's County Arts Council President Nancy Graf (left) and Executive Director Erin Shoemaker. (Photo by Ingrid Swann)*

## Volunteers Honored

It was a great night to celebrate the lifeblood of our museums. Friends board members, museum staff, the St. Mary's County Board of Commissioners and Maryland Delegate Johnny Wood gathered at the Paul Hall School for Maritime Training and Education in April to honor all the volunteers who contribute hours of their time to serve the public and the needs of the St. Clement's Island and Piney Point Museums.

Our museum volunteers are simply invaluable. They assist staff in conducting tours, operating the museum stores, providing visitor services, helping with special events, and handling tasks that sometimes arise unexpectedly. They are the extra eyes, ears, and hands that allow the museums to function smoothly.

All volunteers were recognized for the many hours served in 2009. Awards to the outstanding volunteers of the year for 2009 were made to Mary Hyatt (St. Clement's Island Museum) and Bettie Broadhurst (Piney Point Lighthouse Museum) who were chosen by staff and the volunteer coordinator of each museum. Thank you, volunteers! We couldn't do it without you!

For information about volunteering opportunities contact museum site supervisors: April Havens, Piney Point Lighthouse Museum – 301-994-1471 or Chris Barbour, St. Clement's Island Museum – 301-769-2222.



*Pictured left to right: County Commissioner Dan Raley, Mary Hyatt, Commissioner Tom Mattingly, Bettie Broadhurst, Commissioner President Francis Jack Russell, and Delegate Johnny Wood. (Photo by Kim Cullins)*

## 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)



PROUD CORPORATE BENEFACTOR

The Friends of the  
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38370 Point Breeze Road  
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