

The Beacon

PIEDRAS BLANCAS LIGHT STATION OUTSTANDING NATURAL AREA ~PART OF THE CALIFORNIA COASTAL NATIONAL MONUMENT~

VOL. 13, ISSUE 1

JANUARY - MARCH 2019

147-YEAR-OLD LENS GETS A MUCH NEEDED CLEANING

For two days in December 2018, a group of volunteers assisted Lampist Jim Woodward with cleaning the First Order Fresnel lens from Piedras Blancas, currently on display in Cambria. PBLA volunteer and PBLA board member Zale Schuster spearheaded the project and was the driving force to clean the lens. A small group of volunteers spent about 80 hours cleaning the lens, with about 220 hours spent on the entire project, including planning and preparation. Jim Woodward supervised the two-day cleaning project, which the Piedras Blancas Light Station Association funded and the Cambria Lions Club approved. The lens is owned by the Coast Guard.

How did the Piedras Blancas lens end up in Cambria? On December 31, 1948, an earthquake caused extensive damage to the upper three floors of the lighthouse. In 1949, the decision was made to remove those three floors. The lens was carefully disassembled and the pieces were carried by hand down the stairs, stacked and numbered, down to the last screw. Four members of the Cambria Lions Club, who were concerned about the future of the lens, received permission from the Coast Guard to take the lens to Cambria. In 1951, it was reassembled and lit at its new home on the Pinedorado grounds, next to the Veterans building on Main Street. Around 1990, after 40 years of being exposed to the elements, the lens was weathering a slow death. After a great deal of community input and discussion about how to restore and protect the lens, it was taken to Monterey by the Coast Guard for restoration. A group in Cambria called the Friends of the Piedras Blancas Lighthouse Lens was formed to generate funds to provide a protective enclosure for the lens. The Coast Guard returned the lens to Cambria in 1993 where community volunteers completed the final restoration work and in 1994, the light was lit again.

Nearly 25 years later, the nonprofit Piedras Blancas Light Station Association was given permission by the Lions Club to clean the lens. Jim Woodward was hired to oversee the operation and train volunteers to be able to periodically clean the lens in the future. The 147-year-old glass prisms are delicate and required gentle dusting, cleaning with a distilled water and isopropyl alcohol solution, and then a final buffing with microfiber towels. The lens cleaning project cost over \$3,000 and was funded by the Piedras Blancas Light Station Association. Donations are welcome for future cleanings. Each night, the lens is lit to showcase the beauty of this historic artifact. Now it shines like a jewel!

Right: A happy cleaning crew after a job well done! Holly Gant, Abel Martinez, Zale Schuster, Jim Woodward, Carole Adams, Phil Adams (not pictured: Bob Dees and Tom Kennedy)



Above: The upper glass prisms and bullseye panels shine after their initial cleaning. Note the bottom two panels are dull with years of grime.



The Beacon is a joint publication of the Piedras Blancas Light Station Association and the Bureau of Land Management. The PBLA is a nonprofit partner of the BLM and provides support for the restoration, conservation, interpretation, and stewardship of the unique natural, historical, and cultural resources at the Piedras Blancas Light Station. © Copyright 2019



LENS CLEANING CREW IN ACTION



Above: The green paint on the cabinet was cleaned. Right: Prisms were carefully dusted before cleaning.



Above: There was room for a 6 foot ladder inside the lens! Right: After polishing, the bullseye panels were clear enough to see through again.



JIM WOODWARD - THE LIGHTHOUSE CONSULTANT

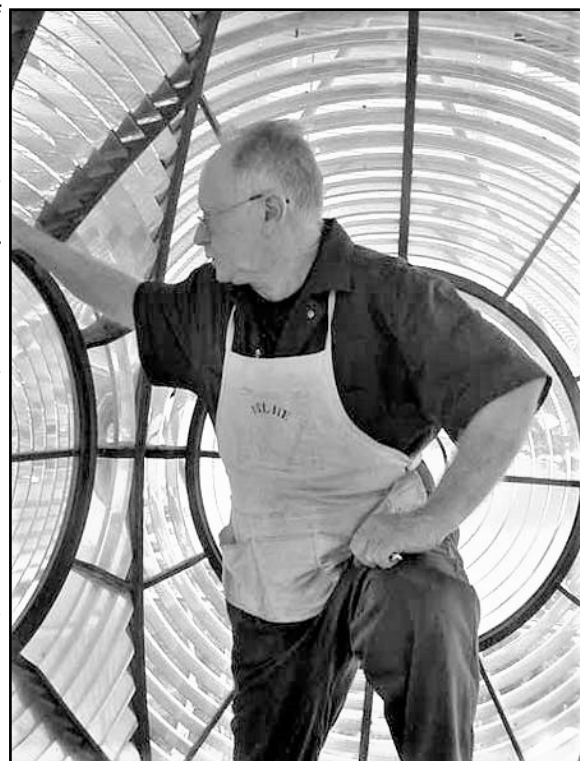
We are fortunate to have the knowledge of Jim Woodward, one of the few remaining lampists in the country. Jim gave us a detailed report on the state of our Fresnel lens in April 2018 which led to the December 2018 cleaning. Jim was a 40-year employee of the US Coast Guard. His career began as an enlisted man on a buoy tender in 1963. Jim's expansive knowledge and experience with Fresnel lenses began in 1965 as an apprentice. After leaving active duty, Jim returned as an engineering technician and his primary focus was lighthouse-related projects including reconstruction, maintenance and preservation of classic French Fresnel lenses. He has been a key player in over 100 lens projects throughout his career including Point Reyes, Farallon Island, and Point Arena in CA, Heceta Head, OR, Cape Hatteras and Bodie Island, NC, St. Augustine, FL, Devils Island, WI, and Fire Island, NY. Jim retired from the Coast Guard in 2004 and now devotes his efforts entirely to lens preservation through his company The Lighthouse Consultant LLC.

What is a Lampist? In order to be considered a qualified Coast Guard lampist with the authorization to professionally conserve, restore, repair, treat, disassemble or assemble, any or all components of a Coast Guard-owned classical Fresnel lens, the following standards and requisites must be met:

1. Two years of direct supervised training by a qualified and approved professional lampist or trained industrial equipment conservator with experience in optical glass, metal, wood, or historic lighthouse optical navigational equipment.
2. At least three years of demonstrated full-time experience of working directly on Fresnel lens conservation, restoration, treatments, repair, assembly and disassembly. Internships will not be counted toward this requirement.
3. Documented continuing education courses completed with a concentration on materials and treatment methods pertaining to industrial artifacts made of multiple materials and/or Fresnel lenses.
4. Knowledge of and experience in industry standard conservation methods specifically related to historic optical equipment and metals.

When the curator's office formalized the definitions of a lampist in the 1970s there were four individuals who were granted lampist status, including Jim Woodward. Since then, two more have been awarded the title after approximately seven years in the field working as supervised apprentices and there are now two new apprentices beginning their programs. It should be noted that there are numerous skills involved and it is not simply time in the business that brings qualification. The skills necessary include not only a knowledge of lenses, but ability in rigging, marlinspike seamanship, carpentry, mechanics, and proper and appropriate conservation practices.

Any lens in the country that is still under the control of the US Coast Guard can only be worked on by a Coast Guard certified lampist. The US Coast Guard Curator's Office publishes a list of all certified lampists.



Above: Jim Woodward aligning the panels from within the First Order Fresnel lens in the Gibbs Hill lighthouse on Bermuda Island. Photo courtesy of The Lighthouse Consultant LLC

MEET THE NATIVES

Seaside Daisy (*Erigeron glaucus*) is a species of flowering plant in the daisy family also known by the common name seaside fleabane and beach aster. This wildflower is native to the coastline of Oregon and California where it grows on beaches, coastal bluffs and dunes. This is a perennial daisy reaching heights between five and 30 centimeters with branching, nodding stems which may be hairy to hairless. It grows from a stout rhizome and produces thick, firm, rounded to spoon-shaped leaves, sometimes with a few teeth along the edges, each two to 13 centimeters long. Its stems bear flower clusters of one to 15 flower heads which are variable in size from one to over three centimeters wide. The centers contain golden yellow disc florets and the edges are fringed with ray florets which may be long or quite short, and are shades of deep blue and purple to lavender to nearly white.



LOOKING FOR A UNIQUE GIFT? WE HAVE AN ONLINE GIFT SHOP!

We offer custom ornaments, etched wine glasses, shot glasses, mugs, t-shirts, fleece jackets and vests just to name a few. An engraved brick installed at the light station makes a memorable gift, too! Prices include tax and shipping and all the proceeds stay here at the light station. You may also join or renew your membership online. Visit us at: piedrasblancas.org/gift-shop



INTERN UPDATE

We love hearing from our former interns! Our 2016 intern, Jake Castellanos, recently sent us an update on what he has been doing since leaving the light station.

My time after working for the Piedras Blancas Light Station has been filled with new exciting challenges and career development. After my stint as a Natural Resources Management Intern at PBLS, I found myself working as an outdoor educator for 1½ years. Providing maintenance and leading tours for the public at PBLS gave me great insight and motivation to continue focusing on work that involves education and providing service to others. I worked at two science camps located on the Central Coast: first at a science camp known as Camp Ocean Pines, located in Cambria for two seasons, and then at a science camp in the foothills of Santa Barbara known as The Outdoor School for one season. During those seasons I found myself really enjoying teaching elementary school students about natural science topics. Part of this work that gave me such joy was being able to inspire young scholars in the beauty of the outdoors.

Through my time spent as an outdoor educator, I then decided to go back to school to pursue a Masters degree in Counseling and Guidance for the college level. I found that through my work as an outdoor educator, the part I loved the most was being able to provide motivation and positivity to the students that came to the camp. Due to my own developments and positive change in college, I found that the higher education institution level is where I want to work. I wanted to go into a counseling program that would allow me to become credentialed to work at a higher education institution, and serve college students as a mentor and role model. Right now, I am currently in my second year of the Counseling and College Student Personnel program at California Lutheran University (CLU). Alongside my studies I am also working as a Counseling Assistant for the Career Services office at CLU. Through my studies and work, I have relearned and utilized my growing passion for helping others. Without a doubt in my mind, my internship at PBLS gave me the opportunity to learn more about myself as worker, educator and student of the natural world. It is in these special lessons I learned at PBLS that helped me to move forward in my zig zag career path. I want to thank my supervisors and the volunteers at PBLS and the public who came to the light station for giving me this rich learning opportunity.



HAPPY 144TH BIRTHDAY, PIEDRAS BLANCAS LIGHT STATION!

The lens was first illuminated on February 15, 1865. Join us as we wish the light station a happy birthday during our regularly scheduled tours on Saturday, February 16th. Check our website for details.



COOKING AT THE LIGHTHOUSE

This recipe was from Maude Rogers Thorndyke's recipe book. Maude was the daughter-in-law of Head Keeper Lorin Thorndyke. She married his son Lorin, Jr. in 1908. There are no baking instructions included. Maude knew how to bake so she probably didn't feel the need to clip the instructions. Today, we're on our own to find a pie crust recipe to go along with this tempting rice pie filling.

Watkins® Coconut Rice Pie

1 cup rice
2 tablespoons butter
1 cup raisins
1 cup sugar
3 eggs
1 teaspoon Watkins® vanilla
2 tablespoons Watkins® Coconut Dessert



Boil rice, add Watkins® Coconut Dessert (moistened with a little cold water or milk), sugar and butter. Then let cool and add eggs, raisins and vanilla.

Note: Watkins® Coconut Dessert was a mix that bakers used for a quick delicious pie. For coconut fans, Watkins recently began selling their Coconut Dessert mix again.

Excerpted with permission from Beverly Praver's cookbook "Dinner at the Lighthouse" available in our gift shop.

TRIVIA TIME

Fresnel lenses were a big breakthrough because:

- A. They created a brighter light than other methods.
- B. They were less expensive than other lighting methods.
- C. They came in different configurations to allow different flash patterns.
- D. A and C

Called "the Mount Everest of lighthouses", this tower was the most expensive lighthouse built in the United States:

- A. Minot's Ledge Lighthouse
- B. Split Rock Lighthouse
- C. St. George Reef Lighthouse
- D. Fourteen Foot Shoal Lighthouse

Lighthouse keepers recorded information about the weather, visitors and chores in a:

- A. Logbook
- B. Journal
- C. Daily Diary

Answers: D, C, St. George Reef Lighthouse located at the end of a reef six miles offshore of Crescent City, CA; A, Logbook

TAKE A PEEK AT THE LIGHTHOUSE ANY TIME

Since our live webcam was installed in 2016, many visitors have written to say how much they enjoy the live 270 degree view from the light station. You may see elephant seals on the beach or a beautiful moonrise. Check us out:

piedrasblancas.org/webcam

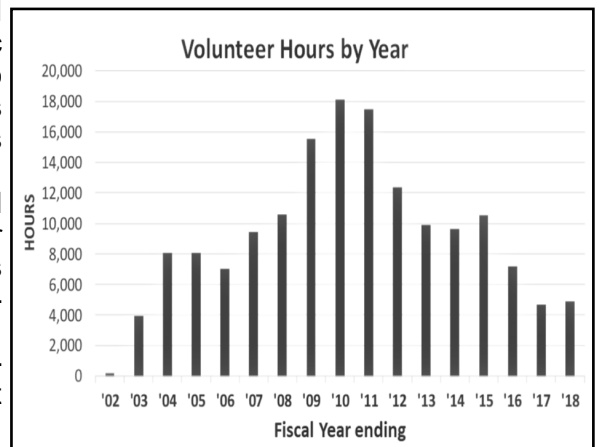
HAND-PAINTED REPLICAS OF PIEDRAS BLANCAS LIGHT STATION ARE NOW AVAILABLE



After months of working on perfecting a resin model of the light station, our lighthouse replicas are finally here! A hearty thank you goes to Elaine Mermelstein and Lisa Tanzman of CCU Merchandising in Cambria for researching vendors and facilitating the design with Holly Gant of PBLSA. The full color, hand-painted resin models are 6" tall and 4" wide at the base. They are accurate down to the black trim around the windows. You won't find them anywhere except here at the light station! Visit our online gift shop to buy this one-of-a-kind gift: piedrasblancas.org/gift-shop

VOLUNTEERS ARE THE HEARTBEAT OF THE LIGHT STATION

Piedras Blancas Light Station is owned and managed by the Bureau of Land Management and has two full-time employees, but our limited staff couldn't accomplish as much without our small group of dedicated volunteers. During fiscal year 2017/2018 our volunteers logged 4,908 hours of which 3,038 were for interpretation and environmental education which included giving public tours and 4th grade school tours to local students. Another 1,524 hours were in support services such as repairing fences, painting rusty stairs, or building a new door for the fuel house. We are always looking for people who love to work outdoors doing anything from guiding or assisting tours, light maintenance projects, staffing our gift shop or removing non-native plants. Interested in learning more about volunteering? Contact Jodie Nelson at jrnelson@blm.gov



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Piedras Blancas volunteers have a variety of interesting backgrounds and talents. **Mark Arnold**, a retired Cal Poly professor, has contributed a great deal to interpretation at the light station since he came on board in 2004. Mark is a skilled computer artist. Many images he created enhance the visitor's tour experience. For instance, his rendering of the fixed and flashing first order lens allows us to see what the Piedras Blancas lens looked like prior to the 1916 rearrangement of the panels. The image used in the rotunda slide show that explains how a Fresnel lens works was created by Mark. He regularly has delighted visitors during living history tours with his portrayal of a keeper at work in the fog signal building.

Recently Mark's first novel, *Monster*, was published. It is a highly researched and brilliantly written book about the life of Mary Shelley, who wrote *Frankenstein*, which is regarded by some people as the first piece of science fiction. Mark vividly brings Mary Shelley to life and helps us understand the events in her life that could have led to creation of the world's most famous monster. As one reviewer stated, "This is one true story that will haunt you forever."



Longtime light station volunteer **Dave Babcock** received a California Poppy Award for Exemplary Volunteer Service at Hearst Castle in 2018. Awardees are honored by California State Parks for their significant contributions to the betterment of Parks. In addition to his service at Hearst Castle, Dave has been a light station volunteer since 2010 and reliably guides tours each week. Our visitors always enjoy his humorous and engaging tours. Congratulations, Dave!



Elephant seals lounge on the beach below the light station. Photo by Gary O'Neill

LIGHTHOUSE NEIGHBORS

Point San Luis Lighthouse

(58 miles south of PBLs)

Located in Avila Beach. For a complete listing of guided tours and special events and to reserve a ride on the shuttle, visit: PointSanLuisLighthouse.org or call 805-540-5771

Point Sur Lightstation

(65 miles north of PBLs)

From November through March, tours are offered at 10 AM on Saturdays and Sundays and at 1 PM on Wednesdays. During the summer there are additional days and times. For a complete listing of tours: PointSur.org or call 831-625-4419

Point Pinos Lighthouse

(90 miles north of PBLs)

Located in Pacific Grove, open Thursday through Monday, 1 PM - 4 PM. For more information: PointPinosLighthouse.org



JOIN OUR MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS ON THE 4TH WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

The Piedras Blancas Light Station Association meets every 4th Wednesday of the month at 6 pm at Rabobank in Cambria. The public is always welcome to come listen, ask questions or voice concerns.

We are currently accepting resumes from those who are interested in becoming a board member. The board is made up of people from all backgrounds and education who live in different parts of the county. We especially need someone who has fundraising or grant writing experience.

Please send us an email if you are interested or have questions: contact.pblsa@gmail.com

PIEDRAS BLANCAS LIGHT STATION TOURS

Tours are offered year-round on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. From June 15 through August 31, tours are offered daily except Wednesdays and Sundays. There are no tours on federal holidays. Tours last about two hours and include the historic Piedras Blancas lighthouse and support buildings along with a half mile interpretive trail that provides spectacular ocean views and opportunities to view wildlife. Meet at the former Piedras Blancas Motel located 1.5 miles north of the light station at 9:45 AM.

Please do not wait at the gate to the light station!
For information, email PiedrasBlancasTours@gmail.com
or call 805-927-7361

Groups of 10 or more,
please make advanced
arrangements.

\$10 for adults, \$5 ages
6-17, no fee for children
5 and under.

Tours may be
cancelled on the day
of the tour due to
inclement weather.



Dress warmly and wear comfortable
walking shoes. Sorry, no pets!

PBLS Association
P.O. Box 127
San Simeon, CA 93452-0127
805-927-3719
membership.pblsa@gmail.com



All memberships include our quarterly newsletter. Your dues help with the maintenance and restoration of the Piedras Blancas Light Station.

- ___ \$50 Friend of the Lighthouse
(1 complimentary tour)
- ___ \$100 Acting Keeper
(2 complimentary tours)
- ___ \$250 Assistant Keeper
(4 complimentary tours)
- ___ \$500 Principal Keeper
(engraved brick)
- ___ \$1000 Superintendent of Lights
(engraved brick & private tour for up to 6)

**Help restore
and preserve
Piedras Blancas
Light Station
by joining PBLSA**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please make check payable to PBLSA
You may also join online at piedrasblancas.org
Thank you for your support!



Find us on Facebook
and Instagram:
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PIEDRAS BLANCAS LIGHT
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SAN SIMEON, CA

