SECOND ANNUAL LIGHTHOUSE GALA WAS A SUCCESS!

By Rona Trachtenberg
Photos by Patty Daniels Photography & Teri Kovacs Photography

On Friday, March 2, 2018 two hundred and eighty-three guests and 20 volunteers celebrated the 111th anniversary of the Hillsboro Lighthouse under a cloudless sky filled with bright stars and a full moon.

The event “Be Bedazzled in the Moonlight” delivered every expectation it promised. This was the second annual festive gala that the Hillsboro Lighthouse Preservation Society (HLPS) hosted to raise essential funds to repair their beloved historical ATON (aid to navigation).

This year’s event was especially pivotal because the (Continued on page 4)

HLPS UTILIZED CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY TO REPAIR LIGHTHOUSE!

By: Art Makenian

Your team of preservationists once again will undertake the complicated task of an uncompleted HLPS Project 17 tension rods installation. These rods could not be installed due in part because the main iron casting brackets which they make part of the architrave casting assemblies were no longer there. Actually, the cast iron material was rusted and flacked away, See picture below.

This is not an unusual condition considering an all cast iron metal structure exposed only few feet away from an ocean beach front for 110 years where exposed to harsh environmental conditions. In mid-June of this year, HLPS will start the installation of a newly designed and manufactured sleeve brackets. These brackets are to enhance the upper level column sockets that have now deteriorated beyond their serviceable limit. A very special method was chosen to manufacture these sleeve brackets by eliminating all or any welding joints, called “CNC Flame Cutting Technology”. CNN

(Continued on page 8)
FROM THE PRESIDENT

2018 is turning out to be another banner year for the HLPS. We cannot say enough how blessed we are that you are all here and generous enough to support us in our endeavors to keep the light shining.

First, we are still cleaning up from hurricane Irma. Although the lighthouse itself remained undamaged, the USCG was overwhelmed with repairs and work that needed to be completed for all the USCG bases around the sector and district. Since the repairs and work to our grounds were not critical and mostly cosmetic, we have to wait our turn for certain things to be completed. For example, the fence that keeps boaters from roaming onto the property has yet to be erected. But, thanks to the HID (Hillsboro Inlet District) the sands and beaches are back to their prior conditions. They did a great job!

Secondly, we had another great membership meeting in February. Everyone had a great time at this event and we have heard that everyone prefers the meeting to be at the beginning of the year instead of near the end of the year, as we did in years past. So, 2019’s membership meeting will also be in February. Look for the exact date on our website in the coming months. Also, the membership meeting will remain free for all members in 2019, so there is no reason not to attend. Free food, drink, comradery, and lighthouse discussion. What’s not to like.

Thirdly, our 111th gala was another smash hit! This year we actually had to turn people away. I can’t overstate what a great, fun event it is for everyone and how far the funds that we raise from the event go into keeping the lighthouse repairs scheduled. This year we raised over $17K. If that sounds like a lot, keep in mind we have well over $100K scheduled for repairs this year (2018), alone. And yes, we will be doing another gala in 2019. It will be another full moon gala on Friday, March 22nd 2019. Mark your calendar and buy your tickets early, we anticipate selling out by early 2019. Tickets are anticipated to go on sale by November.. Look for the article about the 2018 gala in this newsletter.

Fourthly, the ongoing repairs from last year are just now (June-July) getting completed. So, if you see people working high up in the air on the lighthouse, they are working to repair more of the tension rod structures from last year’s repairs. Again, look for the article about the repairs later in this newsletter.

Finally, let me just say that your donations are what allow us to keep doing what we do. We have no paid volunteers and all monies go towards maintaining the lighthouse. We are aware that your hard-earned money can be spent or donated in innumerous ways and on other organizations. But, we are grateful that each of you support us as you do. We are constantly working to keep our beacon shining on us all and living up to your expectations of our organization. Thank you all!

Ken Herman—HLPS President
The museum is located at: Hillsboro Inlet Park, A1A at 2700 N. Ocean Boulevard, Pompano Beach. It is open Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday - 11:00 am until 3:00 pm. It is also open on Tour days from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. On most other days you can arrange a private tour by contacting Annie Garrick at: museum@hillsborolighthouse.org or by phone 954-226-3566

We are very proud of our loyal volunteers, Linda Peck, Cindy Malaney, Molly Malaney, Barbara, Mandalee Barker who keep the Museum open every week. If you are interested in helping out for a 2 hour time slot, please contact Annie at museum@hillsborolighthouse.org or 954-226-3566.
Category Force 5 winds of Hurricane Irma, in 2017, wreaked immense havoc and damage to the 147-foot tall structure that included beach and foundation erosion.

The evening netted over $17,000 for upcoming repairs thanks in part to the admission fee of $11 per person (representing the Lighthouse’s 111 years of existence) and monies collected from 55 silent auction items. “We are a volunteer, non-profit 501c3 organization so every dollar collected goes directly to fix the Lighthouse,” affirmed HLPS President Ken Herman, who is also an unpaid volunteer.

“Our first gala, last year, was a learning experience,” added Debbie Divich, LHPS Media Coordinator. “We made many improvements for this year’s event and we even offered a few surprises.”

Some of the creative enhancements included:

- Having two trolleys to alternate driving guests from the parking garage to the Lighthouse property.
- Having two bar stations: one for beer/wine, and the other for cocktails.
- Having three bartenders, who kept the lines moving efficiently.
- Pricing all drinks at $5 and having guests purchase tickets ahead of time so the bartenders would be able to focus on making drinks not change.
- Inviting Carrie Bennett, a local chalk artist, to draw a beautiful rendition of the Lighthouse in different colors of chalk on the sidewalk between the two cottages.
- Inviting EJaz Hassanali, another super talented local artist, to create an amazing lighthouse portrait during the evening that was revealed after dinner and placed into the silent auction.
- Having Adam Heim, a local videographer, create a short-time lapse movie of EJaz Hassanali making his one-of-a-kind art work. The movie went to the highest bidder of the live artwork.
- Having E&M Culinary, Events & Creative, from Boca Raton create a “Slice the Meat” carving station (one for prime rib and the other for roasted turkey) as part of their menu during the meal they catered, which also included salad, and a vegetarian selection.
- Laying down a red carpet at the entrance to the Lighthouse to welcome the guests as they “walked the red carpet.”
carpet” to climb the 176 steps to the top of the Lighthouse where they had the rare, once-a-year opportunity to enter the Lens Room. The guests were treated to an up-close-and-personal encounter with Mr. Fresnel’s invention and Ralph Krugler, HLPS historian.

Visiting the Super Lens
I was stationed, in the motor room area, just below the Lens. My task was to allow no more than five to six guests, at one time, into the small motor room and then to direct no more than two guests, at a time, to climb the narrow ladder up to Ralph and the brilliantly glowing Second Order Lens.

For the guests who were curious as to how the mechanics worked ... my answer went as follows, “A light sensor timer goes on after sunset, which alerts the motor to start, which makes the two 9 foot in diameter clamshell prisms start rotating around and reflecting the single 1,000 watt GE lightbulb to create a solid light that sweeps every 20 seconds, which can be seen by mariners 28 nautical miles (32 land miles) out to sea, which is a North American record.”

“There is redundancy throughout the system,” continued Ralph, who had a perpetual smile and a glow of happiness on his face the entire four hours we were up at the top of the Light.” He added, “There is a master motor that drives the rotator and a slave motor in case #1 dies.”

While the food, dancing, drinks, silent auction and socializing were the highlights on the ground level, I can attest, with one hundred percent confidence, that the Lens, Ralph and whatever guest was sitting next to him were the most photographed selfies of the evening. And when the full moon rose, with its orange hue glistening over the ocean, then that was the most photographed awesome image of the night.

Anyone who didn’t climb to the top truly missed out on a spectacular night view that is completely different than the daytime version. Guests were mesmerized by the sweeping Lighthouse beam that reflected off the water and the kaleidoscope of colored lights that could be seen along the 360 degree view of the beach and land below. The guests reported that the experience was, “breathtaking and awe-some.”

In 2017, guests had the option of winning an overnight evening in one of the Keeper’s Cottages in the silent auction. In 2018, the final, and best, modification came in the form of one very impressive live auction item that was acquired by Ben (aka the Barefoot Mailman) Ellis and his wife Jeannie.

The Big Prize
The influential couple convinced the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company to donate a ride, in their blimp, for four lucky auction winners. “What is so miraculous about this auction item,” explained Ken Herman “is that each year the company receives hundreds of requests for ride certificates for their world-famous Goodyear blimp. The opportunities for charitable

(Continued from page 4)
The ride was originally slated for just two people. But when Ben & Jeannie Ellis visited the local Blimp Operations in Pompano they met Oriana Garcia, the Base Operations Coordinator, who contacted Dan Smith, the Airship PR Specialist, and this wonderful team modified the auction prize to include four people.

“They loaned us a huge 5' x 4' poster of "Wingfoot One" (the name of our local Blimp) so we could display it right next to the podium,” explained a jubilant Jeannie. We had the opportunity to meet Jay Perdue, the Blimp pilot, and we decided to invite his entire Blimp Team to the Gala.

“We reserved a table of eight for Mr. Perdue, his wife Leilani, the three crew members and their wives. They were all extremely excited about climbing the Lighthouse to see the view and the Lens Room.”

“Everybody was so excited about meeting "The Blimp Pilot"! He was a celebrity!

“Mr. Perdue made an awesome presentation and created further buzz for the Blimp Ride. He mentioned how important the Lighthouse is, as a navigational aid, and as a proximity landmark when the blimp calls into the Pompano Control Tower to approach the base for a landing.”

The live auction was conducted by Mayor Lamar Fisher, who was there with his wife Suzan. Mayor Deb Tarrant and her husband were also in attendance.

Special Guests
Other local luminaries attending the Gala included: Susan & Roger Gingerich; Susan Gingerich is the Executive Director for the Sample McDougald House and she is also the President-elect for the Pompano Rotary. Susan & Roger own Liberty Tax in Pompano.

Dave & Lyn Tabachnick have been permanent local residents for the past two years after retiring and moving South from Long Island where Dave was a prominent piano technician and “Tuner for the Stars” for Billy Joel, Ray Charles, Neal Sedaka and Marvin Hamlisch, among many others.

The winning bid for the four passengers aboard the Goodyear Blimp was $3,500 ... a worthy sum to help restore the precious Lighthouse.
About the Volunteers

The phrase, “It takes a village,” is apropos to this event because it took a plethora of dedicated volunteers, working tirelessly for many months, to create this amazing event.

Debbie Divich and Chris Doone managed all of the organizational details and decisions, including: the guest registration list; planning and logistics; the menu and caterer; the DJ and music. Art Markenian complimented the women by saying, “The reception was outstanding and perfectly organized by Deb & Chris. They did an amazing job especially considering they both have ‘real’ full-time jobs.” Ken Herman, the HLPS President was involved with everything, every step of the way, and was always available for questions or direction, but he didn't micro-manage anyone. He respected each person's ability to do what they volunteered to do. Ed Dietrich, the HLPS Vice President handled important business issues, such as the insurance requirements and other 'behind-the-scenes' details. Linda Peck and Annie Garrick greeted guests at the parking garage, registered them for the trolley, sold tickets for the cocktails and were available for whatever was needed. Linda also created the centerpieces. Debbie’s Mom and Sisters helped setting up, selling tickets and bartending. Lynda Gilbert, Donna Klacik, and Carole Gilbert were bartenders. Ralph Krugler, the HLPS Historian, was in charge of the private tours of the Lens Room. Rona Trachtenberg was in charge of the Motor Room waiting area. Chris Doone, Pam W. and Debra Sivert collected items for the silent auction. Ben and Jeannie Ellis handled the Blimp Ride application process, contacted the Goodyear Company and local Blimp Base, facilitated the certificate award, finalized the requirements for certifying the award for the winner and invited the Goodyear executives to the Gala. The HLPS is so very fortunate and appreciative that community organizations also lend their support. Ric Green, CEO of the Pompano Beach Chamber of Commerce immediately volunteered to promote this event. Priscilla Ellis (no relation to Ben & Jeannie Ellis) is Director of Business Operations for the Chamber. She went over and above to help HLPS get the event message out to their 1,100+ members in their “weekly highlight” email.

All in all, “The Gala turned out to be one of the number one events in Broward County and it has become one of our best fundraisers,” concluded Ken Herman.

If you didn't get a chance to attend the 2018 gala and you want to avoid the dreaded stigma of FOMO (fear of missing out), then please consider marking Saturday, March 22, 2019 on your calendar to Save The Date for next year’s third annual gala fundraiser.

HLPS is looking for energetic volunteers for our 2019 Gala Committee. If you would like to help plan our 2019 Full Moon Fundraiser, please contact Debbie Divich @ 786.251.0811 or media@hillsborolighthouse.org. Our monthly planning meetings will be start in August 2018.
LIGHTHOUSE REPAIRS (CONT)

stands for Computer Numeric Control which is not a new concept in the Machining Industry. The Flame Cutting with advance torches has been used for quite some time. Now with these two processes combined, we’ve been able to convert our technical drawing parts into a one piece steel sculpture. See the drawing below,

Thus achieving a dimensional accuracy of +/- zero tolerance, just as a 3D printing. See few pictures of the finish product below.

Your team of preservationists once again will make history by repairing a technically complicated critical section of our lighthouse. On June 16th of this year, HLPS will commence installation of these newly designed and manufactured sections of the structural support. Although, only three sockets are deteriorated beyond their serviceable limits, the Coast Guard Engineers and HLPS jointly have decided to place support sleeves on all 8 top end sockets, As usual, while your team will be busy undertaking this project, the lighthouse operation will not be interrupted from normal daily operation. But the visitations and tours will be restricted pending the work conditions. Please follow our Facebook postings for progress reports.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS: I’m looking for someone to take over as Editor of the Big Diamond. I have been doing this for 2 years now and have to let go of it... It is fun but does take some work each issue, 10-20 hours spread over a month. The format is currently Microsoft Publisher (2016) and is what I inherited. I will still help with a dump of the membership data. The next issue is targeted to be completed in January 2019. Two volunteers might work well.. One to do the actual layout mechanics and the other to track down and edit articles and select pictures. Any questions or to help contact: Dave Noderer—daven@computerways.com

LIGHTHOUSE LINKS

- Hillsboro Lighthouse Preservation Society: HillsboroLighthouse.org
- Memorial Bricks: http://www.hillsborolighthouse.org/memorial-bricks
- Hillsboro Lighthouse Preservation Society Store: HillsboroLighthouse.org/store
- Florida Lighthouse Association: FloridaLighthouses.org
- Florida Keys Reef Lights Foundation: ReefLights.org
- Florida Trust for Historic Preservation: FloridaTrust.org
- National Trust for Historic Preservation: PreservationNation.org
THE WEBCAM SAGA AND HURRICANE IRMA

This is the story of the HLPS’s webcam and the saga to get it operational after hurricane Irma. HLPS provides a free, live streaming webcam to the Hillsboro Inlet. To see it visit: www.hillsborolighthouse.org and select the ‘Inlet Cam’ option from the menu. Many boaters use this service to check the conditions of the inlet before going out. Others use it to just see what’s going on in the inlet. We have visitors from all over the world enjoying the stream.

The camera’s physical location is on the U.S.C.G. grounds, inside the H.I.D. (Hillsboro Inlet District) area where the dredges are located. The Cam is on the top of a tall pole facing the inlet (south / south-east) and is hosted through EarthCam and onto our site.

Irma was not kind to our inlet camera. Many of you reported that the camera was out of service following the storm. The outage was due to a number of cascading factors: First, the camera and power seemed to be undamaged from the storm. After an initial diagnosis, it was determined that there was no internet connection. And, through further investigation, we discovered that the internet service was down.

It was discovered that the physical internet line running into the U.S.C.G. and H.I.D. area was damaged and took a number of weeks to get repaired, with the internet provider needing to run a new physical line into both areas. Once the internet was repaired, we anticipated the camera to again become operational, but it didn’t.

Next, we worked with EarthCam to try and access the camera both over the internet and by directly patching into the camera – neither method worked. But, the power indicators, located at the bottom of the pole, all showed proper power running to the camera. EarthCam suggested that we check the camera for power - at the top of the pole. They suggested that either the camera or the cabling were bad. This was not an easy ask.

To accomplish this task, the camera would have to be loosed from it’s position, lowered and then accessed. The good news was, we only needed to lower the camera about 6-7 feet to access it. But, the bad news was, it required us to climb on top of the H.I.D. trailer – which we did.

After lowering the camera case, which is attached to the top of the pole by 3 large hose clamps, we could finally get physical access to camera. But, it be noted that the camera is well protected and housed in a nearly waterproof case, which must be taken apart to get to the electronics inside. We immediately noticed that there were no power indicators on the camera. This meant that either the camera or the cabling was bad. There are 2 cables running into the camera, a power cable and a Cat5 cable. The power cable looked fine and there were still some LED’s lit in the camera housing, so not that cable. That left the Cat5 or the camera.

We started with the Cat5 cable. A Cat5 cable is the same cable you would use to plug your computer into the internet, at work or home. It is the communication cable. To check a Cat5 cable requires a cable tester. The tester is composed of 2 parts which get plugged onto both ends of the cable and the tester runs electricity through all wires and indicates which ones are working. Luckily, we have such equipment. A quick test showed that one end of the cable was not connecting properly, only 4 of the 8 wires were connected and the connector need to be replaced. This is done by cutting off the old connector, aligning the 8 wires into a new connector (easier said than done), and crimping the connector onto the wires. After repairing the cable and re-connecting it to the camera, all the camera LED’s lit up! EarthCam confirmed the camera was now streaming!

Finally we had to get the camera re-attached to the pole. This required climbing a step-ladder, placed at the very edge, on the top of the H.I.D. trailer and reaching out to the camera pole; while lifting the camera casing. Harrowing, but not as bad as cleaning the outside windows of the lighthouse lens room!

After the camera was operational, we contacted EarthCam to update the website to change from using Adobe Flash (an obsolete streaming technology) to using HTML5 (the new and improved streaming technology).

Everyone can now enjoy the live, 24 hour streaming of the Hillsboro Inlet camera, using the updated HTML5 code. Sorry for the delay but we hope you can appreciate to what we went through to get it working again.

The ‘we’ in this article: Ralph Krugler, Ken Herman and the H.I.D. crew – Capt. Scott and Woody (thanks for your help – you guys are the best).
NEW MEMBERS & RENEWALS—JANUARY 2018 TO JUNE 2018

Join today to help preserve our lighthouse's heritage and receive these benefits: Join online: http://hillsborolighthouse.org/join-us

- A subscription to our newsletter "The Big Diamond"
- Free admission to all tours, programs, and lectures for the membership period
- Timely updates to events related to the lighthouse

Membership rates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Family (of 4)</th>
<th>Family (of 6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$35.00 / year</td>
<td>$50.00 / year</td>
<td>$75.00 / year</td>
<td>Lifetime $500.00 or more. Lifetime is a one-time fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business (non-profit)</td>
<td>$125.00 / year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business (profit)</td>
<td>$150.00 / year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Member
- Jay DeFiacono
- Joshua Demond
- Veronica DePrado
- Lynda Di Carlo
- Lucinda Dickinson
- Kim Dix
- Les Dobson
- Gloria Eberle
- Steven Eckers
- Mary Beth Elliott-Williams
- Manfred Eulitz
- Jean Evans
- Melanie Evans
- Maria Rubby Ferrer
- Debbie Fitzgerald
- Thomas Fitzgerald
- Jolyn Fitzsimmons
- Christopher Fraizer
- Jutta Fuentes
- KATHERINE GAVIN
- Jon Goldstein
- Gold Goudarzi
- Kyle Green
- Michele Greene **
- Nancy-Jane Greene
- Cindy Groves
- Maggie Gunther
- Barbara Haley
- Kathy Hanes
- Bruce Harting
- Dean Hayden
- Tom Hertner
- Michael Hetzel
- James Higgins
- Chelsea Hite
- Linda Hogan

James Hohman
- Donovan D. Holmes
- Sarah & Roger Ingraham
- MARTHALY IRIZARRY
- John & Barbara Irvin
- Matthew Johnson
- Don & Beth Ann Joswick
- Victor & Karen Kee
- G. Con & Erma Keller
- Gary C. Keller
- Abigail Kelly
- Trevor Kempse
- Carol & Peter Kenah
- Mark Kingery
- Terry Kinton
- Ellen Kirbert
- Christina Kirk
- Jeffrey & Victoria Koch
- Jeff & Sue Krawec
- ROBERT KREBS
- Jarmilla Kubikova
- Carefree Boat Club *
- Wayne / Mary Landry
- Lorrie Lane
- Celeste LaVergne
- Lisa Lawson
- Jo Ann Le Fever
- Jo Ann LeFever
- Gregory Lemoine
- NORA LEWARK
- Barbara Long
- John Low
- Carolyn Mann
- Joseph S. Manuele
- John Maracz
- ALIYAH MARTIN
- Thomas Martin
- Fernando Martins
- Richard Matlocks
- Tushyati Maudgalya
- Daniel Mauer
- Bernard Mc Mahon
- Bob & Carolyn Mc Sweeney
- Kathleen McCool
- Bonnie McHolme
- William Meleski
- James P. Menconi
- Jaqueline Metayer
- Alana Miller
- Ron & Lynne Mitchell
- JACKLYN MOSKOW
- Susan Muir
- Adrian Mundt
- Kevin Nanz
- CAROL NELSON
- John Newton
- Kimberly Norman
- Kevin O'Keefe
- Craig Painter
- John Papalia
- John Pazienza
- Jayne Peterson
- Sophie Petetelor
- Brian Phillips
- Jack & Maggie Phillips
- Steve Pingleton
- Kim & Patricia Poirier
- Joseph Price
- Susan Reynolds
- Johanna Ricman
- Daniel Rieger
- Kevin Ries
- Jean Riley
- Patty Robards
- Giovanni Rodriguez
- Susan Rodriguez
- Bruce Rosenkrantz
- John-Michael Ruddy
- Joe Ruff
- Hessein Sakhai
- Rubenstein Sandy
- Kathy Santini
- Joyce Schneider
- Sheri Scholl
- Jack Scholz
- Thomas Schricker
- Ken Schroppe
- Knights of Columbus *
- Antonio Serbia
- Antoino Serbia II
- Ernesto Sergenti
- Pompano Proud Inc. *
- Lakeview Orchards *
- Peter Skiltoni
- Dominique Srdanovic
- Todd & Elizabeth Suess
- Janet & Imre Szilagyi
- Chris & Lynn Thalmann
- Susan Tippett
- Wilmot (Bill) & Judy Tramel
- Charles Tyson
- Jo Udina
- Cathy Van Dyken
- Rita Vester
- Philip Vias
- Michael Warner
- John & Elizabeth Waters
- Margaret Weburg
- Ralph & Laura Weiss
- Alesia Welters
- Ariel White
- James White
- Jody Wilken
- Bob Williams
- Bradley Williams
- Austin Wilson
- Clara Wilson
- Rich & Maggie Winkel
- Wave Witi *
- Pam Wunderlich
- Loretta Zagarolo
- Duane Zahradnik
- Deborah Zimmerman

MONETARY AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS

Pat Anderson
- Davis Family
- Cassill Foundation
- Arlene Loesel
- Welling Family
- In memory of Tom Loesel
- Adams/Hopkins/Petersen

Arthur Burgess
- Rick Dickson
- Ken Herman
- Hillsboro Shores Improvement Association
- John Murrett
- Rodorimer Family
- Jay Stout

Lee Butler
- Eckers Family
- Theresa Kaposi
- VonStaden Family

Hib Casselberry
- Delta Kappa Gamma
-

Thomas Costello
- Annie Garrick

Glenda Bailey
-

Jim Crawford
-

KEVIN DEAN
-

Karl Decker
-}

Cheryl Craig
-

Pamela L. Crader
-}

Jay Costa
-}

Valerie Costello
-}

Hib Casselberry
-}

Doug Anderson
-}

In memory of Tom Loesel
- Adams/Hopkins/Petersen

In memory of Tom Loesel
- Adams/Hopkins/Petersen

In memory of Tom Loesel
- Adams/Hopkins/Petersen

In memory of Tom Loesel
- Adams/Hopkins/Petersen
The Lighthouse. As a physical structure and a symbol, the lighthouse resonated with Susan and became emblematic of her life.

Susan’s interest in lighthouses and longtime affiliation with the Florida Lighthouse Association was a conscious commemoration of her enduring devotion to, and remembrance of, her husband Bill and his son Tom. It was Susan’s way to carry on the memory of loved ones, but it may have also been an acknowledgement of her own nature which she recognized in the lighthouse.

Susan had a strong inner light, and that quality drew people to her. She was not shy about reaching out to new friends wherever she went. Her light could also reach those who may have been lost in the darkness of grief and loss, or depression, or an inability to see their own self-worth. She had an ability to coax people out of the shadows of their isolation and into the light of friendship and community.

But where did Susan’s light and optimism come from? One might assume that Susan lived a charmed life where she never experienced disappointment, heartache, loss, or sorrow. This was unfortunately not the case. At the age of 36 she found herself a single parent after 17 years of marriage with no college degree and little conventional work experience. She relied on the practical skills she had, her intelligence, and her perseverance to make ends meet and eventually thrive.

And then at age 50 she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She went through her first bout with cancer and she came out scarred and battered, but she scored a technical knockout. There were to be more re-matches to come, but those could wait. She had too much living to do! While mom was in the hospital, Bill committed himself to Susan. Susan’s recovery was buoyed by this new love that had kindled between she and Bill. After she recovered, they wed, and thus began what were undoubtedly the happiest years of her life. Susan got to experience the sweetness of true love and happiness that she so genuinely deserved. Just five years later, she lost Bill. Could the light have flickered at that point? Perhaps, but Susan’s community came to her support and eventually, Susan’s light regained its strength, and perhaps grew stronger than before due to the love she had found.

She dealt with the passing of her parents, kin, and close friends in similar fashion. She would withdraw, fondly remember the times that they shared, and then reengage with the world of the living. She would go out to learn new skills, challenge herself, meet new friends, and continue to shine her light. In the midst of loss, Susan would have likely counseled us that life is for the living, if she were here remembering someone else today.

The lighthouse doesn’t shine it’s light only when the weather is good, in fact, its light is much more precious when conditions are bad. As Susan has shown us, although it may be easier to shine one’s light when you are happy, or when life is easy, the true value of our light energy is to help us make it through times of great sadness, or of battle. And when at last the storm has passed, we can shine our light outward again to help another stranger or friend who may be struggling through a storm of their own.

Susan was a valued HLPS volunteer since 2009 and will be long remembered by all that knew her...
Support Florida lighthouses by purchasing a 'VISIT OUR LIGHTS' auto tag.

www.saveourlights.com

Nautical flea market chalk drawing by Carrie Bennett—Photo by Ken Herman