

HILLSBORO LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS

Last in the series

In our last issue, it was noted that The Lighthouse Service was taken over by the Coast Guard in 1939. Captain Stone did not want to retire as keeper, so he joined the Coast Guard. Ill health in 1942 forced him to retire. After that time the designated keepers were there short term, usually less than a year.

In 1997 when the Coast Guard began a renovation of the tower, including removal of mercury, Dennis Dever, the Officer in Charge, Coast Guard Aids to Navigation Team Miami, noticed the talents of Arthur Makenian. Art had been a member of Flotilla 6 of USCG Auxiliary and a member of the newly formed Hillsboro Lighthouse Preservation Society. He had contributed to the construction of the present Auxiliary Base in Boca Raton, the marine radio communications tower, and the removal of the old CG Base at Red Reef Park. In 1998 Dever appointed Art Contracting Officer's Technical Representative Observer for the rehab project. Art was to "visit the work site frequently, in uniform, to observe work progress and practices". Although he was not to personally change technical requirements or advise the contractor, Art was to relay noted discrepancies to Dever who noted, "Your experience and enthusiasm will play a valuable part in the successful outcome of this high profile renovation". After the first bearing failed in less than a month of use, Art and Dave Butler re-engineered the bearing support.

Art's background was very impressive — born in Alexandria, Egypt of Armenian parents, forced to leave Egypt during the 1956 Suez Canal War, and immigrating to America to join his mother. Art speaks fluently in five languages which helped him during his long career in the aerospace industry. Art served Pan American World Airways for eighteen years in many managerial positions within the Flight Operations,



Maintenance and Engineering Departments. Four of those years were spent at Pan America World Services that led him to establish residency on four continents. Ten additional years were devoted to General Electric Co., Aircraft Engine Group as Sales Executive and Customer Support Manager. His responsibilities extended to Eastern Europe and the Middle East. The last ten years of Art's professional career were devoted to building and initiating major aircraft maintenance service centers for international air carriers.

Within three months of receiving his volunteer job at Hillsboro Lighthouse, Art was appointed Light-house Keeper of this light by 7th District US Coast Guard. In this new confirmation letter he was told, "We are extremely fortunate to have you on our team. Your dedication and contributions to the renovation project truly defy description".

In April 2002, Art requested for termination as Hillsboro Inlet Lighthouse Keeper. He and his wife live within a few blocks of the lighthouse and he enjoys watching the beam of light sweep out to sea, remembering his part in changing darkness into light. He is now master of *China Clipper*, a 50' Chris Craft Constellation he beautifully restored. Art often takes her on Coast Guard assignments to help protect our SE Florida shoreline.

