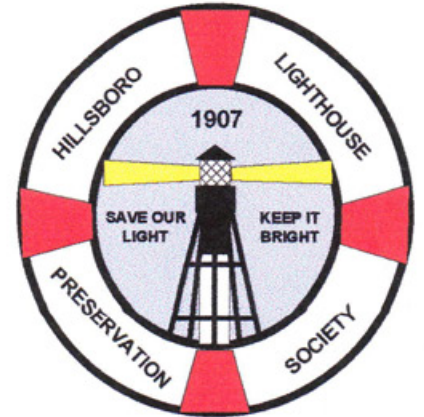


# BIG DIAMOND

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE  
**HILLSBORO  
LIGHTHOUSE  
PRESERVATION  
SOCIETY**



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Volume 1 Number 1

October 1997

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## NON - PROFIT GROUP FORMS TO SAVE HISTORIC BROWARD COUNTY LIGHTHOUSE

The Hillsboro Lighthouse Preservation Society (HLPS) has been formed in order to restore and preserve Broward County's only lighthouse. The 137 foot tall iron and steel structure, built in 1907 is in danger of having it's huge, original, nine - foot Fresnel lens (pronounced fre-nel) and 1000 watt bulb removed and replaced by a small modern rotating beacon.

The non-profit organization has adopted 4 main goals:

1. Keep the Fresnel lens in the tower.
2. Repair & reactivate the powerful light and Fresnel lens.
3. Provide periodic public access to the Lighthouse.

4. Establish a museum and visitor's center near the lighthouse and make it available to the public.

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## HLPS HOLDS FIRST PUBLIC MEETING

The newly formed organization will hold it's first public meeting on Wednesday October 22, at 7 PM at the famous Pelican Pub restaurant, located near A1A on the south side of the Hillsboro inlet and a short distance from the historic lighthouse. The address is 2635 N. Riverside Dr. in Pompano Beach. The phone number for the Pelican Pub is 954-785-8550.

A social hour will precede the meeting, starting at 6PM. A cash bar will be available.

At 7PM the meeting will offer a review of the historic background of the lighthouse and it's present condition. Results of meetings with the United States Coast Guard will be discussed, along with

recommended actions that concerned citizens need to take. A representative of the Florida Lighthouse Association (FLA) will be talk about their group and their efforts to preserve other historic Florida seashore sentinels.

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## HLPS MEETS WITH US COAST GUARD

On Tuesday October 7, HLPS met with representatives of the US Coast Guard (USCG) 7<sup>th</sup> District in Miami to discuss the Hillsboro Lighthouse. HLPS made it known that it was organizing to oppose the removal of the Fresnel lens and to advocate it's restoration to full operation. Also, HLPS expressed it's desire to raise money and arrange for improvements to the lighthouse.

HLPS offered, as a first project, , to provide new electrical service to the tower. The wiring is deteriorating and needs replacement. USCG will study the offer and let us know.

Lighthouses throughout the US have been turned over to local non-profit groups like HLPS for preservation and restoration, once the USCG has determined they are no longer essential for USCG use. Here in Florida for example, lighthouses in St. Augustine, Ponce Inlet, Jupiter, Key Biscayne and Key West are all in the hands of local preservation groups.

USCG representatives have not yet determined that the Hillsboro lighthouse is no longer needed for USCG activities. They did acknowledge that there was substantial public interest in opening the facility to visitation. HLPS agreed and expressed it's desire to assist in the implementation of these visitations.

HLPS will keep it's members, the public and the surrounding communities informed of these critical discussions with the Coast Guard as they develop.

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## LIGHTHOUSE COULD BE A BOON TO LOCAL ECONOMY - WATER TAXI COULD PROVIDE SERVICE

If you have ever traveled on Broward Counties inland waterways, you know what a delight it can be. HLPS has proposed using a water taxi type service to provide periodic visitation to the Hillsboro lighthouse. Pompano Beach has already announced plans to rebuild the fishing fleet marina at Hillsboro inlet. HLPS has suggested to city officials that provisions be made to permit a water taxi to dock at the new marina in order to provide transportation service for the short distance across the inlet. Additional stops could be made at nearby Deerfield Beach and Lighthouse Point. The Hillsboro lighthouse already has dock facilities and with some upgrading could accommodate public visitation.

What a wonderful day a family could have. Park the car, buy your tickets and climb aboard for a short ride across the famous Hillsboro inlet. Upon arrival, climb the 137 foot, 90 year old lighthouse to the top and behold a breathtaking view of some of the world's most beautiful beaches and ocean. Gaze up at the massive 9 foot tall, Paris-built Fresnel beacon. Visit the restored lightkeeper's cottages, filled with historical photos and memorabilia. Follow the story of the barefoot mailman and see the historical marker commemorating James Hamilton's unfortunate fate.

Head back across the inlet and perhaps you may want some lunch at many of the nearby restaurants or cafés. Shop at the dozens of boutiques that are but a few minutes away. Maybe your from out of town and decide that this area is a nice place to spend some time, so you book a room at one of our many fine hotels.

A dream you say? Yes, today it is a dream, but one that has come true for dozens of historic lighthouses all over the country. It can happen here too, if we all work together!

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## HLPS BOARD & OFFICERS

The initial HLPS board of directors and officers are as follows:

### Board of Directors

- David Butler
- Harry Cushing
- Julie Cushing
- Charles Seitz
- Miriam Hood
- Fred Bammen, III
- Carmen McGarry
- Dr. Ray McAllister
- Rodney E. Dillon
- Hib Casselberry

### Officers (pro-tem)

- Harry Cushing - President
- Dave Butler - Vice President
- Julie Cushing - Secretary/Treasurer

All of the above mentioned individuals are subject to ratification at the first board meeting, which will be scheduled shortly.

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## SAFE NAVIGATION AT HEART OF BEACON BATTLE

While much can be said of the importance of preserving the 90 year old Fresnel beacon at the Hillsboro Lighthouse, the most critical reason is SAFE NAVIGATION. Hillsboro Inlet is unique in the large number of small to medium size boats that use the inlet as a reference point. Many of these small craft go out of sight of land in their quest for good fishing. Even skippers of large commercial charter vessels had come to depend on the 1000 watt beacon arcing out to sea and guiding them home. New navigational aids such as Global Positioning Systems (GPS) or radar are nice if you have it. But many small to medium boats do not have these aids. For decades the strong beacon at Hillsboro inlet guided many a mariner home to safety.

It is crucial that the strong and reliable beacon be put back in operation guarding and guiding our sea lanes. One search and rescue mission that could be avoided due to reactivation would more than pay the cost of restoration.

**True Fact : "Big Diamond" is a term that the old timers used when referring to Hillsboro - Look closely at the lantern room windows to find out why!!!**

## BEACON REPAIR NOT COST PROHIBITIVE

At the heart of the Fresnel Beacon controversy is the contention by the USCG that the cost to repair the beacon is unreasonable and prohibitive. Nothing could be further from the truth. Dave Butler, President of the Pompano beach Historical Society and a naval architect has closely examined the Fresnel lens in detail.

The beacon stopped turning back in 1992 due to a broken worm gear. A simple problem to repair, but for reasons unknown bureaucracy has intruded. Since it was originally installed in 1907, the beacon rotated on bearing made of liquid mercury. It provided friction - less turning to the heavy glass, iron and bronze lens. Generations of lightkeepers worked daily in the tower, lovingly caring for the mighty and powerful beacon. Many a youngster in days of old, was allowed to climb the tower and gawk at the 9 foot giant that slept by day. They would swear to the keeper that not a single fingerprint would be left upon the great light, lest he or she not be permitted to return.

But alas, today we have learned via the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), that mercury is a nasty substance that will do great harm to us (Funny how all those keepers worked in there every day for decades and lived long and happy lives). So in accordance with these politically correct times we are in, the USCG drained the mercury out of the bearing, thus compounding the simple problem of the broken worm gear. And there it sits today frozen in it's tracks, perfectly able to resume it's mission with a few simple repairs, but grounded by red tape.

David Butler has proposed several different methods to get the bearing problem worked out. Some of these involve replacing the liquid mercury bearing with a custom made ball bearing assembly. (see drawing at right) All of these proposals could be done in the range of \$25,000.

But, for the sake of argument let's say the figure is higher. We believe these funds can be raised by the people, businesses and communities of Broward County. Let the people who live in Broward County rally to the cause of our historic lighthouse in order to keep it burning bright. Dade County raised over \$2,000,000 to virtually rebuild, from the ground up, the Cape Florida lighthouse on Key Biscayne. Compared to the task Dade had, our lighthouse is a bargain.

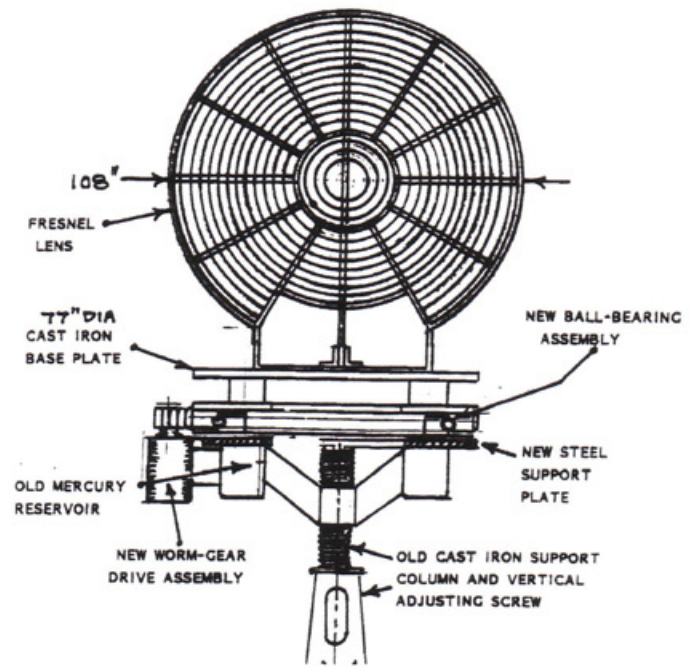


Diagram of David Butler's proposed repair to Fresnel lens at Hillsboro Lighthouse

## SAVE OUR LIGHT

## KEEP IT BRIGHT

# PROGRESS AND SAFETY TAKE A GIANT STEP BACKWARD AT HILLSBORO

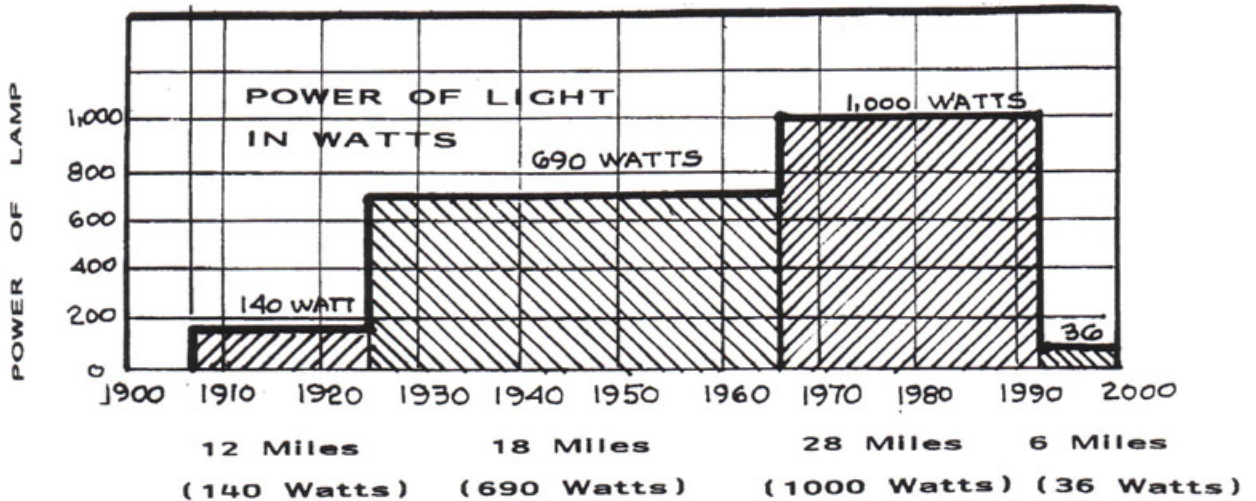
If you want to see the relative power that the Hillsboro Light is putting out these days, with it's wimpy little substitute beacon, please refer to the chart below. As you can see we are now at a power level that is **WEAKER than the original 140 watt KEROSENE vapor lamp used at the lighthouse in 1907!!!** The light was at it's most powerful from 1965 to 1992 when a **1000 watt** bulb provided a range of **28 miles!** This made the "Big Diamond" with it's second order Fresnel lens and great height, one of the most powerful sentinels of the east coast of the US.

But today, our great beacon is dark. Only a 190mm rotating beacon with a 36 watt bulb is bolted to the lighthouse railing, plugged in with an extension cord! We have the lowest power level ever. Yet we have more boat traffic moving through the inlet morning noon and night.



Example of potential water taxi shuttle route from new marina on Pompano Beach side of inlet

POWER OF HILLSBORO LIGHTHOUSE



Graphics by Dave Butler

## Let your governmental representatives know how you feel about Hillsboro Lighthouse

VERY  
IMPORTANT

**Admiral Norman T. Saunders**  
**Commander**  
**United States Coast Guard**  
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