



THE FLORIDA LIGHTHOUSE ASSOCIATION, INC.

A NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION

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A record of 144 Florida Lighthouse Association members attended the association's quarterly meeting at Coquina Crossings Clubhouse, Elkton, Florida Saturday (January 27). Following the afternoon meeting, and a buffet dinner, the members traveled to the St. Augustine Lighthouse for a night climb up the 219 steps and a grand view.

Stan Farnham, association president, presented a power point-aided talk about the marketing and financial plan for a Florida specialty license plate, a top strategic goal. He said: "Lighthouses, steeped in the maritime history of this country are too special to let fall down or be torn down. They can be forgotten and neglected, if not protected. Funds from the license plate sales will be used to help preserve, restore and protect our 30 Florida lighthouses. I'm optimistic about achieving the license plate goal in 2007 to provide sustained future funding."

Farnham, of Naples, said. "At some point you have to buckle up and go. Now is the time to complete what you voted the top goal. Seize the moment. Save our lights."

"The robust growth of the association to nearly 2,000 people, who share the organization's passion for preserving lighthouses for future generations to enjoy and appreciate, assures a positive outcome," he added.

The featured speaker, Dr. Sam Turner, director of archaeology for the St. Augustine lighthouse, talked and showed visual aids of his investigation into the wreck of the Jefferson Davis Civil War ship off St. Augustine waters. Turner, who obtained his PhD at King's College of the University of London, has worked on shipwrecks in the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America as well as in the United States. Using projected old maps he identified where he thought the remains might be for his quest to find this historical ship.

The meeting included a memorial to Gene Oakes, past president, by family members including his brothers Bowden and Avery and widow Beverly. Earlier a memorial tree was planted on St. Augustine Lighthouse grounds in honor of Oakes who died in January 2006.

Farnham presented the Thomas H. Taylor President's annual award to Beverly Oakes for Gene Oakes' distinguished service to the organization. The award is named for Tom Taylor, an organizer of the association and its president, 1997-2001. He died in 2004.

Janet Garcia of Hawaii won an award for traveling the farthest. Harry and Jean Pettit, of Lakeland and Mary Dorsey of Inverness received award for major financial contributions, which each exceeded \$2,000.

The general membership meeting followed a Board of Commissioners meeting Saturday morning and a strategic planning meeting Friday night in the St. Augustine Lighthouse gallery

room. The meeting focused on the 20 action items to obtain a specialty license plate. The Board approved a marketing and financial plan and a dozen other decisions.

The all-volunteer association, with members located throughout the state, meets quarterly at a lighthouse and publishes a quarterly newsletter. The Web site, www.floridalighthouses.org, provides detailed information about the association. Only six of the 30 Florida lighthouses are open to the public. One advantage of being a Florida Lighthouse Association member: quarterly meetings alternate among the lighthouses and most of the lighthouses not open to the public are open to members for the meetings.

Florida Lighthouse Association Officers: Stan Farnham, of Naples, president; Paul Wenglowky, of St. Augustine, executive vice president; Diana "Dede" Smith, of Orlando, vice president-membership; Charley and Lottie Knox of Lake City, vice presidents-fund raising; Stan Beckstrom, of Jupiter, vice president-information technology and webmaster; Gayle and Dennis Stemas, of San Antonio (FL), vice presidents-meetings and events; Christi Sessions, of Fort White, secretary; Sharon Puls, of Lutz, assistant secretary; and John Kennedy, of Fort Myers, treasurer. Neil Hurley, of Virginia, and former U.S. Coast Guard commander, is association historian, and will be the featured speaker at the next meeting at Amelia Lighthouse in April.

"The Florida Lighthouse Association is a non-profit group of citizen activists dedicated to the preservation of the 30 remaining historic lighthouses that line our state's 1200 mile coastline. Once central to the economic growth and settlement of our nation, many of Florida's lighthouses face uncertain futures.

Our mission is to preserve, restore, protect and defend Florida's lighthouse towers, along with their material culture, buildings, artifacts and records to assure that the magic of Florida's lighthouses and lighthouse keepers will be available for the enjoyment and understanding of future generations."