



PONCE DE LEON INLET LIGHTHOUSE ILLUMINATIONS

4931 South Peninsula Drive • Ponce Inlet, Florida 32127 • www.ponceinlet.org • www.lighthouselocker.org • (386) 761-1821 • lighthouse@ponceinlet.org
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IMAGE BY TOM DiTUSA

Dear Members,

I hope this issue of *Illuminations* finds you well as we celebrate the arrival of the New Year.

I am pleased to announce that the Preservation Association concluded its 2018-2019 fiscal year on September 30th, 2019. It was an incredibly eventful year and a great deal of work was accomplished not only in respect to the ongoing restoration and preservation of the historic light station itself but in relation to the Association's other areas of operation including museum development, artifact acquisition, and educational programming. While there is not enough room in this letter to provide a full synopsis of these accomplishments, the Association's recently published Annual Report provides a summary of the organization's activities during Fiscal Year 2018-2019 in great detail. You can view the report in its entirety online at www.ponceinlet.org.

It is my honor to welcome Greg Gantt, Cyndi Ritchey, and Mary Lou Fillingame to the Association's Advisory Committee. The Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association is governed by an all-volunteer Board of Trustees comprised of eleven Ponce Inlet residents who are committed to the ongoing preservation and dissemination of the maritime and social history of the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse. The Board is assisted in its endeavors by an all-volunteer Advisory Committee made

up of like-minded Town residents drawn from the general membership. Together, these two groups guide the ongoing operations of the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse and Museum.

As many readers may recall from the previous issue of *Illuminations*, the museum was in the process of acquiring the historic Pacetti Hotel located directly across from the lighthouse on South Peninsula Drive when the newsletter arrived in their mailboxes at the beginning of October. Commonly referred to as the Pacetti House, Pacetti Hotel, or Pacetti Boarding House, the history of this 135-year-old structure, the land it sits on, and the family that built and operated it, is inexorably linked to that of the lighthouse, its keepers, and the families who once called the light station home.

The Board of Trustees views the purchase of the Pacetti Hotel as a rare once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to save one of Volusia County's most endangered historic places and significantly enhance the museum's ability to interpret the Ponce de Leon Inlet Light Station in more meaningful detail. I am pleased to announce the official purchase of this important piece of Ponce Inlet history by the Preservation Association on October 4, 2019. You can learn more about the hotel and the organization's current efforts to restore and preserve the 3.5 acre site in the articles found in this issue of *Illuminations*.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the generosity of everyone who contributed to the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse this past fiscal year. Thanks to their generosity, the Association was better-equipped to address the ongoing needs of this important National Historic Landmark and world-class museum. Those wishing to donate to either the General Operating Fund, Lighthouse Endowment Fund, or Pacetti Hotel Fund may do so online at www.lighthouselocker.org or by phone at (386) 761-1821 ext. 10. Additional information regarding how you can support the Ponce de Leon Inlet Light Station and the Association's efforts to restore the newly acquired Pacetti Hotel can be found online at www.ponceinlet.org under the Support Us tab.

The Association's many successes over the years could not have been achieved without the continued support of its many members. I wish you all a wonderful new year. Thank you.

With Warm Regards,

Ed Gunnlaugsson

Ed Gunnlaugsson
Executive Director
Ponce Inlet Lighthouse

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THE PONCE DE LEON INLET LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION IS DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION AND DISSEMINATION OF THE MARITIME AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE PONCE DE LEON INLET LIGHT STATION.

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ILLUMINATIONS is published quarterly by the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association, Inc.

Subscription is a benefit of membership in the Association. *ILLUMINATIONS* welcomes letters and comments from our readers.

REGULAR HOURS OF OPERATION

SEPTEMBER 3, 2019 – MAY 24, 2020
OPEN DAILY FROM 10:00 AM UNTIL 6:00 PM
(LAST MUSEUM ADMISSION SOLD AT 5:00 PM)

MAY 25, 2020 – SEPTEMBER 7, 2020
OPEN DAILY FROM 10:00 AM UNTIL 9:00 PM
(LAST MUSEUM ADMISSION SOLD AT 8:00 PM)

SPECIAL HOURS OF OPERATION

MUSEUM AT NIGHT EVENT
JANUARY 3, 2020 (FRIDAY)
MUSEUM AND GIFT SHOP OPEN FROM 10:00 AM
UNTIL 8:00 PM (LAST ADMISSION SOLD AT 7:30 PM)

RACE WEEK 2020 EXTENDED HOURS
FEBRUARY 7-8 & 14-15, 2020 (FRIDAY & SATURDAY)
FEBRUARY 17-19, 2020 (MONDAY – WEDNESDAY)
MUSEUM AND GIFT SHOP OPEN FROM 10:00 AM
UNTIL 7:00 PM (LAST MUSEUM ADMISSION AT 6:00 PM)

BIKE WEEK 2020 EXTENDED HOURS
MARCH 12-14, 2020 (THURSDAY-
SATURDAY)

MUSEUM AND GIFT SHOP OPEN FROM
10:00 AM UNTIL 7:00 PM (LAST
MUSEUM ADMISSION AT 6:00 PM)

SCHEDULED TOWER CLOSURES

JANUARY 10, 2020 (MONDAY)
TOWER CLOSED FROM 4:30 PM TO 6:00 PM
MUSEUM AND GIFT SHOP OPEN UNTIL 6:00 PM
(LAST MUSEUM ADMISSION SOLD AT 5:00 PM)

FEBRUARY 9, 2020 (TUESDAY)
TOWER CLOSED FROM 5:00 PM TO 6:00 PM
MUSEUM AND GIFT SHOP OPEN UNTIL 6:00 PM
(LAST MUSEUM ADMISSION SOLD AT 5:00 PM)

UPCOMING MEETINGS

JANUARY 20, 2020 (MONDAY)
BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND QUARTERLY
MEMBERSHIP MEETING
(OPEN TO GENERAL MEMBERSHIP)

FEBRUARY 17, 2020 (MONDAY)
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
(CLOSED TO GENERAL PUBLIC AND MEMBERSHIP)

MARCH 16, 2020 (MONDAY)
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
(CLOSED TO GENERAL PUBLIC AND MEMBERSHIP)

CLIMB TO THE MOON SCHEDULE

CLIMB TO THE MOON

JANUARY 10, 2020
(FRIDAY)
5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

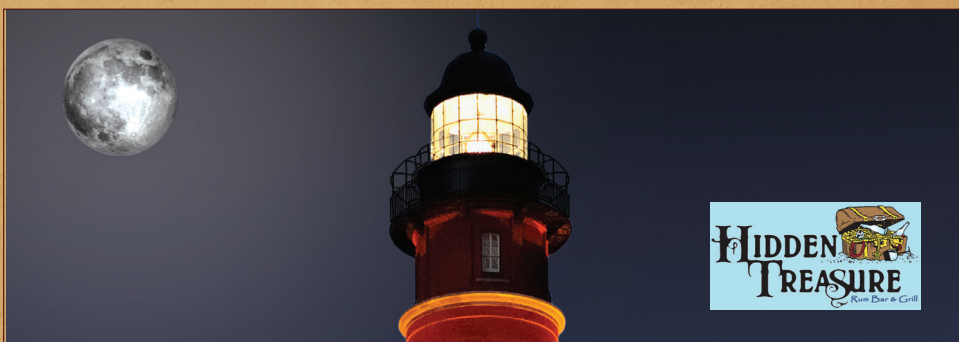
FEBRUARY 9, 2020
(SUNDAY)
5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

MARCH 9, 2020
(MONDAY)
6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Journey to the top of the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse and experience this National Historic Landmark in all its glory. Join the Old Lighthouse Keeper on a personal tour of lighthouse and lantern room, and enjoy breathtaking views of the Atlantic Ocean, Ponce Inlet, and scenic inland waterways.

Toast the setting sun with a sparkling beverage and enjoy delicious hors d'oeuvres by the light of the full moon with your significant other and friends. Offered only on the eve of each full moon, this special event is limited to 25 participants only. Tickets must be purchased in advance by calling Angel at (386) 761-1821 ext. 10. Prices are \$35 for non-members and \$30 for members.

Food for this event is generously donated by Hidden Treasure Rum Bar and Grille. Locally owned and operated, Hidden Treasure Restaurant offers a wide selection of delicious entrees, appetizers, and beverages and is located directly across from the lighthouse on the north bank of the Ponce Inlet waterway. You can visit them online at www.hiddentreasurerestaurants.com



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JANUARY 3, 2020, MUSEUM AT NIGHT EVENT
FRIDAY, 5:30 PM TO 8:00 PM

Enjoy a fun-filled evening of discovery at the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse with Museum of Arts and Science (MOAS) curator of astronomy Seth Mayo. Climb to the top of Florida's tallest lighthouse and view the wonders of the universe through MOAS's powerful Cassegrain reflector telescopes before heading back to earth to participate in Ponce Inlet's award-winning Science of Light and Lighthouse Illumination workshop. Teachers will be admitted free charge throughout the evening in appreciation for all they do with valid school I.D.

JANUARY 11, 2020, GIRL SCOUT DAY
SATURDAY, 10:30 AM – 2:30 PM

Calling all Girl Scouts! Drop that cell phone and learn how sailors navigated the world's oceans and navigable waterways in the days before modern electronics! This event is designed especially for Girl Scouts ages 8 and older and is limited to only 60 participants. Registration for this event is available online at www.lighthouselocker.org. Please contact programs manager Mary Wentzel by email at mwentzel@ponceinlet.org, or by phone at (386) 761-1821 ext. 18, for more information.

FEBRUARY 14, 2020, BEACH RACING DAY
FRIDAY, 10:00 AM TO 2:00 PM

Travel back in time and discover the wild and woolly roots of Stock Car Racing during the 16th Annual Beach Racing Day at the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse and Museum. See historic beach racing cars from the Living Legends of Racing and talk with drivers, owners, and mechanics who risked life and limb in pursuit of the checkered flag on the World's Most Famous Beach. Meet and listen to renowned authors Buz McKim and William Lazarous as they discuss the history of auto racing and their respective books, *The NASCAR Vault: An Official History* and *Florida Motorsports Retrospective Pictorial* and *Sands of Time: The Definitive History of Beach Racing*. Both authors will be onsite during the event to sign autographs and share their extensive knowledge with lighthouse guests.

MARCH 6-8 & 12-14, 2020, BIKE WEEK AT THE LIGHTHOUSE
THURSDAY-SATURDAY, 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Take a ride down South Atlantic Avenue to one of Bike Week's favorite destinations! Discover over 130 years of maritime history as you tour one of the largest and best preserved light stations in the country. Explore the museum, participate in special presentations, and climb 175 feet to the top of Florida's tallest lighthouse where spectacular views the World's Most Famous Beach, Ponce Inlet, and inland waterways await.

MARCH 28, 2020, FLORIDA HERITAGE DAY
SATURDAY, 10:30 AM – 2:30 PM

Discover the fascinating history of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Light Station and local region on Florida Heritage Day! Enjoy historic reenactments, educational programs, and other family-oriented activities from 10:30 am until 2:30 pm. Learn what it was like to live and work in and around the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse at the turn-of-the-20th century as you explore one of the largest and most complete historic light stations in the country.

ATTENTION READER: Unless otherwise noted, all scheduled events and activities at the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse are provided free of charge to participating guests with the price of regular admission. Additional information regarding scheduled events can be found online at www.ponceinlet.org under the Calendar of Events tab. Individuals wishing to learn more about these and other upcoming scheduled events may contact programs manager Mary Wentzel by phone at (386) 761-1821 ext. 18, or via email at mwentzel@ponceinlet.org.

PACETTI HOTEL ACQUIRED BY PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

As many of you may recall from the previous issue of *Illuminations*, the Preservation Association was actively engaged throughout the month of September navigating the legal and financial requirements to acquire the Pacetti Hotel located directly across from the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse on South Peninsula Drive. The Association's Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that the property was successfully purchased on October 4th, 2019, from Greenacres Foundation, a Cincinnati-based non-profit 501(c)(3) founded by the hotel's previous owners Louis & Louise Nippert.

The weeks following the official acquisition of the Pacetti Hotel were very busy as museum staff began the arduous process of restoring the 3.5 acre site. Maintenance-related work has included cleaning the hotel's interior, cutting back overgrown shrubs and trees, and clearing the historic grounds of debris that has accumulated over the years.

An initial order of work was also developed by the museum's administrative staff to address the property's most critical needs. The most pressing of these time-sensitive issues is the restoration of the eroded shoreline and stabilization of the historic seawall which sustained significant damage during the 2017 and 2018 hurricane seasons. Additional items to be addressed include the hotel's old HVAC system, damaged roofs, interior and exterior restoration, and more.

The museum's curatorial staff is actively engaged in several Pacetti Hotel projects as well. In addition to accessioning dozens of items for future use in the Historic Pacetti Hotel Museum, Assistant Curator/Registrar Felipe De Paula spent considerable time helping research the hotel and the family that built it. As a result of his efforts, the museum's staff possesses a far greater understanding of the history of the Pacetti Hotel than ever before. Although he continues to discover more with each passing day, much of what he has learned to date is addressed in the feature article beginning on page 8 of this issue of *Illuminations*. Last but not least, Curator Ellen Henry initiated the lengthy review process for placing the Pacetti Hotel on the National Register of

Historic Places.

The procedure for inclusion on the National Register begins with the submission of a preliminary site information questionnaire to the Florida Department of State's Bureau of Historic Preservation. The questionnaire includes a description of the site's physical characteristics; a summary of the property's historic, cultural, social, and architecture significance; and historic and modern photographs of the hotel and grounds. Once the Bureau of Historic Preservation receives this information, a site visit may be made to determine the suitability of nomination. Additional information may be requested before the State's Review Board makes its final determination regarding whether or not the site is eligible. If it is, the State will assist museum staff in preparing the necessary nomination paperwork for inclusion on the National Registry.

Although much has been done in very little time, a great deal of work needs to be completed before the Association can focus its efforts on the restoration of the hotel and other secondary structures. The most pressing of these tasks includes the stabilization of the historic seawall and restoration of the eroded shoreline.

Individuals who are interested in learning more about the Pacetti Hotel and ways to assist the Preservation Association with the acquisition, stabilization and restoration of this important historic site either financially or with in-kind-services are encouraged to contact Executive Director Ed Gunn by phone at (386) 761-1821 ext. 15 or email at edgunn@ponceinlet.org for more information.

Help support the historic Pacetti Hotel Museum by making a donation today! Acceptable forms of payment include cash, check, or credit card. Checks should be mailed directly to the lighthouse at 4931 South Peninsula Drive, Ponce Inlet FL, 32127. Cash and credit/debit card donations are accepted inside the

museum gift shop and online at www.lighthouselocker.org. Thank you!



The hotel's grounds in need of attention



Scattered brush and debris on the west lawn



The damaged sea wall resulted in shoreline erosion



The property includes several outbuildings in need of repair

The Historic Pacetti Hotel



The Pacetti Hotel now.

In 1883, a United States government survey party led by General Orville Babcock entered Mosquito Inlet to search for a site where a new lighthouse could be constructed. The site that was selected was situated on the property of Bartola Pacetti, a man whose family had lived on and cultivated that land for over a hundred years. General Babcock selected ten acres of Mr. Pacetti's land upon which the Mosquito Inlet Lighthouse, now known as the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse, would be built. This sale of land, ten acres for \$400, spawned an important connection that would eventually lead to the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association purchasing the historic Pacetti Hotel for \$1.7 million on October 4, 2019. The acquisition of this historic site presents a great opportunity for the Association, for it will help us preserve and share the history of the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse—a history in which the Pacetti Hotel is undoubtedly involved.

The land upon which the Pacetti Hotel now stands can be traced back to the New Smyrna colony developed by Dr. Andrew Turnbull in 1768. Antonio Pons II, whose parents had been recruited by Turnbull to settle the area, started working the land just north of Mosquito Inlet after the New Smyrna colony failed. Pons' ownership of the land became official in 1803 when a Spanish royal decree rewarded his loyalty to Spain with a 175-acre land grant on the inlet's north shore.

Antonio Pons II was killed in 1812 defending the then-Spanish city of St. Augustine from American invaders. In 1815, his widow Benita Usina sought a confirmation of the grant and title for herself and her children from Florida's Royal Governor. Following this confirmation, Benita Usina requested additional lands in 1823 to support herself and her children. Her title to the grant was again confirmed, and by 1828

a new survey of her land described it as 320 acres. An Italian wig maker named Andreas Pacetti had also come to Florida as part of the doomed Turnbull colony. There he married his first wife, Gertrude Pons. In 1842, Bartola Clemente Pacetti, a descendent of both families, moved onto the Pons land grant at Mosquito Inlet and began tending an orange grove there. He made his living by many means, including scavenging shipwrecks, piloting boats through the inlet, and offering his services as a fishing guide. In 1860, Bartola married Martha Jane Wickwire at the nearby Dun-Lawton Plantation. Once the Civil War began that following year, the Pacettis were forced to flee their lands near Mosquito Inlet because of the inlet's use by Confederate blockade runners.

After the Civil War, Bartola constructed a small Cracker-style cottage on the Halifax River close to Mosquito Inlet. The Pacettis began taking in boarders and guiding them on a fishing and sight-seeing expeditions. By 1881, Bartola and Martha had constructed a larger boarding house located east of their little cottage. This new boarding house drew even more visitors to the area and the lively business guiding tourists and fishermen would eventually result in the inlet's charter fishing industry which is

still important today.

In 1883, General Babcock selected a portion of this Pacetti land to be used for the construction of the Mosquito Inlet Lighthouse, now the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse. It is very possible that Babcock boarded with the Pacettis during his visits to Mosquito Inlet, seeing as there was literally no other convenient place to stay. General Babcock could see the potential of the area and the strong business that the Pacetti Boarding House had been generating. He purchased 100 acres on the north side of the inlet for his own personal use and planned to develop a resort after the lighthouse project was completed. Sadly, Babcock never lived to accomplish his plan. He was drowned in Mosquito Inlet just as the lighthouse construction was getting underway. What remained was his name for his planned development—Ponce's Park. As a village began to grow up around the lighthouse and the Pacetti place, Babcock's name, with one small alteration, was adopted and Ponce Park was born.

Bartola and Martha Pacetti took the \$400 from the sale of land to the government and in 1886 completed a two-story addition containing possibly as many as seven more rooms to the rear of their boarding house. The addition's first floor consisted of a long



The Pacetti Hotel then.

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THE HISTORIC PACETTI HOTEL (continued)

hallway lined with windows on the west side and a covered porch that ran the length of the addition on the east side. A kitchen was attached to the back of the west side. The hotel rooms on the second floor were all on the east side of the buildings off the long hallway that went from the front of the hotel to the back. In joining the two buildings there was a gap between the two rooflines which can be seen in images of the hotel from this time. This was the first real hotel at Ponce Park, which would eventually become Ponce Inlet. Mosquito Inlet's reputation as a fishing spot spread around the country and the Pacetti men, including Bartola and his sons Gomez and Bert, were the most famous fishing guides in the area. Even Martha Pacetti, who was universally praised for her cooking, also participated by guiding tourists on river sightseeing trips in a small naphtha-powered launch.

One of the earliest guests at the Pacetti's boarding house was the artist William Aiken Walker, who visited the Hotel regularly between 1881 and 1919. Walker was born in Charleston, South Carolina, and used his artistic

talents to portray the South's devastation following the Civil War. Walker chose the life of an itinerant artist, traveling throughout the South to wherever the art market was strong. He enjoyed wintering in Florida, often starting out at the Magnolia Hotel in St. Augustine and moving to Mosquito Inlet later in the season. He reportedly urged Martha and Bartola Pacetti to expand their boarding house into a hotel catering to wealthy sportsmen who enjoyed fishing, and during his winters there he often served as the desk clerk to help defray the cost of his room. He was also generous with his art, making gifts to the Pacetti family of drawings and paintings.

One of Walker's closest friends among the winter guests at the Pacetti Hotel was Dr. C. Lewis Diehl, a pharmacist and the first president of the Louisville

College of Pharmacy. He and Walker shared a passion for fishing, sight-seeing, and playing the card game Whist—all of which were common at the Pacetti Hotel. Another important visitor was William Henry Gregg, a wealthy St. Louis industrialist. Gregg had retired in 1889 from the presidency of the Southern White Lead Company and was devoting himself to travel, socializing, and fishing. He spent weeks in Florida each year, tying up his yacht *Orian* at the Pacetti hotel dock. From his travels, Gregg wrote the classic book *Where, When, and How to Catch Fish on the East Coast of Florida* (1902). The book was heavily illustrated in Walker's style, and although no artist was credited, it was generally accepted that Walker had contributed. At the time, Walker was well known for

his detailed paintings of fish caught by guests at the Pacetti Hotel, an important source of income for the artist.



Bartola Pacetti fishing near the Mosquito Inlet Lighthouse

Bartola Clemente Pacetti died in 1898, and his son Gomecinda ("Gomez") took over management of the hotel. In 1917, Martha also passed away. The popularity of Ponce Park and the Pacetti Hotel continued to flourish into the 1920s

as the Florida real estate boom was in full swing. The Pacetti Hotel was sold in 1920 to Mrs. Fred Phares, of Lexington, Kentucky. The Phares' used the hotel as a clubhouse where they held various balls and dancing parties until the untimely death of Mrs. Phares the very next year. The hotel was again sold, this time to Edmund Widdowson, a wealthy land speculator and businessman from Clymer, Pennsylvania. Widdowson had a sister living in Ponce Park and he himself planned to retire and live in Florida during the winters. The building's use as a hotel was coming to an end. After Widdowson's death in 1929, his heirs sold the property to Olivia Gamble, daughter of James N. Gamble of Procter and Gamble fame. She purchased the property to honor the memory of her father who loved the area and was reported to have stayed and fished at the hotel many years prior.



The Pacetti Hotel once had a large rear porch.

Olivia Gamble undertook a major restoration of the property in 1937, and it was then that the two rooflines of the building were joined, giving the hotel the appearance of a single structure. A concrete seawall and a new dock were constructed, and Gamble also arranged for a street entrance gate to be installed at the property's driveway.

Olivia Gamble did not live in the Pacetti Hotel. Instead, when in Florida she resided at another house in Daytona owned by the Gamble estate. She used the hotel to host her friends and social events. After her death in 1961, the property was willed to her nephew, Carl Louis Nippert and his wife Mary Louise of Cincinnati, Ohio. Louis and Louise Nippert were socially prominent philanthropists in Cincinnati. They created a suite for themselves on the Pacetti Hotel's second floor where they stayed during their Florida visits. Louise Nippert referred to the

place as the "Pacetti fishing hotel" and hosted many guests and social events there. The Nipperts were also the owners of the Cincinnati Reds baseball team during the Reds' most successful years that saw them win the 1975 and 1976 World Series. When the Reds were in Florida for spring training at that time, the Nipperts hosted the team and held parties in their honor.

In 1970, the Nipperts hired Virginia Ann Caneer as a resident caretaker for their Pacetti Hotel. Living right next-door to the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse, Ann Caneer became heavily involved with its restoration. Ann and a group of citizens in the town of Ponce Inlet worked together to save the nearby historic light station. Her commitment to saving the light station was but a continuation of the close relationship between the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse and the Pacetti Hotel. Back in the late nineteenth century, Bartola Pacetti's son Henry died in an unfortunate boating accident while helping to bring supplies for the lighthouse's construction. His other son Bert Pacetti later went on to marry Bertha Rowinski, the daughter of the first lighthouse keeper at Mosquito Inlet. Overall, the Pacettis and the lighthouse keepers maintained mostly friendly relationships throughout the years.



The Nipperts in front of the Pacetti Hotel

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THE HISTORIC PACETTI HOTEL (continued)



The Pacetti Hotel and the Mosquito Inlet Lighthouse

By 1972, Ann Caneer was the leader of a group of volunteers who not only saved the light station but also developed the site into a National Historic Landmark and a world-class museum. Ann became the museum's first executive director. She lived at the Pacetti Hotel for forty years, and during that time she herself hosted guests and events at the hotel as a result of her interest in automobile racing. Her favorite driver, Jimmy Means, and his team stayed at the hotel whenever races brought them to the area.

Ann Caneer retired from the Preservation Association in 2008 and soon moved to Alabama to be near her family. The Pacetti Hotel no longer had a resident caretaker. Ann passed away in 2011, as did Louise Nippert. The Pacetti Hotel property was deeded to the Greenacres Foundation, an Ohio non-profit founded by the philanthropy of Louis and Louise Nippert. The building remained unused since Ann's departure. On October 4, 2019, the property was officially purchased by the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association. That date marked the beginning of a new

chapter in the history of this magnificent structure. The Pacetti Hotel that began its life as an isolated fishing resort for visitors from all over the country will be restored by our Preservation Association to showcase the hotel's history and its importance to the lighthouse as well as the town of Ponce Inlet.

Few buildings in Volusia County have a history that can match that of the Pacetti Hotel. Now that our association has endeavored to restore the building to its former glory, we are seeking support from anyone interested in preserving our local history. Those who would like to be a part of this important restoration can do so in a variety of ways. Financial donations are always appreciated, as are donations of services and any period appropriate artifacts. If you have any object or document that may have originated from or relates to the Pacetti Hotel in any way, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We are also always on the search for photographs of the hotel, stories from those who may have visited, and any general information that might help us better interpret this historic structure.

LIGHTHOUSE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ON THE NATIONAL STAGE

Ponce Inlet Lighthouse and Museum programs manager Mary Wentzel, lead docent John F. Mann, and volunteer docent Jackie Mann were privileged to lead a breakout session highlighting the museum's educational endeavors during the 19th National Docent Symposium (NDS) held in Washington, D.C. from October 23rd through the 27th, 2019.

The NDS is a biennial conference that promotes continuous improvement in docent practice by facilitating communication and collaborative interaction among volunteer docents, tour guides, and professional staff from US, Canadian, and European museums of art, science, and history. Scheduled every other year since 1981, the Symposium provides participants the rare opportunity to share their experiences, explore best practices, and exchange ideas in an effort to improve their existing programs. Each event is dedicated to a specific theme or topic and is typically sponsored by a museum located within the host city with additional support from other cultural sites in the immediate area.

The focus of this year's symposium was *Capitalizing on Experience*. Event highlights included an opening reception at the historic Mayflower Hotel hosted by keynote speaker Augustus Casely-Hayford of the National Museum of African Art, 48 informational workshops, 18 guided tours of cultural centers within the Washington D.C. area, two catered lunches featuring guest speakers Kaylin Feldman of the National Gallery of Art and Karleen Gardner of the Minneapolis Institute of Art, and a closing reception at the Freer/Sackler Museum hosted by its director Chase Robinson.

Inspire by the spirit of cooperation and fellowship that they encountered during the 2017 Docents Symposium

in Montreal, the trio of lighthouse educators submitted an application requesting authorization to present a workshop during the October event. The lighthouse's

proposal was one of more than 200 tendered to the National Docents Symposium Board for review. Applications were received from museums large and small, with many originating from some of the nations' premier institutions including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Guggenheim, the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Getty Museum, and

practically all branches of the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. We are proud to announce that Ponce Inlet's presentation was one of only 48 workshops chosen for the conference.



Ponce Inlet Lighthouse Programs Manager Mary Wentzel poses in front of the museum's booth at the 2019 National Docents Symposium

Mary, John, and Jackie presented their program on the morning of October 25th. The breakout session, titled *Partnering with Your Schools: A Scholastic and Museum Alliance, STE(A)M and More*, focused on the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse and Museum's award-winning *STEAMING through Lighthouse Illumination* educational program. The workshop sold out within the first few hours of open registration and was attended by 48 docents and museum professionals from across the US and Canada.

The three presenters kicked-off the workshop with an overview of the Ponce de Leon Inlet Light Station and the Preservation Association's 47-year mission to preserve and

disseminate the maritime and social history of the National Historic Landmark before launching into the main focus of the presentation - educational outreach program development and the importance of building collaborative relationships with local public and private schools.

Using existing lighthouse programs as examples, Mary, John, and Jackie led an entertaining and informative discussion about the importance of developing engaging educational programs for students of all ages and fostering effective collaborative relationships with public and private school teachers and district administrators. The portion of the presentation devoted to the *Science of Light and Lighthouse Illumination* proved of significant interest to those in attendance.

The three presenters emphasized time and again that the quality of an organization's educational program did not rely on the size of the museum or the amount of funding available. What often distinguishes an exceptional educational program from a mediocre one is the parent organization's ability to achieve the following goals:

- a) **Be Proactive:** An organization's success is often tied to its willingness to push existing boundaries. Think "outside of the box," and adapt to the ever changing needs of the local school system.
- b) **Stay Focused:** An organization cannot address everything. Stick to what you know and do it well. Develop a clear educational vision that is focused on the museum's established mission and then work towards making that vision a reality.
- c) **Build Relationships:** Developing excellent educational programs is only half the battle. The success of your educational endeavors relies on the support and advocacy of teachers and school administrators. Build collaborative relationships with local educators by visiting schools and attending district level meetings and seminars.
- d) **Be Creative:** Think effective, engaging, and relevant. Children learn in many different ways. Design your programs so they address multiple learning modalities, encourage student interaction, and are relevant to the established curriculum by aligning them to the state or national standards.
- e) **Invest in Your Docents:** Museums with limited resources rely heavily on well-trained volunteers. The time spent recruiting, training, and retaining volunteer docents is well-worth the effort. Remember, a strong volunteer corps is the foundation upon which most successful educational programs are built. Invest in them and thank them often for all they do.

While the breakout sessions were not competitively ranked or rated, the popularity of Ms. Wentzel and Mr. and Mrs. Mann's presentation was clearly evidenced by the sheer volume of follow-up emails and phone calls that the lighthouse received in the weeks following the symposium's conclusion. As a result of the workshop, a prospective collaboration is currently being explored between Ponce Inlet Lighthouse and the Smithsonian American Museum of Art and Renwick Gallery.

When asked to summarize the lighthouse group's overall conference experience Ms. Wentzel replied. "Our main objective during the 2019 National Docents Symposium was to network with other museum docents, discover new ideas and techniques that we could utilize at the lighthouse, and learn from the experiences of others in our field. However, the amount of positive feedback that we received about our presentation was truly wonderful. I was amazed by the level of appreciation everyone felt for the lighthouse's educational efforts. At the conclusion of the third day, many docents informally remarked that our presentation was the best that they attended. The praise that the lighthouse received for its ongoing commitment to education was both humbling and exciting to hear. The experience filled all three of us with a deep sense of pride and gratitude."



The historic Mayflower Hotel in Washington D.C. where the 2019 National Docents Symposium was held.

JOIN THE PONCE DE LEON INLET LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

A GENERAL ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES:

- Free admission to the museum and lighthouse during regular hours of operation
- 10 percent discount in the museum gift shop and online store
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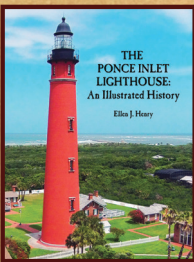
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The *Ponce Inlet Lighthouse: An Illustrated History* is the culmination of more than 40 years of research by the Ponce De Leon Inlet Lighthouse Preservation Association. Written by museum curator Ellen Henry, this fully illustrated hardback volume is the definitive history of the historic Ponce De Leon Inlet Light Station. Signed first edition copies of this recently published book are now available for purchase online and in the lighthouse gift shop.

Price: \$49.95 (+S&H)

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