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October 25, 2012

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Dear Roma,

Hello Friends!

While scheduled boat service to the islands has ended for the season, we're very happy to tell you in this issue about new opportunities to get to and tour Boston Harbor.

We also have information about upcoming events and news. Buckle down, batten those hatches and prepare for Hurricane Sandy, and Enjoy this issue of Tidings!

- **Veterans Day Cruise to Georges Island & Tribute to Charlie Boyer FBHI Volunteer & Veteran**
- **New Years Day Seafarer's Cruise to Spectacle Light**
- **Ghosts of Massachusetts Lights (a Halloween treat)**
- **Boston's Best Cruises Winter Cruises on the Harbor**
- **eBay Auction going on and on-going**
- **NPS 'Critical Conversations: The State of History in the NPS'**
- **Mid-days at the Meeting House - Old South Meetinghouse**

Thank you for reading, and thank you most of all for your support. The Friends are primarily supported by your membership. Our office Coordinator sends Membership Renewal Letters approximately 4 weeks before your membership expires. You can respond by mail/check, or you can renew easily on our **[web page](#)** - it's instant!

If you were on the harbor and/or visited one or more of the islands this summer and would like to write an account of your experience, please send it to me for an issue of Tidings. We may print your story for all to see!
ChairmanFBHI@gmail.com

Thank you!



Walter Hope, Co-Chair & President
PO Box 121020, Boston MA 02112 for personal notes, and stories...



Veterans Day Cruise to Georges Island

Sunday, Nov 11

**Departs Quincy 10:15am
Departs Boston 11:00am
Returns Boston 2:00pm
Returns Quincy 2:30pm**

- **Veterans cruise free!**
- **Adults and children \$5**

This cruise highlights the military history of Boston Harbor, and includes a stop at Georges Island, a tour of Fort Warren, a view of Dorchester Heights as well as a visit to the USS Constitution. Tribute to Charlie Boyer, FBHI Volunteer & Veteran!

**Buy tickets now for the Veteran's Day Cruise!
Veterans, please call 617.770.0040 to reserve your complimentary ticket**

**For information, contact Boston's Best
Cruises <http://www.bostonsbestcruises.com/specialty-cruises-2>**

New Years Day 'Seafarers' Cruise to Spectacle Island,

Tuesday January 1st, 2013

**Boat will depart Rowes
Wharf at noon, traveling
to Spectacle Island,
returning to Rowes Wharf at 4pm.**



Spectacle Island was once home of two range lights (similar to light houses), a hotel with rumored gambling - long before it was legal in Massachusetts!

Later in life Spectacle was the receptacle for Boston's garbage and the city operated a dump, and horse rendering facility making glue from horses & fish. Spectacle is now home to the highest point in Boston Harbor, offering beautiful 360 degree views of the harbor & city, a beautiful visitors center with interpretive displays and more!

We will travel to Spectacle onboard the Massachusetts Bay Lines boat M/V Freedom.

Events are in the planning stages for the day, but look for a snowman building contest (for the kids), winter photo safari, guided and self led tours of the island. Start the new year and explore!

This trip is an official FIRST NIGHT EVENT. [Purchase tickets NOW! at www.fbhi.org](http://www.fbhi.org)



Ghosts of the Massachusetts Lights



by Lee Holloway

used with permission http://www.prairieghosts.com/ma_lights.html

America's oldest lighthouse stands in Boston Harbor. The first tower, built in 1716, was destroyed during the Revolutionary War. The first 75 feet of the present lighthouse was constructed in 1783, and another 14 feet were added in 1859. In addition to its 18,000,000 candlepower lens, the light station also has an enormous bell to warn ships off the hazardous shores on foggy days. But despite the velocity of the bell, it cannot penetrate what mariners call the "**Ghost Walk**," an area of sea several miles east of Boston Light. No one has ever been able to explain the Ghost Walk, not even a team of MIT students who spent an entire summer on Little Brewster Island studying the mystery.

But there are other mysteries associated with Boston Light. John Ford, a local lighthouse aficionado, makes frequent trips to Boston Light and has stayed overnight in the keeper's house on several occasions. "I can't say who or what it is, but there is a ghost or something out there," Ford asserts. "But," he adds, "it's not a scary kind of ghost."

The **spirit stalking Little Brewster may be George Worthylake**, the first keeper of Boston Light. A few months after accepting the job, Worthylake drowned when his boat capsized. **Robert Saunders** became the second keeper, but he had only been at the light station a few days when he, too, drowned. After the second disaster, some people surmised the island might be cursed. "It could be any one of the old keepers," Ford says. "The men-and women-who kept the lighthouses were very dedicated and very possessive of their lights. There are all kinds of stories about haunted lighthouses. I think its just some of the old keepers--still on the job."

The Quonahassitis Indians believed **Hobomock**, a demon-like spirit, inhabited the forbidding ledge of granite which lies about a mile off Cohasset, Mass. These jagged monstrosities that bare their teeth at low tide have gnashed holes in the hulls of numerous ships, sending many men to a watery grave. As the toll of lost ships and men increased, it became evident a lighthouse was needed at Minots Ledge. It took three years to construct the original "screwpile" light which stood high above the water on metal "legs." Henry David Thoreau likened it to ". . . the ovum of a sea monster floating on the waves."

From the day it began operation January 1, 1850, keepers complained the structure was unsafe, but their warnings were ignored. The light had only been in service a little more than a year when on the morning of April 11, 1851, the keeper went ashore, leaving his two assistants, Joseph Wilson and Joseph Antoine, in charge. A severe northeast gale moved in and the keeper was unable to return to his post. By the night of April 16, people on the mainland were awakened by the incessant ringing of the fog bell at Minots Ledge.

The following morning, the lighthouse was gone. Hobomock's lair had claimed another victim. The bodies of the two assistants washed ashore, one on Gull Rock Island in Cohasset Harbor, and the other in Nantucket. There was some disagreement concerning the ringing of the fog bell as the lighthouse was destroyed. The more logical dismissed it as the result of powerful waves striking the bell. The romantics claimed it was Wilson and Antoine, bidding their family and friends a final goodbye.

Construction of the present 97-foot, grey granite tower began in 1855 and the new Minots Ledge Light became operational in November, 1860. The first keeper of the new Minots Ledge Light lasted only a year and it wasn't long

before the Lighthouse Service had difficulty filling the post. The assignment was undesirable for several reasons: Monstrous waves crashed over the very top of the lighthouse; doors were frozen shut during winter storms; and the isolation affected the most stalwart of men. One assistant keeper was driven mad by living in rooms without corners; and another threatened to kill the head keeper. And to make bad matters worse, there were ghosts lurking about.

More than one keeper reported the presence of **two phantom figures in the lantern room**, and unexplained knocks and the ringing of a phantom bell were often heard in the middle of the night. Many lighthouse personnel swore that on calm, sunny days, if one looked at the reflection of the tower in the water, the images of the two drowned keepers would appear in the doorway. Minots Light was automated in 1977, but this did not end the paranormal activity associated with the lighthouse. Boaters hurrying to shore as the skies darkened and the seas became increasingly rough, sometimes reported seeing what appeared to be a **man clinging to a ladder** on the side of the weather-beaten old lighthouse. He was screaming, they said, but his words were indecipherable. That is, until a Portuguese fisherman witnessed the phenomenon and declared the man was calling for help in his native tongue. Joseph Antoine, you see, was a native of Portugal.

*Keep visiting the harbor this winter
with Boston's Best Cruises!*



M/V Voyager III

Boston's Best Cruises is offering many cruises in the late Fall and Winter Months including:

Saturday, Oct 27 - The Masquerade Cruise

Departs Boston 9:00pm, Returns Boston 12:00am Adults \$25

21 and up only!

Saturday, Nov 3 & 10 Autumn Lights Cruise - North or South Shore

Saturdays, Nov 3 (North Shore) & 10 (South Shore)

Departs Quincy 10:15am, Departs Boston 11:00am

Returns Boston 3:00pm, Returns Quincy 3:30pm

- **Adults 13 - 64 years \$45**
- **Children (4-12) and Seniors (65+) \$35**

- **Children under 3 free**

This 4-hour trip will visit more than 10 lighthouses between downtown Boston and Cape Ann, and 8 lighthouses between Boston and Plymouth. Lighthouses have been an integral part of navigating and piloting ships along the New England Coast since colonial times. Join us on this fascinating tour and immerse yourself in the history of lighthouses.

Stars of the City Cruise - Saturdays, Nov 24 - Dec 22

Departs Boston 4:00pm, Returns Boston 5:30pm

- **Adults 13 - 64 years \$20**
- **Children (4-12) and Seniors (65+) \$15**
- **Children under 3 free**

The beauty of downtown Boston when viewed from the water during the winter is widely underestimated. This cruise will take you into all of the nooks and crannies of the wharfs, piers and parks that line the waterfront. Enjoy some holiday cheer with our special hot and cold drink offerings and some snacks available at the galley. Light narration (to identify points of interest) and holiday background music complete this great trip. The highlight of the trip is the vibrant blue illuminated trellis in Christopher Columbus Park which will greet us as we return to Long Wharf North.

**For information and tickets about both cruises, go to:
<http://www.bostonsbestcruises.com/specialty-cruises-2>**

Boston's Best Cruises (617) 770-0040

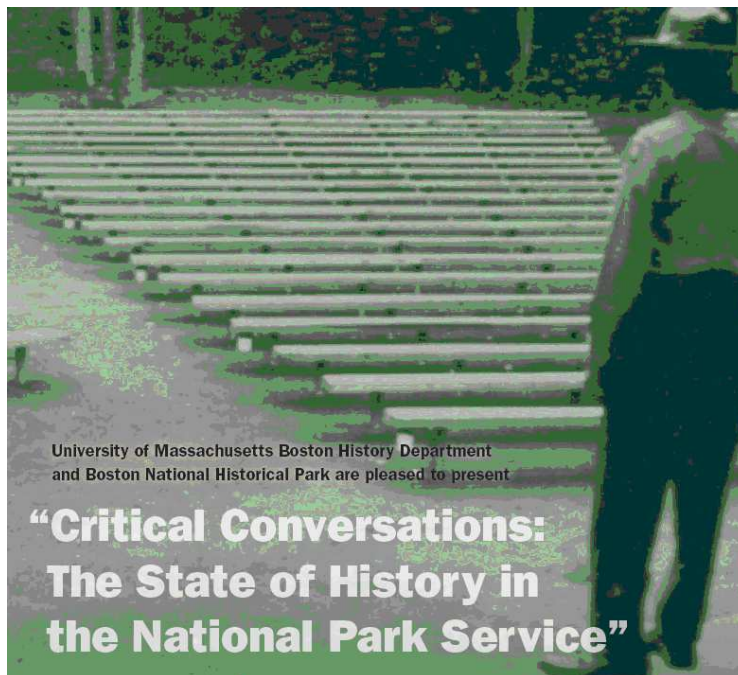
Fall 2012 FBHI eBay Auction is going on - and ongoing!



Auction items can only be found online at our eBay page: http://donations.ebay.com/charity/charity.jsp?NP_ID=52728

- Items will be added as they are received.
- Do you have an item or items that are new or 'nearly new', small enough to be shipped easily?
- Can you ask a business for an item we could add to the auction? (Gift cards are not 'good candidates').
- Check our page often! (links from our home page)

www.fbhi.org as well.



"Critical Conversations: The State of History in the National Park Service"

Friday, November 2, 2012
1:00-6:00 p.m.

Historians, curators, and NPS interpreters discuss the recent Organization of American Historians report, *Imperiled Promise: The State of History in the National Park Service*.

Roundtable discussions will focus on the History/Interpretation Divide; Partnerships for History; Fixed and Fearful Interpretation; and Civic Engagement. What will it take for the NPS to "recommit to history," and where we might go from here? Discussion with the audience will follow.

To read the report go to: www.oah.org/programs/nps/Imperiled_Promise.pdf

- For schedule and participants: www.umb.edu/history_NPS
- RSVP: Nov2rsvp@gmail.com
- Questions: jane.becker@umb.edu
- Free and open to the public.
- Free parking for this event is available courtesy of the JFK Library and Museum. Please park at the far end of their lot, closest to the Massachusetts State Archives building.

Massachusetts Archives * 3rd floor, Room 315 * 220 Morrissey Blvd. * Boston

MID-DAYS AT THE MEETING HOUSE PERSPECTIVES ON THE WAR OF 1812: Celebrating the Bicentennial of America's "Second Revolution"

Co-sponsored by the USS Constitution Museum
Explore the War of 1812 through a variety of unique and thought-provoking

perspectives!



- Thursday, November 1, 12:15 pm **Why should We Care about the War of 1812?**
- Thursday, November 8, 12:15 pm **A Star Spangled Summer**
- Thursday, November 15, 12:15 pm **"In the Zenith of My Glory": The Human Experience of Naval Battle and its Aftermath During the War of 1812**
- Thursday, November 29, 12:15 pm **"A Firm and Universal Peace": Legacies of the War of 1812**

OLD SOUTH MEETING HOUSE 310 Washington Street, Boston
617-482-6439 www.osmh.org

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