

Publicity . . . The Point Pinos Lighthouse was featured in an April article in Lighthouse Digest, an international magazine published in Wells, Maine.

The article by William Foster, with photos by B. Noelle Pearsall and Arlene G. Miles, details the history of the Point Pinos Lighthouse, which opened in 1855 and is the oldest continuously operating lighthouse on the West Coast.

The Alcatraz Island light in San Francisco Bay, no longer in use, was one year older than the Point Pinos light, which may have been shelled during World War II by an enemy submarine.

Visitors to the Point Pinos light are treated to "a beautiful, well-kept reminder of our nation's maritime history," according to the article, which also cited the lighthouse's location on the rocky coastline surrounded by the Pacific Grove

Municipal Golf Course amid "enormous juniper trees and scores of wild deer" that "add to the beauty and serenity" of the place.

The building is original, as are the lens, prisms and mechanisms, which were made in France in 1853.

The current light is from a 1,000-watt bulb, which when amplified by the lens, produces a beam of 50,000 candlepower visible for 15 miles out to sea.

Before electricity was installed in 1915, there were four earlier sources of power for the light: sperm oil, lard oil, kerosene and an incandescant vapor lamp.

There used to be a fog horn and radio beacon at the lighthouse, but they were shut down in recent years, no longer needed because of new technology in navigation.

Skunked

One of life's great fears is a close encounter with a skunk.

Well, Bob Stone's been there, done that.

Stone, the Coast Guard lighthouse keeper at the historic Point Pinos Lighthouse in Pacific Grove from 1954-57 and later a docent at the museum there until his death last year, told about the skunk while indoctrinating other lighthouse docents.

The story involved a pet alley cat, George, who was a sloppy eater that he was fed in a pie pan on the back porch of the lighthouse.

One night there was a terrible commotion in the back yard and George dashed through the door, followed closely by a very angry skunk, who was spraying all over the place. Seems that George interrupted the skunk, who was helping himself to George's dinner.

The cat and skunk tore through the kitchen and into the basement. It took three weeks to get the skunk smell off George and out of the lighthouse. Stone never did say how the skunk got out of the building.

Museum . . . The story about Stone and the skunk was in the newsletter of the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History Association.

The Point Pinos Lighthouse is still a functioning

house, owned by the Coast Guard, which operates the now-automated light and leases the site to the city of Pacific Grove for \$1 a year for use as a museum.

The Museum of Natural History is a city department, accessible for the lighthouse museum.

Volunteer docents provide free public tours of the lighthouse 1-4 p.m. Thursdays-Sundays.

Point Pinos Update by Jim Fremgen

Have you ever visited an historic residence and been greeted by a docent who told you about the house and its history? Has that docent ever been someone who actually lived in that house? If you visit Point Pinos Lighthouse on the right weekend each month, that is exactly the experience you will have.



The picture on the wall to the right of Veva is of her and Bob, and was taken before they came to Point Pinos.

Once a month, Veva Stone Larson comes over from Turlock, California, to be the docent at Point Pinos on Friday and Saturday. Veva's first husband, Bob, was in the Coast Guard and was the assistant keeper at the lighthouse from 1953 to 1956. The head keeper then

lived in one of the newer houses next to the lighthouse. Veva and Bob lived in the lighthouse itself. In fact, they were the last people to live in it. Their first daughter, Sandy, was born while they were there. When they left in 1956, the building was left with only minimal maintenance—except for the light, of course.

While Bob maintained the lighthouse, Veva worked at the Bank of America. After leaving the Coast Guard, they remained in the Monterey area for 20 years. Bob worked for the telephone company and Veva for a real estate management firm.

Bob later died and Veva returned to her childhood home in Turlock. There she met Marv Larson, a retired carpenter, and they decided to share the rest of their lives together. But she never forgot those years at Point Pinos. So, when she learned about the docent program there, she signed up. Once a month they drive their motor home over from Turlock. Veva greets visitors to the lighthouse and tells them about its history, with special insights that only she can provide.

Very recently, while volunteers were doing some work in the basement of the lighthouse, they noticed Bob Stone's name in the concrete. As they swept a bit further, they saw that Veva's name was there too. It seems that Bob left a permanent reminder of their time there. ■