



# CANAVERAL BEACON

The official newsletter for members of the  
Cape Canaveral Lighthouse Foundation.

Follow us on Facebook @CCLighthouse



## Our Mission

*To assist Space Launch Delta 45 in preserving, protecting, promoting, and interpreting the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse and its historical significance to the Florida Space Coast, State of Florida, and our Nation*

Vol. 16, No. 3

May 1, 2026

## Message from Our Foundation President



Spring has arrived on the Space Coast, and with it comes a season full of milestones, momentum, and meaningful connections for the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse Foundation. Perhaps the most exciting development in recent weeks is one you can literally see taking shape: framing on the final two lighthouse keepers' cottages began this month. I won't sugarcoat it; we faced a perfect storm of challenges to get here. Actual storms, supply chain disruptions, launch activity interruptions, and staffing hurdles all conspired to test our patience. But as this Foundation has proven time and again, we don't stay down for long. Those obstacles are behind us, and construction is moving forward. Watching those frames rise is a sight that makes every challenge worth it.

On the visibility front, we are thrilled to share that the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse will be featured on WUCF's Florida Road Trip television program. Executive Producer Heather Bailey and her cameraman Ben filmed here on March 5th, and we will be one of just ten Florida lighthouses spotlighted in the 2026 season. This is a wonderful opportunity to share our story with a broader statewide audience and draw new visitors and supporters to our mission.

Our community engagement has been equally inspiring. The Foundation was well represented at Founders' Day on April 4th at Field Manor in Merritt Island, where volunteers Patricia Lautner, Bev Merrilees, Liz Graveur, and Susan Gleckel kept our table busy from open to close. Their energy and dedication are exactly what makes this organization so special. Our Victorian Garden Parties led by Laura Lee Walko have also continued to delight guests, with two very well-received events under our belts and more to come.

Looking ahead, we are excited to participate in Cape Family Day on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, an open-house event for badged personnel and volunteers to bring their families on base. SLD 45 has made this year's event intentionally STEM-focused, with visits to facilities including 5 SLS, the MOC, launch complexes, and on-base museums. Inspiring the next generation of explorers is a cause near and dear to our Foundation, and we are proud to play a role in that effort.

Finally, in honor of America's 250th anniversary, our Semi-quincentennial flag has been flying proudly from the flagpole each day. Railing flags have been purchased and will be displayed on the museum railing from Memorial Day through Labor Day, a fitting tribute to our nation's history and the enduring legacy of this lighthouse within it.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. Keep Shining,  
Shane Smith  
Board President

## Museum Highlights

### Museum Highlights

On Friday 10 April we had one of the busiest non-event days in lighthouse history, quite unexpectedly. For about a 30-minute overlap, we had visitors from both commercial tour partners, Canaveral Tours and Space Shuttle Excursions. We also had our max-size caravan with 25 vehicles containing 73 visitors – all volunteers at the Brevard Zoo. Then we were surprised by two bus loads holding 83 visitors from AFTAC (Air Force Technical Applications Center) at Patrick Space Force Base. The docents did a remarkable job providing tours for so many people and the volunteers in the Keeper's Closet made a lot of money for the Foundation!



The tour by the Zoo volunteers was coordinated by Mark Tomassone, who volunteers both as a docent at the lighthouse and a volunteer at the Zoo. We've had similar tours through other lighthouse volunteers who work with other organizations. We always appreciate the work these other volunteers do for their organizations and enjoy showing them around.

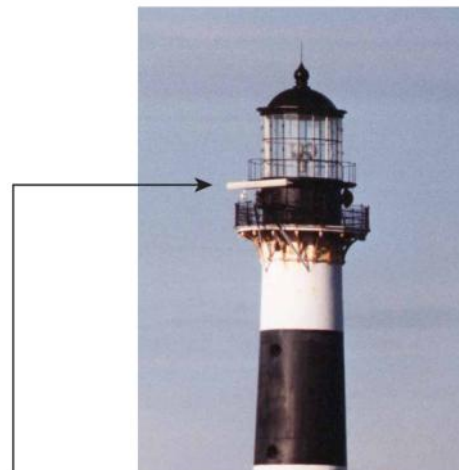
If you have a group you'd like to help coordinate a visit for, just fill out our Group Tour Request form on our website Visit page. [Visit - Cape Canaveral Lighthouse](#)

### Did You Know?

Over the years, various launch observation instruments were mounted on the lighthouse. Beginning in 1969, the lighthouse hosted sea surveillance radar equipment for several decades. The radar receiver was mounted directly on the lighthouse railing and data was sent to flight control through an antenna tower constructed next to the lighthouse. The data was used to identify ships and aircraft approaching the exclusion zone during launches. The brick is painted black on the inside of the 3rd floor to make it easier to see the scopes mounted there.

Becky Zingarelli  
Museum Director

[museumdirector@canaveralight.org](mailto:museumdirector@canaveralight.org).



Attached to the lamp room on the left is the horizontal 1969 radar antenna.

## Partners with Cape Canaveral Space Force Museum



CAPE CANAVERAL  
SPACE FORCE  
MUSEUM

We enjoy a very special relationship with the Cape Canaveral Space Force Museum (CCSFM). They manage the CCSFM and blockhouse at LC 26, the Sands Space History Center, and the museum's Hangar C annex right next to the lighthouse. They also partner with us for all public tours, education tours, and events.

Their Museum Director, Jamie Draper, is the Facility Manager for the lighthouse and is our liaison to the Space Force for all official interactions. Jamie did a phenomenal job as the keynote speaker at our Groundbreaking ceremony on 10 February. During the pandemic when we couldn't be at the lighthouse, Jamie kept checking on it for us and provided much-needed humor in his "photos" of the lighthouse during that time.



CCSFM's Curator, Sabra Gossett, is very active in the Museums of Brevard (MOB), serving as Vice President, and leads the Nitty Gritty Group that shares ideas for managing museums.

More information can be found about the CCSFM, and the nonprofit foundation that supports them (United States Space Force Historical Foundation), on their website: [Cape Canaveral Space Force Museum](https://www.capecanaveral.spaceforce.museum/)

Their new entry in the next MOB brochure reads:

*Stand where America entered the Space Race - and encounter the machines that made history possible. Headquartered at Launch Complex 26, the historic site of the 1958 Explorer I launch and pioneering bioflight missions that helped chart the path to human spaceflight, the Cape Canaveral Space Force Museum preserves both the hardware and spirit of America's ventures into space. Walk through the original blockhouse and stand at the launch pad where the nation first reached orbit. Nearby, visit Launch Complex 5/6, where Alan Shepard began America's journey with the first human spaceflight of Project Mercury. Then explore Hangar C, home to more than 40 full-size restored rockets, missiles, and space artifacts. Spanning more than 75 years of aerospace achievement across multiple historic locations, this is more than a museum visit - it's an authentic encounter with the birthplace of American launch operations.*

# Cape Family Day

For the first time in a few years, the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station was open 9am to 1pm for badged personnel and their families on Cape Family Day, held Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. An estimated 6,000 visitors came on station to visit various locations, such as the Naval Ordnance Test Unit, the Apollo pad at SLC-34, the fire station, the weather station, the Cape Canaveral Space Force Museum, and culminating at the lighthouse and Hangar C, where food trucks were also available. The focus this year was on STEM education and the day was chosen to align with Brevard County Schools' *Take Your Child to Work Day*. The crowds were steady but not overwhelming and it was wonderful to see so many children truly enjoying and learning about the lighthouse.



**SPACE LAUNCH DELTA 4.5**

**PATRICK & CAPE FAMILY DAY**

**23 April 2026**

**Cape: 0900-1300 | Patrick: 1200-1600**

All members of Patrick SFB/Cape Canaveral SFS welcome!  
 \*Eligibility: DoW ID card holders & sponsored family members  
 Civilian Clothes Authorized | ALTERNATE DUTY LOCATION AUTHORIZED

**Cape: 0900-1300**

**Eventbrite Registration REQUIRED (WILL BE SCANNED AT GATE)**

Map of activities and Rules will be sent to Eventbrite registrants. The event will be an open-house style event where CAC, DBOG, & KSC PV card holders (only) can escort their family members (no badge required) on CCSFS and visit facilities.

All persons over 18 must also have a form of government issued identification, a driver's license or passport. If using a driver's license, it must be a Real ID.

**Launch sites Museums Planes and More!**

**Food Trucks at Hangar C**  
 Participating Organizations: M.A. STORE, Detachment 3 (Astronaut Recovery), Fire Station, LOCC (A-17B), Lighthouse, Hangar C, CCSFS museum, NUTU

**Displays/Booths at Hangar C:**  
 Special (static display of astronaut testuits), Blue Origin, AAFES, S DLS, National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, and more!

**Patrick: 1200-1600**

@ DOS Hangar & The Base Library (STEM Activities)

**STEM Activities @The Base Library**

**FSS Fun Zone**  
 Bounce Houses, Games & Activities

**Food Trucks @DOS Hangar**  
 Hamburgers, BBQ, Tacos, Shaved Ice, & more!

## Foundation in Action

2026 1st *QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP CARAVAN*, occurred on Saturday Mar. 21, 2026. 72 attendees enjoyed a beautiful day while visiting the Lighthouse, Keeper's Cottage and Hangar C.



Photo credit: Cheryl M. Bennett

**CALLING ALL SPEAKERS!** The Cape Canaveral Lighthouse Foundation (CCLF) has a Speakers Bureau ready to provide volunteers to give a presentation to local organizations about the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse, and the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse Foundation. Currently, we only have about five CCLF members who have been supporting us when we receive requests for lighthouse speakers. We are looking for members who love lighthouses and who would love to tell the community about our historical lighthouse right here in Brevard County. There is a PowerPoint presentation that speakers use when speaking to the organizations and new speakers will be trained, using that presentation. They will also be told what the usual process is when going out to the public to give the presentation. If you are interested, contact Sharon Crockett at 321-537-5797.

Below are pictures of Ron and Chris Ecker, when Ron spoke to the members of the Titusville Sail and Power Squadron a few years ago, before the first keeper's cottage was built. Ron began with the history of the Cape Canaveral lighthouse and surrounding area, how we came to have rocket launches at Cape Canaveral, the current public tours and school field trips, ending with where were then, ready to build a Keepers' Cottage! There was a lot of interest in the presentation within this group, especially since they are boaters and they do use the lighthouse for navigation. We always like to hear people say they still use lighthouses in this age of GPS.



Ron with members of the Titusville Sail and Power Squadron



Ron with a Sail and Power Squadron Coffee Mug

**IT'S NO SECRET!**

**JUST 75 DAYS UNTIL**

**CHRISTMAS IN JULY!!!**

**SAVE THE DATE -**

**Tuesday, July 14th, 2026**

**Tickets on sale soon!**

**Shhh—It's a Secret! OUR WONDERFUL LIGHTHOUSE IS GOING TO BE A STAR!**



Exciting things are on the horizon at the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse, and this time, we're stepping into the spotlight. In the coming months, our historic beacon will be featured on an upcoming episode of Florida Road Trip on WUCF. While the episode has not yet been officially announced, we're thrilled to share that our lighthouse, and the incredible stories it represents, will soon reach audiences across the state and beyond!



WUCF has asked that you keep this news within our lighthouse family until the official announcement. But we're giving you an exclusive early glimpse behind the scenes and we can't wait until we can share it with the world together in the Fall of 2026!

This opportunity is more than just a moment on camera. It's a chance to showcase the rich history, resilience, and significance of the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse to a broader audience. From its role guiding mariners through treacherous shoals to its unique place alongside America's space program, the lighthouse stands as a powerful symbol of Florida's past, present, and future. The film crew have already captured not only the structure itself, but also the spirit of preservation that drives our mission. Thanks to your continued support, we're able to protect and share this one-of-a-kind landmark—ensuring its grandeur endures for generations to come. We'll be sure to share air dates and behind-the-scenes updates as soon as they're available. Until then, just know our lighthouse is ready to shine for everyone! Stay tuned.

## Rare Opportunity—Stunning Photographs

Cape Canaveral had an unusual visitor on the night of April 15. David Zapatka is the volunteer Director of Photography for the United States Lighthouse Society. His national project, USA Stars & Lights, has brought him to previously photographing 287 lighthouses, exclusively at night. Starting in 2013 in his home state of Rhode Island, he ventured out to the Dutch Island Lighthouse on Narragansett Bay simply to learn if his new digital camera could capture a lighthouse under the stars at night. It soon grew to shooting all over New England, then the Northeast, and eventually the entire country. He's been to 27 of the 32 states that are home to lighthouses.

We can now add Cape Canaveral to his list as number 288. As he describes, making a night shoot here is for one with a gift of patience. In 2023, and about to embark on a three-week Florida trip in the project's RV, he reached out to the Space Force for night access. As many know, one can't simply drive up to the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse. Unlike most every other land-based historic tower in the state, access to Cape Canaveral is severely restricted. David made two lengthy trips in the RV during the winter of '23, bypassing our beloved lighthouse. Having raised more than \$50,000 for USA Stars & Lights through philanthropic grants, David recently worked out shoot logistics with Emre Kelly with Public Affairs for the United States Space Force. Closely watching the long-range weather forecasts in early April, the shoot seemed to be a go. A brief scare arose as Blue Origin hastily scheduled a hotfire test the morning of the intended shoot. Fortunately, and while David was on a flight from New England, the hotfire was scrubbed and the night access to the lighthouse remained in place. This provided a unique opportunity to photograph the lighthouse, still bathed in the lights from the launch pad.

Night photographers love clear dark skies offering millions of stars. April in Florida is generally one of the last months having crisp night skies like we get in winter as the humid summer air has yet to return. What was unexpected for David were the lights blasting the Blue Horizon launchpad, less than a mile from the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse. "Every lighthouse shoot is situational," he explained. "My objective is to capture America's historic lighthouses as they were meant to be seen during the dark of night." Historically speaking, our national photographic archives of lighthouses include few night images prior to the advent of today's digital cameras with electronic sensors. Think of the irony—lighthouses do most of their important work at night, and throughout their histories, few were ever photographed in the dark. It's David's mission to try and correct this oversight. On a clear April night and assisted by photographers John Winkopp and Rick Kibbey, images of Cape Canaveral Lighthouse were added to the growing national collection.



David's work can be seen on the United States Lighthouse Society's website, [www.uslhs.org](http://www.uslhs.org). Visit their digital resource section, look for the "David Zapatka Collection." Additionally, his own project website is: [www.starsandlighthouses.com](http://www.starsandlighthouses.com)

## Rare Opportunity (cont.)

Additional stunning photographs of the Cape Canaveral Light Station at night which David Zapatka has shared for our readers.



Insert photo of New Glenn 31- AST Bluebird 7 launch on 19 April 2026  
— Credit John Winkopp

David Zapatka on Straitsmouth Island in Rockport, Massachusetts at sunset on the night he shot there.



## Keeping the Light Shining -Membership Musings

**Membership Convoys.** The 21 March convoy was very well attended with everyone eager to see the Lighthouse, Lighthouse Museum, Hangar C, and LC26. It was a beautiful day full of discovery with some refreshments thrown in; the homemade cookies and lemonade have caught on! ***Our next convoy will be held in June;*** registration will be open soon, so be on the lookout for the convoy notification with pertinent details. This is a convoy you will not want to miss: the final two cottages are in process of being erected and you will be there to see the progress being made. It's an exciting year for CCLF!



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**CCLF and CCSFM Volunteers Family and Friends Tours.** Since the placard program that allowed badged volunteers to take family and friends out to the lighthouse, Hangar C and the Space Force Museum has not returned, we thought we could help a little by periodically offering a free standard caravan tour to all Lighthouse and Space Force Museum volunteers.

Approximately once per quarter, we will accept reservations for the tour on a first come, first reserved basis up to our max of 25 vehicles. ***Everyone must register each individual attending*** through our secure portal, since the information includes SSN and Driver's License. Each child must also be registered, though only name and birth date are required. The caravan will travel together to visit the lighthouse, Hangar C, and LC 26. The tours scheduled for 2026 will be:

- Saturday 2 May (Leave Sands Parking Lot at 10:30am - Return at 1:00pm) **(Reservations Closed)**
- Saturday 11 Jul (Leave Sands Parking Lot at 10:30am - Return at 1:00pm)
- Saturday 10 Oct (Leave Sands Parking Lot at 10:30am - Return at 1:00pm)

While not as flexible as getting a placard whenever a guest comes to town, this will at least allow you to bring some of your family and friends if they happen to be around for the tour. See Volunteer Notes for 11 July Reservations. Please go to the following link to provide your security information, which will also act as your reservation. You will be provided additional tour details and notified if the tour is full or not. [Tour Security Information Form](#)

**Community Outreach Committee.** Do you know how often the Outreach Committee participates at local events to talk about our lighthouse? We love our lighthouse and do what we can to spread the word/information. Just this year our Outreach Committee participated at Sam's House Pioneer Day in February, and at Field Manor for their Founders Day in April where the band "Hot Pink" performed. There are more opportunities this year in August and November to see our Outreach Committee in action where we encourage our members to attend these events and see what's going on in our community. These are really fun events!



**Florida Lighthouse Association.** In our last Beacon column, we mentioned that some CCLF members are getting together to go to Amelia Island (Fernandina Beach) for the Florida Lighthouse Association (FLA) Spring meeting. If you would like to know more about it, the following link will take you to their information page where you can also sign up to attend. These are fun meetings where we meet with other lighthouse enthusiasts and enjoy lighthouses around the State of Florida, Amelia Island housing our northernmost lighthouse.



If you like to climb lighthouses, this is one where climbing WILL be allowed although it is not generally open to climb. In fact, in most cases when FLA has a meeting at a lighthouse, they are allowed to climb. The last meeting was at St. Marks in Florida's

Big Bend area and the lighthouse was opened to FLA members to climb; visitors who were not there with FLA could visit the museum, but could not climb.

<https://floridalighthouses.wildapricot.org/Spring-2026-Amelia-Island>

***Welcoming the newest members of the  
Cape Canaveral Lighthouse Foundation Family!***

**NEW MEMBERS 21 February 2026 - 20 April 2026**

**Assistant Keeper (\$35 - 1 Member)**

**Lighthouse Keeper (\$50 - 2 Members)**

Brian Margavich

**Head Lighthouse Keeper (\$100 - 2 Members)**

Robert & Kendra Boyd

Malcolm Brand

**Student Membership (\$15 = 1 Member)**

**Lifetime individual Membership (\$1,000 = 1 Lifetime Member)**

**Lifetime Family Membership (\$1,500 = 2 Lifetime Members)**

***...And celebrating our renewing members of the  
Cape Canaveral Lighthouse Foundation Family!***

**RENEWALS 21 February 2026 - 20 April 2026**

**Assistant Keeper (\$35 - 1 Member)**

Mark Bergs Patti Dunn Christopher Gillard Connie Kostyra Sheila LaVoie  
Candyce Long Aryne (& Robert) Patterson Michele Piechocki Anita Stephens

**Lighthouse Keeper (\$50 - 2 Members)**

Nancy Brunetti Carol Burgess Satellite Family Dentistry (Jonathan & Ruth Calderon)  
Sam & Susan Ferguson Stephen Goldsmith Aggressive Pest Control (Shawn Lewis)  
Ed & Marilyn Lipsey James Reed Louise Schuster Virginia Scott Ken & Dede Smith  
Anne Sullivan Mark & Dorothy Willis

**Head Lighthouse Keeper (\$100 - 2 Members)**

Janice & Philip Barchat Robin Courtney Ralph & Winnie Crawford Drew & Bobbie LaGravenese  
Ciro Morales Buzz & Kathy Petsos Janine Vaccarello Laura Lee Walko

**Student (\$15 = 1 Member)**

**Lifetime Individual Membership (\$1000 = 1 Lifetime Member)**

**Lifetime Family Membership (\$1,500 = 2 Lifetime Members)**



# Cape Canaveral Lighthouse Foundation Lifetime Members

Pierre & Kathy Alix Titusville, FL	[Bobbie Grine] Tuscaloosa, AL	Larry & Elva Ostarly Rockledge, FL
Julia & Joseph (Jett) Black, III Cocoa Beach, FL	Bob & Dianne Heidersbach Cape Canaveral, FL	Dixie & [Jerry] Sansom Cocoa, FL
Ginny Blaetz Cocoa, FL	Christy & Randy Horn Oviedo, FL	Michael & Susan Schwarz Port Canaveral, FL
Gail Browning Cape Porpoise, ME	Jerry & Darleen Hunt Merritt Island, FL	John "Tank" & Rheta Sherman Cocoa, FL
Carolyn Burby Port St. John, FL	Bill Jelen Merritt Island, FL	Dave Spain Merritt Island, FL
Jack Burrie Deerfield Beach, FL	Gene Johnson Merritt Island, FL	[Yvonne]/Bob Thornton Titusville, FL
Lloyce Campbell Merritt Island, FL	Rocky & Lisa Johnson Cocoa, FL	Mark & Nancy Tomassone Rockledge, FL
Jim & Mary Clamons Palm Bay, FL	Larry Kaczor & Caroline Kaczor Elliott Cocoa Beach, FL	James Trammell Melbourne, FL
Barry & Sheila Compagnoni Melbourne Beach, FL	Al & Carol Koller, Jr. Titusville, FL	RADM Jim & Kathie Underwood Merritt Island, FL
Scott & Liz Cooper Greenwood, IN	[Eric Kucera] Merritt Island, FL	Celeno West & Allen McFarland Cocoa Beach, FL
Preston A., Jr & Nancy C. Creech North Augusta, SC	Lynn & Mike Mariotti Naples, FL	Rose Marie Wiley Cocoa Beach, FL
Sharon Crockett Rockledge, FL	Jeanna & Mike Merrifield Titusville, FL	Dr. Elbert [Sonny] & Kay Witt Melbourne FL
[Charles] & Ginny Davis Titusville, FL	[RADM Robert] & Beverly Merrilees Merritt Island, FL	Dr. Jess & Bertie Yates Melbourne, FL
Robert Davis Merritt Island, FL	Joe & Barb Mihelcic Cocoa Beach, FL	
Debra Divich Merritt Island, FL	Teresa Moore & Don Nawalany Cape Canaveral, FL	
Jill & [Jim] Dooley Merritt Island, FL	Cal & Virginia Myer Naples, FL	
Cynthia Dropeski Melbourne, FL	[Donald] Ellen Myer Washington DC	
Ron & Christine Ecker Satellite Beach, FL	Jamie & Jessica Myer Los Angeles, CA	
Albert & Marie Elebash Melbourne, FL	Jeff & Cathi Myer Burlington, MA	
Rodger S. Fowler Merritt Island, FL	Caroline & Jimmy Raleigh Merritt Island, FL	
Ric & Nancy Garwood Merritt Island, FL	Jim Ravitch Merritt Island, FL	
Rep. Tom Goodson Rockledge, FL	Rick & Michele Rohrmann Cocoa Beach, FL	
[Bud] & Liz Gravuer Cocoa, FL	Hal Row Mims, FL	
Beth & Dwight Greenberg Cocoa, FL		

**\*\*\* CCLF Membership Application Form \*\*\***

**SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY & JOIN CCLF TODAY!**

Completed forms should be submitted along with payment to:  
CCLF | P.O. Box 1978 | Cape Canaveral, FL 32920

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes, please contact me regarding volunteer opportunities.**

Please select a membership level from the categories below:

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS**

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Head Lighthouse Keeper                   | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lighthouse Keeper (Family)               | \$50  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Lighthouse Keeper (Individual) | \$35  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student Lighthouse Keeper                | \$15  |

**LIFE MEMBERSHIPS**

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership (Family-2 member) | \$1,500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership (Single)          | \$1,000 |

**TOTAL AMOUNT DUE:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

**Chris Ecker, CCLF Membership**  
Phone: (321) 591-9844  
Email: [cclfmbrship1@aol.com](mailto:cclfmbrship1@aol.com)

**Bev Merrilees, CCLF Volunteers**  
Phone: (321) 452-5426  
Email: [bmerrilees@cfl.rr.com](mailto:bmerrilees@cfl.rr.com)

**To pay your membership dues online via PayPal, visit [CanaveralLight.org](http://CanaveralLight.org)**

**CCLF Member Benefits**

- Admittance to annual membership appreciation meeting held at the lighthouse;
- Subscription to *The Canaveral Beacon*, CCLF's bi-monthly newsletter;
- Discounts at the Keeper's Closet Gift Shop, including 10% off commemorative brick orders;
- Volunteer opportunities to support & promote the lighthouse in its historical context; and, most importantly,
- Supporting CCLF's efforts to restore the lighthouse grounds and resurrect history!

**MEMBERS SAVE 10% AT  
KEEPER'S CLOSET**

Stop by the Keeper's Closet gift shop during your next visit to the lighthouse. Browse our selection of souvenirs, books, apparel, jewelry, children's items and other lighthouse memorabilia. Proceeds support Foundation initiatives and community events. Members who present their membership card when shopping will receive a 10 percent discount on their purchase.

## Volunteer Spotlight on Greg Lowdermilk

Even as he served in the Air Force, often at the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Greg Lowdermilk was not a great fan of lighthouses.

“I had no sentimental thoughts about lighthouses,” he said.

That was until after he escorted a group of visitors to the Space Force Station. Dr. Elbert “Sonny” Witt, the late director of operations at the Cape Canaveral Airforce Station, invited Lowdermilk to the top of the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse.

“We got to the top and he pointed out everything,” he said.

Lowdermilk served as a pararescueman with the 920<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing, including in combat rescue in Iraq and many other deployments overseas. Training sometimes included parachuting onto the Air Force Station.

“We would use the lighthouse as a reference,” he said.

But the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse was not much more than a reference point when parachuting onto the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station.

Today, Lowdermilk is a docent who escorts others to the top of the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse, and as a fan, now looks for lighthouses to visit whenever he travels.

“I like lighthouses now,” Lowdermilk said. “It’s kind of a cool thing.”

Just a few years after that first trip to the top, Lowdermilk retired from the Air Force after 26 years. It was a career that took him from enlistment to chief master sergeant and on to a commission as a second lieutenant. At age 41, he was one of the oldest to be commissioned in the Air Force at the time.

Retirement took him away from the area, but he and his wife moved back to Cocoa Beach, and he began volunteering at the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse about two years ago after someone suggested it.

“It’s good to give back,” he said.

In addition to being authorized to escort some visitors to the top, he once or twice a month serves as an escort on one of the tour vans. He also helps with special events when asked. He collaborates with a team on other projects at the lighthouse when needed.

Lowdermilk spends some of his time as an instructor for Porsche Racing School, occasionally traveling to different racetracks in other states.



## Museums of Brevard Spotlight—Sams House



The oldest standing historic home in Brevard County (other than the lighthouse) is Sams House at Pine Island (Merritt Island), also a member of the Museums of Brevard. Open Tuesday through Sunday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Admission is free. **Park Location:** 6195 N. Tropical Trail, Merritt Island, FL 32953.



The Original Sams House Cabin

From their website [Sams House at Pine Island](#)

“From Ice Age animals to Native Americans to early pioneers, Pine Island Conservation Area has a rich history. Come inside the oldest standing home in Brevard County, the 1875 Sams family cabin. Travel back in time here and along the paved trail where interactive exhibits highlight Pine Island’s many past inhabitants. Artifacts like mastodon tusks, pottery sherds, and 19th century farm tools found within the Pine Island Conservation Area help piece together the story of this special place.

Enjoy a walk through a mangrove swamp and live oak hammock to reach the Indian River Lagoon, or hike the rugged Garnet Trail north to the Pine Island Road trailhead. Wading birds, bald eagles, alligators and bobcats are just a few of the animals that you may see. The Environmentally Endangered Lands Program and the St. Johns River Water Management District jointly own the approximately 900-acre Pine Island Conservation Area which includes the Sams House Education and Management Center.”



Sams House



Sams House Reenactment Actors

## Thank you, David Zapatka, Volunteer Photographer, USLHS



David Zapatka at work as captured by John Winkopp

## 2026 Cape Canaveral Lighthouse Foundation Board of Directors & Advisors

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 Ms. Patricia Lautner, Community Outreach  
 Mrs. Bev Merrilees, Volunteer Coordinator  
 Mr. Ciro Morales, Social Media Guru  
 Ms. Barbara Moser, Museums of Brevard Advisor  
 Mr. Ray Valley, Webmaster

### 45TH SPACE DELTA REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Jamie Draper, SLD 45 Command Liaison  
 Mr. Mike Blaylock, CCSFS CE Liaison  
 Mr. Tom Penders, CCSFS Advisor

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