

The

EXPLORER

Vol VIII, No. 8
Spring 2005

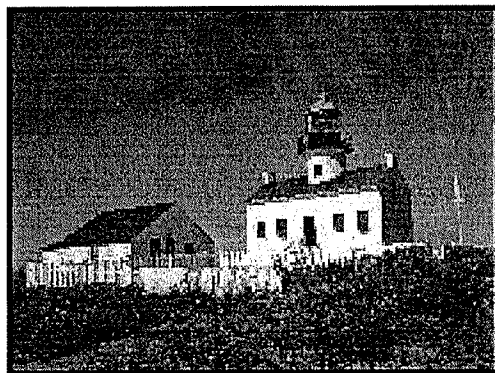
Newsletter of
Cabrillo National Monument and
Cabrillo National Monument Foundation

From the Superintendent

by Terry DiMattio

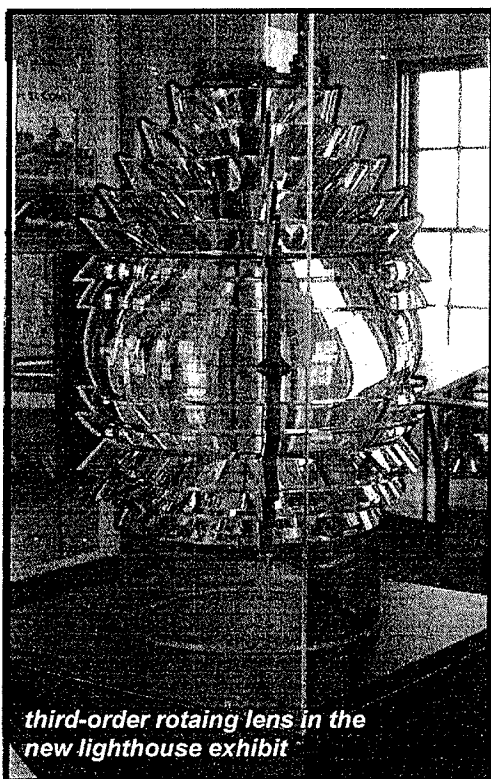
The Old Point Loma Lighthouse has endured many changes, good and bad, during its long history. It is our hope that the recent changes we have made, along with the things we are doing today to preserve it and tell its story, will help future generations come to know and appreciate the important role it has played in the settlement and development of our nation.

In honor of the opening of "The Lighthouses of Point Loma" exhibit and the completion of our effort to further our visitors' understanding of this popular feature of Cabrillo National Monument, the focus of this issue of *The Explorer* is the Old Point Loma Lighthouse. It has been a long and challenging journey to complete this chapter in the history of the lighthouse, and I have been fortunate to have been a part of it for most of my career.



We still have a little more work to do, though. Ranger Marty Lane and a number of interns and Volunteers-In-Parks (VIPs) have done a great job of re-landscaping the grounds around the lighthouse with seeds gathered from the park and native plants propagated in our greenhouse. With all the rain we have had this winter, though, we have an abundant crop of weeds and non-native plants that need to be removed before they go to seed. Once we remove these exotics and the native plants become established, there will be less room for the weeds and the grounds will begin to look more as they did in the late 19th century.

As the excitement of finishing the rehabilitation of the grounds fades, the routine, but critical, work of maintaining the lighthouse and its setting becomes increasingly important. Chief of Maintenance Charles Schultheis



the existing paint and rust removed, repaint everything with a coating that survives this harsh environment, and put it back together. It is not as exciting as rehabilitating the grounds or creating a new exhibit, but it is necessary if we are to preserve the lighthouse for the enjoyment of future visitors.

To further our visitors' understanding of the history of the lighthouse, Cabrillo National Monument Foundation Executive Director Karen Eccles is revising F. Ross Holland's book, *The Old Point Loma Lighthouse*. The foundation first

being edited and brought up to date, and Christina Watkins and Amanda Summers, who designed *Understanding the Life of Point Loma*, are creating a new layout for the book. We are hoping to have it ready by November 15, 2005—the 150th anniversary of the first lighting of the lighthouse.

The Old Point Loma Lighthouse has endured many changes, good and bad, during its long history. It is our hope that the recent changes we have made, along with the things we are doing today to preserve it and tell its story, will help future generations come to know and appreciate the important role this lighthouse has played in the settlement and development of our nation.

is working with Michael Scott, a historical architect in our regional office, to implement a project to clean, repair, and repaint the exterior of the building, including the metal lantern and captain's walk that surrounds it. We have decided to hire a firm to examine the layers of paint on the lighthouse's soft sandstone walls to determine why some of it is flaking off, and advise us on the best way to prepare the walls and the right type of paint to use to protect them against weathering. It has been several years since we painted the lantern, and the salt-laden marine wind is causing the metal to rust. We may need to dismantle the metal railing and deck, have

published it in 1968 and revised it in 1976. With the rehabilitation of the lighthouse grounds and all the changes that have taken place there, it is fitting that a new edition be published. Mr. Holland's text is



The Explorer

is published quarterly by Cabrillo National Monument, funded by Cabrillo National Monument Foundation.

Patricia Heusner, editor
Jim Nauman, production

1800 Cabrillo Memorial Drive
San Diego, CA 92106
(619) 222-4747

CNMFKaren@aol.com

A tale of sister cisterns

by Roger E. Kelly
Senior Archaeologist
NPS Oakland

Keeping a local good water supply was a challenge to most lighthouse families, particularly along the West Coast. In many places, rainwater collected from open, large, flat but slightly sloping "rain sheds" flowed into storage cisterns. Today, visitors see a replica of the 1880s water collection system at the Old Point Loma Lighthouse. But mostly out of sight are two brick-lined "sister cisterns" of different time periods, each associated with Lighthouse water supplies. This pair of cisterns, constructed during the 1850s–1880s, can be compared to 1899 cisterns near the Point Bonita Lighthouse, Marin Headlands unit of Golden Gate NRA, overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge, whose plastered domes are visible near a parking lot. One is at least twice as large as Old Point Loma's 1883 cistern, with a dome over six feet high.

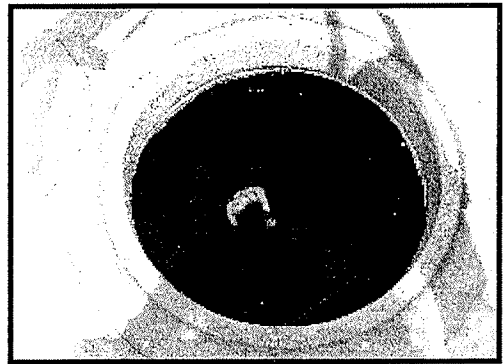
How would you have constructed a cistern in the 19th century?

Likely, skilled bricklayers followed "pattern books" of drawings showing cross-

sections of an elongated "bottle-shaped" cistern, covered by a dome with an access hole, and vents for intake and overflow. First, a deep, round hole was needed to accommodate cylindrical brick walls, lightly covered with thin plaster or whitewash. If a "rain shed" was the collecting method, the cistern would

required an understanding of how to lay spirals of stacked bricks in connected rows so that consistent circles were maintained, as the dome became an enclosed cover.

These cistern domes were completed with a cast-iron "keystone" ring and heavy iron access lid. A thick coating of fine-grained plaster was applied to protect the dome from weather and unwanted materials falling into the stored water. At the Old Point Loma Lighthouse, the 1883 cistern is now re-joined to a replica water catchment basin and hand pump. Its well-crafted brick walls were revealed during archaeological



Today, visitors see a replica of the 1880s water-collection system at the Old Point Loma Lighthouse.

need to be at a downslope position and possess gravity intake and overflow vents. Cisterns were also filled by nearby structural downspouts or closed flumes or pipes from local springs. Of course, masons carefully laid the curving brick walls, working layer by layer, with tight, even mortar seams.

Building a fitted brick dome

monitoring and an overflow vent was documented, but no artifacts were found. This cistern is about 12 feet deep, has an inside diameter of eight feet, and was constructed to hold 11,000 gallons of water. Even today, it still holds some water!

Unfortunately, we have not identified the mystery builder, names of the bricklayers, or even which brickyard supplied

the hundreds of common red bricks needed. There are no marks or "brick brands" visible, although a brickyard in the La Playa settlement was operated by a Thomas Whaley during the 19th century. It is likely that the same contractor built the "rain shed" and the cistern as one project during 1883.

Totally out of sight—beneath the new white picket fence posts surrounding the replica rain shed—the lowest portions of an earlier (1858?) brick cistern were found. While just a small portion of its curving red brick walls were observed, it appears to be very similar to the 1883 cistern, yet perhaps 25 years older. In the 1935 National Park Service survey map of the Lighthouse prior to the 1930s restoration work, this cistern is shown as "abandoned" with a "NH pipe grid cover," meaning that a girded pipe framework was placed over the opening for safety purposes prior to 1935. Later, NPS restoration project director Sam Hendricks noted that "The furthest-south old

cistern was dismantled a few feet below the surface of the ground before it was filled." In 2003, power augers revealed a cistern wall in one of several post holes but exposed only a few red common bricks in place. We know now that the bottom one-half or one-third of this smaller cistern remains buried, with an earthen fill including pieces of the 1880s rain shed which were apparently gathered up and dumped in the abandoned cistern in 1935. This earlier cistern apparently collected rainwater from Lighthouse gutters and probably held water hauled by wagon up the long road from La Playa. Although we identified the location of this original cistern, we will not be able to add many details about its construction.

Lighthouse keepers and federal officials tried four methods to provide domestic water for families. Three cisterns were constructed (a small one was included in the original construction of the

lighthouse lowest floor). The last-built cistern can be viewed by visitors, with its replica rain catchment basin. Historic records cite the many water wagon trips necessary to supplement rainwater. The 1883 cistern is a wonderfully crafted structure, made with skill, experience, intelligence, and care by unknown workers whose work "still holds water" almost 125 years later.

Archaeological monitoring and documentation were greatly facilitated by park curator/historian Robert Munson and VIP Nancy P. Walton.

The light that failed

Reprinted from a previous issue of *The Explorer*

On March 22, 1891, the Old Point Loma Lighthouse lens cast its beam over the ocean and harbor entrance for the last time. The event was reported and commented upon in *The San Diego Union* on that day, sharing the pages

with news of a Franco-Russian alliance, the death of Confederate General Joseph E. Johnson, and Senatorial bribery charges in Sacramento.

An article on page 3, near a large advertisement touting the Hotel del Coronado as a "veritable earthly paradise,"

announced the closing of the lighthouse:

The light on the head of Point Loma Promontory, which has been a beacon to mariners and a land-mark to travelers for thirty-six years will go out of service tonight. Below, on the ocean side, about 400 feet nearer sea level, the new light that is to shine under, instead of over, the fogs, will be touched into flame at tomorrow's sunset by a San Diego lady. There are

small sailing parties forming that will combine this event with a moonlight picnic, the hill climb and the exhilarating descent, offering attractions to the young people particularly. Some of their elders will recall the old white light that first went into the tower of the stone lighthouse in 1855, and which shown (sic) toward the big sheep pasture across the bay, where the city of San Diego now stands.... The unusual height of its light, some 485 feet from the water, this being the second highest in the world, has been found too high to do best service, as the fogs settle about it at that latitude.... Capt. Robert D. Israel has discovered that the new light and his 65th birthday anniversary are due at about the same time, as it was sundown on March 23, 1826, when he decided to try mortality, and incidentally lighthouse keeping.... The old stone house, which is to be boarded up and left until the war department shall decree to tear it away for fortifications or guns, has been visited by many thousand people from the four corners of creation. It has seen one marriage and two births, but no deaths. And from its tower visitors have feasted their eyes on what no less a traveled authority than Charles Dudley Warner declares to be one of the four great views of the world.

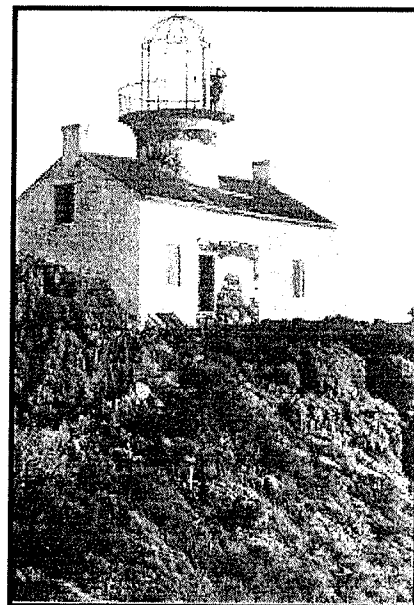
The article did not identify the "San Diego lady" who first lit the lamp in the new lighthouse. Further details of the closing of the Old Point Loma Lighthouse appeared on

March 26:

Frank Burton of San Francisco, superintendent of light house repairs, who has superintended the setting up of the new lighthouse machinery, began on Tuesday to take down and pack the old lens and lamp for shipment to the New York headquarters. He says the old house will then be boarded up and whitewashed and left in charge of Capt Israel. The pilots of the harbor were offered the use of the structure, but have declined it. How they will be able to learn when a vessel is outside has not yet been settled, but probably an electric bell will be put in from Pelican Point to Ballast Point. Formerly they were signaled by the lighthouse force raising a barrel to their flagstaff.

The *Union* printed a touching "obituary" of the Old Point Loma Lighthouse in an editorial on Tuesday, March 24, 1891, entitled "The Light that Failed":

One of the most familiar and romantic landmarks of the entire bay region has disappeared forever. On Sunday night the light in the tower at Point Loma, which has been as a "pillar of fire at night and a cloud by day," for many, many years shone for the last time. It will be sadly missed by residents in the bay region who have regarded it with a feeling akin to reverence and have pointed it out to strangers as one of the historic and interesting features of the landscape. Many have for years watched for its first



gleam at night and felt a sense of companionship in the light that never failed. It could be seen from the mountains, from the mesas, from any direction. It was a beacon and a hope to mariners and an object of veneration, almost, to the old residents of the bay region. It will shine no more forever, and to thousands its disappearance will be like the death of an old comrade. The new light below the point burned last night for the last time, and to many Point Loma will have lost half of its romantic interest because of "the light that failed at last."



Stories of the Lighthouse

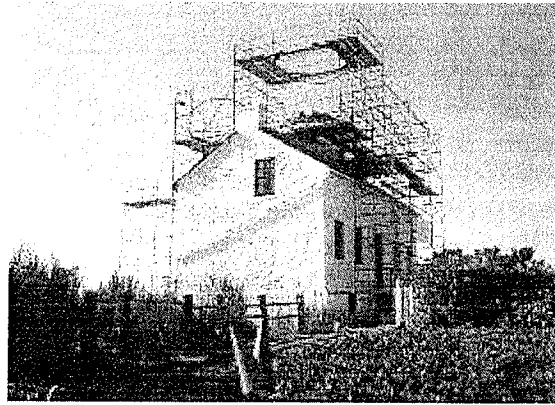
by Marcy Marquez

Almost everyone associated with Cabrillo National Monument knows that the Old Point Loma Lighthouse was completely built in 1855 and its first day as an official lighthouse was November 15th of that same year. But do you know that our beloved lighthouse has played many roles other than just navigating ships and people safely into our harbor?

The Old Point Loma Lighthouse was last illuminated on March 22, 1891, having been closed because of its high location, the light often obscured by the fog. This is where my story begins:

The lighthouse quickly began to lose its shine in more than one way. After its abandonment, the Fresnel lens was removed and transferred elsewhere. Vandals began to deface the tower with graffiti, break windows, steal parts of the building, and some even used the basement as an outhouse.

In 1913 the Order of Panama, a local organization promoting San Diego's Hispanic heritage, had grand ideas and planned a great celebration in preparation for building a 150-foot statue of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo exactly where the Old Point Loma Lighthouse stood. The Army approved of this idea, since it would allow them to have a radio station at the base of this enormous statue. Thankfully for us, the citizens of San Diego



did not agree with these grand plans, signed petitions, the Order of Panama fell apart, and we still have the lighthouse.

1913 was a busy year: President Wilson designated the lighthouse and one-half acre around it as Cabrillo National Monument, and the lighthouse was used by the military. Under the protection of the army and at the direction of the Commanding Officer of Fort Rosecrans, the lighthouse was established as a radio station and used as such during World War I.

Good times came to the visitors of the lighthouse during 1921-1935. Mrs. H.E. Cook, an army sergeant's wife, sold candies, postcards, and sodas to visitors in the parlor room.

Although Cabrillo was established as a national monument in 1913, the War Department managed it until 1933 when the National Park Service became its guardian. The Works Progress Administration approved \$38,000 to make the lighthouse more presentable to visitors.

In the early 1980s the National Park Service began its first major restoration of the Old Point Loma Lighthouse.

Many lighthouse enthusiasts attended the gala celebration honoring the completion of the Old Point Loma Lighthouse restoration in 1935 by the National Park Service. This would surely become the first of many lighthouse projects to come. In the 1930s Clinton Rock operated a gift shop and tearoom in the parlor.

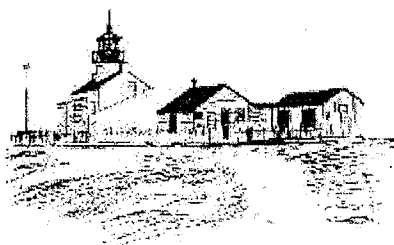
Visitation came to an abrupt stop when the Japanese Navy attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941. The lighthouse was quickly taken by the army, closed, camouflaged with olive green paint, and used as a naval signaling station and storage facility throughout WWII.

In 1946, the army returned the lighthouse to the National Park Service and it welcomed several new friends. Donald M. Robinson became the first NPS employee. As superintendent, he oversaw the addition of a flagpole and the arrival of the original Cabrillo Statue; he shared the Park Headquarters in the lighthouse basement with F. Ross Holland, Cabrillo NM's first historian.

In the early 1980s the

National Park Service began its first major restoration of the Old Point Loma Lighthouse. Repairs began with the roof, tower, lantern, and the metal and glass framework that housed the third-order Fresnel lens. During the mid 1990s the rooms of the lighthouse were refurnished in the authentic 1870s style that one sees today.

I have often wondered how the lighthouse has felt throughout all its changes. It will continue to tell stories and beckon visitors to come to share its past and future.



Has the lighthouse ghost moved to the Assistant Keeper's Quarters?

by Dean Robinson

While working in the maintenance division for over two years, I have had the opportunity to see all of the Old Point Loma Lighthouse's nooks and crevices that go unnoticed by most people. In other words, I have developed a special closeness with this place. While doing routine maintenance at the lighthouse, I have been asked three times by visitors about the ghost that lives there. Personally, I have not as yet encountered a ghost. I suppose the story originated because of the book, *Ghosts of the Old Point Loma*

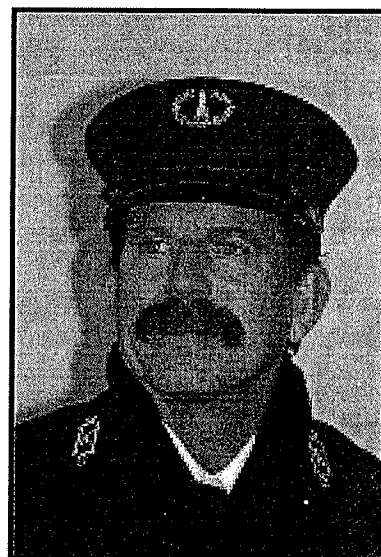
Lighthouse, sold in the visitor center.

At any rate, here is an update on the ghost story:

Today I met a lady—probably in her mid-70s—who was certain she had seen Captain Israel, alive and in the park! After talking with her for a few minutes, I realized why she was so certain about her sighting. She had been in the Assistant Keeper's Quarters, seen the display, and read about Captain Israel. What, of course, had brought her to conclude that the Captain's ghost was walking in the park was that the face she had seen on the mannequin in the display was the same as that of our living history interpreter: Lighthouse Keeper Robert Israel, portrayed by CNM Volunteer William Doyle! (below)



The mannequin



The "ghost"

A lot of noise about hummers

by V.I.P. Claude G. Edwards

Lately, recurring reports have generated a lot of excitement about the presence of hummingbirds that have been observed passing through and visiting Cabrillo National Monument and other areas of Point Loma on their northbound migration. This is an annual occurrence that draws much interest within the overall spring migration period, which also brings numerous other species of birds en route to their breeding grounds.

Several species of "hummers" can be found during this period as they zip past craning heads and late-pointing fingers of those who would attempt to distinguish them "on the fly." Only when they pause for a few fleeting seconds, or even perch for a minute or two, can sharp-eyed hummer-hunters put a name to particular individuals, given the proper line of sight and lighting.

The familiar Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) is a year-round resident that nests and raises its young in our vicinity. Its numbers are apparently bolstered in late winter and early spring as males set up breeding territories and announce their presence with scratchy songs and dive-bombing aerial displays. Prior to appearance of the colorful arrays of flowers that typically signify the arrival of spring, this hummingbird seems to survive on the sparse

native and exotic nectar sources present on slopes and along walkways around the park during and following the winter rains.

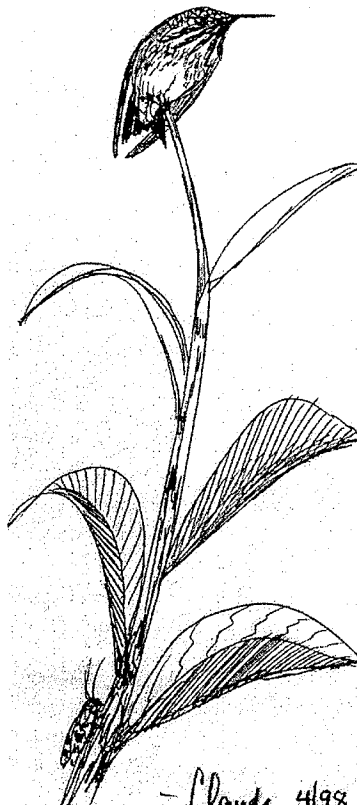
Anna's hummingbird remains the most numerous species throughout the migration period, aggressively defending favorite blooming trees, shrubs, and wildflowers from the speeding passersby, perhaps even becoming a part of their numbers as indistinguishable migratory birds that interact with resident territorial ones.

The dominant truly migratory hummingbirds that are found and reported at this time of year are the Allen's (*Selasphorus sasin*) and rufous hummingbirds (*Selasphorus rufus*). These are "sibling species," closely related species in the same genus. They both spend the winter in Mexico and conspicuously travel north along the coast as early as February and extending to late April. Only the males can

be safely identified, and even then, some cannot be determined without appropriate lighting or the presence of varying amounts of green feathers on their upperparts.

The males in this group can be located by their metallic wing-buzzing as they fly past or change positions while visiting flowering plants. Another feature they have in common is a flaming orange-red gorget—feathers on their throat—best seen in good light. Females of the two species share orange-to-peach coloration on their sides and lower back, but are usually left unidentified.

In April, the species that really gets bird-watchers into a tizzy is the diminutive dynamo of American birds, the calliope hummingbird (*Stellula calliope*). The males are unique in having red-and-white striped gorgets, rather than the uniformly colored throats found in the adult males of other species. This is the smallest bird in the country,



Calliope hummingbird
Claude Edwards

barely more than three inches in length in our region. Since this hummingbird is observed while on migration, individuals that are reported are rarely seen by those that attempt to locate them later. Female calliopes resemble pint-sized female *Selasphorus*, with orange-tinted sides, along with proportionately shorter bills and tails, but this is subtle.

Individuals and small groups of binocular-clasping observers move between and gather expectantly around blooming bottlebrush trees (*Callistemon citrinus*) and New Zealand Christmas trees (*Metrosideros excelsus*), as well as native sages (*Salvia apiana* and *S. mellifera*), monkeyflowers (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), and other blooming plants. It is almost as if the plants themselves are part of the spring bird migration.

Two other species that can be found when visiting Cabrillo NM and other parts of Point Loma are the black-chinned hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*) and Costa's hummingbird (*Calypte costae*), occurring in smaller numbers than those described above.

Thus, there is good reason for such small and relatively unobtrusive birds to create or be the source of such clamor and activity in our midst.

People, people, people

Welcome to the people report

by Carol A. Martin

Nello "Jeff" Jefferson is enjoying his recent retirement from Cabrillo National Monument. He has taken a couple of vacations already without having to worry about coming back to work. He calls every so often to check on how things are going. I will bet he has a whole list of projects to work on at home; he was never one to sit still. We wish him the best and a very happy retirement with many more trips ahead. Look out fish, here he comes!!

All of us at the Park miss you, Jeff!

Biotech **Tiffany Duffield** will be leaving the National Park Service in June to pursue a career with computers. We all know those are wild critters!!

Ed Christensen began his new career as a supervising Ranger for the City of San Diego. His new territory includes Mission Bay and the surrounding areas. In this permanent position he is enjoying weekends off, increased wages, and is honing his management skills. Good luck, have fun, and be careful out there. Ed, I have some interesting information about the top 8 inches of soil around Mission Bay for you!!

Some of you have already met **Jennifer Sawyer**, the new VUA assisting Linda in the entrance station. She was born in San Diego at Mercy Hospital.

Her first job was as a

newspaper carrier. After completing High School she attended Mesa College. She then moved to Idaho where she was a member of the National Guard for six years. While in Idaho she attended Idaho State University. Biology was her main course of study and she has an interest in plants. Jennifer

worked at Grand Teton National Park campgrounds for a summer and a half as a laborer. One favorite of her many jobs was as an activities director at an assisted care facility. Jennifer also worked one summer at Sequoia National Park, tracking fire effects for a wildland fire study. If she had her way, she would eat Mexican food every day. She enjoys outdoor activities and would like to learn how to surf now that she is back in San Diego. After work and on her days off she spends time with her husband who is helping to raise her two sons. She hopes to settle in the area around the Grand Tetons some day. Help to welcome Jennifer by introducing yourself.

People are one of the park's greatest assets. Thank you for all you do!

If you would like to be included in this column in future issues, please e-mail me at

Carol_Martin@nps.gov





Cabrillo National Monument Foundation

If you love lighthouses, the bookstore in the Visitor Center at Cabrillo National Monument is the place to go! We have a brand new postcard strip consisting of five historic photos of the Old Point Loma Lighthouse that retails for \$1.25, and also a new postcard showing the three lighthouses of Point Loma; it ties in nicely with the new exhibit in the Assistant Keepers Quarters at the park. Another exciting item for sale in the bookstore is a 550-piece puzzle depicting Lighthouses of the United States. It comes in a tin box and sells for \$14.95. There are a few lighthouse calendars left that are on sale, and even if you already have a calendar for this year, the beautiful photographs could be used many different ways. There are many other lighthouse items such as cross-stitch kits, framed prints, books, lighthouse lens ornaments, and models of the Old Point Loma Lighthouse that would make wonderful gifts for the lighthouse enthusiast.

While we are on the subject of gifts, please remember that a membership in the Cabrillo National Monument Foundation makes a great gift and supports important programs at the park. For as low as \$35.00, your gift membership allows lucky recipients and everyone in their car free entrance to Cabrillo National Monument for one year. On top of that, the member receives invitations to special events at the park—many of them in the evening when access to the public is prohibited—a 15% discount on purchases in the bookstore, and a copy of *The Explorer* four times a year.

Karen Eccles
CNMF Executive Director

Make a Lasting Legacy

The CNMF Endowment Fund, established in 1997 with the San Diego Foundation, is another way you can support the endeavors of Cabrillo National Monument. Interested donors can contact us at (619) 222-4747 or by e-mail at CNMFKaren@aol.com

Calendar

Bird walk at CNM, 3rd Saturday of every month.
Join Claude Edwards at 9:30 AM in front of the
Visitor Center for an exciting morning.

June 26, 2005

Military History talk
more information
to follow.

August 25, 2005

CNMF Annual Meeting
NPS Anniversary

October 2, 2005

Cabrillo Festival

New Members

Dave and Deanna Brownlee
Sal Cianci
Patricia and Norman Custard
Jesika Englebretson
Stephanie Francis
Tom Frichtel
Jerome Johnson
Olivia Jourdane
Karen Koeder
Rudi and Asunción Lusti
Art and Susan Peinado
Mary Platter-Reiger
Alex and Jeanie Rodarte
Joseph Rubenson
Steve Slaughter
Jacqueline Thousand
William Yancey, MD



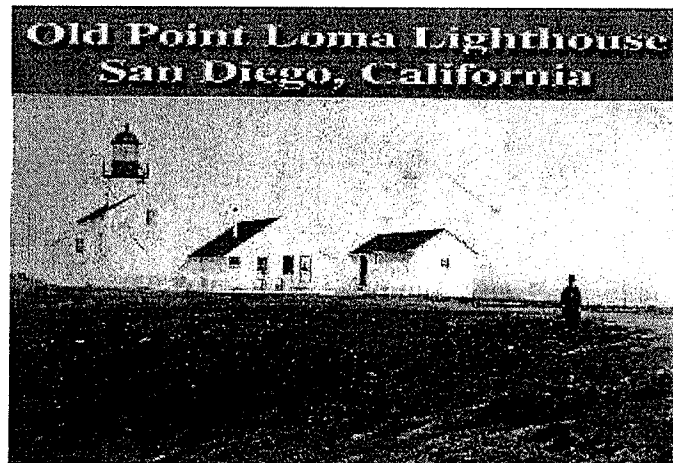
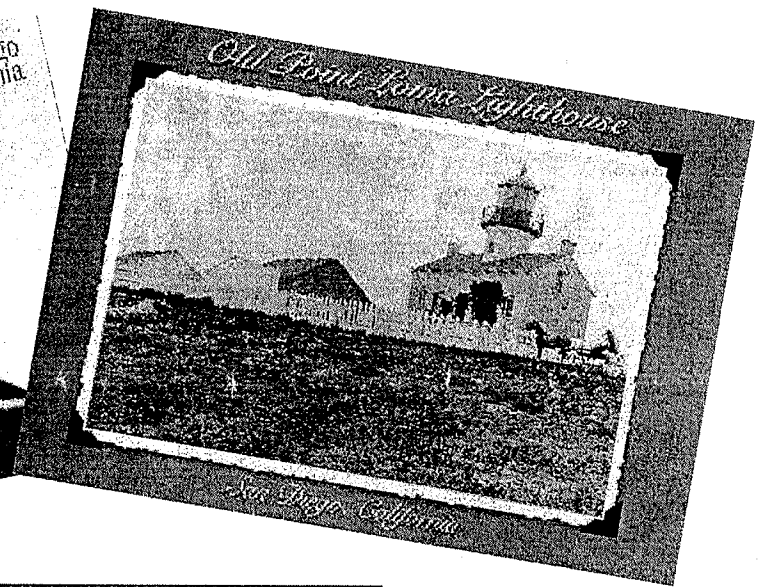
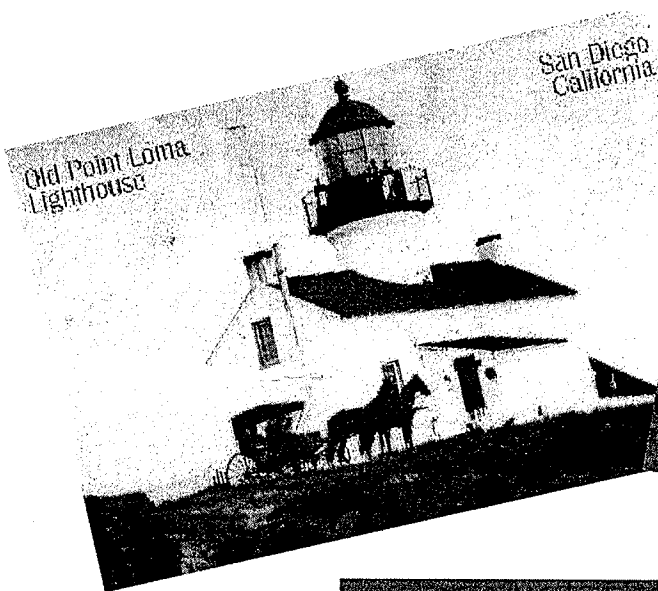
Please visit our website:

www.CNMF.org





Old Point Loma Lighthouse ■ *San Diego, California*



Some of the postcards with historic views of the Old Point Loma Lighthouse available in CNMF Bookstore



Cabrillo National
Monument Foundation
1800 Cabrillo Memorial Drive
San Diego, CA 92106



NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT
2381
SAN DIEGO, CA

