

# KEEPER'S LOG

## Point San Luis Lighthouse



*The Point San Luis Lighthouse during Springtime. Photos from our Archives.*

## Welcome to the Keeper's Log!

### Shuttle Bus Tours Resume May 1st.

The Point San Luis Lighthouse is opening again for shuttle bus tours! Beginning May 1, tours will run Saturdays at noon and 1 pm. Beginning June 1, tours will also run on Wednesdays. Go to [My805Tix.com](http://My805Tix.com) to purchase tickets.

### A Note from the Executive Director

After so many months of closure, it is a joy to open the lighthouse to shuttle bus tours once again. Starting May 1<sup>st</sup>, tours will be available Saturdays at noon and 1 pm. Starting June 1<sup>st</sup>, we plan to add tours on Wednesdays. COVID-19 precautions will be in place and masks will be required on the bus as well as on the tour, in the buildings, and on the grounds. Tickets can be purchased at [My805Tix.com](http://My805Tix.com). Call 805-540-5771 or email [sanluislighthouse@gmail.com](mailto:sanluislighthouse@gmail.com) for more information. Not ready to venture out quite yet but still want to see the light station? Try our docent-led interactive virtual tour which uses Zoom and goes every Wednesday at 11 am, or our professionally filmed "on-demand" video tour. Tickets for these tours can also be purchased at [My805Tix.com](http://My805Tix.com).

Issue 28, April 2021

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Don't resist the rain and storm. I'll never  
leave you lost at sea. I will be your  
lighthouse keeper. Bring you safely  
home to me.

~ Sam Smith ~

[www.pointsanluislighthouse.com/donate](http://www.pointsanluislighthouse.com/donate)

Happy Spring!

*Deb Feaghty*

## The Queen of the Pacific

If you've toured the lighthouse, you've no doubt heard tell of the sinking of the *Queen of the Pacific* just shy of the Port Harford wharf. The sinking of the steamer on April 30, 1888, added to the justification for a light at Point San Luis. That same year, the federal government appropriated \$50,000 to build the lighthouse, which was completed two years later. What kind of a ship was the *Queen*? Turns out she was pretty spectacular.

On November 21, 1881, the *San Luis Obispo Tribune* reported a "splendid iron steamship" for the Pacific Coast Steamship Company was nearing completion at the yard of Cramp and Sons in Philadelphia. Her dimensions were "336 feet long, 36 feet, 6 inches beam, and 22 feet depth of hold" with a 3,000-horsepower engine and a carrying capacity of 2,000 tons of cargo. Passenger accommodations included 40 staterooms on the upper deck and 13 staterooms on the lower deck, all "fitted up with every convenience and detail necessary to make a sea voyage comfortable." Also on the upper deck were four large, elegantly furnished bridal rooms, a "dining-saloon" 86 feet long and 36 feet wide, and a social hall with a "fine piano" where passengers could gather and "while away the tedious hours." The *Morning Astorian* (Astoria, Oregon) described the dome covering the main staircase:

**This is a true circle 14 feet in diameter and six feet high from the base, and from the main saloon deck to the apex of the dome inside is 22 ft. The dome is made in twenty-two segments and the filling is of figured stained glass, and from the center hangs an exquisitely jeweled electric chandelier. The dome is enclosed in a safety cover on the promenade deck, and between it and the dome proper there are placed six electric lights which at night give a most charming effect to the dome and the social hall.**

Three thousand people witnessed the *Queen's* launch from the Cramp and Sons shipyard on January 14, 1882.

The *Tribune* reported on February 18, 1882, that the steamer was nearing completion and would bring to Port Harford railroad material for the San Luis Obispo and Santa Maria Valley railroads, including "two locomotives and a complete railroad machine shop:"

**In the meantime, the wharf at Port Harford is to be extended 600 feet. The work will begin immediately and will be completed by the time the new steamship arrives.**

The Spear Street wharf in San Francisco was also extended to accommodate the steamer.

After several trial runs, the *Queen* began her voyage to the west coast on June 6, 1882, sailing by way of the Straits of Magellan and stopping at Rio de Janeiro and Valparaiso along the way. The ship arrived at Port Harford on August 22. The *Tribune* reported that the time from Valparaiso to Port Harford was the best ever made, at 17 days and four hours, and gushed that:

**Every possible arrangement for the comfort and entertainment of passengers has been made in the furniture and decoration of the social halls, saloons, and staterooms. A grand upright piano, extensive library, groups of rich tropical plants and flowers, superb Axminster carpets, elegant candelabra, mirrors, tinted glass and fine paintings, are some of the features of this floating sea palace.**

A special excursion train, with people packing all eight cars, ran from San Luis Obispo to Port Harford to inspect the *Queen*. "Guards were in attendance at the gangways to assist the ladies and children in passing to and from the ship and every door on the vessel was thrown open," the *Tribune* reported.

On May 1, 1888, another special excursion train was run to Port Harford to see the *Queen*. But this time, it was to see her in a somewhat different state. She had taken on water the day before and had settled to the bottom in about 20 feet of water 150 feet from the wharf. All passengers and crew were saved, although the cargo suffered. She was raised from the bottom, towed to San Francisco for repairs, and returned to service until scrapped in 1935.

## James L. Harrington, Sr.

1949-1951?

**At Point San Luis we are committed to documenting our history. If you know anyone who served at the lighthouse, or know their relatives, let us know and we will contact them to record their memories.**

During 1949 and perhaps until 1951, James L. "Jim" Harrington, Sr. was stationed at Point San Luis with his wife Irene and three-year-old son Jim Jr. Harrington's son, even though he was just a toddler, has memories of his time here – or perhaps he heard these stories from his parents.

Harrington enlisted in the Coast Guard in 1944 during World War II, serving as a pilot in the South Pacific and on beach patrol in Oceano. He met his future wife at a USO dance in Oceano. Jim and Irene were married in 1944; Jim Jr. was born in 1946. After the war ended Harrington was discharged from the Coast Guard and the family moved to San Luis Obispo, Irene's hometown. Harrington re-enlisted in the Coast Guard in 1949 and was assigned to Point San Luis.

Jim believes his dad "did the jobs enlisted ranks get assigned to at lighthouses – mainly maintenance work, painting, cleaning, and shifts monitoring the station's radio."

Their car was kept in Avila. There was road access through the neighboring ranch, but only the "commandant" used it in his Jeep. Everyone else had to walk the two-mile path along the bluff, "where there were often rattlesnakes." "My dad," he said, "usually carried me on his shoulders and wielded a big stick."

"There was a small boat that we could take from the lighthouse pier at high tide. Once, my mother and I had to take it when it wasn't high tide. A Guardsman had to drop me to another Guardsman in the boat while my mother had to navigate a rope ladder.

"We lived in a duplex with a wood cookstove. The rattlesnakes were often on the front porch sunning themselves in the morning.

"One night, I was suffering from yellow jaundice – probably hepatitis – and had to be carried out by a Guardsman to our car. My mom drove me to the hospital in San Luis Obispo.

"A brighter memory is fresh crab from the fishermen. The station had a place outside to cook the crab."

Eventually the family moved back to San Luis Obispo so Jim could start kindergarten. For a few months Harrington was assigned to the Coast Guard cutter out of Morro Bay, after which he left military service and returned to civilian life.

*James L. Harrington, Sr. passed away in 1999.*

*Jim Jr. lives in Grants Pass, Oregon; his younger brother Tim, who was not yet born when the family lived at the light station, resides in Lompoc.*

## Point San Luis on Facebook

Almost every day we're posting updates, historical information, and amazing photographs on the Point San Luis Lighthouse [Facebook page](#).

To stay connected, visit our Facebook page often. But in case you've been "off-line" for a while, here are a few postings you might have missed:

~ Did you know we now have on-demand tours of the Point San Luis light station? Now you can tour anytime, day or night. Wear your pajamas; we won't tell. Join head Keeper Ed Taintor as he takes you on a virtual tour by following this link:  
<https://my805tix.com/e/psi-on-demand>.

~ The Point San Luis Lighthouse Keepers non-profit was established in 1995 and took over the huge task of restoring the abandoned and neglected lighthouse. This image shows the scaffolding erected to enable them to strip all the paint from every bit of woodwork. A core group of dedicated volunteers worked day-in and day-out to return our lighthouse to her former glory and since then an estimated 100,000 hours of volunteer labor has been logged. We appreciate all of our

volunteers but are especially grateful to those early volunteers who started it all.



~ Here is an image of the Lighthouse grounds with the military lookout tower built during WWII. Japanese subs were a real threat at that time and at least one tanker, the S.S. *Montebello*, was torpedoed and sank just north of the Lighthouse two weeks after Pearl Harbor. The [Cambria Historical Society](#) has more information on the ship's sinking.



130<sup>th</sup> + 1 Events  
in 2021:

Sunset Photo Shoot –  
happened 4/9/21

~

Pecho Coast Trail Plant  
Walk - 5/23/21

~

Yoga on the Lighthouse  
Beach - 5/29/21

~

Paint 'n' Sip at Point San  
Luis - 6/19/21

~

Patriot Cruise of San Luis  
Bay - 7/18/21

Due to COVID-19, dates  
are subject to change.

Go to [My805Tix.com](https://my805tix.com) to  
purchase tickets.

## New Board Member Spotlight: Paul Irving



Paul was born in New Haven, Conn. and grew up in New Haven, Milford, Mass., and Diamond Bar, Calif. He attended college at Mount San Antonio, Saddleback, and Cuesta, but eschewed a four-year degree in favor of jumping straight into the workforce.

Paul has enjoyed a rich and varied career both in Orange County and on the Central Coast. He's been a regional sales manager for Hind Sportswear, a professional musician / bandleader / trumpeter for bands like Rock Steady Posse in the 1980s, Moziac in the 1990s, Zongo All Stars since 2007 and, most recently, Upside Ska. He's also a jewelry designer, a USCG-licensed captain, a sailing teacher, a licensed insurance agent and wholesale brokerage manager, and the founder and owner of [Big Big SLO](#), a live music marketing agency serving large venues like the Santa Barbara Bowl and Vina Robles Amphitheatre as well as most

smaller venues in SLO County. To say he's a polymath would not be an overstatement, with expertise running the gamut from marketing, to music, to sailing, to insurance, to amateur photography. He's also an account rep for the *New Times* for their online ticketing platform, My805Tix.

While COVID-19 caused him to shift from live music events to live-streamed events, he is eager to lead his two bands back on local stages once he's able to do so.

Paul fell in love with the Point San Luis lighthouse when he moved his sailing school from Morro Bay to Port San Luis and he visited the lighthouse for a photo shoot for his new business. "I was blown away by the incredible views and knew immediately that this was a very, very special place," Paul says. A few years ago, PSLK Board member and friend Tarren Collins invited him to collaborate on the annual "Live at the Lighthouse" concert series which he hopes will restart this summer.

Now on the Board himself, Paul plans to help with, among other things, digital communications and production of fundraising events.

Paul lives in Baywood Park with his wife Jessica and their two teenagers Edie and Cooper.

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## Point San Luis Lighthouse

### KEEPER'S LOG

P.O. Box 308  
Avila Beach, CA, 93424

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As a way to honor the memory of a loved one in a very special way, Point San Luis offers dedication benches. Only a limited number are available. For information and pricing, contact [SanLuisLighthouse@gmail.com](mailto:SanLuisLighthouse@gmail.com) or call (805) 540-5771.



## Give the Gift of Membership

*If you're looking for a unique gift idea, consider giving a Point San Luis Lighthouse Keepers membership as a birthday or anniversary gift for someone special in your life.*

### Memberships Now Available Online!

Visit [pointsanluislighthouse.org](http://pointsanluislighthouse.org)

*Annual Memberships help preserve a special piece of California; each membership level comes with premiums – check them out online.*

- \_\_\_ Lighthouse Keeper - \$50
- \_\_\_ Lighthouse Mariner - \$100
- \_\_\_ Lighthouse Navigator - \$250
- \_\_\_ Light Station Inspector - \$500
- \_\_\_ Light Station Commander - \$1000

Or send a check to PO Box 308, Avila Beach, CA 93424, payable to the Point San Luis Lighthouse Keepers.

Donations and memberships allow Point San Luis to stay in operation. Consider donating or becoming a member today.

Special thanks to all who support the lighthouse!

If you shop on Amazon, use [AmazonSmile](#). Choose Point San Luis Lighthouse Keepers as the non-profit you're supporting. The AmazonSmile Foundation will give us 0.5% of the price of what you buy!