



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fort Sumter
National Monument

1214 Middle Street
Sullivan's Island, SC
29482

843 883-3123 phone
843 883-3910 fax

Fort Sumter News Release

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Contact(s): Carlin Timmons Bill Martin

Phone number: 843 881-5516 843 883-3123 x 11

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Celebrate National Lighthouse Day at Sullivan's Island Open House

(Sullivan's Island, SC) - Join the National Park Service as we celebrate National Lighthouse Day at the Sullivan's Island Light on Saturday, August 7, 2010. An open house special event takes place from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the grounds of the U.S. Coast Guard Historic District at 1815 I'On Avenue on Sullivan's Island.



The Historic District represents the evolution of events important in United States maritime history from 1895 to 1962. Commissioned on June 15, 1962 as the last major lighthouse to be built in the United States, the Sullivan's Island Lighthouse replaced the original Charleston harbor light (otherwise known as the Morris Island Lighthouse), which was built in 1876. Several unique features make this lighthouse stand out from others:

- Instead of having the traditional circular shape, it is three-sided, a feature meant to make it more wind resistant. The result is that it can withstand

gusts up to 125 mph as demonstrated by its ability to hold up against Hurricane Hugo in 1989.

- It is the only lighthouse in the country to have both an elevator and siding.

(more)

- The light was the second brightest in the Western hemisphere with 28 million candlepower but was reduced to 1.5 million to accommodate Sullivan's Island residents. It can still be seen 27 miles out to sea on clear nights.
- Originally painted white and red-orange (like that seen on Coast Guard helicopters), local residents petitioned the government to change the color to the black and white seen today.

The Coast Guard chose the location because of its historic importance as being the site of the only U.S. life-saving station in South Carolina. Plans are in the works to get the lighthouse placed on the National Register of Historic Places since it was declared eligible for such nomination in 2007.

It was on August 7, 1789 that Congress passed an Act for the establishment and support of lighthouses, beacons, buoys and public piers. In honor of the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the first federal lighthouse, Congress designated August 7, 1989 as National Lighthouse Day. This recognition has encouraged communities and citizens groups to dedicate themselves to the preservation of these historic structures. As part of the anniversary, lighthouses, where feasible, were open to the public.

"It is in the spirit of public access that park staff and volunteers invite the public to explore the grounds of the US Coast Guard Historic District," said Fort Sumter National Monument Superintendent Bob Dodson.

The grounds, quarters cupola and boat house will be open to the public from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm on Saturday, August 7th. Because of safety concerns, only the base of the lighthouse will be open. Poet Ginger "Shaw" Bell, a 1967 graduate of Moultrie High School, will be signing

copies of her lighthouse poem and artwork entitled *There Stands an Image*. Ginger Bell grew up in the Old Village of Mount Pleasant and her father Paul Shaw was involved in the construction of the lighthouse. These copies will be free to the public and Bell encourages all former classmates to attend the open house. In addition, authors Margie Clary and Kim McDermott will sign copies of their book, "South Carolina Lighthouses." The Arcadia book will be available for purchase. Refreshments will be served. All activities are free and open to the public.

For more information, call the park at (843) 883-3123.

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