
KEEPER'S LOG

Point San Luis Lighthouse



Mother Corn Shuckers playing at Point San Luis in 2019. Photo courtesy of PSLLK Archives.

Welcome to the Keeper's Log!

Bus and Hiker Tours Run Wednesdays and Saturdays

The Point San Luis Lighthouse is open for tours every Wednesday and Saturday. To take a shuttle bus up to the lighthouse, purchase tickets [here](#). To hike to the lighthouse with a PG&E docent, register [here](#). The hike is free; bring \$10 for the lighthouse tour.

Issue 29, July 2021

In this Edition

Building the "New" Duplex. Page 2.

Richard Smith, USCG. Page 3.

The Double Dwelling: Old and New. Page 4.

Volunteer Spotlights – Rojean and Lee Dominguez. Page 5

Inside my empty bottle
I was constructing a lighthouse
While all the others
Were making ships.

~ Charles Simic ~

A Note from the Executive Director

www.pointsanluislighthouse.com/donate

Our summer concert series is back! Starting this month and continuing into October, "LIVE at the Lighthouse" will feature musicians playing on our cliffside stage 3 pm-7 pm on seven different Saturdays: July 10 (Mother Corn Shuckers), July 24 (Kenny Lee Lewis & Frenz), August 14 (Zongo All-Stars), August 28 (Carbon City Lights), September 11 (Back Pages Band), September 18 (41K/Damon Castillo) and October 16 (Topsy Gypsies). \$35 tickets include round-trip van transportation from Avila; admission is \$20 if you come on your own by water (kayak/SUP). Food and wine will be available for purchase or, if you buy a table, the wine is on us. The historic site will be open for touring and you can browse in our gift shop. Purchase tickets at My805Tix.com.

Happy Summer! *Deb Feaghty*

Building the "New" Duplex

Visitors to the lighthouse are always sorry to learn that the original 1890 two-story Victorian duplex, built to house the head Keeper's two assistants and their families, was demolished by the Coast Guard in 1960, replaced by the building that now houses our indoor event venue, an office for our executive director, and storage for our archives. It's a modern building, but one that lacks the charm and history of the long-gone double dwelling.

Readers might be interested in an article the *Pismo Times* published on April 7, 1960, about the building of the "new" duplex. Some excerpts are below:

Addison Wood, Arroyo Grande building contractor, is constructing two homes at San Luis Light Station. An unusual feature of the contract is that materials and workmen must be carried to the station by amphibious truck or "duck," purchased for the job. The "duck" is the easiest transportation to and from the station now. The \$95,329 contract calls for replacement of a...two-story duplex housing unit with two modern residences, one with four bedrooms and one with three. The Wood firm was also contractor in a recent lighthouse residence construction job at Piedras Blancas Station. Two of the four families normally stationed at the coast guard post are living in Avila Beach while construction is going on, and the men commute across the water...

A longer article appeared in the April 18, 1960, issue of the *San Luis Obispo Telegram*, and is also excerpted:

A seventy-year-old page of history was recently burned at Point San Luis and its ashes pushed into the ocean [Coast Guardsman Robert Smith remembers differently; see page 3]. The stalwart two-story frame duplex, which has housed coast guardsmen manning the Point San Luis lighthouse and their families for many years, has been demolished. A modern three- and four-bedroom, single story duplex is being constructed in its place. Addison B. Wood of Arroyo Grande holds the \$95,329 general contract for the project, scheduled for completion by July 30. He is also builder for a similar, but larger scale, housing development at Piedras Blancas lighthouse, north of San Simeon.

A unique operation involved in the San Luis Obispo light-station development is that all materials and labor are transported to the site in a surplus army duck, an amphibious craft. The station is comparatively isolated. Except for a foot path which winds itself around the high cliffs just north of the Port San Luis Transportation Company pier, the station is accessible only by boat...Recently, rattlesnakes have been encountered along the path and a warning sign to prospective visitors is being prepared by the coast guardsmen. Walking to the station takes about an hour. It is a much shorter boat trip. However, the tide must be reasonably high to reach the coast guard landing...

Assisting Wood with the building project is the W.D. Pierce Company of Morro Bay, excavation contractor and owner of the amphibian vehicle. Gravel, cement, lumber, fixtures and other building materials are loaded into the duck at Avila Beach and laboriously unloaded by hand at the building site...

Notes:

Addison B. Wood was a building contractor and developer for more than 50 years in the South County prior to his death in 2002. He also served on the Arroyo Grande City Council and was mayor from 1962 until 1970.

Walter D. "Duke" Pierce owned and operated Pierce Construction in Morro Bay, Sierra Nevada, and the Central Valley from 1958 until 2000. He passed away in 2009. According to his obit, he was also a fisherman and abalone diver, and at one time held the record for the most abalone harvested in a day.

Richard Smith was serving at Point San Luis when the two-story Victorian duplex was torn down in 1960 to make room for a one-story modern duplex. He recalled that he was living in the right side of the old duplex and had to move “to the beach” while demolition and rebuilding were going on.

“There wasn’t room to get a bulldozer behind the dwelling because of a retaining wall,” Smith recalled. “They put a cable around the dwelling and pulled it off the foundation. Then they pushed it over the cliff and the tide slowly took it away.”

After the new duplex was completed, Smith lived in the older cinderblock duplex down the hill until June 1961, when he was discharged.

These are more of his memories:

In March 1959, I married and took my bride from Phoenix to Oakland. At that time, I was on the San Francisco Lightship. The ship was in drydock in the estuary in Alameda. We were undergoing overhaul. In May we were scheduled to go back to the Lightship station outside of the Golden Gate. Having been on the ship for nineteen months on semi-isolated duty, I asked for a transfer. I was offered the Lighthouse. A week later we were in Avila calling the Lighthouse. They said go to the end of the road to the old pier and we will be there in a boat. We met them, loaded our belongings and were off

Richard Smith 1959-1961

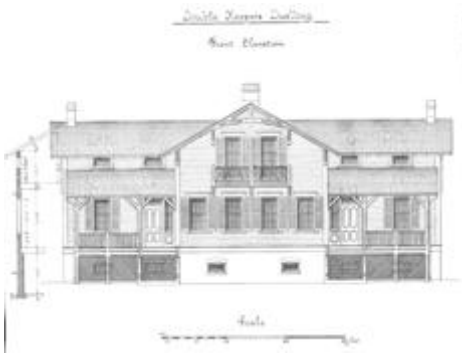
At Point San Luis we are committed to documenting our history. If you know anyone who served at the lighthouse, or know their relatives, let us know and we will contact them to record their memories.

across the bay. The boat was a twenty-foot inboard with an old-fashioned tiller in the stern, the kind you see in World War II movies. When we got to the Coast Guard pier, the swells were coming around the end of the breakwater and moving in a semi-circle to hit the landing site under the boom straight on. We had to time the swells to arrive in slack water at the proper time. The boat was equipped with a four-point harness that ended in a large iron ring. The coxswain ran under the boom, reversed the boat and threw the iron ring on the hoisting hook, then yelled at the operator on the winch. Our timing was off and before the boat was raised we were hit and slammed into the pier. Then we were raised fifteen feet to the dock where our belongings were transferred to a Jeep with a trailer. This was our introduction to our next two years in Paradise. My new bride said, “Oh dear.”



Coast Guard boat with four-point harness and iron ring. Photo courtesy of Norma Antrim, widow of Roscoe Antrim who served at Point San Luis 1957-59. The three people on the boat are unidentified.

Double Dwelling Construction: Old and New



Double Keepers Dwelling, front elevation, Office of the Light-House Board, 1889.



Another view of the modern Duplex under construction, 1960.



Double Keepers Dwelling under construction, 1890.



Children playing at the new Duplex's construction site – most likely Eric and Gail Settlemier, son and daughter of Robin "Bob" Settlemier, Coast Guard officer-in-charge 1959-1960.



Modern Duplex under construction with "duck" in front, 1960.

The Settlemiers lived in the circa 1948 cinderblock duplex "down the hill" while their new quarters were being readied. The two enlisted men and their families moved to Avila Beach while construction was underway.

LIVE at the Lighthouse
Saturday Concerts:

Mother Corn Shuckers
July 10

~

Kenny Lee Lewis & FrenZ
- July 24

~

Zongo All-Stars
August 14

~

Carbon City Lights
August 28

~

Back Pages Band
September 11

41K/Damon Castillo
September 18

Tipsy Gypsies
October 16

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

Volunteer Spotlights: Rojean and Lee Dominguez



Rojean was born and raised in a small farming community in south central Michigan and trained as a gymnast in high school and college. Undecided whether to pursue nursing or teaching, she became a health educator, receiving her BS degree from Central Michigan University and her MPH from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.

Rojean did two tours with the Peace Corps, working to establish health education and wellness departments on the Tonga Islands and in the Philippines, and training their citizens to become health educators. She has served as a director of health education and wellness with the Arizona department of health services, Maricopa County health department, the CA department of health services, the U.S. department of education, and Cal Poly. She also taught at Cal Poly and

ASU, and served as executive director for the American Cancer Society in Santa Cruz and SLO counties. Rojean retired from Cal Poly in 2014. She and Lee have a daughter, a two-year-old granddaughter, and two grand doggie dachshunds.

Lee was born and raised in Phoenix, served with the Army in Vietnam, and obtained his BSBA from ASU. He worked as an epidemiologist with the AZ department of health services and with the county health department in Monterey. After Lee and Rojean moved to the Central Coast, he worked for Orchard Supply as HR manager for both the Santa Maria and Pismo Beach stores. Retired since 2007, he's a wine enthusiast and avid gardener.

Rojean and Lee first became involved with the lighthouse as trail docents in 2010. Lee continues to lead trail hikes and volunteers for many of the lighthouse's special events. Rojean serves on the lighthouse Board as Board Secretary, and on the fund-raising and music committees. She chaired the silent auction benefit in 2018 with the Five Cities Orchid Society and the 130th Anniversary drawing/raffle in 2020. She also helps coordinate culinary prep for our special events.

Rojean and Lee live in Pismo Beach. They love to travel, particularly ocean cruising, and have visited most of our seven continents.

We are so fortunate to have both Lee and Rojean as dedicated volunteers.

Point San Luis Lighthouse

KEEPER'S LOG

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



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 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

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!