

The U.S. Lighthouse Society is proud to present:

Lighthouse Fun 4 Kids

Featuring:
*The Flying Santa:
A Tradition of Showing
Appreciation*



Issue #7

Feeling creative?

Email your colored in version of the Cuttyhunk Island Lighthouse, featured on the cover, along with your mailing address to info@uslhs.org, and we'll send you an "I love lighthouses" bumper sticker!

Learn more about the U.S. Lighthouse Society and lighthouse preservation!
Visit our website at USLHS.org

Lighthouse Fun 4 Kids



SHINE

A synonym is a word that means exactly or nearly the same as another word. For example, a synonym for dog is pooch. Try finding synonyms yourself. Begin with the word **shine**. You can ask Google for a synonym for **shine**, use a book called a Thesaurus, or even ask Alexa. Find five!

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

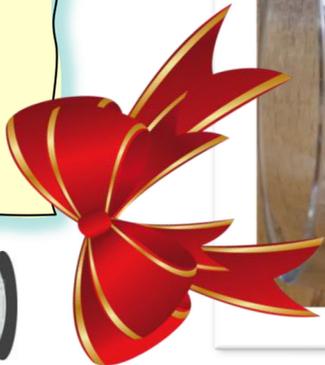
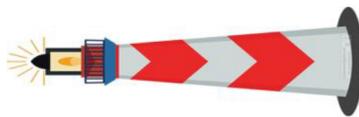
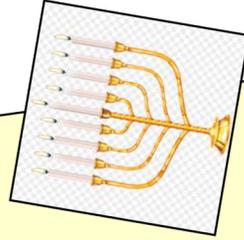
Make a Terrarium!

Find a jar, vase, or glass bowl. Place a few rocks in the bottom. Find some moss and lay it over the rocks. Moisten the moss with a little water. Now, make your terrarium scene. Find small items to add. Twigs make good winter trees. Small plastic people are cool. If you have a little lighthouse figure, it's even more fun! Remember to lightly water the moss about once a week.

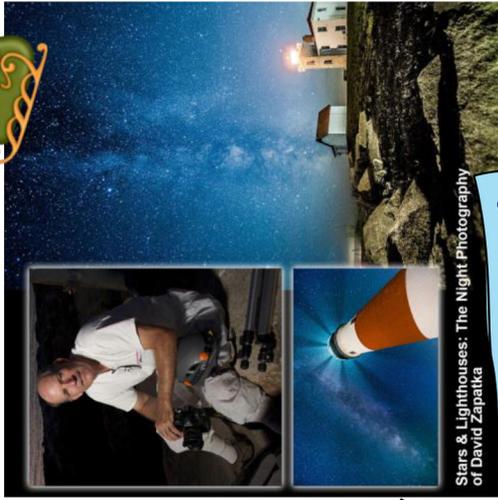
A Fun Limerick

There once was a lighthouse keeper,
Who was a very heavy sleeper;
If he overslept,
And the light was not kept;
He'd then be a new job seeker.

(Why? Because lighthouse keepers had to wake up in the night and tend to their light, or they'd be fired.)



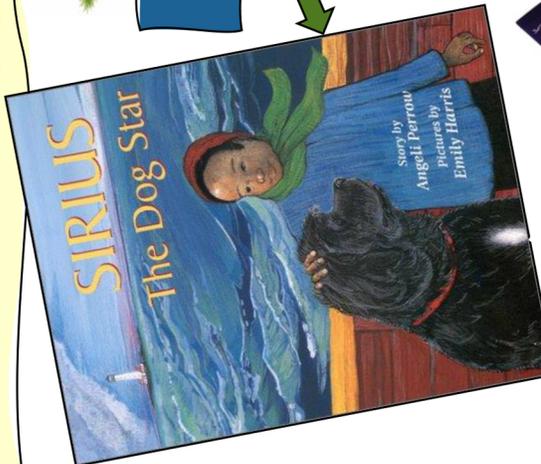
The Man Who Takes Night Photos



Stars & Lighthouses: The Night Photography of David Zapatka

David Zapatka, who lives in Rhode Island, has an awesome job. He travels the coastlines of the USA in a camper named Ruthie. But there's more! He takes photos of lighthouses at night with the stars and the Milky Way in the background. His pictures are amazing and show lighthouses doing what they are meant to do—shining their lights in the darkness to help small boats and big ships. David has published two books of his photos and has exhibited them in many galleries. He calls his beautiful work “Stars & Lights.” We think it's totally fun that David gets to stay up late and mess around with cameras, while traveling and camping out.

Go David and Ruthie!!! We love what you do!!!



Want a new book?
How about this one?



Riddle--What's in this Lighthouse Stocking?
Answer—More lighthouse stockings!!
Lighthouse socks really rock!
Send us a photo of your lighthouse socks!



Keeper Tom O'Hagan did not have a FitBit, because he lived many years ago at Ponce Inlet Lighthouse. But he wanted to know how many steps he took each day. The distance from his house to the lighthouse was 135 steps. The lighthouse has 203 steps. If the keeper went from his house to the top of the lighthouse and back six times each day, how many steps did he take altogether?

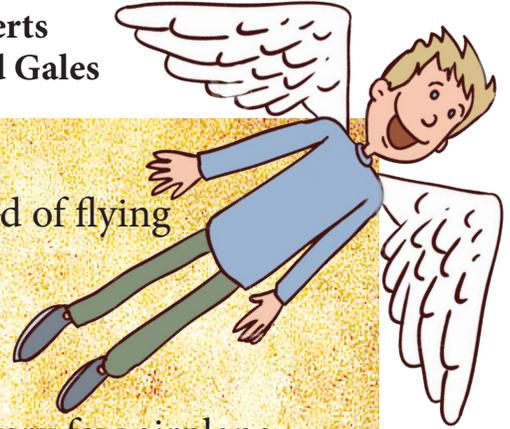
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Send us photos or scans of any lighthouse items you've made—ornaments, cookies, puzzles, paintings, drawings, or lighthouse things you collect. We have a wonderful place for them on our website.



The Flying Santa: A Tradition of Showing Appreciation

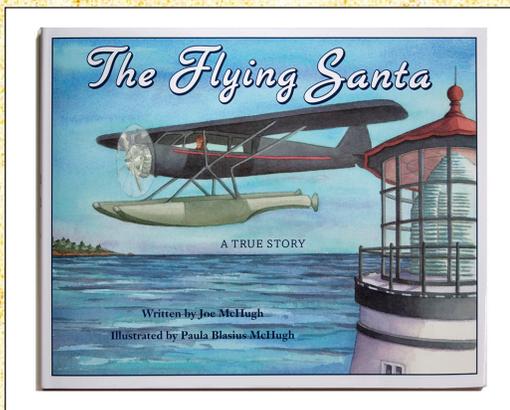
By Cheryl Shelton-Roberts
Graphic Design By Richard Gales



Over a century ago, a young man dreamed of flying like a bird.

Imagine:

Nearly 100 years ago, you are one of the very few airplane pilots—you are one of the first bravest of the brave to take a seaplane into the air and find your way to remote islands to deliver packages, supplies, medicine, and fly sick people to a doctor. One of the best pilots in the country, you are a hero to these people, but you are legendary because you did even more. You helped Santa Claus deliver Christmas spirit and gifts to lighthouse keepers and their families on lonely, far-away light stations where few people dared to travel.



Captain William (Bill) Wincapaw was the first Flying Santa. He liked to fly floatplanes because the floats allowed him to land and take off on water. He could reach islands surrounded by water to help people in need or stop and chat with a lighthouse keeper. Illustration courtesy of Joe and Paula McHugh.

You are William (Bill) Wincapaw /wink-uh-paw/ who became known as “The Flying Santa.”

Legend has it that Captain Bill Wincapaw was one of the first pilots who flew in a war and later become a “mercy” flier in Maine. He flew in good weather and bad and was not afraid



Bill Wincapaw was known to make daring flights even in snowstorms to help those in need along Maine's 3,000, hard-to-reach islands. Illustration courtesy of Joe and Paula McHugh.

of a rain or snowstorm. If someone living on a remote island or in hidden cove of the state needed medicine or transportation to medical help, Captain Bill Wincapaw was there to do the job.

During the years before reliable radio navigation made flying safer for pilots in 1920, Bill flew by the seat of his pants, so to speak. He used landmarks to guide him for miles in cloudy or rainy or snowy weather, and his favorite landmarks were lighthouses. Yes! They were the tallest things on the ground reaching up, up, up into the sky and they had a light to help them to be seen even better.

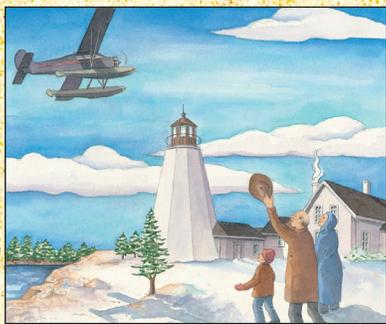
It was great fortune that the captain liked to fly all kinds of airplanes, but his favorite was a seaplane, or "floatplane." Bill often risked flights during bad weather because he knew the tricks to safely flying a floatplane. On takeoff, for instance, he had to have just the right speed for lift and the ailerons had to be at just the right angle to keep the plane balanced so it didn't flip over. He used his flying skills to reach just about any place surrounded by water even when there was nowhere



Captain Bill Wincapaw often used lighthouses to guide him when he was helping deliver supplies and medicines to sick people. The Owl's Head Light told him he was headed for his homebase in Rockland, Maine. Illustration courtesy of Joe and Paula McHugh.

to land on rocky islands or no roads to serve as a runway. His daring feats were written about in newspapers including the time he flew his plane and spotted seven young men stranded on big chunks of ice called “ice floes.” If he hadn’t found them, they would have frozen to death because rescue boats had great trouble finding and reaching them.

Bill loved his job helping people in need, and he knew that without the lighthouses being kept by hard-working lighthouse keepers and their families that his job would be nearly impossible, and many lives would be lost. He started landing near lighthouses and spending some time with the



Captain Wincapaw circled a light station to get a keeper's attention who would call his family out to watch gifts float down to their island. Illustration courtesy of Joe and Paula McHugh.

keepers to tell them how important their jobs were. He said many times to them, “Thank you for doing a fine job and keeping a good light.”

But he wanted to do more and to show his appreciation in a meaningful way to the dedicated keepers. His idea? He would help Santa at Christmastime to deliver packages to keepers at isolated stations and put a smile on

everyone’s face who lived at these sometimes lonely outposts. So, in 1929, Captain Bill Wincapaw made his first flights over Maine’s lighthouses and surprised the families with gifts that rained from the sky. He would first circle the station to get the keeper’s attention and then fly back again and drop well-wrapped packages to the waiting lighthouse families.

Sometimes he missed and the package with coffee or newspapers or puzzles would land in the water or on a rock. Sometimes, it took a while to find where the gifts landed, but it became a game to locate all the gifts dropped by the Flying Santa.

Bill received notes of joy and gratitude for the gifts he had delivered, and he planned to keep the tradition for as long as he could. His teenaged son, Bill Jr., became one of the youngest pilots in the country and started helping his dad drop packages to waiting and eager lighthouse keepers and their children. We all know that Santa can fly with reindeer, but Captain Bill and his son were Flying Santas in an airplane with floats instead of wheels for landing gear.

Next, something exciting happened. Bill Jr.'s high school history teacher asked if he could help with the Christmas cheer flights. "Of course!" was the answer. Edward Rowe Snow was not a pilot, but that didn't stop him. He and his wife and daughter started shopping and wrapping gifts for



the Christmas flights that reached dozens of light stations and their keepers. It became a big operation with businesses

helping to provide an airplane and gifts. Each year, waiting for the Flying Santa became a time of anticipation for kids at lighthouses.



The Flying Santa gave Seamond a new doll for Christmas. At right, she is with (l-r) her father, Keeper Octave Ponsart, Edward Rowe Snow, and her mother, Emma Cornell Ponsart.

On Cuttyhunk Island, a lighthouse keeper's daughter, Seamond, waited anxiously for the Flying Santa to fly over her home and drop some gifts. She wished with all her heart for a new doll, and that is exactly what Mr. Snow included in her family's package. Unfortunately, Seamond's doll was in a package that landed in a rocky crevice-- the island was covered with big rocks. Her dad fixed it up

and, although it was cracked and one arm broken, it became her favorite. She played nurse for her doll and took her everywhere she went on the island, even up to the top of the lighthouse.

Seamond's mother wrote a letter to Mr. Snow and told him what happened to her doll, and the next year, he rented a helicopter and landed and handed the gift personally to Seamond. He wanted to know that she received what she had wished for all year long, a perfect, undamaged doll for Christmas. She grew excited when it was time for the Flying Santa to visit.



Seamond thought that Flying Santa, Edward Rowe Snow, deserved a big thank you for personally delivering her Christmas gifts.

Photographs from the Seamond Ponsart Roberts private collection.

She had no siblings or friends close by to play with, so, she often played Parcheesi with her parents on a homemade board. She also felt happy when her older cousins occasionally



Seamond and one of her play pals, Skipper, lived on Cuttyhunk Island, Maine. Photo from the Seamond Ponsart Roberts private collection courtesy of Jeremy D'Entremont.

visited from three miles away in town. They knew Seamond was a bit lonely, so they joined her in simple games like playing school or grocery store, or they would cut out paper dolls and make up conversations among them. If the weather was good, she and her cousins ran to the rock beach and pretended they were mountain goats from out West by daringly jumping from rock to rock. And there was always the serious business of beachcombing for treasure, especially sea glass that was like pirates' jewels. Her dad built a swing, and she and her visitors loved to swing far out over the rocks and sand. And, of course, running up and down the lighthouse steps to the top of the tower was a favorite game until her dad had to remind them of the rules of no running on the steps and never any stomping heavily on them—as lighthouse keeper, he had to make sure the steps were always clean and strong.

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Not even the 2020 pandemic kept the Flying Santa from delivering Christmas cheer to excited Coast Guard kids at Station Jonesport, Maine. Photograph by Brian Tague and courtesy of the Friends of Flying Santa.



Seamond is all grown up now and retired from the U.S. Coast Guard. She wanted to show her appreciation after having received many gifts from the Flying Santa when she lived at a lighthouse. She became an elf to help him out one year. Christmastime is all about showing appreciation for shared kindness throughout the year. Photograph by Brian Tague and courtesy of the Friends of Flying Santa.

Seamond's mother made cookies and enjoyed sending her cousins off with cookies to eat on the way back to town, and she always made sure to send some to her aunt and uncle, a lobsterman.

Over time, there were several Flying Santas, but the tradition began with Captain Bill Wincapaw and son Bill Jr. who flew to lighthouses and life-saving stations, also called boat stations, for 18 years. Edward Rowe Snow, renowned maritime author and historian, continued the tradition for 40 years with the help of his wife Anna-Myrle and daughter Dolly. Thousands of man hours have gone into recognizing the great work of lighthouse keepers and the U.S. Coast Guard and their families in New England and beyond—over 600 Coast Guard children get gifts thanks to the Friends of Flying Santa.

Some of these children do not live at the coast guard stations with their parents; in this case, they are taken to the stations and not only get gifts but also get to see where their parents live and work. The Friends of Flying Santa makes stops at over five dozen lighthouses and U.S. Coast Guard stations and give out packages with candy, books, puzzles, and even dog biscuits.

Today, following in the tradition begun by Captain Bill Wincapaw, the Snows, and the Hull Life-Saving Station, the Friends of Flying Santa carry on the 92-year-old tradition of helping Santa bring Christmas spirit to US Coast Guard stations and the men and women who man these important, life-saving stations. The Friends of Flying Santa are so highly respected for their work that after the terrorist attacks on New York City in 2001 and flights over government properties were banned, the group was given special permission to make their gift drops over a number of light stations and coast guard boat stations.

Today, they continue to bring families together at Christmas, the best gift of all.



The author thanks: Joe and Paula McHugh who wrote and illustrated *The Flying Santa* (<https://www.callingcrane.com/books/flying-santa.html>; you can talk with the author and artist: familystories@comcast.net); *Love from the Sky* by Angeli Perrow and illustrated by Heidi Farrow (www.angeliperrow.com); Seamond Ponsart Roberts for personally describing her childhood at Cuttyhunk Island Lighthouse and for her amazing book *Everyday Heroes: The True Story of a Lighthouse Family* (available at amazon.com); and Jeremy D'Entremont for sharing photographs from Seamond Ponsart Roberts and Friends of Flying Santa. A comprehensive history of the Flying Santa by Brian Tague is at www.flyingsanta.org.



Number Fun for Lighthouse Kids

Lighthouses of Hawaii:

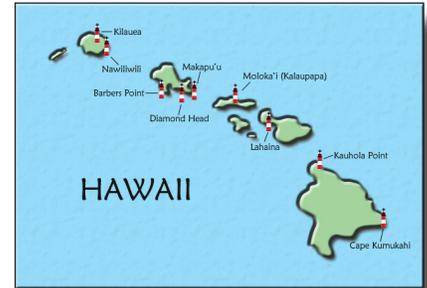
Using subtraction and regrouping three-digit numbers to find the difference.

Vocabulary you'll need to know: century, elevation, decade, landmark, stories.

Let's start!

Have you ever visited a lighthouse? Have you ever met a lighthouse keeper?

Wherever you find ships, and bodies of water, you will probably find a lighthouse.



Most lighthouses of the 21st century (our century today) run automatically without a keeper, but back in the 19th century, it was a different story. If only lighthouses could talk, what a story they could tell!

The state of Hawaii, an island chain, became a part of the United States August 21, 1959.

The tallest lighthouse in the state of Hawaii is the century old Kalaupapa Lighthouse. It was built on the island of Moloka'i in 1909 with an elevation of 66 feet. In 1982, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Moloka'i Lighthouse



Aloha Tower

The Aloha Tower, located in Honolulu Harbor, is both a lighthouse and a well-known landmark. The Aloha Tower was built in 1926 for \$160,000. It is 10 stories high measuring 184 feet tall, plus it has an additional 40 feet of flag mast. For four decades, it claimed the honor of being the tallest building.

There are many numbers, and number words in this passage. Which numbers should be used to find the difference in height between the Kalaupapa Lighthouse, and the Aloha Tower?

Hint: Compare heights to find out.

Of the two lighthouses mentioned, which one is taller? How much taller is the landmark in Honolulu than the lighthouse in Moloka'i?

Think, which operation finds the difference?

A $184 + 40 =$ _____ B $1982 - 1909 =$ _____

C $1926 \times 1982 =$ _____ D $184' - 138' =$ _____

F How many years in a decade?

E How many years in a century?

G In the story does the word 'stories' mean something you read, or levels in a building?

H. Does "elevation" mean hovering or height?

I. True or False: Landmark, a noun, means, an object or feature of a landscape or town that is easily seen and recognized from a distance, especially one that enables someone to establish their location.

Thank you to Randa Jacob for submitting this activity. Want to submit one of your own?

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