



## **President's Report 2020 as presented March 22, 2021 at the FoNL Annual Meeting**

*We are committed to save, restore, and preserve Nobska Light Station, to repurpose the Keeper's House into a maritime museum, and share the Nobska Story with future generations.*

My disclaimer—it is impossible to report on the accomplishments of 2020 amid a global pandemic without emotion and extreme bias for those who gave above and beyond the standard board member and volunteer expectations in the nonprofit sector. Like so many, the Friends of Nobska Light felt the impact of COVID-19 but in adjusting to the needs I believe we discovered strengths and opportunities previously untapped.

March of 2020 forced all of us to take a deep breath, pause, find ways to take care of those around us, stay safe and move forward. We recommitted to our shared vision but now through the lens of a pandemic—nothing I ever imagined would happen in my lifetime nor outside my profession in healthcare. We adjusted, remained flexible and stayed committed to Nobska and her community.

Thank you to all our Board members many of whom assumed added responsibilities as we decreased operational costs. Join me in thanking two of the newest board members, Sally Colacicco and Lara Balter, who both assumed an interim officer role at the end of 2020 while continuing their engagement in numerous committee activities.

We all expected the Facilities Committee to be active during the construction project, but I was amazed and extremely grateful for how the team responded with energy and commitment to meet the additional needs in 2020. Together we developed a COVID action plan for staff, board members and volunteers specific to site visits and interactions that assured the safety of all those engaged in our mission. The Committee collaborated with both Catalyst and Dellbrook to minimize the impact of supply chain interruptions, manpower shortages and cost increases. Work schedules were adjusted to assure safety and efficiencies in manpower and cost.

Work completed within the Keeper's house included a new ADA bathroom, upgrades to two additional bathrooms on second floor, insulation, trim, walls, paint, lighting plan updates and installation, HVAC system design changes and installation, interior and exterior doors, hardware, locks, fencing, security system and many more details too long to list. Amazing work, thank you Pat Burke, Steve Levy, Phil Richardson, John Scanlon, Lara Balter and Jeff Thomas for your commitment and continued attention to detail. The team developed a thorough punch list with Dellbrook and Catalyst and continue to work through the needs as materials and subcontractors become available.

A special thank you to Jeff Thomas and Pat Burke for developing a caretaker program that engaged our volunteers and continues to keep them part of Nobska's path forward. Thank you to all of the volunteers, our modern-day keepers, assuring the house, tower and site are secure and attended to when there is a need. Every day—weekday, weekends, holidays, pre storms, post storms—7 days a week our caretakers are on site. Thank you for your commitment and hours of volunteering.

Under the leadership of Eric Wisch, we continued our Capital Campaign despite the need to pause direct solicitation of gifts. Instead, the Capital Campaign Committee stayed connected to our community and donors through biweekly communications, social media and indirect interactions. Our digital newsletter was made possible with assistance of volunteer Kate Maguire now transitioned to Kat Johnson. The committee hosted our first virtual happy hour and developed two appeals: Summer's End in September and the End of the Year Appeal sent in November with outcomes similar to those of past years. We now have a Business Outreach Team and although their work was postponed began cultivation of select businesses in December. Members of the committee collaborated with Barbara Meissner on Stewardship

opportunities like the display window at Howlingbird Studios on Queen's Byway. Carissa April engaged a local artist Liana Rasmussen to create the magnificent holiday silhouettes in the windows of the Keeper's house. Sally shared one of her watercolor paintings of Nobska and together with Lara created the "Perfect Holiday Gift" opportunity offering a personalized gift card sent to a Nobska enthusiast for a minimal donation. I continue to be amazed by the creativity and flexibility of this committee and the Board members who lend them a hand.

Thanks to the efforts of Jeannine Jeffery, also a member of the Capital Campaign Committee, and Lara Balter, we can proudly report that our donor database is current and designed to efficiently create reports and support both individual and mass mailings. In addition to her role as treasurer, Lara agreed to be the primary owner of the database to assure accuracy moving forward.

We successfully aligned construction activities with the expectations of reimbursement grants awarded over the past few years and received funds from both the Community Preservation and Massachusetts Cultural Council Grants. These monies combined supported over \$754,000 in capital improvements in 2020. A sincere thank you to Mary Harris for her efforts in securing these resources.

To date we have reached close to \$2.8 million dollars of the \$5 million/3yr goal.

The United States Coast Guard completed an important element of the divesture process in April—soil remediation. This was followed by soil replacement and seeding. To our great surprise the grass took in some parts and then came in strong after a second seeding in the Fall.

The Coast Guard also completed an audit of the Friends of Nobska Light in August concluding FoNL is "doing a good job raising funds then using them to keep this treasure looking good." They expressed gratitude for partners like us who exemplify how these relationships benefit the public. We are not alone in this project.

Five years ago, March 16, 2016, the Friends of Nobska Light, entered a contract with the Town of Falmouth and the United States Coast Guard to save Nobska and implement a master plan ensuring community access to this icon. We are grateful to celebrate the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this relationship and look forward to our continued collaboration. Julian, Sam and all our town representatives, thank you for your support and leadership. We also recognize the contributions of those who completed their service to Friends of Nobska in 2020—thank you Mary, Bob, Catherine, Susan as well as departing members of our Advisory Board.

Nobska continued to be a destination for peaceful reflection and awe-inspiring moments captured by our local photographers, artist, and tourists. She served as the backdrop for numerous engagements and elopements and endless selfies posted on social media. Thank you to our volunteers like Margaret Sulanowska who assisted a couple with parking and navigating the site while eloping in a rainstorm on New Year's Day.

Back to the bias I mentioned at the start of this report, thank you to the spouses, partners, friends, and/or family members of our Board who support your continued engagement and when times are rough provide the love and laughter we all need.

Navigating 2020 required us to restructure, adjust our budget, suspend tours at Nobska, and maintain a safety plan which included so many Zoom meetings like this. With the combined strength of the Board, the Town of Falmouth, our donors, and all those who visited and cared for Nobska, we continued to move forward and fulfill the mission that joins us here today. Yes, 2020 had complexities and uncertainties but for Nobska perhaps 2020 is best remembered as a *Year of Gratitude*.

All the best,

*Kathy*

Kathy Walrath, President