

# Visual Orientation For Volunteers

**With special thanks to these dedicated volunteers for their input:**

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**With gratitude to all of the dedicated volunteers at the Pensacola Lighthouse.**

*"There are two ways of spreading light - to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it."*

*Edith Wharton*



# Introduction

**Greetings!**

If you are reading this message, you have agreed to volunteer your time at the Pensacola Lighthouse. We are so glad that you are here. By now, you will have read the volunteer manual. This manual is your guide to having a successful volunteer experience, as well as being able to provide a successful experience for the many guests you will encounter.

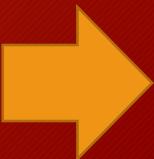
The visual guide that you are about to review is a compact tool to help you to adjust to the many questions you will be asked, and some of the issues that you may face while you are volunteering at the top of the tower, the base, or inside of the Museum house.

The amount of information may seem overwhelming, but the purpose of the power point is to help you to select a few facts and nuggets about the PLH to share with our guests. You are not expected to know everything contained in this informative presentation. However, over time, as you become comfortable, you can build on your knowledge and learn more about this wonderful place. The more you know, the more confident you will be and the more engaged you will become during your volunteer time.

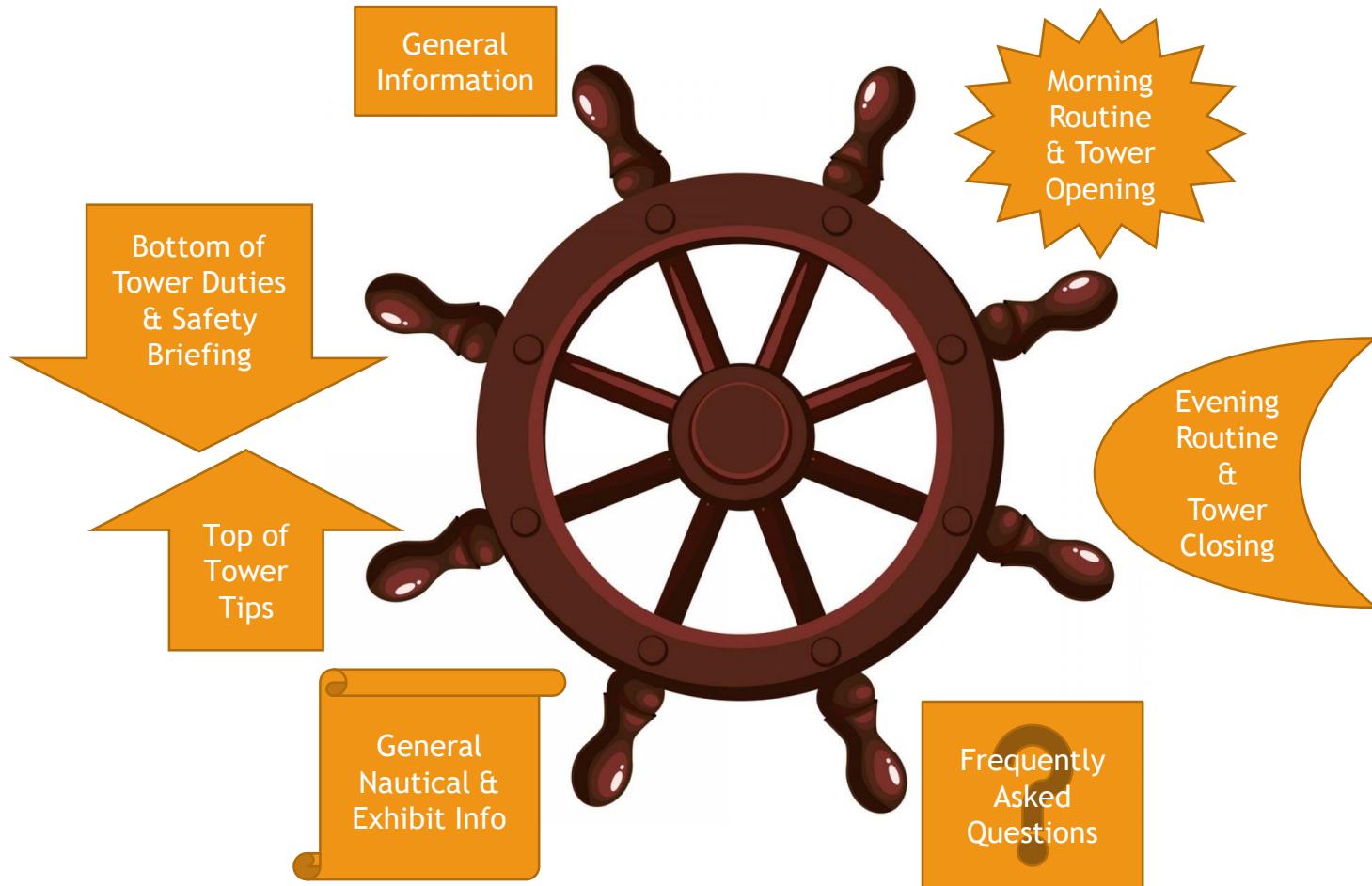
You will be trained by a volunteer mentor. Don't be daunted by how much he or she knows; because they, like you, started in the same place and had to build their store of knowledge. Always feel free to ask any volunteer or staff for assistance of any kind. We believe in the old saying that, "there are no stupid questions".

We appreciate you and wish you the greatest success in growing in this volunteer experience.

Thank you for being part of keeping the light shining!



# Table Of Contents



# General Info for Volunteers

- You will be trained by a seasoned volunteer mentor and will be allowed to shadow him/her until you are comfortable enough to be at the top or base alone. The tips below are important to keep in mind so that you are comfortable with guest safety.
- This is a list of frequently observed issues and needs from our experienced volunteers. During your training time, feel free to ask anything that comes to mind. We want you to feel comfortable at the top!



# Morning Routine

## In The Mornings:

- Before you climb in the mornings, first lock the deadbolts on the wooden door.
- As you make your way to the top, open up the shutters and windows.
  - If there is a hard rain or storm, consult with a manager about opening the windows. If you are at the base during a storm, you will be asked to shut the first window, secure the outside door, and open the wooden door to allow guest access.
- Open the door at the top, loop the rope around the exterior ladder and hook it to itself to hold the door open.
- Turn-On your radio when you arrive and perform a radio check at the top or at the base. Return it to the dock in the evenings for charging.



# Evening Routine

## In The Afternoons:

- Close the exterior door at the top, loop the rope around the interior ladder and hook it to itself to hold the door closed.
- Turn-Off your radio and return it to the dock in the evenings for charging.
- Un-plug space heater or fan (if used)
- Empty Trash, bring bag with you to bottom.
- As you make your way to the bottom, close up the shutters and windows.
- Close and latch the North Tower door.
- Unlock two large deadbolts on wooden door, exit the door, close it and place the rubber wheel chock against it.



# Bottom Duties & Safety Briefing

- Base safety instructions include:
  - (No flip flops allowed on stairs, may be carried up or left in shoe caddy),
- Hold rail on the left
  - Unless guest encounters others coming down, then step right, hold on to the step in front of them, and allow the others to pass.
- Watch for the narrow head space in two areas marked in orange,
- Watch for the lens, it has pointed tips that hang down.
- Check for wristbands, hand stamps and the star stamp on children too young to climb. If the guest is without any of these, please send them to the Gift Shop.
- Children climb in between parents. If an adult is alone, children go up in front of the adult and down behind them.
- If there are wind gusts advise guests about weather conditions at the top, and caution them about headwear and glasses.
- Maintain constant contact with the top of tower volunteer, especially on busy days and/or when the weather is bad.
- Guests can have water, but no other food or drink. We also ask guests to dispose of chewing gum. While guests are waiting to climb offer historical information, be engaging about where they are from, etc.



# Top of Tower Tips

- Stay in constant contact with the base and gift shop. Do not leave your radio inside; carry it with you at all times.
  - During the busy season, this is particularly important to keep the flow of guests up and down the stairs regulated.
- Only 15 people are allowed to be on the catwalk at one time.
- Keep the guests moving around the catwalk, keep in touch with base regarding how many people you have at the top, and advise the base when guests have started to clear the area, so more people can begin the climb. Regulated movement is essential so that everyone can share the experience at the top. We do not want any bottlenecks inside of the tower or on the ground.
- Additionally, and most importantly, the height requirement to be at the top is 44". Some guests try to sneak their small children to the top. If the child has a star stamp on their hand, the guests and the child need to go back down immediately to the Gift Shop. Adults are not allowed to carry their children up/down the stairs or on the catwalk regardless of height.
- If guests appear to be in distress, disoriented, or exhausted, allow them to sit down in the chair. Some people are afraid of heights and may require assistance descending. If anyone is anxious or frightened and unable to descend safely, call the Gift Shop.



# Top of Tower Tips

- Always remain outside on the catwalk when guests are present and walk around the perimeter regularly. If guests are at the top, do not remain inside under any circumstances.
- Learn how to use the wind and lightening meters. Keep in regular contact with the base and Gift Shop about any changes in weather, especially wind gusts and lightening. You will be making the determination of whether or not if it is safe to have people on the catwalk under various conditions. *Discuss this issue with your volunteer mentor.* (reference volunteer manual page #)
- Be vigilant and assertive about briefing parents not to allow their children to extend their arms, legs, head, or any other body part through the railing. It is important that no one runs around the catwalk, if guests are unable to control their children, or they themselves endanger the safety of others, ask them to leave the catwalk. Remember, you are in charge at the top
- Do not allow children under the age of 12 to climb the tower or descend the stairs unless they are accompanied by an adult. If a child comes up alone, radio the base, and find out the status of the adult who belongs to the child. During the ascent/descent of the tower, if two adults are present, small children climb up/down between the adults. If one adult is present, the child(ren) go up in front of the adult and down behind him/her.
- Absolutely no one is allowed to climb the stairs up to the lens deck unless it he/she is an employee or contractor.



# Top of Tower Tips

- Know the procedure in the event of an emergency. Notify the Gift Shop immediately and remain in constant contact with them throughout this time. Know the location of the AED, first aid kit, water, and candy (for diabetic guests). Notify the Gift Shop if you are running low. You may be asked to fill out an accident report. Be observant. *Discuss this with your volunteer mentor. (reference volunteer manual page #)*
- Guests are not allowed to wear flip flops on the stairs to make the climb to the top. However, if the base is unattended, they will frequently do so. They do have the option to wear their flip flops on the deck of the catwalk because it is often hot and/or damp. They have to remove them before they descend.
- Guests are frequently frightened at the top. They do not have to come out onto the catwalk. Also, going down the small staircase is often an issue. They can sit on the stairs, or they can turn around and go down like they are descending a ladder.
- If you are unsure, feel uncomfortable, or need a bathroom break at anytime during your shift, do not hesitate to radio for assistance.



# Frequently Asked Questions

- Is the light still in operation?
  - Yes, it is. It has a sensor on the north side of the building that turns the light off and on automatically at dusk and dawn. People whose boats do not have GPS continue to rely on the light for guidance.
- How old is the Lighthouse?
  - The lighthouse was first lit on January 1, 1859. Recently, there was a 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration to commemorate this date. The Keeper's quarters were added in 1869.
- Why does the lens turn & why is the tower painted two different colors?
  - Every lighthouse has its own signature or characteristic. Our light is set to rotate so that a beam of light passes every 20 seconds. The signature varies with other lighthouses, either faster or slower. Some may pulse or have a steady light. This signature is printed on mariner's charts, so, that by counting the interval time between light flashes, a location can be determined. (Daymark: 2/3 black, 1/3 white. This is a unique paint scheme which identifies the Pensacola light during the day. If the tower were white, it would not stand out to ships because it would blend in the grey sky. The black contrasts against the sky, and green foliage stands out against the white background).
- Is this the original lens?
  - Yes, the lens was built in Paris, France, in the late 1850's by Henri LePaute. The design was by Augustin-Jean Fresnel (Fruh-nel), from which the lens draws its name. It was transported here in pieces and assembled at the top of the tower in time to be lit on January 1, 1859. During the Civil War, it was disassembled and moved to Montgomery, AL, but it was reinstalled in 1869.
  - The Union placed a 4<sup>th</sup> order lens at the top of the tower and this smaller lens was used during the interval.



# Frequently Asked Questions

- What turned the lens prior to electricity?

- The lens was turned by a clock mechanism that sat below it. The lighthouse keeper had to wind the rotating mechanism by pulling on chains that extended below the lens room and through the watch level. This had to be done around the clock every three hours. You can see the oval cutout in the floor below. In 1965, the rotation became automated, so the chain system became obsolete. Today the light is powered by a 1,000 watt light bulb; however, historically another important duty of the keeper was to carry two 5 gallon oil cans of kerosene to the top every day to refill the oil lanterns. The lens casts its light out 27 miles. When the light was powered by kerosene, the light beam went out 19 miles.

- How high up are we?

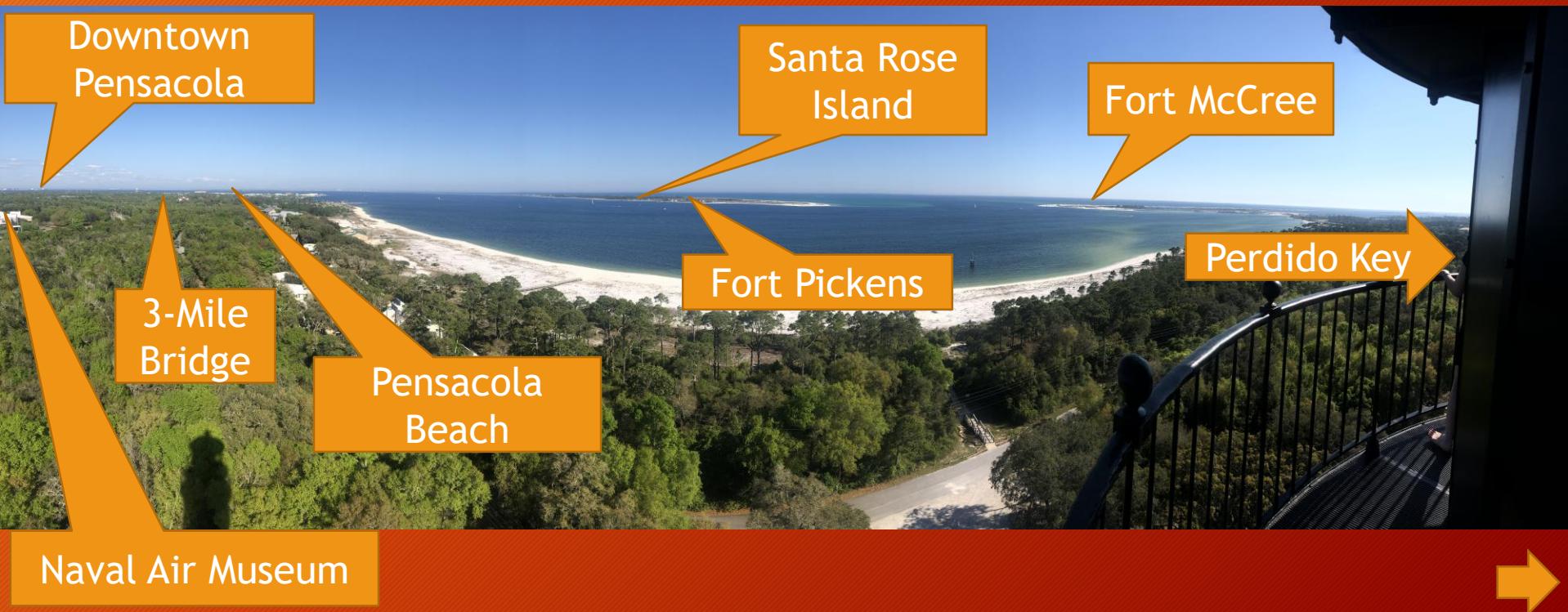
- You are 130 feet above the ground and you climbed 177 steps to reach this catwalk, which is approximately a 15-story climb. The lens is 10 feet above you. The total tower height is 151'. Focal Plane (some guests ask about this because it is mentioned on our sign): The focal plane is the distance from the level of the water to the optical center of the lens. Our focal plane is 191 feet, and is the highest in the State of Florida.

\*Ponce Inlet is the tallest lighthouse, St Augustine's lighthouse is taller BUT both are built on flat ground and thus have lower focal planes.



# Frequently Asked Questions

- What is that island out there?
- Other major landmarks seen from the catwalk:



# Frequently Asked Questions

- **Are we on a military base?**

- Yes, the majority of the Pensacola Naval Air Station belongs to the U.S. Navy. The land where we are currently standing, belongs to the U.S. Coast Guard.

- **How many times a day do you have to go up and down the stairs?**

- During our volunteer shift, we usually only go up/down once, unless there are bad weather conditions or an emergency that requires us to go more than once.
- Our lighthouse keeper on staff climbs twice per day. Once at 8 a.m. to install the curtains and stop the lens rotation and once at 4 p.m. to lower the curtains, resume lens rotation, check lens timing, and lamp life. (weekdays)

- **Can I watch the Blue Angels perform from here?**

- Yes, you can make reservations to see the Blues practice. You can make your reservations on the PLH website ([www.pensacolalighthouse.org](http://www.pensacolalighthouse.org)) or call (850) 393-1561, option 3. (Current cost is \$25.00 per person).

- **Is the Lighthouse haunted?**

- In 2009, the Ghost Hunters from the SyFy Channel spent the night in the Lighthouse and deemed it the most haunted lighthouse in the United States. People have reported the trap door closing at the top of the stairs in the lens room, the smell of pipe smoke on the stairs, light orbs, cold spots, and occasional sightings of apparitions. We also have Ghost Tours that you can participate in as an evening activity.



# General Nautical & Exhibit Info

- **Range Markers –**

- These low tech navigation aids are a simple way to help captains stay in the channel as they are coming in to port.
- There is only one straight line between two points, so when the captain sees one stripe, he knows that he is in the channel.



- **Signal Flags –**

- In the Coast Guard Room, you can observe a backup system that is still in use today which helps ships to communicate with one another without electronics.
- Each flag stands for a letter, but shortcuts are available. For example: the red/yellow diagonal means "man overboard".



- **Fresnel Lens Display –**

- This room is dedicated to the art and science of illumination throughout lighthouse history. It shows several examples of lighting technology. A replica 4<sup>th</sup> order Fresnel Lens is displayed along with an interactive model of its function.



- **Interpretative Panel Showing Cannonball Damage –**

- Early in the Civil War, Union troops fired on the Lighthouse, which was held by the Confederacy at that time. Ft. Pickens, which you can see from the top, was the Union Army's stronghold. The Confederacy occupied the Lighthouse, Ft. Barrancas, and Ft. McCree (which was destroyed in a hurricane). They ultimately abandoned these areas, and dismantled the Fresnel lens and moved it to Montgomery, Alabama. In doing so, their hope was to disrupt the resupply of Ft. Pickens, however, the Union replaced the lens with a smaller, 4<sup>th</sup> Order Fresnel lens. Ultimately, the original lens was restored to the top in 1869.



# General Nautical & Exhibit Info

- Timeline Trivia - Stephen Pleasonton was promoted to the be the "fifth auditor of the U.S. Treasury", because he had the foresight to move the Constitution of the United States and the Declaration of Independence to safety when the British Troops burned Washington in 1814. In his position, he was in charge of lighthouses, and during his tenure, the Fresnel lens was invented. He was such a penny pincher, that he would not approve the purchase of Fresnel lenses. Therefore, Congress had to work around him, and that is how we, and others got their Fresnel lenses.
- Gargoyle - When you are on the catwalk, be sure to turn around and look up to see the 16 gargoyles at the top, one at each point of the compass. Not only do some people believe that they scare away evil spirits, but they also act as a downspout when it rains. The water comes out through the mouths so it does not stream down the glass and reduce the visibility of our light on stormy nights.
- Samuel Lawrence Sign - As told by one of our volunteers, John Walen. When John went to make the sign to honor Samuel, a keeper for many years, he chose a piece of mahogany, which cracked when he began to cut it. Using black walnut instead, John selected a fancy bit with curly cues to carve out the letters, and placed it on his workbench. When he came back, the bits were scattered all over his work bench, as well as the floor, but the one he had selected was nowhere to be found. He ended up using a plain bit, which resulted in a very plain sign. John found out that Samuel Lawrence was a plain-spoken man, so John thinks it was Samuel's hand guiding him in the making of the sign.



# General Nautical & Exhibit Info

- Oldest Artifact in the museum - This is a small piece of Spanish Armor in the Plexiglas case on the wall. The Spanish used to put stout cloth on top of the armor and hold it in place with pins. The remnants of the pins are still visible.
- A recreated berth from a ship is in the basement, along with the knee from the U.S.S. Constitution, which came from a Florida live oak tree (notice the interpretive panel).
- Pensacola Industries - In the past, tall ships were frequently seen in Pensacola's naturally deep water harbor. Lumber was the coin of the realm. Carmelo Pennise's story represents the success of immigrants who came to this area in search of a better life.
- Winch In Oil Shed - Yellow fever was thought to be contagious until around 1900 when it was discovered that mosquitoes were the vectors. Prior to that time, people who had contracted the disease were sent to Deadman's Island (near Gulf Breeze, FL), and this winch helped to pull the small boats ashore.
- Women who Kept the Light exhibit –Telling the stories of the often untold lives of women lighthouse keepers all over the United States, this exhibit highlights a few of their heroic efforts to keep the lights shining. Additionally, it also highlights their successors, the SPARs, the female Coast Guard Auxiliary established during WWII.
- Reading Room / Library – Guests of all ages can learn and explore various topics related to Pensacola's past ,as well as historical and maritime information.

