



Nantucket Lightship Basket Museum

Weaving Nantucket's Past Into Its Future

Members' Collection



2011 Exhibit



Nantucket Lightship Basket Museum

49 Union Street • Nantucket, MA 02584

Five minute walk from Main Street

Parking available

Phone: 508.228.1177 • Fax: 508-228-7092

www.nantucketlightshipbasketmuseum.org

Hours

Tuesday – Saturday
May 27 – October 8
10:00 AM – 4:30 PM

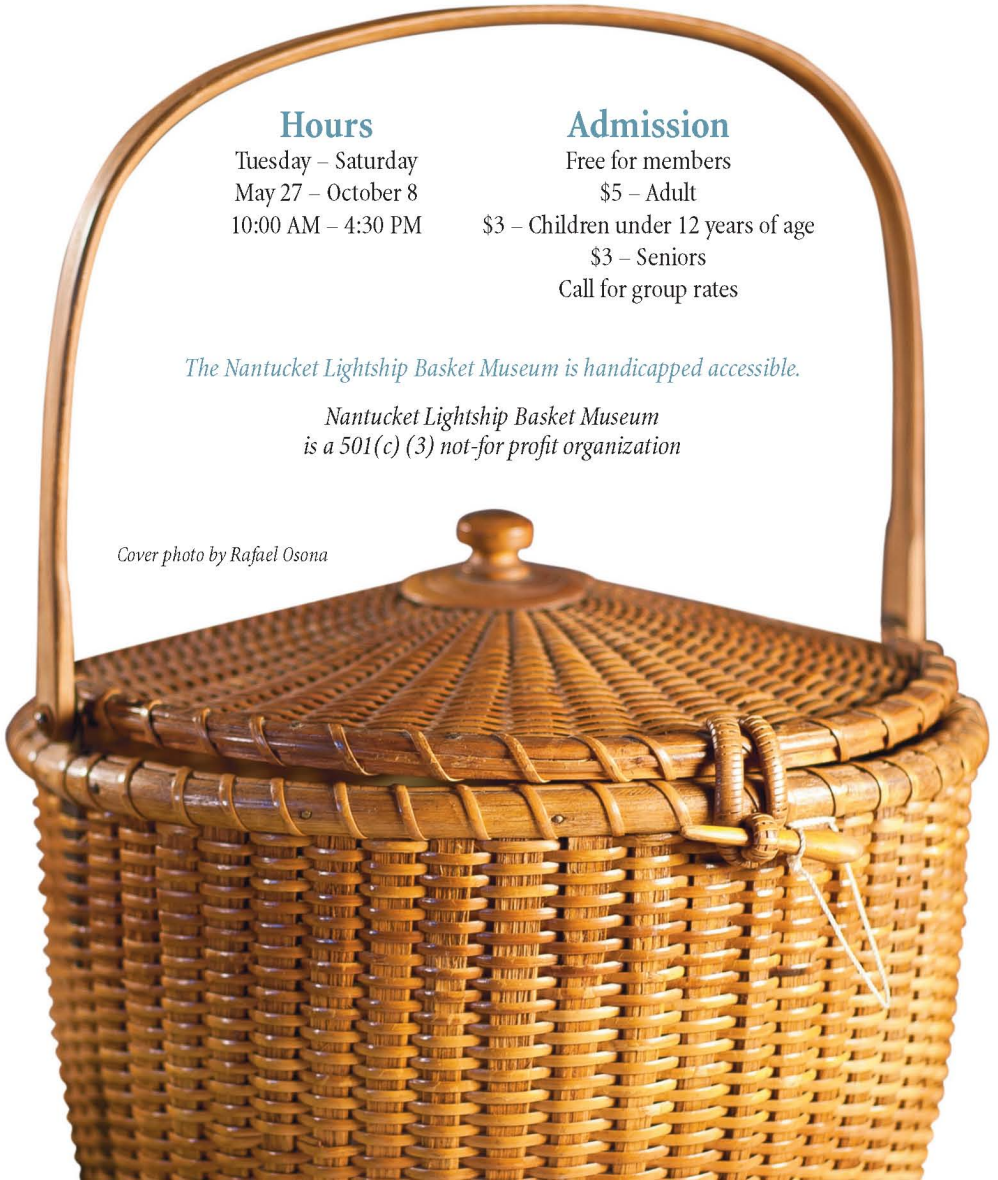
Admission

Free for members
\$5 – Adult
\$3 – Children under 12 years of age
\$3 – Seniors
Call for group rates

The Nantucket Lightship Basket Museum is handicapped accessible.

*Nantucket Lightship Basket Museum
is a 501(c)(3) not-for profit organization*

Cover photo by Rafael Osona



2011 Exhibit Members' Collection

The 2011 exhibit celebrates the varied and classic lightship baskets collected by our members through the years. From our founders to our newest supporters, the common thread that binds us all is a passion for these beautifully handcrafted historic pieces indigenous to our island. This exhibit covers the artfully simple antique pieces of yesterday to the elaborate and defining treasures that we see today.

All of these baskets have their own unique stories which passionate collectors are eager to share. The collectors themselves have stories to tell, in their searches for certain pieces, falling in love with a basket unexpectedly, a desire to own a particular basket maker's nest or a variety of work from different eras and makers of different backgrounds. The stories are as varied as the baskets presented here and each highlights the colorful characters of the weavers themselves.

As part of our ongoing research and documentation of historic basket makers we are focusing on three significant weavers from three time periods. William (Billy) D. Appleton, b.1851-d.1918, a lightship keeper who wove baskets aboard the *No. 1 New South Shoal*; Ferdinand Sylvaro, b.1868-d.1952, who made baskets on land in the 1920s - the post lightship era - who also had many connections to the lightship keepers, including Mr. Appleton and Stephen Gibbs, b.1896 - d.1974, who primarily wove ladies' purses in the late 1950s through the 1970s. Mr. Gibbs' baskets are easily recognized by their distinctive golden honey patina.

Also included in this exhibit are baskets from the Katherine and Edgar Seeler book, *Nantucket Lightship Baskets* which individual members have collected through the years. The Seelers were founding members of the museum and renowned authorities on the basket making craft.

We hope you enjoy this special exhibition of a peek into the private and rare collections of our museum members. Their collections not only preserve this craft and its intrinsic value, but offer a deeper understanding of the lightship basket's true place in our island's history.



William D. Appleton

1851 – 1918



William (Billy) D. Appleton was one of nine children. Research indicates that William D. Appleton was on board the whaling vessel *Martha Wrightington* of Nantucket that sailed from New Bedford on July 2, 1866. Upon retiring, as was the case of many whalers, Appleton became a lightship crewman who wove baskets aboard the *No. 1 New South Shoal* lightship. It is believed that the baskets that were made aboard the *No. 1 New South Shoal* lightship are among the highest quality of antique baskets.

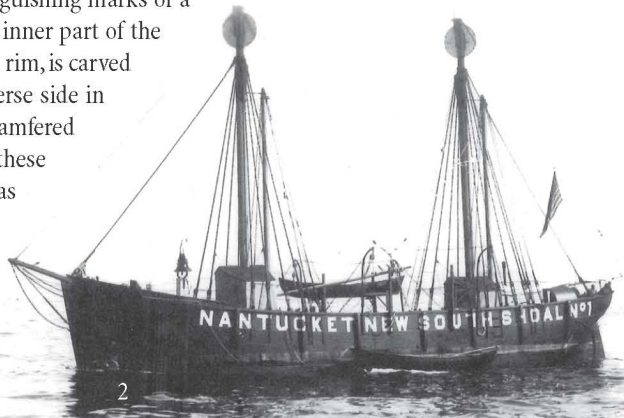
William D. Appleton married Mary E. Mendel in the winter of 1881. There is no record of children from that marriage. In the late 1800s and into the early 20th century, William D. Appleton was listed as a “liveryman,” which was the earlier version of taxi cab driver. William D. Appleton’s business card was double sided. One side listed the cost of a ride to ‘Sconset as well as other destinations around the island. The flip side advertised that he was a lightship basket weaver with a workshop on Lower Orange Street. William D. Appleton continued to weave until around 1910 on land after his duty on board the *No. 1 New South Shoal* lightship ended.

William D. Appleton was influenced by Davis Hall, a fellow lightship crewman, who was known for creating the first oval form of lightship baskets. William D. Appleton shared his knowledge with A.D. Williams, who then taught Ferdinand Sylvaro. Ferdinand Sylvaro is also featured in this exhibit.

It is important to note the distinguishing marks of a William D. Appleton basket. The inner part of the carved handle, where it meets the rim, is carved into a stylized point. On the reverse side in the same spot, there is a slight chamfered edge. Collectors will look for these signature details, if the label has come off in the process of time.



RATES	
With or Without Drivers.	
SINGLE TEAMS:	
Siasconset.....	\$3.00
Siasconset by way of Polpis Road.....	3.50
Surfside and Siasconset.....	5.00
Wauwinet.....	3.50
Wauwinet and Siasconset.....	5.00
Madaket.....	3.00
Surfside.....	2.00
Water Works.....	1.50
Monomoy.....	1.50
Sankaty.....	3.50
Quidnet.....	3.00
Polpis.....	2.50
Hammock Pond.....	3.00
Around town, per hour.....	1.00
Double Teams—Double Rates.	



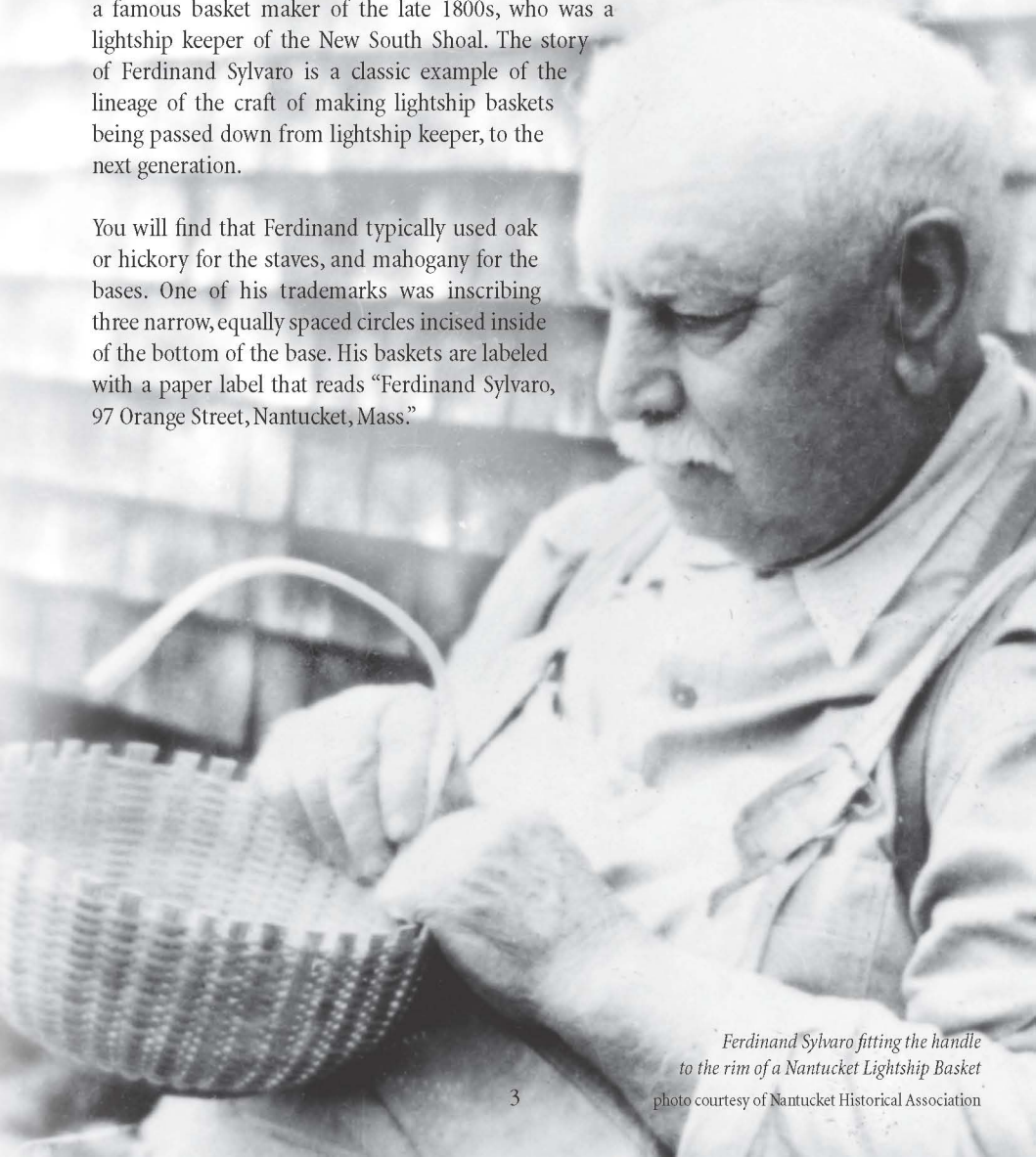
Ferdinand Sylvaro

(1868-1852)

A house painter by trade, Ferdinand Sylvaro was a Nantucket native of Portuguese decent and married a woman named Althea Macy (not to be confused with scrimshander Aletha Macy) Ferdinand Sylvaro worked from his shop that was attached to his home on 97 Orange Street. He was among the “on land” weavers who made baskets in the 1920s. Research suggests that his neighbor, A.D. Williams, taught him the craft of weaving Nantucket lightship baskets. A.D. Williams was taught by William D. Appleton, who is also featured in this exhibit.

Ferdinand Sylvaro owned molds that belonged to Davis Hall, a famous basket maker of the late 1800s, who was a lightship keeper of the New South Shoal. The story of Ferdinand Sylvaro is a classic example of the lineage of the craft of making lightship baskets being passed down from lightship keeper, to the next generation.

You will find that Ferdinand typically used oak or hickory for the staves, and mahogany for the bases. One of his trademarks was inscribing three narrow, equally spaced circles incised inside of the bottom of the base. His baskets are labeled with a paper label that reads “Ferdinand Sylvaro, 97 Orange Street, Nantucket, Mass.”



Ferdinand Sylvaro fitting the handle to the rim of a Nantucket Lightship Basket

photo courtesy of Nantucket Historical Association

Stephen Gibbs

(1896- 1974)

Stephen Gibbs and his wife Loretta operated a basket shop for 20 years where they made and sold lightship baskets. The shop was located at the rear of his brother-in-law's house on Madaket Road. The couple also ran a small bed and breakfast out of the house he was raised in to supplement their income. This house is located on the corner of Ash Lane and North Water St. Prior to his basket work, Stephen Gibbs was an accomplished woodworker and builder on Nantucket, giving him the knowledge to make all of the components for his baskets. After he suffered a heart attack, he turned to the less physical work of making Nantucket baskets, with general focus on ladies handbags.



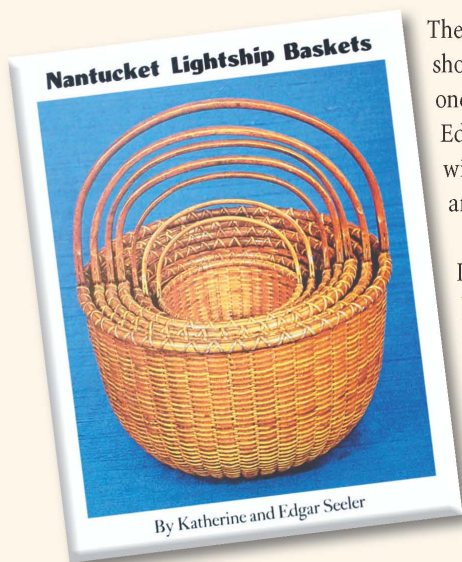
Although it is said that Stephen Gibbs is mainly a self taught Nantucket basket maker, he was introduced to basketry when as a small boy Stephen's mother had him bring supper to Mitchy Ray. Mitchy Ray was a well known island character, as well as a third generation Nantucket basket maker, whose neighbors were accustomed to looking after the confirmed bachelor.

Stephen Gibbs wove baskets for 20 years from 1954 until he passed away in 1974; his baskets are among the finest woven and highest quality of this time period. Mr. Gibbs used oak for his staves and frequently placed a long, ivory clasp to hold the peg on his purses. This clasp has become a trademark of a Gibbs baskets. Stephen Gibbs' nephew, Douglas Porchette, has been quoted as saying, "they were always two years behind in orders." Some would call a Gibbs basket indestructible. Ask any current weaver who has completed a repair on one of Mr. Gibbs' baskets!

Baskets featured in Katherine and Edgar Seeler's book,

Nantucket Lightship Baskets

on display in 2011 Exhibit



The Nantucket Lightship Basket Museum's 2011 showcase exhibit promises to be an exciting one. Some examples featured in Katherine and Edgar Seeler's book, *Nantucket Lightship Baskets* will be on display, currently owned by collectors and members of the Museum.

It was great passion for Nantucket lightship baskets and joy in their personal collection that moved the Seelers to document the relationship and progression of the pieces, from Native American baskets through the Nantucket lightship era to present day craftsmanship.

The first copy of *Nantucket Lightship Baskets*, published in 1973, quickly gained much respect as a unique and useful guide for collectors, hobbyists and those interested in the history and workmanship of the craft.

The Museum gratefully appreciates our members' sharing their collections for this exhibit and their desire to preserve the historical significance and craftsmanship of the lightship basket.





“Moby Dick” –This basket was specially made for Joe & Kathy Gallichio in 2007, by Michael & Marcia Kane with scrimshaw by Dorothy O’Hara. The basket has double ivory overlay handles and an impressive whale fluke carved from a sperm whale tooth as a closure. The detailed scrimshaw scenes depict Captain Ahab’s search and battle with Moby Dick.

From the collection of Joseph & Kathleen Gallichio



A beautiful tray made by the late Harry Hilbert, who dubbed himself the maker of the “Nontucket” basket. This tray has an inlaid compass rose in the center of the base. The staves, as well as the detailed handles, are made with whale bone.

Harry Hilbert began making baskets at age 52 and frequently sold his work on Main Street, Nantucket through Wayne Pratt

Antiques, which closed shop in 2007. Mr. Hilbert was a survivor of the Battle of the Bulge during WWII. His work has been recognized in museums all over the country.

From the collection of Hans & Eva-Maria Tausig



A very classic look! This 6” cocktail purse made by Stephen Gibbs has a solid ivory top plate and is adorned with two perfect doves carved by Aletha Macy. A pristine and rare find indeed. Stephen Gibbs’ baskets are well known for a deep honey patina and the long ivory clasp for the closure.

From the collection of Joseph & Kathleen Gallichio



A very sweet ladies cocktail purse, made by John Elder, has a delicate form and an ebony top plate with a carved, ivory sperm whale. This basket was bought at Tonkin’s on Main Street in 1969; the shop closed in 2007.

From the collection of Hans & Eva-Maria Tausig





An 8" oval Nantucket lightship basket made by William D. Appleton of the New No. 1 South Shoal Lightship. Note the fine detailed carved swing handle and the slight upturn form of the basket.

From the collection of Alan & Barbara Medaugh



A 14" low open round Nantucket basket made by Ferdinand Sylvaro, c. 1930. Ferdinand Sylvaro made baskets in the traditional form, for utility use or display, and almost always labeled his baskets with a red bordered label.

From the collection of John Sylvia



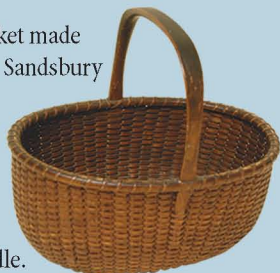
A 7-1/2" whimsical and unique piece for this period with 41 protruding lollipop staves that have carved heart shaped tops.

From the collection of Alan & Barbara Medaugh Collection



7" oval lightship basket made by Captain Andrew J. Sandsbury of the South Shoal Lightship, c. 1890. This basket has a wonderful dark brown patina, and a fixed wooden handle.

From the collection of Rafael & Gail Osona



This is a rare 12" large bell shaped sewing basket with carved heart shaped handles, c. 1880-1890. This basket was well cared for and remains in mint condition. The staves are large, flat and evenly spaced, possibly made from hickory. Maker unknown.

From the collection of Rafael & Gail Osona





Old and new, a small 5-1/2" elegant round covered basket made by A.D. Williams of 120 Orange Street, c.1920. The basket is a precursor to the ladies handbag. The metal plate on the handle that reads "Hughart" most likely identifies the owner of the basket. The second basket is a finely woven replica of the A.D. Williams basket made by Nap Plank in 2007.

From the collection of Alan & Barbara Medaugh Collection



9" heart lollipop basket beautifully made with high attention to detail, by Kathleen Myers in 2004. The basket was made with cherry staves and rim. The base is hand turned cherry burl wood.

From the collection of Alan & Barbara Medaugh Collection



Attributed to Captain Thomas James, c.1880-1890. This sewing basket has the original cloth liner, pin cushion and needle sharpener. It has one missing heart shaped handle. The basket has a slight indent on the lower part of the form, due to the mold that was used.

From the collection of John Sylvia



Museum volunteer, Betsy Dillard spent a lot of time getting this basket to work! She utilized barbeque skewers for the staves which are made from green bamboo. These made weaving very difficult. However, the end result is a fabulous, sturdy double handled fine Nantucket basket!

From the collection of Betsy Dillard



Youth Weaving Program



The Nantucket Lightship Basket Museum is very proud of its youth weaving program. The museum kicked off the new year with two full classes of youth weavers. The museum offers three scheduled sessions each year in summer, fall and winter. Thanks to a generous grant from the Nantucket Golf Club Foundation and many individual donors we are able to continue this historically significant craft and cultivate future weavers. Please see the calendar of events for a schedule of youth weaving classes and adult weaving workshops.





Nantucket Lightship Basket Museum

Calendar of Events - 2011

www.nantucketlightshipbasketmuseum.org • 508.228.1177

May

- 25 **Noon – 1:30 PM Volunteer Orientation**
It is time for the Museum volunteers and docents to report for duty! Learn the details and background behind the current exhibit. Get acquainted with your fellow docents, weavers and other volunteers as you learn how to assist visitors at the Museum. Lunch will be served. Call the Museum, 508.228.1177, for more information. RSVP by May 20.
- 27 **10:00 AM 2011 Exhibit “Members’ Collection” Officially Opens**
Be there when the doors open for this year’s exhibit. Enjoy a cup of coffee and the company of friends as Manny Dias raises the flag on the museum’s twelfth season.

June

- 2 **4:30 PM - 7:30 PM Make a “Flower Frog” Lightship Basket**
Tim Parsons, acclaimed basket weaving instructor, and owner of The Basket Shop, will guide you through the steps to weave a miniature lightship basket frog that can be used to display small flower arrangements. The class fee is \$100, which includes materials. Class size is limited so call the museum to reserve your space, 508.228.1177.
- 8-9 **4:30 PM - 7:30 PM Weave Your Own Mini Lightship Basket**
Tim Parsons, acclaimed basket weaving instructor, and owner of The Basket Shop, will guide you through the steps to weave a 2” miniature lightship basket. The class fee is \$150, which includes materials. Class size is limited so call the museum to reserve your space, 508.228.1177.
- 18 **10:00 AM - 2:00 PM “Annual Sidewalk Sale”**
Find treasures from the Museum Gift Shop’s surplus and out-of-stock items, home furnishings, hostess gifts, books and much more.
- 21 **5:00 PM Annual Meeting**
The Nantucket Lightship Basket Museum’s Annual Meeting will be held at the museum, 49 Union Street. All current members are invited.
- 23 **11:00 AM - Noon “Woodworking in Basketry”**
Tim Parsons, basket maker, teacher and exotic wood enthusiast will demonstrate the wood working involved in basket making. You will see how various component parts of base, handle and rims are made and integrated into the lightship basket’s construction.
- 24 **5:30 PM – 7:30 PM “Light Supper and Finger Food” at Sankaty**
Jump-start the season. Catch up with old friends and make new ones at a cocktail party at the Sankaty Beach Club. Enjoy the breathtaking venue while taking in the sea breezes. Proceeds benefit the Nantucket Lightship Basket Museum. Tickets are \$90 and are available for purchase online at www.nantucketlightshipbasketmuseum.org or at the museum, 508.228.1177.
- 30 **11:00 AM - Noon “Imitation Is The Best Form Of Flattery”**
Join Terri Sackett, master weaver, as she discusses her journey in recreating a replica of a basket made by Captain Andrew Jackson Sandbury, a 19th century whaler and lightship captain.

- 7 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM **“Members’ Collection House Tour”**
Several museum members have opened their homes for guests to view their extensive lightship basket collections. Learn about what has attracted these collectors and how they continue to search for special treasures to add to their collections. Tickets are \$40 and are available for purchase online at www.nantucketlightshipbasketmuseum.org or at the museum, 508.288.1177.
- 11 2:00 PM **“Youth Weaving Summer Session Begins.”**
You can help us to “weave Nantucket’s past into its future” by registering your child for youth weaving. The classes are open to children 11-16. During the 6 week session, every child will complete a basket to treasure for years to come. The course fee is \$80, which includes materials. To register, contact the museum at 508.228.1177.
- 13 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM **“Whine and Weaving.”**
You don’t have to whine, but this is a great opportunity to spend some time weaving, and chatting, with fellow weavers. Bring your current project. You are sure to make some new weaving friends. \$10 suggested donation.
- 14 11:00 AM - Noon **“Lightship Baskets: Past, Present and Future.”**
Basket maker, teacher and juried artist, Karol Lindquist will trace the history of lightship baskets with particular emphasis on the present and what lies ahead for the future of this Nantucket art form.
- 19-23 10 AM - 4:30 PM **“Baskets & Bubbly” Silent Auction & Live Auction Preview**
Join us at the museum and be ahead of the crowd. The Silent Auction & Live Auction Preview provides an opportunity for those interested in casting a silent bid or for a “sneak peek” before the BIG DAY. “Buy It Now” option available on many silent auction items.
- 20 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM **“Whine and Weaving.”**
You don’t have to whine, but this is a great opportunity to spend some time weaving, and chatting, with fellow weavers. Bring your current project. You are sure to make some new weaving friends. \$10 suggested donation.
- 24 11:00 AM **“Baskets & Bubbly Champagne Brunch and Auction.”**
The elegant surroundings of the Great Harbor Yacht Club are the perfect venue to sip champagne and enjoy good food and company. The auction features one-of-a-kind lightship baskets and basket-related items. Reservations required. Ticket are \$125 and are available for purchase online at www.nantucketlightshipbasketmuseum.org or at the museum, 508.288.1177.
- 27 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM **“Whine and Weaving.”**
You don’t have to whine, but this is a great opportunity to spend some time weaving, and chatting, with fellow weavers. Bring your current project. You are sure to make some new weaving friends. \$10 suggested donation.
- 28 11:00 AM - Noon **“Appraisal Day”**
John Sylvia, licensed appraiser and owner of Sylvia Antiques, will be at the museum to appraise your basket or maritime artifacts. For a donation of \$10 to the museum, he will appraise up to three hand-carried items.

- 3 **4:30 PM - 6:00 PM “Whine and Weaving.”**
You don’t have to whine, but this is a great opportunity to spend some time weaving, and chatting, with fellow weavers. Bring your current project. You are sure to make some new weaving friends. \$10 suggested donation.
- 4 **11:00 AM - Noon “Indian Arrowhead Collection”**
Ric Emery, avid Indian arrowhead collector, will share his collection and answer questions about how he became interested in these historical artifacts.
- 10 **4:30 PM - 6:00 PM “Whine and Weaving.”**
You don’t have to whine, but this is a great opportunity to spend some time weaving, and chatting, with fellow weavers. Bring your current project. You are sure to make some new weaving friends. \$10 suggested donation.
- 11 **11:00 AM - Noon “Members’ Collection – Antique Canes”**
Join Max Berry, founding member of the Nantucket Lightship Basket Museum, as he shares one of his many collections; an array of antique canes. See these beautiful objects of art and hear the stories about how these were acquired.
- 15 **2:00 PM - 3:00 PM “Youth Weaving Open House.”**
Join the youth weavers and their instructors as they showcase baskets woven during the summer youth weaving classes.
- 16 **5:00 PM - 7:00 PM “Tribute to the Local Basket Makers.”**
Enjoy the panoramic vistas at the Eel Point Road home of one of our founding members involved in the world of lightship baskets as we pay tribute to Nantucket’s professional basket makers. Join collectors and lovers of lightship baskets in honoring this group of artists who are hard at work preserving this uniquely Nantucket art form. Tickets for the cocktail reception are \$200 and are available at the museum, 508.228.1177. Rain date August 17.
- 17 **4:30 PM - 6:00 PM “Whine and Weaving.”**
You don’t have to whine, but this is a great opportunity to spend some time weaving, and chatting, with fellow weavers. Bring your current project. You are sure to make some new weaving friends. \$10 suggested donation.
- 18 **11:00 AM - Noon “The Art of Collecting: Pueblo Indian Pottery”**
Museum members, Kathy & Joe Gallichio, will share examples of their extensive collection of Pueblo Indian pottery. These avid collectors will happily discuss both their pottery and lightship baskets collections and their similarities.
- 25 **11:00 AM - Noon “Life on a Lightship.”**
Join retired lightship crewman Dick Mack as he shares stories about his time in the Coast Guard serving on the lightship *Nantucket* in the middle 1950s. Hear his stories about life aboard a lightship alerting passing ships to the dangers in the waters surrounding Nantucket.



September

- 1 11:00 AM - Noon “Postcards From The Past”**
Joan Porter, long-time Sconset resident will share her antique postcard collection of Sconset scenes. These nostalgic postcards are reminiscent of days gone by in this seashore community.
- 8 11:00 AM - Noon “Quilting Nantucket Baskets.”**
Join museum member, basket maker and quilter Judy Prohaska as she shares her collection of basket motif quilts. Judy has combined her love of basket making with her love of quilting to produce beautiful quilts of Nantucket lightship baskets.
- 24 2:00 PM 10:00 AM - 4:30 PM “Nantucket Day.”**
Celebrate living on the island of Nantucket and all it has to offer with free admission, weaving demonstrations and refreshments all day. Shop for gifts at the museum gift shop's end of season sale.



October

- 5-6 4:30 PM - 7:30 PM Create Your Own Mini Lightship Basket.**
Tim Parsons, acclaimed basket weaving instructor, and owner of The Basket Shop, will guide you through the steps to weave a 2" miniature lightship basket. The class fee is \$150, which includes materials. Call the museum to reserve your space, 508.228.1177.
- 8 “Last Chance Day.”**
Last chance to see the season's exhibit, "Members' Collection." The exhibit closes for the season at 4:30 PM.

November

- 5-6 Annual Yard Sale.**
Donations accepted throughout the season. The island's premier shopping extravaganza takes place at the Sconset Casino on Saturday November 5, 10 – 3 (early bird admission at 9 for \$10 and on Sunday November 6, 11 – 3. Browse through departments of furniture, clothing, linens, kitchen items, household furnishings, art work and much, much more.

December

- 2 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM Make a “Flower Frog” Lightship**
Tim Parsons, acclaimed basket weaving instructor, and owner of The Basket Shop, will guide you through the steps to weave a miniature lightship basket frog that can be used to display small flower arrangements. A perfect holiday gift for that special person. The class fee is \$100, which includes materials. Call the museum to reserve your space, 508.228.1177.
- 2-3 “Annual Christmas Stroll.”**
Stroll away from the crowds and shop leisurely at the Museum's Gift Shop, while nibbling cookies and taking in the Museum's permanent collection of Lightship Baskets. Museum hours 10 AM – 4 PM.



Nantucket Lightship Basket Museum

You can help by becoming a member!

The Nantucket Lightship Basket Museum is dedicated to preserving Nantucket's rich history of basket making as an art form, providing a permanent home for historical and contemporary baskets and educating the public for future generations with exhibits, lectures and demonstrations.

Please consider supporting Nantucket's rich history with a membership to the Nantucket Lightship Basket Museum.

Yes I want to _____ become a member
_____ renew my membership.

Please indicate how you want your name to be listed in our records.

(Please Print)

Name: _____

Off Island Address: _____

Off Island Phone: _____

From: _____ To: _____

On Island Address: _____

On Island Phone: _____

From: _____ To: _____

E-mail: _____

___ Individual (\$40)

___ Patron (\$1,000)

___ Island Family (\$85)

___ Weaver's Guild (\$5,000)

___ Family (\$100)

___ Ivory Circle (\$10,000)

___ South Shoal Friend (\$500)

Enclosed is my check made in the amount of \$_____ payable to NLBM;

Or please charge my Visa/ Master Card:

Card # _____ Exp. _____

Signature: _____

___ please send information about volunteering at the Museum

___ my employer has a matching gift program

Please make checks payable to Nantucket Lightship Basket Museum.

You are welcome to pay with Visa or MasterCard as well.

Thank you for your support!