



John Xipolitus and Anthony Presutti of Razorback LLC reinstall the repaired vent ball.

Courtesy of: Terry Dickson/The Brunswick News

Vent Ball

In early April, the St. Simons Lighthouse underwent a significant but invisible repair. The copper vent ball at the top of the tower was carefully removed so that a hole in its internal chimney could be patched. The hole was caused by corrosion over the past 149 years. A repair was necessary to prevent rain water from intruding into the lantern room which houses our Fresnel lens. Metalsmith Alex Klahm, who has worked on 38 lighthouses, identified and photographed the damage during a maintenance project in 2017.

The chimney served an important purpose before the St. Simons Lighthouse was electrified in the 1930s. Gases from the kerosene lamp that originally produced our light were vented to the outside through holes in the chimney and vent ball that were strategically placed to prevent rainwater from leaking into the lantern room, especially during a driving rainstorm.

Once the vent ball had been lowered to the ground, Klahm riveted and soldered into place a copper sheet that covered the hole and reinforced the chimney. After cleaning, the ball was raised back to the top of the tower and screwed into place on a supporting shaft. A lightning rod that runs to the ground was then reconnected to the ball. The work was done in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Structures and was funded by the Society's Lighthouse Museum Preservation Fund.

Chautauqua Lecture Series *Continued from p. 2*

The virtual series will be presented on Thursday evenings, August 12, 19, September 2, and 9, at 6 p.m. Please note that the schedule skips August 26. The August 12 lecture will be presented in person, as well as virtually, at the St. Simons Presbyterian Church, which accommodates 400 people. To allow social distancing, the audience will be limited to 200. The cost of the series is \$50 for members and \$95 for non-members. To register, visit coastalgeorgiahistory.org. Registration closes at 5 p.m. on Thursday, August 12, and a Zoom link will be sent the day before the first program. If you would like to attend Clay Jenkinson's lecture in person, please RSVP when you register.



The 2021 Chautauqua Lecture Series is generously sponsored by Raymond James.