

## An Interview with Horton

Wow, the lighthouse is so big and so white, and it's right here in Southold. You wonder, why am I here? Well, my editor asked me to do a piece about the eight lighthouses in our town. I chose this one first, since it's easy to get to being the only one accessible by land.

I thought I could start in the Southold Historical Museum archives. But - no, that would leave me indoors pouring through musty papers and such. Plus, the historical archives aren't complete yet. Besides, I heard that there is real Fresnel lens, lots of information about Captain Green and the Amistad, a whale house, a rusty anchor from some wreck and that the lighthouse actually works. I have to see this in person before I can write about it.

Here I am walking around, taking notes, soaking in the magnificent views of Long Island Sound and the Connecticut coast, all the while and talking aloud, "The view is really breathtaking. I wonder where they keep the brochures?"

*"What did you say? Check out the brochures. Why don't you ask me?"*

*"What was that?"*

*"That was me, Horton, and I can answer all your questions. Go ahead Mr. Human."*

*"Well, I never conversed with a lighthouse, but I'll give it a try. It's certainly better than digging through papers. "Mr. Lighthouse when where you born?"*

*"Born, Lighthouses are commissioned and then built, not born."*

*"Okay, commissioned."*

*"I was commissioned by George Washington in 1790 and built in 1857."*

*"What are your identifying colors and...?"*

*"A flashing green every 10 seconds. And as you know, I am all white; that's called a day mark. Now, how about some hard questions?"*

*"Why are you named Horton? Dr. Seuss didn't write about Horton hearing a Who until 1984?"*

*"That's cute Mr. Whatever your name is. I'll ignore that and give you the facts, as I see them. Barnabas Horton was the original owner of this so called 8 acre "Cliff Lot", hence my name. Hit me with some tough questions please, or else I'll tell the person who sent you what a lousy reporter you are. Say who sent you?"*

*"Hey, Horton, I ask the questions from now on, but I'll give you this one, the editor of the Traveler Watchman newspaper sent me. What's your light for anyway, and does it really work?"*

*"The Traveler Watchman newspaper that was, and I repeat was, on Travelers Street doesn't exist anymore. We historical landmarks know all that history stuff. My light is real, and it's green and flashes every 10 seconds while rotating. It is maintained by the United States Coast Guard. But I didn't become electronic until 1933 when they place my light up on top of an exterior skeletal tower next to the anchor."*

*"What's the deal with the rusty anchor anyway?"*

*"It's from the Commodore, which sunk right here off Dead Man's cove because I wasn't here to light the way."*

*"Hey human, where you going in that '57 Chevy?"*

"I have to get back before..."

*"Gee, that young man just disappeared. I hope he's not looking for his newspaper editor that ain't no more. At least I, Mr. Horton, am still here to tell you the rest of the story - just come visit; we'll have a chat."*

by Joel Reitman