



# The Bay Run



Newsletter of  
The Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers  
and Friends Association, Inc.

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"Our mission is to preserve the history of the  
Delaware Bay and River Lighthouses, Lightships and their Keepers"

## NOTHIN' COULD BE FINER...

by *By Ollie & Shelley Oyster (celebrating one year of wedded bliss)*



Well, hello there. While recently discussing what adventure Shelley and I could possibly pursue to celebrate our first anniversary, I remembered it's been awhile since we've been in touch. After much research and debating (no spats yet, thank heavens), we decided to head south to check out the Outer Banks of North Carolina, taking as much time off as our jobs allowed so we could enjoy all the sights and sites. Upon leaving our home in the Delaware Bay, we started our trip by drifting south under the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, voted one of the "Seven Engineering Wonders of the Modern World". I understand it opened in 1964 and is the largest bridge-tunnel complex in the world spanning 17.6 miles from shore to shore. What a glorious experience as we "followed the flight of the gulls" southward.

After a couple days of just drifting and relaxing, we reached the Outer Banks affectionately known to the locals as OBX. The Outer Banks consist of 43 miles of beach designated as our "First National Seashore". Witnessing our first historical site from under the Wright Brothers Memorial Bridge, we slowly floated to Kill Devil Hills ending up at the Wright Brothers National Park where "the first flight of man" actually took place. This flight was known as the "12 seconds that changed the world" – 120' in

12 seconds. If Orville and Wilbur could only see what they started. The park has markers that show the distances and durations of their four historic flights. Shelley spotted a commemorative monument honoring CDR. Elmer F. Stone a member of the USCG who flew the first successful Trans-Atlantic flight in May of 1919...another tremendous accomplishment.

Moving to the north offshore, we looked up and there was the Currituck Beach Lighthouse (A) constructed in 1875. It is 162' high; the last major brick lighthouse to be built on the Outer Banks. The "Wild Horses of Corolla" are said to have roamed the dunes and sandy beaches nearby. Rumored to be descendants of the Spanish Colonial Mustangs, they have grazed, bred and galloped here for almost five centuries. Legend has it that their ancestors swam ashore from a shipwrecked Spanish galleon as early as 1528. Drifting on to Nags Head, next in sight was the 150' tall Bodie Island Lighthouse (B) which was constructed in 1872. The double keepers' quarters have been restored and are now used as a visitors' center. Needing a break from all this floating *Continued on Page 3*

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*Angelo S. Rigazio, Jr.*



Our two cruises to the Delaware Bay Lights were held in July and August. The July 20th cruise was a hot one. With the temperature holding steady at 96 degrees and a heat index of 110 – 115 degrees, we prevailed and cruised north to Ship John Shoal Light and then headed down the bay to Miah Maull stopping along the way at Elbow of Cross Ledge. Our second cruise on August 3 took us to Harbor of Refuge and then on to Fourteen Foot Bank stopping along the way at Brandywine Shoal. This time, the weather was beautiful; we even had a full boat. On our way to Brandywine Light, we had a real surprise—three humpback whales were seen near Harbor of Refuge and then another two by Fourteen Foot. This was the first time, in all the years of cruising, we saw whales... an unforgettable photographic opportunity for everyone aboard. Once again Captain of the Bonanza II, Mike Rothman, backed up to Fourteen Foot getting so close the passengers could touch the caisson. The winners of the 50/50 on this cruise were newlyweds who were happy to receive the extra income.

National Lighthouse Day at East Point Lighthouse was a success. We all had a good time. Members who participated were: Peggy Stapleford and her daughter, Charles and Joanne Bolton, Steve Murray, Rod and Maxine Mulligan, Nancy Patterson-Tidy, her husband, Carl, Randy Alkins and Mary Ellen Walker. Thank you, Nancy and Carl for hosting our group. It was nice to be working with Steve Murray once again.

Don't forget the New Jersey Lighthouse Challenge on Saturday and Sunday, October 19th and 20th. Our group will be at Cape May Lighthouse. We are always looking for new members to help spread the message of saving our lighthouses for future generations to enjoy. Without the help from the next generation, our lighthouses will be in trouble. Keep the lights shining. *Angelo*

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*The Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers and Friends Association, Inc. (DBLHKFA)  
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As our president has already stated, both of our lighthouse cruises this summer were successful. We received calls telling us how much the trips were enjoyed; it has been suggested that we have three cruises next summer.

National Lighthouse Day gave us the opportunity to give out and discuss information about the lighthouses, meet many people from different walks of life, and also learn from our visitors. Speaking with some fishermen from the area, we were told they were not able to fish after July 5; they had to suspend their means of livelihood due to the fact that the schools of fish they sought were no longer in this area. The fish had left for cooler waters. Fish that are normally caught in the waters off Florida had migrated north since the water in our area had become warmer. It also seems that sharks are trolling along the coast since their food source has moved in closer to the shore. Take care when going to the beach.

Speaking of changes along the coast, I happened to see an article in our local paper regarding Money Island. It was described as “a rural flood-prone community along the Delaware River in Cumberland County where the state has been making offers to buy houses from residents under the Blue Acres Program enacted after Hurricane Sandy”. Many of the residents of Money Island are packing up and leaving. The Environmental Protection Agency has purchased 26 properties, some already vacant, totaling more than \$27 million. This small year-round fishing community is largely gone. Money Island may become a blueprint for other coastal communities as climate change presents more of a threat in the coming years. People still living there have a difficult decision to make. (Post, Michelle B., AC Press, August 4, 2019.)

I am hoping to see many of you taking part in the Lighthouse Challenge of New Jersey this fall. How many of our lighthouses can you visit in a weekend? We will be volunteering at Cape May Lighthouse. Enjoy the rest of your summer. We hope to see you at the Challenge in October.

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and sightseeing, we checked to see if there was a vacancy in the oyster beds at Hatteras Village, a village once inhabited by the Algonquian speaking Native Americans. We decided to stay at the beautiful (and comfortable) U Filter Inn, a luxury Inn where volunteers have placed bags of shells along the shoreline to restore the intertidal oyster reefs, preventing erosion. As you know, oyster reef restoration can be as simple as placing an appropriate material in the proper location.

After a night of rest, we attached to the Ocracoke Ferry, along with a group of barnacles, to check out the island and the second oldest operating lighthouse in the nation. Ocracoke Light (C) was constructed in 1823 and is 77’ high but is not open to the public. These islands all claim the infamous pirate, Blackbeard, and share his legends with the tourists. As a matter of fact, the locals were commemorating the 300th anniversary of his death when we visited. Of course, we had to listen to all their tales. What a bloody bloke! Ocracoke Island is 12 miles wide and home to the Barker ponies, also descendants of the horses that arrived with the Spanish explorers in the 16th century. Some of the ponies were seen grazing in their “Pony Pen”.

Hitching a return ride on the ferry, we came through the area known as “The Graveyard of the Atlantic” where there is a museum exhibiting replicas, artifacts and information regarding over 2,000 sunken ships that lie off the coast. We detached and took a quick tour of the ghostly images rippling in the tide. That night we stayed in the beautiful oyster beds (rated 5 stars) off the Roanoke Island Festival Park, attaching to the hull of the Elizabeth II, a reproduction of a 16th century sailing vessel. We learned that African Americans found sanctuary from slavery in this area during the Civil War. Some of these slaves formed the first All-Black Lifesaving Service in the nation. I understand that this fact is recorded in the history of the US Coast Guard. One mystery existing to this day is the unexplained vanishing of settlers (appropriately known as the “Lost Colony”) where 116 men, women and children were unaccounted for from this 1587 settlement. The story goes that once they

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# PEGGY'S CORNER – Event Calendar

*by Peggy Stapleford Activities/Program Chairperson*



## **SAVE THE DATES – Mark Your Calendars:**

**Fall Meeting Saturday, September 28 (1 PM meeting)** aboard the Cape May – Lewes Ferry. Come join us for a 17 mile, 85 minute cruise (one way) across the Delaware Bay and back. We will leave Cape May on the 10:30 AM ferry; arriving in Delaware at 11:55; our members in Delaware board that **same ferry** at 12:15. Returning we disembark at Cape May at 1:40 PM while our friends from Delaware sail on the return trip to Lewes. We

will have a brief association meeting in the lounge at 1 PM. You can “brown bag it” or purchase your lunch onboard. **The cost of a round trip ticket is:** Adult \$18; \$15 for Seniors (62+), Military and AAA members (with membership ID). For further information, please contact Cape May – Lewes Ferry at Customer Service 1-800-643-3779 open 8 AM – 4 PM; or contact customerservice@drba.net; call Rigazios at 609-884-1329 or Mulligans 856-691-8224 (NOTE: In case of severe weather, the trip date will be the following week October 5 – ferry schedule is the same.) Join us to spend a relaxing day on the Delaware Bay.

**Saturday & Sunday, October 19 & 20 -** New Jersey Lighthouse Challenge – East Point is open 8 AM – 6 PM Our volunteers will be working at Cape May Lighthouse. Volunteers are always needed; all are welcome.

**Winter meeting, Saturday, January 25, 2020 (snow date February 8)** – East Point Lighthouse Schedule: 10 – 11 AM Meet & Greet; 11 – Noon meeting; Noon – 1 Lunch (brown bag); 1 PM Guest speaker TBA Come out and enjoy East Point in a winter setting.

**Saturday, February 1** – Raptor Festival Mauricetown Fire Department

**East Point Fall Schedule:** Open every 1st & 3rd weekend of the month. 1 – 4 PM as follows: Saturday & Sunday, October 5 & 6; Saturday & Sunday, November 2 & 3; Saturday & Sunday, November 16 & 17; Sunday, December 8; Saturday & Sunday, December 21 & 22

**Special Events at East Point:** Saturday, September 7 – Happy 170 Birthday Celebration; Saturday, September 14 and Sunday, September 15 – Butterfly Weekend Noon – 4 PM; Saturday, October 26 – Light the Night (Halloween parade & Night Climb) – 6 – 8 PM; December 7 – Santa Visits the Lighthouse 4 – 6 PM; Saturday, December 21 – Night Climb 6 – 8 PM

**(NOTE: We are always looking for interesting guest speakers, topics and maritime locations. Suggestions can be sent to: [mspegstapleford@windstream.net](mailto:mspegstapleford@windstream.net))**



## **EARLY VINELANDERS CONNECTED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF WILDWOOD & WILDWOOD CREST**

In the 1880's, Philip Baker and his two brothers, who were successful merchants from the farm community of Vineland, visited the area known as Five Mile Beach. The middle section of Five Mile Beach was then known as Holly Beach. Convinced of the potential of this area as a resort, the Baker Brothers considered its development as a profitable business venture. They named the area Wildwood because this new community was actually situated in a forest by the sea. Today almost all the trees have disappeared from the island. The Borough of Wildwood was incorporated in 1895. In May of 1898, the brothers decided to expand their new acquisition by buying the Creese Tract, "an untouched wilderness of sand dunes and thickets". This gave them the opportunity to double the size of their resort. Workers were dispatched to level the sand dunes making way for the construction of 40 cottages. This new settlement became the Borough of Wildwood Crest; two years later the consolidation of Wildwood Borough and Holly Beach created the City of Wildwood.

Also credited for the success of the Baker Brothers' venture was Charles K. Landis, the founder of Vineland. Philip Baker used a plan to protect the beach front from erosion. The plan was given to him by Charles K. Landis who had made a study of seacoast protection in Holland. The clearing of the forests for Wildwood is attributed to the "many hardy pioneers from Vineland and Cumberland County". Fresh water was brought to Wildwood from Vineland and the first mayor of the area was a former Vineland resident. Another Vinelander, Mary Van Valin became the first school teacher and Reverend and Mrs. Meech are credited with opening the first store in Wildwood.

The Chairman of the Wildwood Historical Commission at the time, gave thanks to all the early Vineland residents who "contributed their talents, services, loyalty and commitment to the development of these seaside locations. For all of these and other early settlers, we owe a debt of gratitude to the City of Vineland". (Farinaccio, Vince, SNJ, May 2019).

## **CAN YOU CONQUER THE NJ LIGHTHOUSE CHALLENGE?**

You have exactly 48 hours to climb all of the state's accessible lighthouses. To make it even more challenging, these lighthouses are scattered all over the state. It's 2 ½ hours (pending traffic problems) between New Jersey's northernmost lighthouse at Sandy Hook to its southernmost lighthouse located in Cape May. The Challenge involves stopping at Absecon, Barnegat, Cape May, East Point, Finn's Point Rear Range, Sandy Hook, Sea Girt, Tatham Life Saving Station, Tinicum Rear Range, Twin Lights of Navesink, Tucker's Island and the US Life Saving Station #30 in Ocean City with a few other interesting sites in between. These are all land sites; some of the other lighthouses are only available by boat. Souvenirs of the Challenge are available at each stop and a special prize awarded upon completion. Are you up for it? This year's Challenge takes place October 19 & 20. Enjoy.

## THE STEAM SHIP SS UNITED STATES

The United States, a retired ocean liner constructed in 1950-51 at a cost of \$79.4 million, is the largest ocean liner built entirely in the United States. On her maiden voyage in July of 1952, the ship broke the transatlantic speed record, originally held by the HMS Queen Mary, by more than 10 hours. Designed by American naval architect William F. Gibbs, the United States could be converted into a troopship by the Navy in time of war. But, she maintained an uninterrupted schedule of transatlantic passenger service until 1969 and was never used as a troopship. This 940' long ship had a capacity of 1,928 passengers and 900 crew members. Changing ownership several times, there were plans to dock the United States in Atlantic City, NJ where it would be used as a hotel and casino; nothing came of this plan.



Several preservation groups have been raising funds to save the ship. One of these plans involved turning the ship into a multi-purpose waterfront complex. As funds dwindled, the group began accepting bids to scrap the ship; however, sufficient donations came in via extended fund-raising. Large donations have kept the ship berthed at its Philadelphia dock while the groups continue to further investigate restoration plans. Stop and check out this record breaking ship that can be seen in the Delaware River, in Philadelphia at Pier 82.

## NOTHIN' COULD BE FINER *continued from page 3*

settled here, they were never seen nor heard from again. This site was also the birthplace of Virginia Dare, the first child born of English parents in the "new world". On to the Roanoke Marshes Lighthouse (D), a 75' lighthouse originally constructed in 1877, decommissioned in 1955, then renovated and reopened in 2004. This entire area is very scenic and historic to say the least. There is always so much to learn!

We just couldn't leave the Outer Banks without visiting their most famous lighthouse, the 198' Cape Hatteras Light (E), known as "America's Lighthouse," the tallest brick lighthouse in North America. During the Civil War, retreating Confederate soldiers took the Fresnel lamp from the lighthouse to keep it out of Union hands. The two 1000 watt lamps used currently are visible for more than 20 miles. In 1999 the lighthouse was moved a half mile inland to save it from the encroaching Atlantic. The move took 23 days. Quite a feat.

You all know how time flies when you're having fun. Consequently, it was soon time to travel north once again, back to our home in the Delaware Bay. We hitched a ride on one of the Carnival Cruise Ships heading back to Baltimore Harbor. We had promised Shelley's Aunt Pearl we would spend a few days with her and some other relatives who were vacationing in the Baltimore National Aquarium. Floating into the Chesapeake Bay, we entered Inner Harbor and got a glimpse of the Seven Foot Knolls Light (F), a screw pile lighthouse which served at the mouth of the Patapsco River for 133 years. In 1977 it was transferred to Inner Harbor and is now part of the Baltimore Maritime Museum. We just had to hang around for a glimpse of the lighthouse and to test the water, plus FREE admission!! Can't beat that.

As we headed back to our comfortable home in the waters of the Delaware Bay off Port Norris, NJ, we wondered where the tide will take us next. Vacation time is over...back to our jobs of filtering but much more knowledgeable regarding part of the east coast. We will be traveling again in the near future for as you know, "all the world is our oyster". We'll be in touch. Bon voyage... 'Til next time.





The lifeboat drill was cancelled the morning of the Titanic tragedy. It was felt that another drill was unnecessary at the time.



Lady Liberty wears a size 879 shoe.



There are 2 Air Force 1 planes in case of a problem or one is in need of a tune up.



East Point Lighthouse has been listed among the 10 Most Endangered Historic Places in New Jersey according to Preservation New Jersey, Inc. Erosion has already washed out the protective dunes leaving the stewards of the lighthouse with sandbag brigades in an attempt to hold back tidal waters and storm surge. (*"The Reminder," June 5, 2019*)



In 2013 there were 30 cormorants nesting off Stone Harbor Boulevard on what was once a football field sized island that was lush with trees and shrubs. Now the island is home to 111 cormorants, their population more than tripling in the past 6 years. It seems that these inhabitants are pushing out other wading birds and making it uninhabitable for other species according to the state Department of Environmental Protection. (*Zoppo, A., Press of AC, June 2019*)



Delaware was the first state to sign the US Constitution. Wilmington, which was originally settled by the Swedish, was named for an 18th century British prime minister. Dover was the hub of the state's patriotic efforts during the Revolutionary War and declared the state capital before the end of the conflict. (*Yogerst, "50 States," NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC.*)



The first public reciting of "The Pledge of Allegiance" was held at the Twin Lights in Navesink, NJ on April 25, 1893. (*Lighthouse Digest, February 2009 – Thanks, Jim.*)



Belated birthday greetings to the United States Coast Guard. They celebrated their 229th August 4. Thanks for all you do protecting our shores and its residents.

## CELEBRATING VETERANS' DAY



**We are proud to honor America's  
veterans who put their lives on the line  
for our country every day.  
Thank you for your service.**





**A: Currituck Beach Lighthouse**

**B: Bodie Island Lighthouse**

**D: Roanoke Marshes Lighthouse**



**C: Ocracoke Light**

**E: Cape Hatteras Light**

**F: Seven Foot Knolls Light**

