



# 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"

## WHAT ABOUT RANGE LIGHTS?



Tinicum Rear Range Lighthouse  
Paulsboro, NJ

Range lights are a pair or set of navigational aids used to guide vessels into or out of a port, harbor, or river, or to guide vessels along the deepest part of a channel in a river or bay. The front range light is the smaller of the two and is situated either near the edge of the water or, sometimes, in the body of water itself. The rear range light is always shown from a higher point (from a higher elevation or from a taller tower), and is located behind the front range light. It is usually built on land and stands from a few hundred yards to as much as a mile and a half inland from the front range light. A vessel is guided by lining up the front and rear lights until they are seen from a distance as being directly above and below one another. The vessel then travels toward them or away from them, always keeping the rear range light aligned directly above the front range light. This course is

then held until some other navigational aid directs the mariner to change course.

The shallow waters of the Delaware River and Bay have one of the most extensive systems of range lights in the world. A vessel can follow succeeding pairs of range lights from a point near Ship John Shoal Lighthouse in the bay all the way to Trenton, New Jersey.



### *In This Issue:*

- 2 - A Beam from the President's Desk
- 3 - From the Log of the Interim Vice President
- 4 - Peggy's Corner, Pirates, Rum Runners & The Coast Guard
- 5 - Did You Know?

- 6 - Chicamacimico Life Saving Station and Continue Pirates, Rum Runners & The Coast Guard
- 7 - Celebrating Christmas
- 8 - Pictures from Celebrating Christmas

*Angelo S. Rigazio, Jr.*



As I sit here writing this message, I am reminiscing about all the years I have been associated with this fine group of people. I remember the many meetings and outreaches I have attended, making new friends who shared the same interest and goals of protecting and preserving the lighthouses. Now it seems that the core group of friends I've met over the years is slowly disappearing and the lighthouses we all love are showing signs of disarray and wear.

Our cruises, the main fundraiser we sponsor, are now down to only two cruises this year; the outreaches have been reduced as well as our membership. Membership dues cover the cost of printing and mailing The Bay Run. The cost for mailing the newsletter continues to increase even as our membership funds decrease.

As members, we need to find ways to reach out to the younger generation, to get them interested in preserving these amazing lights. There is history to relate and it needs to be taught before it is too late and these lights are gone. Some of us have lived on these lights, provided the people on the lights with supplies or served in the coast guard protecting and maintaining the lights. We have the knowledge and experience and need to find a way to share it so that our membership will begin to grow once more. Our 24th Annual Keepers Banquet will be held on April 28. Wouldn't it be great to have a full room! Please come out and support your lighthouse family. Hopefully, we can grow once again as an organization and maintain the dream Carole Reilly had many years ago.

Keep the lights shining – *Angelo*

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*The Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers and Friends Association, Inc. (DBLHKFA)  
is a 501(c)(3) non-profit preservation and educational organization.*



*by Rod Mulligan*

Our winter meeting was held on a brisk, cold, windy day at East Point Lighthouse located on the banks of the Maurice River. After an informative meeting, our guest speaker was Ken Whildin, a Committee Member from Maurice River Township who spoke on, "Protecting East Point Light". His slide presentation began with a picture of East Point Light and the surrounding area as it looked in the 1940's comparing it to how it looks today. It was amazing to see the amount of erosion that has taken place over the years. Whildin explained what has been done so far to save the lighthouse from nature's wrath. Saving involved the cooperation of the nearby sand plants, trucks, plenty of sand and many volunteers from the local

communities. All of these entities combined to fill numerous 3,000 lb. sand bags, lining them along the river bank to try to stop the erosion. Maurice River, an important tributary of the Delaware Bay, will eventually have to be dredged to permit ships to sail up to various ports. Our thanks to Mr. Whildin for his presentation. Hopefully the "powers that be" will see the necessity of saving this historic site, the second oldest lighthouse in the state, which is also listed on the National Registry of Historic Places.



*Thanks to our guest speaker, Ken Whildin*

*President Rigazio expresses our thanks to hostess Nancy Patterson*

## **CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS WITH THE COAST GUARD RECRUITS**

*by Rod Mulligan*

On Christmas Day, 2018, Marvin White, Past President of the Millville Elks Lodge #580 and retired USCG Chief Engineman, invited former coast guardsmen, Charles Bolton and me to serve as escorts for 170 recruits from Base Cape May. Recruits were from Company Zulu 196, graduating February 2, 2019 and Company Alpha 197, graduating February 8, 2019. They were all invited to have a day of rest and relaxation and to enjoy a great holiday meal. It was my fourth year participating in this event. It is quite an honor to see these young people of different genders and ethnic groups joining together as a team showing respect to one another; their main goal dedicated to protecting our country and its citizens.

The Millville Elks Lodge #580 under the direction of Arlene Hickman, Exalted Ruler and her excellent support staff, go all out for these young people. They provide a great chow line, great home cooking, "everything from soup to nuts" (a). Recruits are not allowed to consume coffee, sweets or soda during training so they really enjoyed the 50' table of various desserts and the soft drink bar (b). We all sampled the good vittles and took part in the casual conversation (c). The recruits had a chance to call loved ones at home (d); electronic devices must be surrendered during training periods on base. The recruits also were able to join in a little friendly competition (e). I watched as a young Marine joined in for the fun (f). No matter who they are, these young people are working towards the same goal. I was talking to one of the recruits who had completed 4 years in the Navy and transferred to the coast guard because he felt he could be promoted faster. A young lady stopped by our table for a conversation and stated that she had hopes of going to OCS and becoming a high level (Continued on Page 7)

# PEGGY'S CORNER – Event Calendar

by Peggy Stapleford Activities/Program Chairperson



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

**Sunday, April 28, 2019** – 24th Annual Keepers Banquet to be held in the Crows' Nest (3rd floor) at the Sea Isle City Yacht Club, 4487 Venetian Road, Sea Isle City, NJ 08242. Agenda: 10:30 – 11:30 AM Set up; 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM Meeting; 12:30 – 2 PM Banquet buffet, raffle, door prizes, Yard Sail; 2 PM Guest speaker Dr. Anthony Waskie, (*aka General George Gordon Meade*) History Professor from Temple University —Topic: “Meade and New Jersey Lighthouses”. (NOTE: Please check reservation insert for buffet information, etc.)

**Saturday, May 4, 2019** – Coast Guard Community Festival Celebration at Base Cape May. For more information, please check website: [www.coastguardcommunity.org](http://www.coastguardcommunity.org)

**Saturday & Sunday, June 1 (11 AM – 4 PM) & June 2 (1 – 4 PM)** – Bay Days at East Point & Bay Days at Bay Shore Project, Port Norris & Bivalve, NJ

**Summer Picnic Meeting** – (Date, time & place TBA)

**Saturday, July 20** – Cruise to Ship John Shoal and points north leaving at 4 PM from NJ State Marina (Higbee's) in Fortescue, NJ (Once known as “The Weakfish Capital of the World”) – *See Cruise News*

**Saturday, August 3** – 5 hour Old Fashioned Saturday Night Moonlight Cruise to Harbor of Refuge leaving 4 PM – *See Cruise News*

**Wednesday, August 7** – National Lighthouse Day at East Point 1 – 3 PM

**Fall Meeting** – (Date, time & place TBA)

**Saturday & Sunday, October 19 & 20** – New Jersey Lighthouse Challenge

(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))

## **PIRATES, RUM RUNNERS & THE COAST GUARD**

Smuggling became a big business along the Jersey Shore in the 1920s as the nation struggled with the effects of Prohibition. At times it turned into a deadly game of hide and seek, as bootleggers, intent on getting liquor ashore, tangled with officials charged with enforcing the ban against the possession and consumption of alcohol. As bootlegging reached epidemic proportions, people on the beach watched gun battles between the Coast Guard and the smugglers off shore. In Wildwood, NJ, the chief of police was wounded in an incident related to Prohibition. Bootlegging and rum running played a dominant role in the rise of Atlantic City as a tourist mecca. Rum running was prevalent along the Great Bay and the Mullica River. Illicit cargo landed there could easily be transported to Atlantic City by car or truck along Shore Road which is now Route 9.

A road over Turtle Gut Inlet along Two Mile Island near Cold Spring Inlet was stable enough for a wagon and that helped to make the isolated area a potential landing spot for the illegal liquor. In 1921 a featured newspaper story reported that 150 cases of whiskey with a value of \$20,000 had been smuggled into the country from Scotland and ultimately transported to Wildwood on small boats. Following are excerpts taken from a newspaper article regarding bootleggers caught after a gun fight in the Great Bay in 1924:

“...Through the fearless work of the captain of the Bonds Coast Guard Station and an equally brave crew of men, one of the largest hauls of contraband liquor ever taken in this area was captured. (Continued on Page 6)



Congratulations are in order to the team and members of the Maurice River Historical Society at East Point Lighthouse for being honored as New Jersey Heartland Heroes.



There is a history of shipwrecks around the Hereford Inlet Lighthouse in North Wildwood. A 25' wooden shipwreck, located a mile south of 122nd Street in Stone Harbor, was unearthed. Evidence recovered and research found that it was the Ingraham, a ship that sank near the inlet in the late 1800's, as stated by Steve Murray, former Chairman of the Friends of Hereford Inlet Lighthouse. (*AC Press, December 27, 2018*)



January 10 was declared National Oysters Rockefeller Day; Ollie and Shelley, along with several relatives, took part in the celebrations.



The owner of Tank Marine, located in Tuckahoe, NJ is building a fleet of five high-speed, aluminum hulled ferries that will be hustling commuters between New Jersey and Manhattan. The two boats completed so far feature twin turbocharged diesels generating 2,300 horsepower apiece. (*Daily Journal, January 2019*)



The first ever wedding held at the top of Sandy Hook Lighthouse took place in the lantern room in October 2013. Sandy Hook is the oldest original standing light tower in the United States. (*Lighthouse Digest, 2014*)



The historic lamp once used to light Delaware's Harbor of Refuge Lighthouse is presently housed at the Lewes Historical Society in Lewes, Delaware.



US Coast Guard cutter crews from this area are responsible for seizing 34,785 pounds of cocaine from boats off the coasts of Mexico, Central and South America. The cocaine had a street value of \$460 million.



In 1974 wildlife biologists launched a program to help the osprey recovery in New Jersey. Ospreys were at one time declared an endangered species. The biologists efforts began paying off quickly; this was followed by another successful assist for an iconic bird of prey, the bald eagle. Thanks to this program, there are more ospreys in New Jersey than ever. (*AC Press, March 1, 2019*)



During WWII, the Coast Guard Beach Patrol covered more than 3,700 miles of coast and employed about 24,000 men. Patrols on horseback worked in pairs, riding about 100 feet apart, usually covering a two mile stretch. They were called "Sand Pounders" and were able to cover difficult terrain quickly and efficiently. (C 1945)



Four historical reef lighthouses located off the Florida Keys have been declared excess by the United States Coast Guard and are being made available to Federal agencies, State & Local governments, nonprofit corporations educational agencies and community development organizations in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act. Interested parties can contact Eric Stanley at 404-803-3128. (*Lighthouse Digest, March 2019*)



Some stats: People from Philadelphia & Lancaster, PA; Baltimore, MD; Lewes & Dover, DE, New York and various places in NJ have been checking out our web site. Our web site had approximately 8,500 visitors in 2018 from the United States and Canada and several followers on FaceBook. (*Thanks, Kelly*)



# CHICAMACIMICO LIFE SAVING STATION



Built in 1874 and located in Rodanthe Village on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, Chicamacomico was the first US Life-Saving Station built and manned in North Carolina. Eventually 29 stations were built about six to seven miles apart. In 1911 the original station was replaced and in 1915, it witnessed the merging of the US Revenue Cutter Service and the US Life Saving Service which eventually evolved into the US Coast Guard. Chicamacomico saw action through WWI and WWII and was eventually decommissioned in 1954.

The valiant men of the Chicamacomico Station were responsible for some of the most heroic rescues in American Maritime History. The most notable was the most highly awarded heroic rescue —the rescue of British sailors from the SS Mirlo. In

August of 1918, the British tanker, SS Mirlo was torpedoed by a German U-boat off the coast of the Outer Banks. The hit was seen 7 miles away by a man on duty at the Life Saving Station. Keeper John Midgett, whose family had been involved as surfmen for over 40 years, immediately sprang into action; the boat and crew were in the water less than a half hour after the explosion took place. After 4 attempts, the rescue boat finally cleared the waves and headed out towards the Mirlo. Forty-two of fifty-one British sailors were rescued; not one surfman was lost. All the surfmen involved were awarded the Coast Guard Gold Lifesaving Medal and the Gold Cross for Bravery.

Listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, it is also only one of two original 1874 USLSS in the nation open to the public. Of the 178,742 lives in peril from the seas, 177,286 were saved by the US Life-Saving Service, a record unparalleled today. *(NOTE: This life saving station is located in the same village where movie scenes were filmed for the motion picture, Nights in Rodanthe, from the book by Nicholas Sparks.)*



*Mirlo Rescue*

## PIRATES, RUM RUNNERS & THE COAST GUARD *continued*

170 cases of liquor, three boats, and one gun was the net result of the battle with the smugglers about a quarter mile off Oyster Creek. The captain and his crew had been out in the new fast rum chasers, which the coast guard is provided, patrolling the nearby waters when the rum running tender was sighted in tow of a large boat...”

“...In 1931, the rum runner, Josephine, was spotted by the crew of the coast guard cutter, Marion, and ordered to stop; it didn’t. The crew fired a shot and killed the captain. Then the rum runners stopped and surrendered. The Coast guard identified three of the crewman captured as known bootleggers from Newark, NJ...”

After more than a decade of illegal liquor, speakeasies, smuggling and violence, Prohibition was repealed in 1933. Long before there were lighthouses along the shoreline, pirates—real ones like Captains Kidd, Blackbeard, Black Bart and Bonnet, were prowling the waters around Southern New Jersey.

Supposedly Capt. Kidd anchored at the mouth of Brigantine Inlet, in what is now Atlantic County, in the summer of 1698 and went ashore with his crew to bury a large chest. Later, Kidd and Timothy Jones, his first mate, returned and are said to have reburied the chest, only this time, Jones’ body remained behind, a victim of Kidd’s treachery. Today the fascination with pirates continues. For more than 50 years, one of the most popular events in Cape May every summer is the annual Captain Kidd’s Treasure Hunt for youngsters ready to dig up the beach at Cape May Point looking for the elusive bounty.

Moving on to present times, with the repealing of Prohibition, drug smugglers have replaced rum runners. The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Campbell returned to its homeport in Maine after seizing millions of dollars in illegal drugs during a three-month narcotics patrol. 5,300 kilograms of cocaine estimated at a street value of \$159 million were seized. In December, 2018, 2,000 pounds of cocaine was seized northeast of St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands. The Coast Guard has recently requested its own prison ship to hold suspected drug smugglers; that would free up the cutters for other important missions.



## CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS WITH THE COAST GUARD RECRUITS *continued*

scientist; she had to leave our table to find a quiet area to study for an exam she was taking the following day. The exam requirements are high; the drop-out rate is also high.

Picture (g) shows a display of some artifacts of the 50's and 60's provided by Chief White (retired) and myself. We wanted to show how much things have changed for the better since we were "coasties". Chief White checking out Face Book (h)...the four gentlemen in the background are the professional chauffeurs who ensured a safe journey from Millville to Cape May, piloting the super cruise vehicles provided by Sheppard Bus Service of Millville. These bus drivers are an asset to their employer; they were great at maneuvering the barricades at the Main Gate at Base Cape May—not a scratch on any bus! I was assigned to the gentleman on the right. Charles Bolton, not pictured, also chaperoned the return trip to Cape May. (i) is a picture of a group of some of the young people we can thank for giving their time and dedicating their lives to keeping watch on our coasts, on our waterways and making sure our borders are secure. (NOTE: Pictures on page 8.)





