



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"

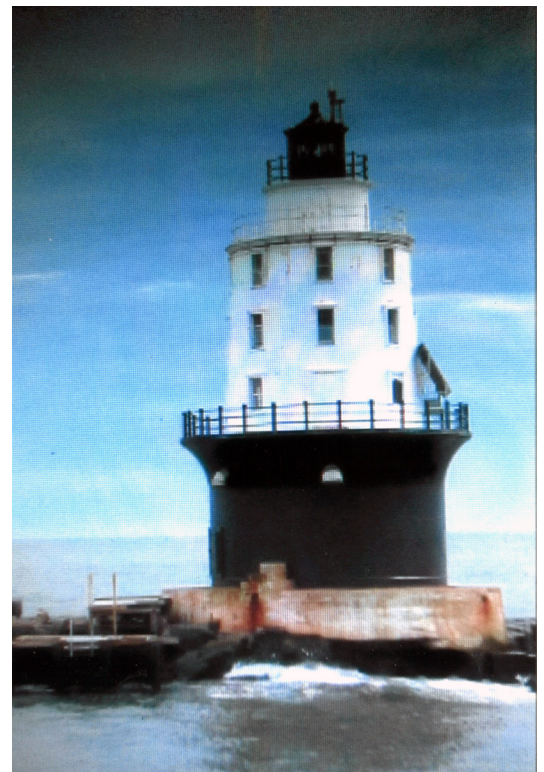
LIGHTHOUSES OF "THE FIRST STATE" (FEATURING HARBOR OF REFUGE)

There had been many shipwrecks along the 25 mile Delaware coastline which prompted the United States Lighthouse Board to recommend the beginning of lighthouse construction to assist mariners. The Delaware coastal area was also well known as a place for pirates to hide from the law.

Appearing near the Cape May-Lewes Ferry dock is **Delaware Breakwater East End Light**. In 1884, this light was constructed as a replacement for the nearby Cape Henlopen Light which was being undermined by wave action and declared unsafe for habitation. The long term plans for Breakwater were to provide transportation to the site and eventually have the structure open for public visitation.

Since the harbor near Breakwater was too shallow for the newer and larger navy vessels, work on the outer breakwater began in 1897. **The National Harbor of Refuge Light** was completed in 1901; its light first exhibited in 1902. Harbor of Refuge was built on the breakwater's southern end to mark it for seagoing vessels. In 1973, the light was fully automated without keepers to maintain it on a daily bases and with a limited coast guard budget, committed more to rescues at sea and drug interdiction. Due to this limited budget, the light received only the most necessary maintenance. One of the last Coast Guard keepers on Harbor of Refuge (Engineman and Acting Officer in Charge) was our own Association President, Angelo S. Rigazio, Jr. He has always enjoyed sharing his experiences and answering questions regarding the time he was stationed there.

So, what is it like living in an offshore lighthouse? Since many of us have never had this experience, I thought it would be interesting for Angelo to share some of his "Harbor" memories. So sit back, relax and read on. Here is the story in Angelo's own words..."I was stationed on Harbor of Refuge Light which was manned by members of the Coast Guard: two petty officers, one seaman and one fireman. Since the rotation schedule was two weeks on, one week off, there was always one petty officer present providing either two or three men on the light at all times, depending on how the rotation was set up. When three men were stationed on the light, each one covered an eight hour watch; with two, each was responsible for a twelve hour watch. The assigned watch included reporting to Group Cape May for radio checks every hour and checking in with weather reports every six hours. These same procedures were followed on all the five manned



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Angelo S. Rigazio, Jr.



A warm HELLO from the President’s Desk. How are all of you managing as the COVID-19 pandemic continues into another year? We are hoping this virus will disappear and our life will return to some semblance of normal once again. As you know, most of our programs and activities for 2020 were cancelled. We are hopeful that we can once again have our meetings and other scheduled lighthouse events in 2021.

I happened to be looking out the window the other day and saw a strange yellow ball in the sky. I recognized it - it was the sun! You remember the sun, the one that had been hiding from us most of February and March? We have had our share of snow, sleet, ice and rain making the days gloomy and dreary. Between the isolation and the gloomy, dreary days, we all have put on a few extra pounds. Spring and summer are just around the corner so we do have something to look forward to—sunshine and warm weather...that special time for going on walks and getting outside to work or just relax in the yard.

As far as planning our boat trips to see the Delaware Bay lighthouses, we have to wait to see what the pandemic situation will be in July and August. We are wondering if it will be possible to keep everyone six feet apart on the Bonanza II, if that is still required. We need to have enough people onboard the cruises to pay for the rental of the boat and still make a profit. By then, hopefully the majority of people will be vaccinated and the positive numbers will be lower making it possible to relax the rules and regulations a little. We are going to think positive thoughts and keep hoping things will improve for everyone. Hope to see you all soon. Stay safe and healthy. Remember, keep the lights shining.

Angelo

THE BAY RUN is the official publication of The Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers and Friends Association, Inc. and is published quarterly throughout the year. A subscription to the newsletter is included with the cost of membership, Annual Membership dues are \$25.00 for the calendar year beginning March 1st. Back issues are usually available for members joining mid-year. Materials are copyrighted and may not be reproduced without permission of the DBLHKFA, Inc.

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SAVE THE DATES – Mark Your Calendars:

We have done some tentative scheduling for the 2021 season hoping we will be able to fulfill some of the events. I have contacted Capt. Mike Rothman to make Delaware Bay cruise reservations on the Bonanza II for the following dates:

Saturday, July 17, 2021 - 5 hour Moonlight cruise to Harbor of Refuge Lighthouse visiting the lighthouses to the South in the Delaware Bay leaving the New Jersey State Marina in Fortescue, NJ at 4:30 PM.

Sunday, August 22, 2021 - 4 hour Sunset cruise to Ship John Shoal Lighthouse and other lighthouses to the North in the Bay leaving the New Jersey State Marina in Fortescue, NJ at 4:30 PM.

We will be keeping aware of the COVID-19 rules and regulations to see when and where we can schedule a meeting. In the meantime, keep up to date by reading **THE BAY RUN**.

Enclosed is the ***Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers Membership Renewal Form*** and the ***Carole F. Reily Scholarship Application Form***. A \$500 scholarship is available to all eligible seniors who are children or relatives of our members. Please have your senior fill out the application and mail it to: **DBLHKFA Scholarship Committee, c/o M. Mulligan, 1049 Simca Terrace, Vineland, NJ 08360** on or before May 15 of this year.

It may be possible to hold our Annual Keepers Banquet in the fall if all goes well. *If you have any suggestions for possible places for the banquet, please contact President Angelo Rigazio at Keeperang54@yahoo.com (609) 884-1329 or our secretary, Darlene Rigazio, Darlenej50@yahoo.com.*

RESULTS OF THE NAME THE TWINS CONTEST UPDATE

Congratulations to Rodney Derickson of Wilmington, Delaware for naming the twins, Pearl & Meryl. Your prize is in the mail. We received twelve sets of name entries. Thanks to all who participated.

I had a chance to speak to Ollie recently and he informed me that the twins are doing well, just “growing like weeds”. They are now 7 months old, have settled to the bottom of the bay and are attached to their Aunt Pearl as their growth development demands. They have also developed a foot each which will help them through the crawling stage. After eventually emerging from a metamorphosis state, they will achieve adulthood after approximately 3 years. Ollie said he and Shelley are looking forward to watching them evolve into beautiful toddlers. Ollie stated: “Hopefully we will be good parents and help them through those ‘terrible twos’.” He added that he and Shelley have been reading books on parenting when they are not busy filtering.

ABANDONED SITES OF SOUTH JERSEY

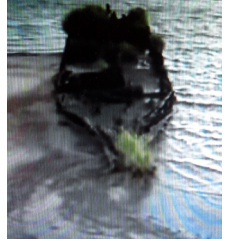
Following is the sad saga of some of the abandoned sites of South Jersey. The pictures were taken from drone shots by Tom and Eleanor Lynskey in August of 2020.



US SILICA SAND RAILROAD was used to transport sand to various companies. A producer of silica sand, kaolin clay and related industrial materials, the Silica Sand Company was founded in 1987 following the merger of two companies. This company offers sand for sports fields, golf course construction and maintenance. Silica sand is also used in the building product industry and is an important part of the glass manufacturing industry accounting for more than 50% of the raw materials used in glass manufacturing. This type of sand is abundant in South Jersey.

The **HAZEL MOORE TUGBOAT** has been abandoned for almost 80 years.

What is left of this boat is located a stone's throw from East Point Lighthouse on the Maurice River near Heislerville, NJ.



The abandoned **RAILROAD SWING BRIDGE** across the Cape May Canal has been replaced by a modern bridge. The canal was dredged in 1942 and the bridge was built as an emergency precaution during WWII. The bridge connected the newly made "island" of Cape May with mainland Lower Township. The swing bridge was abandoned when railroads were no longer necessary. The railroad was reopened in 1980 by Cape May Seashore Lines, a railroad used for travel and sightseeing by tourists.

WORLD WAR II BUNKER, is a concrete bunker located east of Cape May Point Lighthouse in Cape May State Park. The bunker was built by the Corps of Army Engineers in the early months of World War II. It contained heavy artillery and was manned by a rotating detail of naval gunnery crews who spent hours scanning the horizon for enemy ships and submarines. It was part of the coastal defense system.



This is all that remains of the **USS ATLANTIS "The Concrete Ship"** that was built during World War I and went aground at Sunset Beach in Cape May. Due to a shortage of steel at that time, the federal government turned to the experimental designing of concrete ships. President Woodrow Wilson approved the building of 24 concrete ships costing the government \$50 million.

RARE BLUE LOBSTER CAUGHT IN PLYMOUTH BAY

Thirteen year old Adam Carpenter couldn't believe his eyes when he opened his lobster trap and spotted a blue lobster among the others in the trap. Blue lobsters are a rarity, a color mutation that happens about once in 200 million according to the University of Maine Lobster Institute. Placed next to normally colored lobsters, it is easy to see the difference. Carpenter stated, "I was confused and excited; I couldn't believe there was a blue lobster in the trap." His rare find is safely stored in a secret location in the bay to keep it healthy and safe until he decides what to do with it. Blue lobsters have been known to sell for as much as \$500 to restaurants that want to display them in tanks for diners to see. The Red Lobster Restaurant in Ohio once discovered a blue lobster in their product supply. They were commended by the locals for donating it to a zoo instead of selling it to a restaurant for a patron's dinner. When asked what he planned on doing with his rare catch, Carpenter said he just might donate it to the New England Aquarium in Boston; "They'll give it a good home." (*Boston Globe, Summer 2020; thanks to our Boston correspondent.*)



DID YOU KNOW?



St. Patrick's Day – Was there really a St. Patrick? Definitely. St. Patrick was born in Britain as Maewyn Succat who was kidnapped at the age of 16. He became a slave working as a shepherd for the next 6 years. Upon returning home, he received a call in a dream to preach the Gospel. Consequently, he spent the next 15 years in a monastery preparing for his missionary work and became a priest. Upon becoming a priest, his name was changed to Patricus and eventually to Patrick. It is said he spread Christianity throughout Ireland and brought an organized church into existence. (*Not sure about the snakes.*)



Easter always falls on a Sunday between March 22 and April 25. It is a “movable holiday” since it relates to the paschal full moon which falls on the 14th day of a lunar month. (Now that that is fully explained, I'll continue.) Eggs, traditionally forbidden during Lent, are associated with Easter since they symbolize new life. The Easter Bunny is symbolic of the hare, the Egyptian symbol of fertility.



Mother's Day -- In 16th century England, a celebration called “Mothering Sunday” was inaugurated. It was a Sunday set aside for visiting one's mother. Sometime during the day, the mother would attend special church services with her family.



Memorial Day was first established in 1868 when Civil War Commander Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic established Decoration Day as a time for the nation to decorate the graves of the military war dead. The ceremony was held at Arlington National Cemetery where both Union and Confederate troops were buried. General Ulysses S. Grant, his wife and other officials presided over the proceedings. In 1966, Congress and President Lyndon B. Johnson declared the holiday to be known as Memorial Day. It was to be celebrated on May 30 but has since been moved to the last Monday in May, a day to remember and honor men and women who died while serving in the nation's armed forces.



Flag Day honors began on June 14, 1777 when the Second Continental Congress issued a resolution about a flag for our country. It shall be “resolved that the flag of the thirteen United States shall be 13 stripes alternating red and white; the union to be 13 stars white on a blue field representing a new constellation”. As the years passed, a number of people were involved with this resolution until 1916 when President Woodrow Wilson added to the resolution...”in every community the 14th of June shall be observed as Flag Day with special patriotic exercises.”



Father's Day is celebrated to honor fatherhood and the influence of fathers in society. It is celebrated on the third Sunday in June, first celebrated in 1910 in America. (*The Farmer's Almanac 2021*).



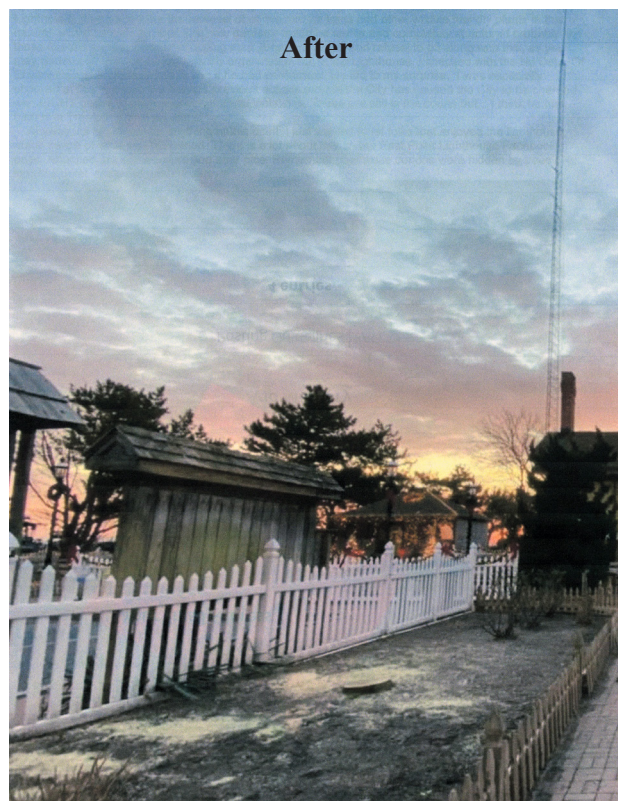
In August of 1935, off the coast of NJ, the American military tested aerial bombardment on R-8, a Navy submarine that had recently been decommissioned. A salvage team now claims that they have located this submarine somewhere off shore between Cape May, NJ and Ocean City, Maryland. A sonar system allowed the team to get a detailed picture of the wreck, accurate measurements of the length, the height, and the beam of the ship. At that time, no dive team had visited the site. (*The Press of Atlantic City, December 12, 2020*)



Cape May was part of the Underground Railroad. Fleeing their chains in Maryland, Delaware and Virginia, African slaves braved strong currents and stormy seas, guided by the beacon of the Cape May Light. Legendary anti-slavery fighter, Harriet Tubman, walked the streets of Cape May as did businessman and former slave, Stephen Smith. Smith's railroad cars carried hundreds of slaves passing through Cape May to freedom.

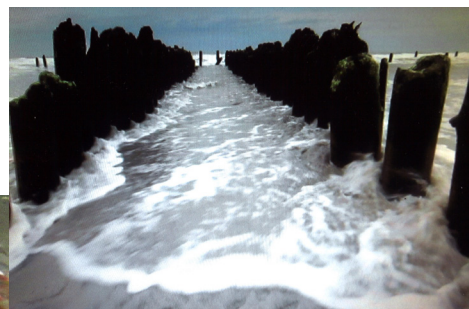
LIGHTHOUSE HEREFORD

“A picture is worth a thousand words” - Quote attributed to many including Confucius & Napoleon



REMNANTS OF ABANDONED LIFE-SAVING STATION RESURFACE AT THE JERSEY SHORE

The coastal storm of February 5, 2021 exposed remnants of an abandoned life saving station built in the late 1800's in Brigantine, NJ. Originally abandoned in 1949 according to the United States Life Saving Service Heritage Association, the station was primarily built of brick and concrete but eventually destroyed by tropical storms. Over the years erosion took place; the life-saving station was completely covered by sand brought about by the ebb and flow of the ocean tides. When Hurricane Sandy hit in 2012, more pieces of the abandoned station became visible. Residents living in Brigantine have been collecting the artifacts for years. Many bottles and other resurfaced items are now in the local museum. *(Nichols, Lori M., New Jersey Advanced Media, February 2021)*



LIGHTHOUSES OF “THE FIRST STATE” (CONTINUED)

lighthouses in the Delaware Bay. All the Bay lighthouses were automated by 1974 and solarized by 2000. Today they are still maintained by the United States Coast Guard and are all still active aids to navigation.”

“Recently while looking through some old photo albums, I found some pictures of Harbor of Refuge taken both inside and outside of the light. (See Pgs. 1 & 8) These pictures were taken in 1973 while the light was being prepared for automation. There were stairs running from the watch deck to the boat landing dock; there was also a staircase going down to the dock and the breakwater. At 7,200’ the breakwater is the second longest breakwater in the United States. The elbow in the middle helped break up the ice flows and kept them from getting into the harbor. When we had time, it was nice to take a long walk on the breakwater but it had to be done at low tide.”

“The first deck of the lighthouse included the office, radio room, kitchen, washer and dryer, and a TV room. The second and third deck had living quarters which included a bathroom with a shower. The fourth deck was the lantern room where the spare lights and other parts for the light were stored. Harbor of Refuge and Cape May Lighthouse were the only two Bay lights that had a revolving light. The smokestack next to the flag was for the generators and contained air compressors for the fog horns.”

“Living on the lighthouse was quite an adventure. We fished a lot during the summer and sold some of the fish to a fish market in Lewes, DE. They paid us \$.40 a pound for weakfish and bluefish. We also kept watch on the lobster pots fishermen had around the rocks. When we saw divers come to the surface after stealing from the lobster pots, we told them to put the lobsters back and get off the rocks. In return, the fishermen would give us a couple of lobsters for standing guard over their pots.”

“Getting on and off the lighthouse was another adventure. Coast guardsmen stationed on other lighthouses in the Delaware Bay were taken to and from the lighthouses by boat. At “Harbor,” we were dropped off and picked up by helicopter, getting into a basket inside the helicopter and lowered to the dock or raised to the helicopter from the dock. After the transition, the basket would then be returned to the helicopter to bring food and other provisions. When the basket was finally lifted back to the helicopter, it would take the person or persons leaving the shift.”

“We had a dog and a cat at the lighthouse. One time, when the dog’s owner was coming down in the basket, the dog got very excited and jumped up towards the basket. A spark from the static charge hit him in the nose. From that time on, whenever he heard the chopper, the dog ran and hid under the kitchen table.”

“Being a lighthouse keeper on Harbor of Refuge was not always boring but one had to keep busy on those long, cold winter days. This was truly a rewarding experience for me that I will remember for the rest of my life. I was so glad I was able to play an important part in ‘keeping the light shining’.”

(NOTE: A special thanks to Angelo for sharing some of his lighthouse experiences as a keeper on Harbor Refuge. I, for one, learned a lot about what taking care of and living in a lighthouse involves.

DID YOU KNOW? (CONTINUED)



In December of 2020, the ceremony of Wreaths Across America was held throughout our country. Procedures had to be changed due to COVID-19’s rules and regulations. What normally took one day, was now completed in three. In Sarasota National Cemetery, Sarasota, Florida, 16,130 wreaths were placed on the graves of the military interred there. In the near future, the association plans to place wreaths on the graves of veterans interred in private cemeteries. *(Florida correspondent, Thanks, Dee.)*



The Delaware River is named for Thomas West, the 3rd and Baron De la Warre, first governor of Virginia. The governor’s deputy, navigator Samuel Argall, was sent on a foraging expedition for the Jamestown colony in 1610 but was blown off course during a storm. After the weather subsided, he found himself in a large unknown bay which he named for his boss. Ironically, Lord Delaware never saw the body of water which now bears his name.



On March 15, 1930, the first streamlined submarine of the US Navy, the USS Nautilus (SS-168) was launched. The Nautilus operated in the Pacific and was based at Pearl Harbor and San Diego. Before being decommissioned in 1945, the submarine completed fourteen war patrols.

INSIDE HARBOR OF REFUGE

