



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”

THAT WAS THEN... THE STORY OF ELBOW OF CROSS LEDGE



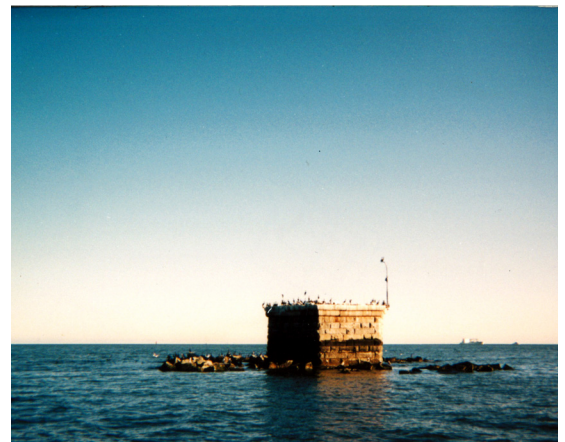
Elbow of Cross Ledge was built to replace the original Cross Ledge Lighthouse, a handsome wood framed structure, in the Delaware Bay. It seems that the Cross Ledge Light was doomed from the start as the setting and completion of the caisson were interrupted by a severe storm in September of 1907. At that time, one worker drowned and another was set adrift in a scow and not rescued for two days. This original light had received glancing blows by passing ships several times. These incidents occurred so many times that the keepers actually slept in life jackets for fear of having to abandon the station should it be hit again. A military photograph taken in 1945, showed the structure to be in surprisingly good condition, everything except the upper part of the cupola, which was missing. During WWII, the military was interested in the deserted structure since

numerous sites in the Delaware Bay were designated as targets; consequently, the former lighthouse was listed as a target for training missions involving aircraft. Besides the strafing, on November of 1951, Cross Ledge suffered serious damage from a storm. After all the problems, the light eventually became automated and was controlled by the keepers of the nearby Miah Maull Shoal Light. Another devastating blow came on October 20, 1953, when the ore freighter Steel Apprentice, navigating in a thick fog and without operable radar, struck the light head on, knocking most of the lighthouse into the bay. In 1962, for safety reasons, the coast guard set fire to what was left of the structure and burned it down to the granite base. The coast guard had to remove the wreckage. The foundation still marks the original site today.

Before the new structure was built, various species of birds used the flat top area as a landing place and a convenient place to nest. It became a favored fishing spot due to the jumbled pile of wreckage at its base which offers a shelter for fish and was sometimes referred to as “Flattop”.

THIS IS NOW...

After the destruction of the original Cross Ledge Light, it was felt that a new lighthouse was needed to help improve the lighting of the bay. At this site, a small “elbow” of the ledge juts out toward the main



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Angelo S. Rigazio, Jr.



Another year has come and gone; remembering 2021 as another year when COVID controlled our lives. I’m sure everyone will agree that 2022 needs to bring us better health and happy events in our daily lives.

Your lighthouse organization has planned two Delaware Bay cruises this summer with each one departing from the Marina in Fortescue, NJ at 3 PM. We cruise on the Bonanza II and visit 5 different lighthouses, circling them, allowing for the opportunity to snap some beautiful pictures, not only of the lighthouses but of the lovely sunset on the Delaware Bay. One cruise is scheduled for July 16, the other for August 20. Come out and support your group as a designated number of passengers are needed to pay

for the trip. There is more information in the newsletter.

Speaking about supporting your organization, I am putting out a plea for our Executive Board and our organization in general. We are in dire need of help in every possible way. We have members who can no longer help on various committees due to age and/or illness. If we don’t get this much needed help soon, I am not sure what will happen to our group. We have four Executive/Board and four regular meetings each year (seasonal). It is always an enjoyable gathering. We need your help to plan these regular meetings and we need your help and ideas to keep this organization going forward. This organization was a dream of our founder, Carole F. Reilly, a dream she passed on to so many. Please come out and help. We are not asking you to do this alone; when we all pitch in together we will make it work.

Our next meeting is Saturday, May 21 at the US Life Saving Station 30 and Museum in Ocean City, NJ featuring John Loeper, USLSS as guest speaker. You don’t want to miss this event as it will be an enjoyable day for all. Look for details in the newsletter. I hope to see you soon. AND REMEMBER, Keep the lights shining,

Angelo

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FROM THE LOG OF THE INTERIM VICE PRESIDENT *by Rod Mulligan*



Due to the snow storm and the postponement of our original date in January, we met at East Point February 12, a beautiful spring-like day. After a very interesting meeting, we listened to our guest speaker, Nancy Patterson-Tidy, Manager of East Point Light, who brought the assemblage up to date on the meetings with the State of New Jersey and the DEP. Patterson-Tidy related some of the building's history. It seems that in 1971, East Point had been shuttered, abandoned and abused. There was a fire which destroyed the lantern room, roof, and other sections of the lighthouse. A hurricane blew in causing the unstable chimney to fall into the kitchen; the lighthouse was almost completely destroyed. Luckily Patterson-Tidy, her husband, Carl, local officials, the Maurice River Historical Society and numerous others, became interested in restoring the building; it took a lot of hard work, persistence and many trips to Trenton to plead the case for this historical landmark. The hard work paid off as witnessed by the way the lighthouse looks today.

But the work is never done. Now there is a never ending fight to protect and preserve the lighthouse which, through the efforts of those involved, has been refurbished, restored and restocked. It hasn't been an easy job. Since this lighthouse is located where the Maurice River flows into the Delaware Bay, it must be protected from hurricanes and other storms plus the high tides in this area. A dredging project has been approved; eventually the draining will begin. After all the hours, days and years of hard work, we cannot allow this beautiful tourist attraction to be destroyed by Mother Nature. If you haven't visited East Point Light, take advantage of their openings the 1st and 3rd weekend of each month. "You'll be so glad you did." Thanks, Nancy, for a very interesting, informative presentation.

Before



After

MEMORIES OF THE LAUNCHING OF THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER USS KITTY HAWK *by Rod Mulligan*

While assigned to the Zinnia, along with now Retired Chief Engine Man Marvin White, we received orders from district headquarters to be on standby for the launching of the 1,000'+ aircraft carrier, the USS Kitty Hawk. The Kitty Hawk's keel was laid December of 1956 at New York Shipbuilding in Camden, NJ at a final cost of \$178 million (equal to \$1.7 billion in 2022). New York Shipbuilding was located north of the Walt Whitman Bridge; at that time, our ship the Zinnia was assigned to Base Gloucester, south of the bridge. The Kitty Hawk had originally been brought to San Diego in the fall of 1960 and was destined to remain there for 27 years. It was decommissioned in 2009 and for the next 12 years it would sit with other retired ships in Puget Sound, Washington.

Imagine this, the Zinnia was all of 125' compared to the over 1,000' air craft carrier, Kitty Hawk. We were like a cork in a bathtub. If there were a strong wave we could have been driven about 150 degrees. There were also some 40 footers assigned to accompany the large ship. The launching did indeed make a large splash. A major concern was that the stern might have created a new branch of the Delaware River on the Philadelphia side. Needless to say it was quite an experience being a small part of Kitty Hawk's history. I'm truly sorry to see a great ship going to the scrap yard and at the same time, I'm proud to have been a member of the USCG Aids to Navigation Team and proud to have been assigned to help the US Navy.





SAVE THE DATES – Mark Your Calendars:

Saturday, May 7, 2022 – Cape May County Coast Guard Community Festival held at the Coast Guard Base, Cape May, NJ. Get an inside look at Coast Guard vessels and helicopters; explore the extensive US Coast Guard Training Center on foot or by trolley. The Coast Guard Recruit Band and Precision Drill Team will perform and there will be a Search and Rescue demonstration. Great food, local brews, vendors and live entertainment including the USO Troupe Show from New York City that will perform at 10:30 AM.

Saturday, May 21, 2022 – Spring meeting to be held at US Life-Saving Station #30 in Ocean City, NJ. Our guest speaker, John Loeper, will discuss recent restoration projects at the station. Loeper is Station #30's Life-Saving Historian and was recently elected President of the US Life-Saving Heritage Association. The Life Saving Station is located at 801 East 4th Street, Ocean City, NJ 08226. Meeting time 1 PM. (Check article on p. 5)

Saturday, July 16, 2022 – Sunset Cruise of the Lighthouses of the Delaware Bay. Four hour sunset cruise to Ship John Shoal Light leaving New Jersey State Marina (Higbee's Harbor) in Fortescue, NJ at 3 PM. See Cruise News page 7 for further information. (Please note change in time.)

Sunday, August 7, 2022 – National Lighthouse Day celebration. We will be at East Point Lighthouse.

Saturday, August 20, 2022 – Sunset Cruise to the Lighthouses of the Delaware Bay. Four hour sunset cruise to Brandywine Light leaving New Jersey State Marina (Higbee's Harbor) in Fortescue, NJ at 3 PM. See Cruise News page 7 for further information. (Please note change in time.)

Saturday & Sunday, October 22 & 23, 2022 – Lighthouse Challenge of New Jersey. Our organization will be stationed at East Point. Volunteers needed and always welcome. Join the Challenge!! How many NJ lighthouses can you visit in one weekend?

EVA MOFFATT PASSES OVER THE BAR

Lighthouse Association member Eva Moffatt crossed the bar December 31, 2021. Formerly of Vineland and a resident of Tarpon Springs, Florida, Eva was a loving wife to Jim Moffatt, a loving mother and grandmother to her children and grandchildren. Eva was very active in her birthplace of Wildwood, NJ, taking part and contributing to many activities in school; when younger she was Secretary for the Wildwood Beach Patrol. Later in life, she was Executive Director of the Greater Vineland United Way and Executive Director of the Cumberland County Human Services Commission before retiring. She was also instrumental in initiating many innovative community programs especially for Senior Citizens and Disadvantaged Residents while teaching Sunday School at the Vineland First United Methodist Church. Eva was very dedicated to the City of Vineland and participated in many ways to the growth of the community through her many volunteer efforts. She was a treasured member of the Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers Association. In lieu of flowers or gifts, the family requests donations be made in Eva's name to the American Diabetes Association. She will be missed by all of us.



GRAVES OF LIFE SAVING STATION SURFMEN DISCOVERED

Research has led to the grave sites of the brave men who rowed out to rescue people from shipwrecks off the coast of Ocean City, NJ in the late 1800s and beginning of the 20th Century. A few graves were found at the old section of the Methodist Cemetery in Seaview, NJ and more were discovered at a cemetery in Woodbine, NJ. Two more resting places were found on the privately owned land of a farmer's family homestead.

When the names of the deceased were found, historians and relatives were contacted by using websites, Ancestry.com and Face Book. "It is long overdue that we recognize the sacrifice, courage and bravery of these men," stated John Loeper, Ocean City Life Saving Station #30 Historian. Loeper was recently elected President of the US Life Saving Heritage Association. The Life Saving Station Museum is located at 4th and Ocean Avenues in Ocean City, NJ.

SPRINGTOWN, NJ PART OF UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Springtown in Cumberland County, named for the boggy soil created by underground springs, was a section of Greenwich Township that has been traced back to 1786 when Quakers began selling tracts of land to former slaves. The settlement allowed for freed or escaped slaves to live more or less freely in a secluded environment without overbearing interference from the outside population. It became an important center for the abolitionist movement. Springtown is located on the peninsula between the Cohansey River and Stowe Creek with direct access to the Delaware Bay, a stop on the Underground Railroad. The Lenape Indians were a critical source in navigating the complex waters as the slaves made their way to Dover, DE, then across 30 miles of the bay, seeking refuge. It is speculated that Harriet Tubman was a frequent visitor to this location

(Bizilian, Sydney. The Reminder, "The Significant History of Springtown, Cumberland County", February 23, 2022.)

REVIVAL OF FORTESCUE & GANDY'S BEACH

A large fishing industry once thrived in historic South Jersey which supported many villages along the Delaware Bay. Those still in existence are quaint and quiet but are still threatened by the forces that eliminated the others. Approximately two years ago, the US Department of Agriculture announced it would provide \$4.5 million to help construct a sewage system to serve both Fortescue and Gandy's Beach. Some of the benefits of this overdue infrastructure upgrade are visible on the grounds of these two villages. Mike Rothman, Mayor of Downe Township, said real estate sales are slowly increasing. Someone is interested in buying a waterfront campground and building a 100 room hotel on the site. The sewerage upgrade is also a substantial environment improvement. The bayshore will regain some of the more welcoming quiet charm it had for a couple hundred years. Originally the fishing village of Money Island was included in the project plans. Eventually the village will be abandoned and allowed to return to a natural state. *(AC Press, February 25, 2022.)*

SEAGRASS AND SEAWEED CRITICAL TO OUR SHORELINES

Seagrass has roots, seaweed does not. The benefits of seagrass are great as explained by Elizabeth Lacy, Associate Professor of Marine Science at New Jersey's Stockton University. She has made it her life's work monitoring and studying seagrass and seaweed. These beds are an important habitat for fish and provide a nursery for baby fish; they stabilize the shoreline and bring in a lot of money for fisheries; they bring in money for tourism; and act as a "shoreline protector" along with producing oxygen and removing carbon dioxide. It is one of the most productive ecosystems in the world, rated the third most valuable on the planet, surpassed only by estuaries and wetlands.

One of the threats to seagrass is people who tear up the beds with the props of their motorboats. One of Lacy's mottos is "Don't Harass the Seagrass" which she hopes encourages boaters to avoid the areas where the seagrass is grown. She also monitors areas of the bay where seagrass has disappeared and tries to discern why it is no longer growing there. *(Ogrodnek, Vernon. AC Press, Sunday, June 28, 2020)*

DID YOU KNOW?



The Courageous, the largest high speed passenger catamaran in the United States is now operating taking passengers between New Jersey and New York City. (*Internet, December 12, 2021*)



Sandy Hook Lighthouse, the oldest operating lighthouse in the country, was completed in 1764 and listed on the National Registry. Tours are presently postponed. People are still invited to walk around the area and explore the site.



New Jersey was almost nicknamed the “Maritime State” instead of the “Garden State” according to former Governor Driscoll in his 1953 veto of a bill to put the words “Garden State” on the NJ license plates.



Ocean going wooden ships (including 4 masted schooners) were built in small towns up and down the Jersey Shore.



Box cars full of clams and oysters were shipped from the Jersey Shore to Campbell’s South in Camden, NJ for use in their soups and chowders. The finished products were then shipped around the world.



There are over 4,800 shipwrecks in the waters along the New Jersey coast focused on the Atlantic Ocean, the Delaware River and Delaware Bay areas.



Absecon Lighthouse is the tallest lighthouse in New Jersey at 171’.



The Delaware River flows 419 miles from New York’s Catskill Mountains into the Delaware Bay.



Delaware was settled by the Swedes in 1627. According to legend, Thomas Jefferson referred to Delaware as the “Diamond State” as it was a “jewel among states” due to its prime location on the Eastern Seaboard. It is currently known as “The First State” since it was the first state to ratify the federal constitution.



Delaware River and Bay Authority commissioners unanimously approved a new fare schedule for the Cape May-Lewes Ferry. From April to October, all vehicle fares will increase by \$2. Return trip value fares will remain unchanged. In-season child rates will be lowered \$1 and all other passenger rates will remain unchanged. This proposed rate change is projected to generate about \$132,000 and will go into effect April 1. (*Atlantic City Press, January 28, 2022*)



The 2022 Horseshoe Crab Festival has been scheduled for Saturday, May 14 in Fortescue, NJ. This event features sea glass expo, craft station, live music, local vendors and more. (*The Reminder, February 9, 2022*)



Stockton College Environmental Science Program, the professor and students discovered the largest post oak tree in New Jersey. The tree measures 64’ high, has a circumference of 11’ 3” and a crown spread of 80’. There are over 500 of these gigantic oaks referred to as “champions” in the State of New Jersey. They perform 600 times the beneficial benefits of typical trees. (*Atlantic City Press, February 11, 2022.*)

CRUISE NEWS

Cruises to the Lighthouses of the Delaware Bay have been scheduled for Saturday, July 16, and Saturday, August 20, leaving at 3 PM...the 4 hour **SUNSET CRUISE (July 16)** goes to Ship John Shoal and returns south in the bay...the 4 hour **SUNSET CRUISE (August 20)**, to Brandywine returning north in the bay. These narrated cruises take place aboard the USCG approved Bonanza II out of the NJ State Marina (Higbee's -slip #5), Fortescue, NJ, 08321. **RESERVE SOON – BRING A FRIEND, NEIGHBOR AND/OR RELATIVE. THESE CRUISES FILL UP QUICKLY!!** (NOTE: Fortescue is "The Weakfish Capital of the World".) Check out this quaint fishing village on the Delaware Bay. **PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF TIME – LEAVING DOCK AT 3 PM.** (NOTE: We must have 30 people sign up for the cruise in order to pay for the fuel.)

The cost for the cruises is \$45 for adults and \$20 for children 5 - 12 years of age. Passengers must be at the dock at least one half hour before departure time. Lighthouses visited are: Miah Maull, Cross Ledge, Elbow of Cross Ledge, Fourteen Foot Bank and either Brandywine or Ship John. You are asked to bring bug spray (just in case), a jacket and a box lunch if you wish. Soda and water are provided onboard. Masks must be worn embarking or disembarking from the vessel.

For reservations please contact: Darlene or Angelo Rigazio (609) 408-6692 e-mail: darlenej50@yahoo.com; Keeperang54@yahoo.com. Checks (**payable to DBLHKFA**) are NOT deposited until after the cruise; if the cruise is cancelled due to inclement weather, your check will be returned. We must have a home & cell phone number for you in case of a cancellation OR you can call the number listed above. Refunds **WILL NOT** be made if you **DO NOT** let us know you **WILL NOT** be there. Payment is due 2 weeks **BEFORE** the cruise, checks can be mailed to: Maxine Mulligan, Treasurer, 1049 Simca Terrace, Vineland, NJ 08360.

There are former lighthouse keepers and members of the coast guard aboard these cruises to narrate and answer your questions. Background information on the Delaware Bay and the history of each lighthouse will be given. Spend some time on the historic Delaware Bay viewing the lighthouses...excellent "photo ops". Come join us for a relaxing, enjoyable time and watch the beautiful sunset on the Delaware Bay.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

shipping channel. This “elbow,” caused vessels to make a small turn in their course and was considered a hazard to mariners. A red steel skeleton tower was erected and relit in 1955. The skeleton tower remains today, guarding the Elbow of Cross Ledge, and is an efficient aid to navigation which serves the mariner, day in and day out. In 1998 this station was solarized. It is still in service today operated and maintained by the US Coast Guard Aids to Navigation Team from Cape May.

(Gowdy, Jim and Kim Ruth. GUIDING LIGHTS OF THE DELAWARE RIVER & BAY, Egg harbor City, NJ, Laureate Press, Inc., 1999.)

(Information from Wikipedia, “Elbow of Cross Ledge Light,” 2020.)



OLLIE’S REPORT – CATCHING UP

Since it has been awhile, I thought I should take some time to let you know how we are all doing. Shelley and I are fine, keeping busy as usual trying to keep up with the twins, plus working and taking care of our habitat. Pearl & Meryl are “growing like weeds”. Since Shelley & I have to work to keep our heads under water, the twins are presently enrolled in the shellfish preschool where they are studying Filtering 101. We all have to begin somewhere. Their teacher is Ms. Rochelle, a relatively new teacher, who transferred from Long Island Sound. We are hoping as they advance in school, they will study the oyster industry here in the Delaware Bay and also eventually learn about the life cycle of an oyster which is very important in this day and age. That way they will be learning about their home port, their surroundings and their lives. They are heading towards the “terrible twos” which I have heard so much about. I understand that the completion of the life cycle of an oyster takes about 2 years so they are also heading towards maturity. Pearl is still a little shy; Meryl is very outgoing. We encourage them to stay out of the sand so as not to become too irritated.

I have read where the State of New Jersey has taken a step toward allowing experimental oyster colony research projects to be placed in polluted waterways to help clean the water. Myself, I don’t like filtering in badly polluted water and hopefully, Shelley doesn’t get transferred there either. The Environmental Protection Department of NJ is deeply concerned about this project because poachers might steal and sell the oysters from this experimental venture, potentially sickening customers and damaging the state’s \$80 million shellfish industry. This experiment was to take place in the Raritan Bay area in New Jersey. Environmental groups are establishing oyster colonies in other parts of the state as well as in the Delaware Bay, our home waterway. Shelley and I hope the twins aren’t affected by this experimental research; we are hoping when the time comes, they will be assigned to cleaner water. Every part of oyster aquaculture is heavily regulated around here so it can be considered super safe.

We, like most parents, hope that our twins will grow up to be contributing factors to our marine society and make us proud. After all, it has been stated that: “water is life itself.” ‘Til next time, stay safe and healthy.

MEMORIAL DAY TRIBUTE

We salute your courage, your honor, and most of all, your sacrifice. A special thank you from all of us who truly appreciate your willingness to service our country – and what it cost you.

