



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"

THE BATTLESHIP NEW JERSEY BB62 – The “Big J”

Safely nestled in the harbor of the Camden Waterfront in Camden, New Jersey, the most highly decorated ship in Naval history, the Battleship New Jersey, has been brought to life for generations to visit and explore her true majesty. Built in the former Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, the New Jersey served during World War II, the Korean and Vietnam Wars and was in the Middle East before being retired in 1991. Of the 1,000 compartments available on the 887 foot vessel, 350 have been impeccably refurbished. Thousands of man hours have been dedicated to bring this fantastic landmark back to its original shape, a testament to the ship's great legacy.

After serving forty-eight years as an active or reserve battleship, the New Jersey was decommissioned for the fourth and final time in February of 1991. The “Big J” had earned nineteen battle and campaign stars from its service in the aforementioned wars and conflicts. The New Jersey traveled more miles, fired more 16” and 5” shells and earned more battle and campaign stars than any other American battleship. She was also the first commissioned battleship to fire a Tomahawk missile. Other than firing the first Tomahawk missile, the New Jersey logged many other “famous firsts”; it was the first battleship to: transfer ammunition at sea via helicopter; operate during the Vietnam War, carry guided-missile armament and operate in the Persian Gulf. The ship is 11 stories high and nearly 3 football fields long; the main guns are capable of hitting targets 23 miles away. It carries enough fuel to fill more than 160,000 automobiles and the firing ability of the *(continued on page 7)*



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Angelo S. Rigazio, Jr.



One morning this past winter, I woke to the sound of the wind howling and whistling around our house. As I lie there listening, it brought back memories of some of the days I spent stationed on Harbor of Refuge Lighthouse. Thanks to the Northeast or Northwest winds, we very seldom had a nice, calm day. The Northeast winds coming off the Atlantic Ocean bringing 15 to 20 foot waves, made a spray that would cover the light, submerging the breakwater. It was something you would have to see to believe. The Northwest winds would blow in from the Delaware Bay bringing ice flows down the bay and into the breakwater’s north side. Very little ice would form on the south side allowing the pilot boats to drop off the pilots so they could safely board the ships coming into the bay. I am eagerly looking forward to this winter weather ending and spring arriving once again.

Speaking of spring, our next meeting will be the 22nd Annual Keepers’ Banquet held at the Yacht Club of Sea Isle City on April 9. We always look forward to socializing with members and their guests, enjoying a great view, sampling the delicious food and listening to an informative speaker. I also understand we are to have a special guest soloist. Hope to see you there.

Remember ‘til then keep the lights shining!!

Angelo

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For Newsletter ideas, Contact

DBLHKFA c/o Maxine Mulligan

1049 Simca Terrace, Vineland, New Jersey 08360

Email: Memax1@juno.com

Board of Directors

Rod Mulligan, Bill Geilfuss, Anthony Giletto, and Katie Moser

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Phone Numbers and Email Addresses

- | | |
|--|--|
| A. Rigazio-(609) 884-1329 • Keeperang54@yahoo.com | R & M Mulligan-(856) 691-8224 • Memax1@juno.com |
| Elma Gardner-(856) 825-0123 • elmagardner@verizon.net | Katie Moser-(215) 884-8548 • KatieMos@aol.com |
| Bill Geilfuss-(215) 872-9506 • billyrio@aol.com | D. Rigazio-(609) 884-1329 • Darlenej50@yahoo.com |
| P. Stapleford-(484) 947-3191 • mspegstapleford@windstream.net | Tony Giletto-(856) 482-8874 • Nino21328@aol.com |
| K. Mulligan-(856) 691-8224 • Kelly@delawarebaylightkeeper-friend.org | |

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

FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

by Rod Mulligan



(An update on our events since the last Newsletter.)

Since the US Coast Guard recruits going through basic training in Cape May couldn't be home for Christmas, they enjoyed a warm welcome and some holiday hometown hospitality at the Millville Elks Lodge on December 24. For the second straight year, they were treated to a complete Christmas dinner, got a chance to play some games, watch movies and call friends and families on their cell phones. Dozens of volunteers helped to prepare the hall and serve these recruits.

Our winter meeting held in Anglesea, was an informative Round Table Discussion featuring four prominent locals. Bill Lehman and Dick Pike both discussed the Tatham Life Saving Station located in Stone Harbor, NJ. They explained the procedures required to get the station in shape and opened to the public. The Dutch style station, established in 1871, is the oldest building in Stone Harbor. There are 19 Life Saving Stations in the nation; of these, eleven are in New Jersey. Because the NJ coast was used to guide ships going to and from ports in Pennsylvania and New York, many ships ran aground in this area. Originally life saving stations were erected every 3 miles along the shore. Relating the history of the building, they explained that all reconstruction must be historically correct. The Station is open for tours and visitors in the summer when people are invited to climb the tower and are encouraged to visit the museum honoring the Life Saving Service, the coast guard and other military services. Tatham Life Saving Station is listed on the State and National Historical Registers. The American Legion Post #331 is now housed in the former Life Saving Station.

Steve Murray, Curator and Historian of Hereford Inlet Lighthouse in North Wildwood, explained the history of the Hereford Lighthouse, stating it was the first building in the Wildwoods; the construction was completed in 1874. A historical lighthouse, it remains a beacon of safety and assurance to mariners and is the only lighthouse of its design on the East Coast. The light is visible for 13 nautical miles. Hereford has won many awards and received several grants. Open year round, it is a cherished landmark for residents and visitors of the seashore resort community. It is also listed on the National Historical Registry. Stop by, stroll through the beautiful gardens and visit the historic lighthouse.

The reconstruction and restoration of East Point Lighthouse and the keeper's cottage were the topics of Nancy Patterson's presentation. Located at the mouth of the Maurice River in Heislerville, NJ, East Point Lighthouse has been guiding fishermen and pleasure boaters since 1849. The light was darkened for World War II and relit in 1980. It is the last active lighthouse remaining on the New Jersey side of the Delaware Bay. Nancy was privileged to meet the last surviving person who lived in the lighthouse and is planning on setting up the structure as once remembered. She is looking forward to hosting an Open House when all the work is completed. The cottage has become a gift shop fully serviced by the Internet. A ramp for handicapped visitors has been installed at the lighthouse along with a monitor enabling people who cannot climb the tower to appreciate the view from the lantern room. A lot of time and energy has been put into restoring the lighthouse to its original shape. Stop in and check out this beautiful landmark. East Point is open to the public on the 3rd Sunday of each month from April through October from 1 – 4 PM.

WINTER MEETING 2017



Listening to presentations



President Rigazio acknowledges guest speakers

Spring 2017

Founded in 1681, Slaughter Beach is a sanctuary for horseshoe crabs. It seems that the crabs come ashore at low tide to spawn which provides us with one of the legends as to the naming of this area. When the crabs come ashore, the wave action flips them over and the crabs are left in the hot sun to die – thus the “slaughter” of the crabs. Other implications are that this vicinity could have been named after the Slaughter Creek that flows through the area; there is also a Slaughter Neck or it could have been named for William Slaughter, the first post master. One more story as to the naming of Slaughter Beach is that the leader of the early settlers planned a meeting with the Indian Chief to supposedly discuss a peace treaty. As they gathered around the cannon for the meeting, the cannon was fired slaughtering all the Indians attending.

In the early years, Slaughter Beach was primarily a resort for Milford area residents during the summer season. There was a hotel, a dance hall and a boardwalk. With the invention of automobiles, people began travelling to Rehoboth Beach thus turning Slaughter Beach into a sleepy little seasonal fishing village. The 2010 census showed a year round population of 207 which increases during the summer season. It is still a place where one can briefly escape from the real world.

Slaughter Beach was once the home to the last wooded frame lighthouse, the Mispillion Lighthouse which was established in 1831. This lighthouse is on the National Register of Historical Places and is now a private residence in Lewes, Delaware.

GOAT ISLAND

Goat Island is an 8 acre island on the Mispillion River located in Milford, Delaware. The Island can be accessed via the Mispillion Riverwalk across from the Milford Police Station. There are varying reports as to how the island got its name. One story is that a farmer use to float his goats out to the island each summer to forage throughout the season; then he would return in the fall to bring them back. Goat Island was originally created by local shipbuilders in the 1940's to straighten out the path of the Mispillion River making way for the wooden subchasers that were being built in the Milford shipyards for use in World War II.

Milford Parks and Recreation is preparing to embark on the last phase of the Mispillion Riverwalk Greenway Project with the addition of a nature trail and preserve at Goat Island.

SEABREEZE – Cumberland County's Ghost Town

Three miles from civilization exists a once thriving civilization along the Delaware Bay. Seabreeze, NJ known for its spectacular sunsets, solitude and opportunities for fishing and wildlife viewing, is now an incredibly eerie abandoned ghost town. Part of Fairfield Township in Cumberland County, this was once a prosperous resort area, a bay front escape that gained popularity in the late 1880's when ferry service began between Seabreeze and Philadelphia.

In 1887, the Warner Hotel, which contained 40 rooms, a bar, bathing facilities and recreational activities, was built to accommodate all the tourists flocking to this area. The community came together for clambakes and boat races until the hotel burned down in 1890. Over a decade later, a second hotel, The Seabreeze, was constructed. Guests could rent boats to take out on the Delaware Bay and, rumor has it, the guests could even enjoy a drink during Prohibition. The Seabreeze burned down in 1940.

The Seabreeze Tavern then became a thriving eatery but was destroyed by Hurricane Gloria; many homes suffered the same fate. A sea wall was built to protect what was left; but some of the homes were lost to fires and floods; the remaining homes were eventually demolished by the EPA.



Abandoned house at Seabreeze



Sunday, April 9, 2017 – 22nd Annual Keepers Banquet at Sea Isle City Yacht Club. Please reserve the date!! The banquet buffet menu is enclosed.

Speaker: Capt. Mike Rothman, Owner and Captain of the Bonanza II (our lighthouse cruise ship). Topic: “Adventures on the Delaware Bay”.

Meeting begins at 12 Noon, buffet at 1, speaker at 2. *(Please note: the banquet venue has been changed to the “Crow’s Nest” which is a banquet room on the 3RD FLOOR – accessible by elevator.)*

June 3, 2017 – Bay Day & Summer Meeting of DBLHKFA. Place of Meeting TBA

Speakers: Katie Moser & Bill Geilfuss – “Lighthouses of the Desert Southwest”

Saturday & Sunday, June 17 & 18, 2017 – Maritime Days. We will be at Hereford Inlet Lighthouse in North Wildwood, NJ; volunteers always needed and welcome.

Saturday, July 8 – Cruise to Harbor & South in the Bay, leaving the dock aboard the Bonanza II from Fortescue, New Jersey at 4 PM.

Monday, August 7, 2017 – National Lighthouse Day. Again our organization will be setting up at Hereford Inlet Lighthouse in North Wildwood, NJ; volunteers always needed and welcome.

Saturday, August 19 – Cruise to Ship John & North in the Bay, leaving the dock aboard the Bonanza II from Fortescue, New Jersey at 4 PM.

September 15, 16, 17 – Maryland Lighthouse Challenge

Fall meeting date, place & speaker – TBA Possibly at East Point

Saturday & Sunday, October 21 & 22, 2017 – NJ Lighthouse Challenge. Our organization will be at Hereford Inlet Lighthouse in North Wildwood, NJ; volunteers always needed and welcome.

*(NOTE: Is there a guest speaker or a topic you would like to learn more about?
Send suggestions to mspegstapleford@windstream.net)*

DID YOU KNOW?

-  The Harbor of Refuge Lighthouse deck, destroyed by a coastal storm in 2009, has been replaced.
-  New Jersey has more diners than any other state, approximately 520. The oldest continuously operating diner is the Summit, founded in 1913 when prefabricated steel diners began replacing horse-drawn lunch wagons for hungry factory workers. (New Jersey Monthly, December 2016.)
-  The sinking of the Tamaroa (the “Perfect Storm” ship) has been delayed since it has not been cleared by federal environmental officials. The ship had previously been scheduled to be sunk off the coast of NJ at the end of 2016 and used as a reef to attract large game fish hopefully adding to New Jersey’s \$1.7 billion recreational fishing industry. (The Daily Journal, January 5, 2017)
-  Cheryl Avallone of Old Bridge, NJ won the NJ Lighthouse Challenge Basket filled with over \$1,000 worth of items. A little over 1200 people took part in the Challenge this past October. Congratulations, Cheryl!!
-  Approximately 5,000 people were onboard the AJ MEERWALD for sails and tours this past summer. A record was set as over 15,000 campus visitors took advantage of the programs offered at the Bayshore Center at Bivalve. (AJ Meerwald brochure, January 2017)
-  Cape May Point, Longport, Newfield and West Wildwood are listed in the top percentage of the “Safest Towns in New Jersey” based on the 2015 Violent Crime Data. Teterboro, NJ came in numero uno.
-  Lighthouses of New Jersey offer incredible views. Climb to the top and bring your camera. Many also offer museums and historical displays.
-  Norfolk Naval Station in Virginia, the largest naval station in the world, celebrated its 100 birthday. The Eisenhower, George H. W. Bush and Truman aircraft carriers are in port there. Belated birthday greetings, Norfolk. (Virginia News, 2017)
-  The Winter Eagle Festival was held in Mauricetown, NJ in February featuring the viewing of birds of prey along the Delaware Bay. Some of the viewing sites included the Bayshore Center at Bivalve and East Point Lighthouse. Guided trail walks, an owl watch, speakers and presentations were offered plus the opportunity of seeing hawks, owls, falcons, vultures and eagles.
-  The State of New Jersey has added 204 acres along the Delaware Bay near the Maurice River and Moore’s Beach as protected habitat at its Heislerville Wildlife Management Area. (AC Press, February 5, 2017)

battleship every 3.5 minutes equaled the destructive capability of 60 WWII era heavy bombers. It is truly amazing.

The “Big J” left the site of her last decommissioning in Bremerton, Washington, in September of 1999, entering the Panama Canal for the tenth and final passage to the Atlantic Ocean. On Veterans Day, November 11, 1999, thousands of people lined the banks of the Delaware River to welcome her home after the completion of the four-month 5,800 mile tow to the Philadelphia Navy Yard, where the original keel was laid in 1940.

After such a glorious past, the New Jersey happily welcomes visitors to not only take standard and self-guided tours but invites guests to explore eight decks, the flag and navigation bridges, wardroom, sleeping quarters, gallery and mess hall. One can “fly into combat and return a hero on the 4D flight simulator, pilot a Seahawk prop plane as it is launched from the ship, engage in a dogfight over Iwo Jima, avoid enemy fire and return safely to the deck of the battleship. One may sit in the same chair that Admiral Halsey used as he commanded the fleet and see how the crew lived aboard the nation’s largest and most decorated battleship.” Specialty tours are also offered. Take the opportunity to walk through a living piece of history, the ship that represented the United States in some of the nation’s most trying and triumphant times.

“Rest well, yet sleep lightly, and hear the call, if again sounded, to provide Firepower for Freedom” - Captain Robert C. Peniston, December 17, 1960. (Information from SJ First, 2002 and EXPLORE – Travel in New Jersey, February 17, 2017.)

(Editor’s note: Pictures provided by Rod Mulligan, volunteer on the New Jersey.)



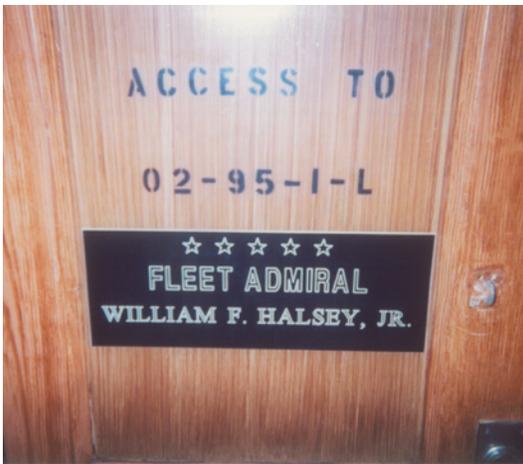
Spring 2017



Volunteers



Medals earned



Admiral Halsey's Office



"Anchors A-Weigh"



16" guns



Visitors to the "Big J"