



# 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”

## STATUE OF LIBERTY



“Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame, With conquering limbs astride from land to land; Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand a mighty woman with a torch...” (Lazarus) Emma Lazarus wrote it best but how many of you have ever thought of our Statue of Liberty as a lighthouse, a woman symbolizing “the land of the free and the home of the brave”? It is one of the tallest and first electrified lighthouses in American history. A gift from France completed in 1886, it was considered an engineering marvel and a colossal monument of fine art as well as the symbolic embodiment of American independence and spirit. In the first 16 years of its existence, its jurisdiction and operations were overseen by the United States Lighthouse Board as a legitimate aid to navigation with a regular complement of lighthouse keepers assigned to its operation. It seems not much has been documented about the lives of the men who kept the light shining during the first decades.

The first keeper was **Albert Emmons Littlefield** who expanded his vocational interest to become acquainted with a great technological innovation of his time...electricity. It is said that during the final construction in 1886, he became involved in installing the electrical plant at the Statue of Liberty. Because of this knowledge, he was asked to stay on as the first keeper.

When **Littlefield** died after serving almost two decades on the island, it was suggested that he be cremated and his remains be interred near the cornerstone of the Statue of Liberty but his family was against this idea. He and his wife are now buried in Bluffton, Indiana. The next keeper, **Charles S. Miller**, kept personal diaries for 3 years noting the routine lighthouse keeping chores, the boredom at times, the challenges of the storms, etc. It is through these diaries much was learned about the everyday life experiences on Bedloe’s Island besides caring for the light. **Miller** once ordered a rifle to shoot rats; there was also a never-ending bird migration that was attracted to the light. One of the most humorous animal dealings was with the steers that occasionally managed to jump from cattle barges passing by. *Continued on Page 6*

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Angelo S. Rigazio, Jr.



The 5th Annual Cape May County Coast Guard Community Festival was held on May 4, 2019. Attendance was estimated at 7,000 on a foggy, cool day. Our group was busy all day long, passing out copies of The Bay Run and “Cruise News” as well as giving information to all those interested. I would like to thank Charles Bolton, Rod Mulligan and Marvin White for staying with me to help. We had a steady flow of people asking about our cruises and the Delaware Bay lighthouses. Hopefully our discussions will help fill up the two cruises planned for this summer. I was able to spend a little time walking around the base, talking to current Coast Guard members and going on a couple of ship tours. It was interesting to note that the ships have changed remarkably since I was stationed at the Cape May Training Center in the 70’s.

The 24th Annual Keepers Banquet held in the Crows’ Nest at the Yacht Club of Sea Isle City was once again a success. The food, the speaker, and the friendship shared were all great. Dr. Anthony Waskie’s portrayal of General George Gordon Meade was a presentation that was both interesting and informative. I would like to thank Steve Murray and The Friends of Hereford Inlet Lighthouse for the generous donation to our organization. Over the years we have attended all the outreaches at Hereford Inlet and our budget was showing quite a deficit since we haven’t been able to sell merchandise there this past year. I would also like to thank everyone who worked hard to put the banquet together. Your time and efforts are greatly appreciated. Thank you. Keep the lights shining!! *Angelo*

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Anthony Waskie, History Professor from Temple University (now retired) in the guise of 203 year old General Meade, was our guest speaker at the 23rd Annual Keepers Banquet. It seems that Meade, a very intelligent young man, made several advances in his career due to his efforts and his brothers-in-law who just happened to be in the “right places at the right time”. His travels, assignments and adventures brought Meade into the New Jersey area where he designed, engineered and worked on some of the lighthouses. The tallest of the lighthouses on which he worked was Barnegat in the area referred to as “The Grave Yard of the Atlantic”. He stated that he had the least to do with Cape May Lighthouse where he was assigned as supervisor in 1859 but he did design and work on the Absecon Lighthouse in Atlantic City.

General Meade is responsible for the designing, engineering and building of 7 lighthouses in Florida and 3 in New Jersey; he was also in charge of surveying the Great Lakes Project which consisted of charting 6,000 miles of coastline. Since he was living in New Jersey at the time, it was necessary that he commute to Michigan for this assignment.

Our thanks to Professor Waskie for an informative, educational and entertaining presentation. How fortunate your college students and the banquet attendees were to gain from your knowledge, research and experience.



*Rod Mulligan presents a figurine to “General Meade”*



*Thanks to our guest speaker, Anthony Waskie as “General Meade”*



*President Rigazio presents a donation for the SICYC's Sailing Program*



Over the winter, the communities around the Cape May Coast Guard Training Center rallied for their coast guard neighbors when the longest government shutdown in American history left the members of the coast guard and their civilian employees working without paychecks. On May 4, 2019, the Cape May County Coast Guard Community Foundation, a group intertwining the coast guard and community, celebrated this relationship by hosting a day of gratitude. The Fifth Annual Coast Guard Community Festival was held at the base in Cape May, NJ. Fortunately Mother Nature cooperated. President Angelo Rigazio and *Continued on Page 8*

# PEGGY'S CORNER – Event Calendar

by Peggy Stapleford Activities/Program Chairperson



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

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

**Saturday, June 22 (11AM)** - Summer Picnic Meeting at Cape May Park Zoo, pavilion #9. Points of interest: Admission to the Zoo **FREE**; after the meeting visit all the sights the Cape May area has to offer – Concrete ship, Cape May Lighthouse, Boardwalk, Trolley tours, Horse & Buggy tours, Bird watching, museums, etc. Come out for a great, relaxing day at Cool Cape May. “Brown Bag Lunch” Bring your own!

**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”*) – for further information see “Cruise News” Spring edition or call (609) 884-1329

**Saturday, August 3** - 5 hour Old Fashioned Saturday Night Moonlight Cruise to Harbor of Refuge leaving 4 PM – for further information, see “Cruise News” Spring edition or call (609) 884-1329

**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))**

## **5 LIGHTHOUSES YOU CAN SLEEP IN**

Just in case you have not made plans for the summer; here are a few suggestions:

1. **Big Bay Point Lighthouse** located in Big Bay, Michigan is a combination of a Coast Guard active light Station and bed and breakfast. Information on this lighthouse can be found on the United States Lighthouse Society Web Site.
2. **New Dungeness Lighthouse**, built in 1857 is located in Sequim, Washington. The cost for staying one week is \$420. This lighthouse, built in 1857, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
3. **Little River Lighthouse** located in Cutler, Maine is the easternmost island light station in the United States. This Victorian style light station, well known for its scenic, tranquil location showing wildlife and waterfalls, charges \$150 - \$225 to spend a night in the keeper's quarters.
4. **East Brother Light Station** built in 1873 in the Victorian style, is located in Point Richmond, California. Originally built to guide ships in and out of San Francisco Bay, it sits high atop an island near a strait that separates San Francisco and San Pablo Bays.
5. **Salmon River Lighthouse** has been listed on the US Registry of Historic Places since 1979 and is located in Port Ontario, NY. The charge per night here is \$225 - \$375. To check out the accommodations, a free Open House is offered the 3rd Sunday of every month April through November.



## FEMALE PIRATES – AARRGGHH..

Since males seemed to rule the high seas, not much has been written regarding the “pirate queens” throughout the ages. These notorious women became feared warriors and rulers of the sea, continuing to prove themselves and carve their place in history and legends. As early as 480 BC, Persian, **Artemisia**, who was considered Queen of Halicarnassus, (a part of the Persian Empire at that time) commanded a fleet of five ships during the Greco-Persian wars. She was branded a common pirate by the Greeks and a reward of ten thousand Drachmas was offered for her capture. **Queen Tetlia** of Illyria (230 BC), plundered the merchant vessels of Ancient Rome and **Princess Sela** (400 AD), a Norwegian, led many raids and amassed a fortune in treasure.

**Alfhild** (850 AD) a Swedish princess took to the sea to avoid an arranged marriage. She and her “merry men” preyed on vessels in the Baltic Sea and on Danish coastal villages. One of the French contributions to this female contingent was **Jeanne-Louise De Belleville**, who, in the 14th century, became a pirate to avenge the execution of her husband. She would only attack French vessels and became known as “The Lioness of Brittany”. Another female avenging her husband’s assassination was **Elise Eskildsdotter**, a politically active noblewoman who made piracy a family affair as she took up the profession and involved her two sons.

Since it was considered bad luck for women to be aboard ships, some of these females carried on their pirating lives disguised as men. In order to receive support from her paternal grandmother, her mother (18th century England) disguised **Mary Read** as a boy when she was a child; she continued with this deception until another female crew member fell in love with her and she had to reveal her true identity. She was allowed to remain part of the crew. Many of these women were also members of nobility. **Lady Mary Killigrew** of England had permission of the Royal Court to operate fleets of pirate ships up and down the coast of Britain. **Ingela Gatherhilm** of 18th Century Sweden was given permission from the King of Sweden to attack and plunder enemy ships on the Baltic Sea.

Not to be overlooked, were the female pirates of China. **Ching Shih** (19th century) took over the command of 300 ships after her husband’s death. She plundered British, Portuguese and Chinese vessels. By 1808 **Ching Shih** had built up the most powerful pirate fleet in history with an estimated two thousand ships and 70,000 sailors. In the 20th Century, **Lo Hon Cho** gained a reputation as being one of the most dangerous pirates in the South China Sea. She attacked everything and everybody. In 1922 she was captured and handed over to the authorities. **Huang Pei’me**, another successful Chinese pirate, commanded over 50,000 pirates. She plundered ships along the east coast of China and sold the captives into slavery.



America, too, had its share of female buccaneers. **Rachel Wall**, an 18th Century American was born in Pennsylvania and was known to work off the coast of New Hampshire. During the late 1780’s, she captured twelve boats, stole \$6,000 in cash and killed twenty-four sailors. She was eventually captured and hanged in 1789. A 19th century American, **Sadie Ferrell**, was a notorious gang leader in New York’s “bloody” Fourth Ward. She was known as “Sadie the Goat” because she head butted her victims before robbing them. Notorious for attacking schooners and small boats and pillaging small villages, her territory included the area up and down the Hudson and Harlem Rivers.

Pirate queens throughout the ages included women from: Scandinavia, Ireland, France, Morocco, China, England and America. During these times woman were attempting to break through the stigma of women’s rights, obligations and proving themselves and took to life on the high seas. (Green, John “Pirate Queens”, 2014)

## DID YOU KNOW?



The first USS New Jersey, BB-16, fought in World War I and was later sunk off the North Carolina coast by US bombers in a training test. The second one, BB-62, was built during WWII, retired in 1991 and became a floating museum on the Camden waterfront 10 years later in 2001. The newest New Jersey, a Virginia class, nuclear-powered, fast attack submarine that will carry Tomahawk cruise missiles and torpedoes, is designated as SSN-796. (*The Daily Journal, April 1, 2019*)



The oldest towns in the US east of the Mississippi: Lewes, DE (1631); St. Augustine, FL (1565) with Pensacola a close second; Savannah, GA (1733); Harrodsburg, KY (1774); Jersey City, NJ (1617); Jamestown, VA (1607) (*On-line news*)



Due to the abundance of Bunker, many whales have been sighted in the Delaware Bay off Cape May. Humpbacks are most common off the Atlantic Coast. All whales and dolphins are federally protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. (*The Daily Journal, May 9, 2019*)



Happy Anniversary to Shelley and Ollie Oyster on their first year of wedded bliss. They will be celebrating in June.



Declared a National Landmark in 1976, Cape May has been listed as one of America's most charming, undiscovered cities.



Barneget Bay is one of the most ecologically threatened bays in the nation. The State of New Jersey has announced a grant of \$10M that will institute projects to prevent polluted runoff from entering the 660 acre watershed. (*AC Press, May 4, 2019*).



Beginning Friday, June 6 and continuing the entire weekend, Delaware will be celebrating "Separation Day". This unique event commemorates the time Delaware claimed its independence from Great Britain. Celebrations will be held at Court House Square and Battery Park in historic New Castle.

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## STATUE OF LIBERTY *continued*

One morning **Miller** was amazed to find a steer grazing out in front of the structure. Dead bodies washed up on the shore occasionally. These activities helped to keep his life interesting throughout the years.

At that time, part of the keeper's duties was taking visitors for a tour up the 403 steps to the top of the Statue. Today, this area known as Liberty State Park, a 1,122 acre park, continues to serve a vital role in the New York Harbor area. The development, which opened formally on June 14, 1976, brought about a renaissance on the waterfront. This was New Jersey's bicentennial gift to the nation.

Standing majestically in the harbor, the Statue of Liberty formally welcomes immigrants into the United States. It is the gateway to the realization of their hopes and dreams of a new life in America. "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore, Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" - Lazarus (Baldwin, D. "Lighthouse Digest," January-February 2019).





## SPARS - LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE GIRLS

### Four Awesome Coast Guard Women

Since women are a very important part of the Coast Guard, it is appropriate to honor some who have made history as contributors to the success of this military organization.

In 1826, **Barbara Mabrity** was named Assistant Keeper at Key West Lighthouse in Florida. When her husband passed away, she became the main keeper, receiving the same federal salary as her late husband (which is a surprise). For thirty years, **Mabrity** ran the lighthouse surviving two wars and 4 major hurricanes including one that destroyed the lighthouse and claimed the lives of 5 of her 6 children. She was one of the first female "Coasties"; the female branch of the Coast Guard began with her and a dozen more like her.

**Florence Eberode Smith-Finch**, born in the Philippines was brought into the military service shortly after her wedding when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and began invading the Philippines. **Smith-Finch** did not leave her home but stayed and worked with the Philippine Resistance conducting acts of sabotage against the Japanese forces. She was captured, interrogated and tortured but managed to survive. Following her liberation, she moved to New York and, after finding that her husband had been killed in the war, joined the Coast Guard Women's Reserve (SPARS). She received the Coast Guard Asiatic-Pacific Campaign ribbon honoring her efforts and in 1947, was the first woman to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

**Vivian Crea**, a Lieutenant Commander in the Coast Guard was the first woman of any military branch to be appointed a Presidential Military Aide. In 2006, **Crea** became the first female Vice Commandant of the Coast Guard.

**Kelly Magk Laccon** was the first woman to become a Coast Guard Rescue Swimmer after completing the rigorous 18 week training period, the most difficult job the Coast Guard offers. This assignment requires jumping out of a helicopter into stormy seas and other deadly conditions to free drowning people and get them to safety. For her bravery and her many rescues, she was honored by receiving an Air Medal Award presented by President George H. W. Bush and the Secretary of the Treasury.





## FROM THE LOG OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Continued from page 3*

member Charles Bolton were in attendance to distribute our literature and speak with the attendees regarding our organization and our lighthouse cruises. This year, Retired Chief Marvin White and I were also able to attend.

Upon entering the main gate to the festivities, it was overwhelming to see over forty sponsors and many vendors. When approaching our booth, we had the pleasure of meeting members, Mr. & Mrs. Grant Hack from Catskill, NY. There were so many events, it was difficult to decide what to do first. The first area we visited was the memorial for all enlisted personnel where retired coast guard personnel were conducting tours. What a beautiful tribute to those who had made the ultimate sacrifice.

Next we viewed one of the two helicopters; what magnificent machines. We strolled over to the harbor where boat tours were being offered. I noticed a hazmat mobile facility with a remote control robot; there was a new state of the art pier which was a far cry from the old wooden structures from WWII. I got to take a partial tour aboard the Katherine Walker, a 175' buoy tender, based in Bayonne, NJ. Marvin and I were assigned aboard the USCGC WAGL-255, a 125' floating bath tub. Marvin was an operating engineer who operated the cable controlled boom with three foot levers which required a lot of back and muscle power without any protection from the elements. On this new tender, Walker, the boom is operated by hydraulics and electronics by an engineer who pushes buttons in a climate controlled compartment. Even the design of buoys has made drastic changes. Congratulations Base Cape May on your proud fleet of vessels.

We had a chance to talk to various individuals, some had served in Korea and some in Vietnam; one was a former keeper on Harbor of Refuge; he was a Mustang and eventually became the CEO aboard the 180' buoy tender, Hornbeam.

Someone pointed out Captain Base Commander, Owen Gibbons, who was enjoying the festivities. The dividing line between enlisted and commissioned personnel has become a thing of the past with better relationships but still maintaining respect and professionalism. It was also a pleasure to see more female "coasties" present.

It was a day well spent; we learned a lot and saw a lot. Thank you for the opportunity to tour the base; it brought back many memories. It is reassuring to know that these men and women are doing their best to protect our country. Thank you for your service. Semper Paratus!

