



# The Bay Run



Newsletter of  
The Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers  
and Friends Association, Inc.

Volume 11 Issue 2

Summer 2011

*"Our mission is to preserve the history of the  
Delaware Bay and River Lighthouses, Lightships and their Keepers*

## OVERFALLS LIGHTSHIP

Over the past several years we have brought you the updates on the progress of the Overfalls Lightship from funding to the renovations/completion to its rebirthing.



(Photos credited to Dr. Bruce Middleton and Bill Geilfuss)

**The President's Report of Tracy Mulveny of the Overfalls Foundation, (excerpts from her) "View From The Bridge" Spring 2011 To paraphrase Charles Dickens. Overfalls has seen "the best of times and the worst of times" The worst had to be when the rust bucket was no longer wanted by the Lewes Historical Society. Transferred to a small group to be known as the Overfalls Foundation (Con't Page 4)**

## INDIAN RIVER Life Saving Station

**Operated by Delaware Seashore Preservation Foundation-Rehobeth, DE.**

**(Artist rendering of Indian River Life Saving Station by Lighthouse Artist Stephen Harrington)**

Notes from artist Stephen Harrington :  
Since I am almost exclusively a "lighthouse"  
artist, I'm going to keep my comments  
strictly to the physical history of the  
Indian River Life Saving Station.

Located on the Delaware coast, as a recreated  
historical site, it is just a few miles from Dewey  
Beach, less than two miles from north of Indian  
River Inlet. Though a very isolated site within  
the Delaware Seashore State Park, it is hard to  
pass the brown, tan and red main station colored  
station building on the ocean side of Route 1.  
(Con't Page 3)



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- 8-April 30<sup>th</sup> Trip Lots of pictures

# The Bay Run

## A BEAM From The Presidents Desk By Angelo S. Rigazio, Jr.



### President's Message

I am sending greetings from Cape May. I can't believe that summer is almost here and in fact, it's going to be a busy summer for us at DBLHKFA I hope to see a lot of you at our very *Special* cruise to my old home at Harbor of Refuge lighthouse.

The last time I was there was in 2001 when I went inside to give details about the working and living conditions on an off shore lighthouse.

I am sure other keepers will agree that living on a bay light was a once in a lifetime experience! The warm days of summer, fishing and watching sunsets were the total opposite of the cold winters with ice flows, nor'easter storms, 15 to 20 feet seas and cold wind that seemed to blow forever. Plus, you can forget the fog, with day after day of the fog horn. I remember and will never forget what it was like being the last officer in charge and also responsible for closing up Harbor of Refuge after it had been manned from 1903 to December 1973. Light keepers worked and lived on this light for 70 years and now even after being automated for 38 years it is still standing strong. I hope that everyone gets to go on one of our cruises to see the lighthouses and to see history before it disappears forever.

*"Keep the Light Shining"*

Angelo



My home away from home!

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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.**

# The Bay Run

## INDIAN RIVER LSS

Continued from Cover Page

Indian River LLS went into operation in 1876, built on the beach about 400 feet due east of the current location. One of 45 “1875 stick-style” stations built, it was originally 20’ X 43’ with 2-exposed roof platforms/lookouts with boat door facing south. Three other buildings being a stable 48’ NW of the station, a privy 70’ SW and a coal shed immediately W (see cover print) the beach location located to expose to the elements forcing relocation in 1877 to the present location. An addition at the NW corner supplies a drying room and a pantry (see cover print). The dormers (cupola) was added around 1885. In 1905 changes of the site would include a keeper’s room, new west side porch, two water tanks, new barn, privy, feed house and meat house. Coal (now oil house) was relocated behind the new kitchen. Plus, 2 new small boat houses were constructed on the beach.

The station retained its unique tan, brown and red colors until 1915 when the Coast Guard took over and it became all white with red roofs and served until 1962. Today, as you can see, it has been preserved as it appeared 1905 –1915 and is operated by the Delaware Seashore Preservation Foundation (under state supervision) Main building is open to the public.

Hopefully the same interest will be shown in our Life Saving Service history as has been given to our nation’s lighthouses.

Thank you to Stephen Harrington for sharing your artist skills and preservation history. Contact us at:

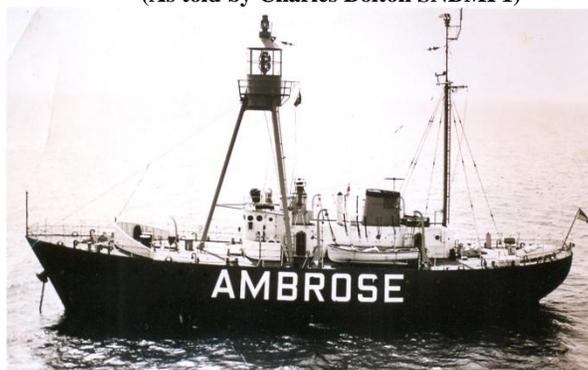
[WWW.COASTALGUARDIANS.COM](http://WWW.COASTALGUARDIANS.COM)

(Thanks to VP "Dusty" Pierce for forwarding this article/picture)

### Member Charles Bolton’s Lightship Recollections

#### Aboard the AMBROSE

(As told by Charles Bolton SNBMP1)



Let me start this story at the beginning of my four year career in the Coast Guard. Just out of boot camp at 17 years old I was sent to the 3rd Coast Guard District. From there I was sent to Sandy Hook, NJ, which was the group office for the Sandy Hook group and life boat station. Next I was assigned to the WAL 613 Ambrose Lightship. The 613 was anchored in Lower New York Bay at the head of the Ambrose Channel, approximately 20 miles from Manhattan N.Y.C. The ship’s duty was to make the entrance safe to Port of New York, which was one of the busiest ports in the world at the time. When I boarded the 40 ft. patrol boat at Sandy Hook Life Boat Station, I had no idea what a lightship was or what the ship’s duty was...but I soon found out. After about a 45 minute ride out to the Ambrose Lightship, I soon spotted a red ship and was told that was the WAL 613 Ambrose. I remember thinking, what in the world did I get myself into. We pulled along side the lightship. The crew aboard the Ambrose dropped a line down to the 40 footer and pulled my bags aboard. Then I climbed the Jacobs Ladder to the main deck. When I got aboard I was met by the chief Bos’n’s Mate and several of the crew members. After talking for several hours, the men told me that on June 24, 1960, just 2 weeks before, while the Ambrose was in port for repairs, the relief 505 was on the Ambrose station and at 04:00 in the morning the S.S. Green Bay Freighter hit and sank the Relief 505. I was told it only took 10 minutes for it to hit the bottom of the ocean. All 9 crew members were rescued. For a 17 year old just out of boot camp this was a real eye opener. I went on to serve 21 months aboard the Ambrose and was then transferred to Corson’s Life Boat Station at the end of Ocean City, NJ in March 1962.

If you would like to read more about the story of WAL 505 Relief Lightship Look for... “Collision at Sea” A true story J.F. McCarthy  
Or what is it like to serve on a Lightship  
“Life aboard a Coast Guard Lightship”  
by George E. Rongner

**Make this year's Picnic June 25th at the  
Cape May Zoo - See Peggy's Corner**

**From  
The  
Log  
of the  
Vice President  
Gaylord F. (Dusty)**



For all of you lighthouse enthusiasts our DBLHKFA membership is busier than usual. On April 30th we met in Lewes, DE to start our tour of Indian River Life Saving Station in Rehoboth, DE. Our interesting and informative guide gave a presentation and then took us on a tour of the station. Indian River LSS was one of six life saving stations built in Delaware at a time. These “Rescue Shacks” were constructed all along the East Coast, the West Coast and around the Great lakes. Our guide explained the two methods of rescue one involved launching a surf boat, rowing out to help the stranded passengers/crew the other involved using a “Breeches Buoy” We saw originals of each method.

The men of Indian River LSS were credited with saving 420 lives, losing only six people. Their skills were honed every day, practicing rowing, semaphore, launching Breech Buoys, etc. For this service they were paid \$10 a week which included their first set of uniforms free (they had to pay for the rest) and NO benefits. Eventually this became a full time job in the early 1900’s. Life Saving Stations were the forerunner of today’s Coast Guard.

Indian River LSS was an active Coast Guard Station until 1962. In 1965 it was turned over to the Delaware Seashore Preservation Assoc. for total restoration. Arriving in Lewes, we had an enjoyable lunch at the Irish Eyes Pub across the channel for our tour of “my pride” the Overfalls Lightship. The restoration group has done a magnificent job with this lightship. We, the DBLHKFA group attending, dedicated a porthole and an engraved brick in memory of our founder and past president Carole F. Reily

**Don't miss any of our 2011 Delaware Bay Cruises aboard the bonanza II. I'll be narration, along with other Lighthouse Keepers**

# The Bay Run

## OVERFALLS LIGHTSHIP

(Continued from Cover Page)



The best of times surely was the September “Overfalls Fest” when she floated proudly in her new surroundings fully restored to like new. During the eleven years this process has taken, it was loaded with the worst and best situations but the magic of the big red ship prevailed. This involved over 40,000 hours of volunteer labors. The Overfalls Foundation Mission is so much like our own DBLHKFA Mission statement; “Preserve and teach the maritime history of Delaware, DBLHKFA relates to the Delaware Bay, River and its navigational waterways” (Our thanks to The Overfalls Beacon and Overfalls Foundation for this information) All events can be found at [www.overfalls.org](http://www.overfalls.org)

### PORTHOLE DEDICATION



A strategically located Porthole with an identification plaque in the Cabin is dedicated to our founder Carol F. Reily as well as a Commemorative Memorial Brick in the “Garden of Recognition” at the new park sight.

# The Bay Run

## Member Sallie Macy's Story First Captain of the Lilac

Capt. Andrew J. Davidson 1933-1939.  
Sallie Davidson Macy's grandfather.



(Painting of the Lilac by Andrew A Davidson)

The Lilac tended lighthouses and lightships on the Delaware Coast providing them with supplies, fuel, mail and transportation. These vessels had an important role in the country's maritime history.

The Lilac served many duties, fitted with Radar in 1949, including crash rescue and fire fighting before its 1972 retirement. Fortunately the ship was spared the fate of the scrap heap after it went up for sale in 2003 thanks to a group of New York volunteers trying to revive the deteriorated ship as a working educational treasure.

Restorers were seeking clues to the ship's history when Sallie, a Delaware native now living in Tennessee was contacted by a friend that the group was trying to locate historic pictures, and information. Sallie responded as she is trying to carry on her father's passion for the Lilac. Andrew A. Davidson was an artist who cherished his memories of being on the Lilac as a young man during the time his father was captain. Before his father died he gave him his old ship photos.



Captain Andrew J. Davidson aboard the Lilac

If anyone has pictures or memorabilia from the Lilac please contact Charlie Richie, Lilac Preservation Project or for information Lilac Project [Charlie@lilacp-reservationproject.org](mailto:Charlie@lilacp-reservationproject.org) Also, contact Mary Habstritt VP Museum Dir. For tour information. Lilac Preservation Project "Restoring Steam on the Hudson" [www.lilacpreservationproject.org](http://www.lilacpreservationproject.org)

Sallie had sent treasurer Maxine a water colored Note Card of the Lilac and other scenes of Delaware Bay that she reproduces from her father's art in the memory of her father, Andrew A. Davidson and they are available by contacting her at:

[salubum@aol.com](mailto:salubum@aol.com)

The complete news story of the Lilac can be obtained from [rbrown@delawareonline.com](mailto:rbrown@delawareonline.com) The News Journal October 3, 2009 issue.

## ***DID YOU KNOW?***

**That Famous Nantucket Baskets were made on Lightships!**

## ***Report from Our Webmaster***

*Kelly Mulligan*

Have you checked our website lately?

If not, you're missing out on an outstanding website opportunity!

Great Job!!! Kelly (Editors Note)

Since January 1st 2011 to date:

3132 people have visited our website

Fri.-Sat.-Sun.-have been the busiest days of the week in April. The rest of 2011 has been relatively busy for all days of the week.

Top 5 countries are visitors from the Netherlands, USA, Russia, Czech Republic, and Ukraine.

Top 5 pages that are visited are Lights Newsletter, Calendar, Brandywine Shoal and Links.

Most people are finding us using Google by searching with "Delaware Bay Lighthouses" or linking from [lighthousefriends.com](http://lighthousefriends.com)

Also, we have already started with members requesting their "Bay Run" newsletters be sent on their e-mail.

## PEGGY'S CORNER and Blackboard is included in our Special Insert



**By Peggy Stapleford**

*Activities/Program Chair*

### **Membership Notes**

*by Eva Moffatt*

*Our membership continues to grow and as an organization with a wonderful mission we really look forward for greater participation.*

*Programs of major interest are always part of the General Meetings, fun Outreaches where we get to know each other and meet other Lighthouse and Maritime enthusiasts. With the Annual Picnic coming up on June 25th at the Cape May County Zoo what better time than to invite a friend, relative or neighbor to come with you to be introduced to your association.*

*Hospitality, Meeting, great picnic, area and always a special program. You will find the Zoo is outstanding*

*See Peggy's Corner, President Angelo's and VP "Dusty's" columns*

*for more activities for this year.*

*Ask someone to become a member.*

### **Our Sincerest Thanks**

*To those members who have sent remembrance checks for the Carol F. Reily Scholarship Fund. Checks may be sent to Maxine Mulligan, Treasurer 1049 Simca Terr., Vineland NJ 08360*

*Any amount is always greatly appreciated to this wonderful program in Carol's name.*

*Tony Giletto, Scholarship Committee*

### **Kids Art Contest Cape May**

Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts Sponsored by the Friends of Cape May Lighthouse

We had 20 area children K thru 3 participate and had several winners.

1-2nd place, 1-3rd place and several Honorable Mentions.

Each student participating will receive a certificate presented by one of the Lighthouse Keepers from

Cape May Lighthouse. (Special Issue will go to the Kids)

### **Glad to hear from Members**

A note from member Bill McCarroll

"Hi Folks you have a wonderful newsletter. I always enjoy reading it.

Especially enjoyed the photos of East Point Lighthouse in the snow".

Bill has also made sure his son-in law Gene Gendek an ex Coast Guard who worked on Delaware Bay Lighthouses, gets to see his copy by E-mail.

A short note from member Bev Schreiber from Everett, Washington and an attractive book mark of all of the Delaware Lighthouses with history descriptions and dates for each.

Bev has a gift shop and she can be contacted at [Bevstudio.com](http://Bevstudio.com)

### **LIGHTSHIP HISTORY**

Light boats, light vessels, lightships these floating lighthouses were placed where mariners needed guidance, where it was impossible to build a permanent structure. Always moored near shifting shoals, treacherous reefs or off shore where it was too far for land-based light to reach, these ships placed an indispensable part of keeping our nations waterways safe for navigation between 1820 and 1985. Light vessels have existed since ancient times. Small ships were used and had lanterns fixed to wooden pole and hoisted up the mast. Tallow candles were first used for light, later oil lamps with wicks. It was difficult to keep these on location and keeping the lamps lit. Lightships at one point charged dues to passing ships making this a profitable enterprise. Today, Lightships are practically unknown to most people and had been taken for granted by the shipping industry.. Modern technology has made lightships, of the few left, historical museum pieces for maritime history. To really get the full history of Floating Lighthouses you must get a copy of author historian Wayne Kirklin's "LIGHTSHIPS Floating Lighthouses of the Mid Atlantic" . Wayne Kirklin was a speaker at our Spring Membership meeting in Delaware in 2007. You can visit him at [www.historypress.net](http://www.historypress.net)

# The Bay Run

## CRUSIN' THROUGH THE PANAMA CANAL

By Rod Mulligan, Chairman of the DBLHKFA Board of Directors

For our 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary we decided to do something we have always wanted to do...take a trip through the *Panama Canal*. We would like to share some of this adventure with you. The Canal was recently voted one of the “*Seven Wonders of the Engineering World*” and after seeing it we tend to agree. We flew from Philadelphia to Panama City with a stop over in Miami. Panama City is a smaller version of New York City.

Since Panama has over 14,000 kilometers of rainforest, hikes were included on our tour. We saw all types of flora and fauna; luckily we went early in the morning before it got too hot and humid. Another side trip was to “*The Island of Flowers*” in the Pacific.

Due to how Panama City is situated, the sun rises in the south (strange).

After a week of touring, Saturday arrived at last. What we had been waiting for...our

cruise through the Canal. We headed to Port Balboa for a “partial transit” since the trip through the length of the Canal would take too long.

Nearly 15,000 vessels pass through these waters every year.

It is known as “the waterway that fundamentally changed the course of world politics, economics and travel”

Our cruise boat took us north towards the Caribbean

Sea and Atlantic Ocean. It was once used to ferry

passengers from Manhattan to the mainland. Ships

head toward the Atlantic in the AM, Pacific in the PM.

Fees are based on the size of the ship and its cargo.

Our cruise boat fee was \$1,800, reservations are required for the Canal a year in advance. Many ships were waiting to

to go through the Canal. It cuts travel time by 9 days

Since the tides between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans vary 18ft every 12 hours, it was necessary to build a series of locks .After waiting our turn we entered

the first locks built, the Mira Flores locks, behind an enormous ship full of containers. There was another

cruise ship next to us. Tugs guide the larger ships through the Canal but ships go under their own power.

*(Continued in the Fall Issue of the “ Bay Run”)*



Our guide pointing to palm leaves used for Panama hats



Bougainvillea as seen on "The Island of Flowers"



Our cruise boat



One of the series of locks



### CRUISE SCHEDULE 2011

**NEW SPECIAL CRUISE SUNDAY JULY 10<sup>TH</sup>**

Reserve **TODAY** it's filling up fast!

**Regular Sunset Cruise August 14<sup>th</sup> Leaving 4:30**

**MOONLIGHT CRUISES**

July 30<sup>th</sup> Leaving 6:30 August 14<sup>th</sup> Leaving 5:00

SEE PEGGY'S CORNER-on Insert of CMC Zoo MAP for Annual Picnic

# The Bay Run

## Spring Trip by far the Best in Years!

Thanks to Rod Mulligan, Peggy Stapleford and VP "Dusty" Pierce's great planning!



Tony, Jim & Rod on Cape May-Lewes Ferry



Entrance to Indian River Life Saving Station



Indian River Life Saving Station



Indian River Life Saving Station & Museum



Members attending tour lecture Touring the interior of Station Bill Geilfuss remembers this



Station Lamp and Washstand



Sign of their time



Restaurant Sign



Everyone Lets have lunch



At the Overfalls Lightship



Overfalls Stern view



Presenting dedication check Pres. Angelo VP Dusty, Maxine and Rod

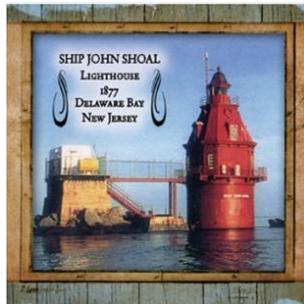


Overfalls other view

(photos courtesy of Bill Geilfuss, Dr Bruce Middleton, Jim Moffatt and Katie Moser)

**Was a Sellout!  
Our Ship John  
Coaster Sets**

**We ordered more  
Now in Stock!**



**Single Coaster Set \$12  
w Coaster Holder \$15**

Shipping/Handling by USPS \$7.50

Order from Jim Moffatt

[JamesMoffatt@Comcast.net](mailto:JamesMoffatt@Comcast.net)

Photo of Ship John Shoal Lighthouse on the Coasters is a Carol F. Reily original.

Each coaster is made of the finest quality **ABSORBA Stone** Each drink coaster is protected with a cork back to protect your furniture Oak wooden holder separate.