



# The Bay Run



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

Volume 17 Issue 7  
Winter 2013

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

## YO HO HO...

... *“And a bottle of rum.”* Speaking of pirates, it seems that piracy goes back quite a long way in the history of the United States. There have been ocean pirates, river pirates and Delaware Bay pirates (not to mention the ones from Pittsburgh). Ocean piracy took place in the Atlantic Ocean as late as the 1870’s. The Ohio and Mississippi Rivers had their share of pirates along with those of the Delaware Bay.

During Colonial times, the Delaware Bay was one of the favorite cruising places for pirates who boldly sailed into the Bay and up the Delaware River. It seems that ships from France and Spain lurked about the Cape awaiting ships coming and going from the Port of Philadelphia. A favorite and most successful ruse of these pirates was to enter the Delaware Capes flying the English colors and signal for a pilot boat. The pilot boat was then captured, manned and stationed within the Capes so the incoming vessels were met, captured and looted. In 1709, the town of Lewes, DE was threatened by the pirates for the third time. The governor of Delaware just happened to be in Lewes and immediately sent a message by boat to warn the outward bound vessels, thwarting the attempt of the pirates.

Some of these pirate ships were commanded by legendary privateers, men such as: Capt. Kidd, Blackbeard and Stede Bonner. Rumor has it that these men buried treasure in and around Cape May. Blackbeard was the most notorious pirate to plague this area. One popular place for Blackbeard’s buried bounty is Higby’s Beach (no digging allowed). Capt. Kidd’s treasure is supposedly hidden in Del Haven which has been proclaimed by newly discovered maps and other documents. Both Blackbeard and Capt. Kidd were to have buried treasure at Cape May Point. Have you ever gone searching at the Point for the famous Cape May Diamonds? Bonner’s cache is interred along the Delaware Bay just north of the Cape May – Lewes Ferry Terminal near the original settlement of Town Bank.

Although this information is resourceful, researchers cite that pirates seldom buried their treasure. Surprisingly, pirate communities were the first to initiate a system of checks and balances similar to what is used today. It seems that the pirate crew would elect a captain and a quartermaster, who when not in battle, would dole out the bounty to the men. It was also stated that the men contributed part of their share of the bounty to be given to any pirate injured in a battle—similar to compensation for medical or disability insurance.

Their flag was the “Jolly Roger” and has been held as a symbol of piracy adopted by film makers and toy manufacturers. Pirates are depicted as wearing one earring; the value of this earring was meant to pay for their burial if they were lost at sea and their body washed ashore. It is also noted, that no authentic record exists of a man ever being made to “walk the plank.”

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**Angelo S. Rigazio, Jr.**



Greetings once again from Cape May. Can you believe this will be the last Newsletter in 2013? And I am sure it is going to be another great one. Thank you Maxine Mulligan for all the detailed work you put into each issue. It has been a challenging but exciting year for our organization. Our outreaches brought us to the Cape May Coast Guard Base and included a picnic with a tour of Aids to Navigation and Search and Rescue. Our Maritime Days, the Lighthouse Challenge and Lighthouse Day were all held at Hereford Inlet Lighthouse. A special thank you to Steve Murray and Betty Mugnier for always welcoming our group and for being so accommodating. Our boat cruise took us to Harbor Of Refuge Lighthouse while passing by the other bay lights. As you can see, we are an active group keeping busy all year round. Thank you to all our dedicated members who plan and work at each event and also to those members who attend the events. It is your continued dedication that keeps our organization moving forward. I am sure Carole is smiling down at us.

*Till then, keep the lights shining. Angelo*

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*The Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers and Friends Association, Inc. (DBLHKFA)  
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Happy Holidays to everyone and welcome 2014. Hope to see you at the meeting at the Angelsea Fire House on January 11. Come out and help us celebrate the 140th anniversary of Hereford Inlet Light. We had a great meeting at the Bayshore Center Oyster Sheds in Bivalve, NJ on October 5. Before the meeting, we were given an 8 minute video presentation; followed by a tour of the “Sheds” lead by Rachel Dolhanczyk, Curator of the Delaware Bay Museum and Folklife Center. Bivalve was once the center of the oyster industry—the “Oyster Capital of the World.” Our lunch was served out on the pier near the Harvey Gamage (check photos), a visiting schooner built in 1973. It is owned by the Ocean Classroom Foundation, offering programs of education where students learn seamanship skills, maritime history, marine science, applied mathematics, navigation and maritime literature under the tutelage of the captain and crew. Students from Maine were on their way to the Caribbean.

Our organization took part in the Lighthouse Challenge of New Jersey on two brisk, breezy days, October 19 and 20, at Hereford Inlet. Our sales were also brisk thanks to all the volunteers. Katie Moser and Bill Geilfuss stamped a total of 804 passports for visitors to Hereford taking part in the Challenge.

On Sunday, October 27, Tony Giletto and I narrated a lighthouse tour on the AJ Meerwald, NJ’s tall ship—another brisk, breezy day. This was the second lighthouse cruise this year. They are promoted by the Bayshore at Bivalve Project. The May 26 cruise was narrated by President Angelo Rigazio and myself. Among the adventurous passengers was a long time friend, Jack Dunn of Sarasota, FL, who had returned to Vineland with his wife, Dee, for a visit; he enjoyed the cruise immensely. Jack is an Air Force veteran so a belated thanks to him and all our veterans who we remembered on Veterans Day. On October 27, Tony joined me on the cruise along with his daughter, Melissa Small, who was visiting from Oklahoma accompanied by her friend, Susan Bellon from Utah. Both are retired school teachers. Susan reminded me of Carol. Almost the entire length of the cruise, she sat as far forward in the bow as possible; she didn’t seem to mind getting wet from the spray.

Even though there were two to three foot seas with a rather strong wind and cool temperatures, Captain Jesse Briggs took us down to Brandywine Shoal. On the way back we visited Fourteen Foot Shoal and Miah Maull Shoal Lighthouses. The previous week, Tony had taken his daughter Melissa and her friend to visit the lighthouses from Cape May to Sandy Hook.



and Liberty. It makes one wonder where we would be without the foresight, courage, determination and spirit of these people.

We also had the opportunity to see the Coast Guard at work. While observing the boats on the Cape Cod Canal, we noticed a large sail boat struggling awkwardly in the waves. It had lost all power and was adrift. The Marine Police were contacted and came to the aid of the floundering vessel. The Coast Guard Base nearby was notified immediately. We watched as the Coast Guard towed the sail boat out towards the ocean accompanied by the Marine Police. What an interesting adventure to end our day.



My wife and I were fortunate enough to be invited to spend some time in Sagamore Beach, Massachusetts, about 12 miles south of Plymouth. What a beautiful ride up 95 North passing through New London, CT (home of the US Coast Guard Academy) and Groton, CT “The Submarine Capital of the World”. We were given the grand tour of the area which included Plymouth Rock and the Mayflower II, a replica of the original ship. The “Rock” lay unnoticed for 121 years when it was finally identified in 1741 as the landing place of the Pilgrims. Among various historic sites visited, we saw the National Monument to the Forefathers, a beautiful 81 foot monument erected in 1889. This monument is dedicated to the four virtues that brought the Pilgrims to the New World: Morality, Law, Education

by *Peggy Stapleford*  
*Activities/Program Chair*

**Saturday, January 11, 2014** –  
*(Snow date Saturday,*

*January 18)* Winter meeting to be held at Angelsea Fire House, 209 New Jersey Avenue, North Wildwood, NJ. We will be celebrating the 140th Anniversary of Hereford Inlet Lighthouse. Hospitality 10AM – 11AM (*Coffee and Donuts provided by Steve Murray*); Meeting 11AM – Noon; Lunch Noon – 1PM - \$5 for hot sandwich of your choice: *Hot Roast Beef, Meatball Sandwich or Sausage & Peppers available at*



*the Fire Hall.* There is also a soda machine at the fire hall or you may bring your own lunch and beverage.

**PLEASE LET ROD MULLIGAN KNOW BY January 4** your choice of sandwich so they know how many to prepare:

Memax1@juno.com or call (856) 691-8224.

1PM – 2PM – Guest speaker, Steve Murray,

TOPIC: “History of the Lighthouse Keepers of Hereford”.

**Sunday, April 13, 2014** – Spring banquet to be held at the NEW SEA ISLE CITY YACHT CLUB. Further information to follow in the Spring Newsletter.

**Reserve the date**

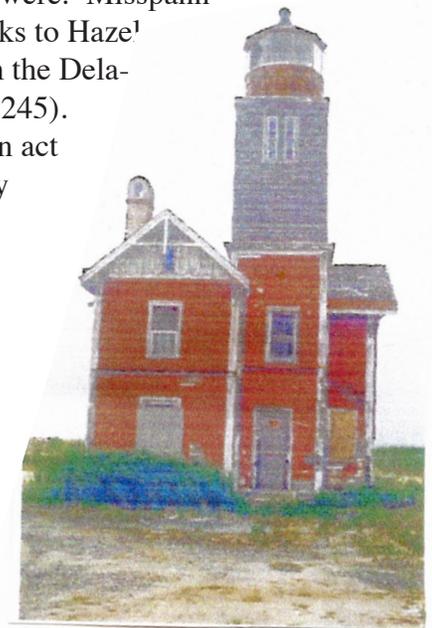
## RESEARCHING MISPELLION LIGHTHOUSE

The original Mispillion Lighthouse was located on the South bank of the Mispillion River where it joins the Delaware River. On a 1664 map, the first occurrence of the name Mispillion appears as “Mispening” perhaps meaning “at the great tuber (stream)”. Other variations through the years were: Misspann Creeke, Mispelion, Mispalling Creeke, Masphillion Creek, Muskmellon. Thanks to Haze<sup>1</sup> Birthingam, Lewes Delaware Historian, for this information she obtained from the Delaware Place Names, US Department of the Interior, Geologic Survey Bulletin (1245).

The first known lighthouse on the Mispillion River was authorized by an act of Congress in 1831. The land was purchased for \$5; the lighthouse was poorly constructed by Winslow Lewis. The lantern with six lamps set in spherical reflectors was on top of the keeper’s home. In 1838, the lighthouse was in such bad shape, it was torn down. A new one with the same layout was constructed showing two lights at low tide, one light at high tide. Since the river was very shallow, using the lights in this way, the captains would know exactly at what time they could attempt to venture over the sandbar at night.

In 1855, a fifth order Fresnel lens shining through an arc of 180 degrees was installed. By 1887 the entrance to the river had become so shallow that few vessels could navigate the waterway. Since it was useless to navigate, the lighthouse board recommended that the lighthouse be discontinued. In 1859 it was sold at public auction for \$135 and moved to Walnut Street in Milford, DE. It is believed that this structure no longer exists.

The river became navigable again in 1873 so a new lighthouse was built at a cost of \$5,000. On June 15, the new lighthouse exhibited its light, a 6th order Fresnel lens, for the first time. A year later, \$5,000 was allocated to build a brick cistern and to add four rooms. The building was now a 2 story structure, L shaped with a square tower in the intersection of the two wings. The tower, which was 48 foot above the bay, contained the staircase. Beginning with the 1877 Lighthouse Board Reports, the lighthouse property was reported to be plagued by erosions from the waters of the bay. Stone, brush, riprap and piling were all used to try to preserve the land and to protect the lighthouse. Maintenance and repair of this embankment would be a continual headache and source of expense. To provide better access to this site by land, Congress approved the building of a road across the marsh.



*(Information for history of Mispillion Lighthouse, Delaware obtained from Lighthousefriends.com)*  
*(Continued in Spring Bay Run)*

# VISITING MAINE'S "OUT OF THE WAY" LIGHTS

By Wm. F. Schneider (courtesy of K. Moser)



Maine is known as the Lighthouse State. Some are not so easily reached. After multiple trips to the state, it was time for me to attempt a visit to the difficult ones—a trip that involved five boat excursions.

The trip began with a detour to Rockport, ME for transit to Thacher Island at 8AM on a Saturday. After fifteen minutes, we reached the island where the boat was winched up a ramp before we disembarked. Thacher Island is one of America's last twin lights. 45 foot towers from 1771 were replaced in 1861 by 124 foot granite towers with first order Fresnel lenses. The fog signal saved the SS America from destruction in 1919 when it was transporting President Woodrow Wilson home from Versailles. The north tower has been inactive since 1932; the south automated in 1980.

Since the island is a nesting area for seagulls, they can be quite nasty. One attacked me on the boardwalk running between the towers. I slipped over the side avoiding the bird but received some leg and hip scrapes along with a black and blue waist. Serious injury was averted since the walkway was only two feet above ground.

At 3PM, I was at Cook's Lobster House on Bailey Island near Harpswell. A twenty-one foot powerboat provided a rough ride to Halfway Rock Lighthouse. (See Photo A) Distantly visible from Bailey Island, Halfway Rock is a three acre isolated outcropping between Capes Small and Elizabeth—hence its name. The 66 foot granite tower was first lit in 1871. The new keeper's house arrived in 1960, followed the next year by a boathouse and helipad. A 1972 nor'easter left only the tower which was automated in 1975. The vacant tower needs painting and the Coast Guard is seeking new owners to maintain and operate it.

Back on US1 at 5, I attempted to reach Camden for the final harbor cruise at 6:30 to view Curtis (B) and Indian Island Lights (C). Five acre Curtis's first brick tower came on line in 1835. In 1896 the current 25 foot lighthouse was put into service with a fourth order Fresnel lens. In 1934, the island was named eponymously for Cyrus HK Curtis, publisher of the "Saturday Evening Post." Automated in 1972 sans Fresnel, the town of Camden took possession of the island the following year.



Indian Island Lighthouse was built in 1875 to replace a roof lantern which had served as the guiding light since 1850. An automated light situated nearby allowed for the light to be sold in 1934 to a private party.

Whitehead Island's forty-one foot stone tower was erected in 1852 to replace the 1807 original. A steam driven fog signal installed in 1860 replaced one which often needed to be manually operated since the weather fouled up the mechanisms. Notable lore here includes two sailors being frozen to death in 1805 and initial keeper Ellis Dolph discharged for ordering extra oil which he subsequently sold to Thomaston merchants on the mainland.

Southern Lighthouse is a 27 foot brick tower from 1857 with a breezeway connecting it to the keeper's house. An oil house was added in 1906. Taken out of service in 1934, it was purchased by artist Andrew Wyeth. His son, Jamie, now owns the 27 acres and uses the pyramidal bell tower as his studio.

Since my next cruise was postponed due to the weather, I opted for a drive to Pumpkin Island Lighthouse about 50 miles away. From 1854, this 25 foot tower marked the north entrance to Eggermoggin Beach. The 1885 boathouse and 1902 oil house still exist.

Leaving on my 1 PM departure, which had been confirmed,

we pass Egg Rock Lighthouse (1875) guarding Frenchman Bay on the way to Petit Manan (D). The 1817 tower was too short at 53 feet for shipping so it was replaced by the current 119 foot one in 1855—it is the second tallest tower in Maine. Reinforced with steel rods in 1877, automation occurred in 1972. US Fish and Wildlife personnel now inhabit the keeper's house to monitor the migrating terns and puffins. Samuel deChamplain named the island; Manan being the Indian term for "Island out to sea."

On to Machias Seal Island. Two miles out of Cutler Harbor, the captain stops so I can view Little River Lighthouse. This 41 foot cast iron tower replaced an 1855 stone one in 1876. The wood Victorian house was added in 1888. Five years after automation, the lens was removed in 1980. The American Lighthouse Foundation has owned the light since 2000. Keepers now live on the island part of the year welcoming paying guests.

Prodded by local merchants, the town of Saint John, New Brunswick had twin octagonal wooden towers constructed in 1831. By the late 1860's one was so decrepit it was replaced by one with a third order Fresnel lens. Since it was brighter than the surviving twin, mariners got confused as to the correct nautical position. Although in Maine waters, Canada keeps civilian keepers as sovereignty remains in dispute.

On my way home, I stopped in Whiting to visit Tim Harrison and Kathleen Finnegan at their home. Since leaving Wells, Maine several years ago, they now publish LIGHTHOUSE DIGEST in an end room of the house which doubles as a gift shop.

(Photos by William F. Schneider)



## *Compiled from a telephone interview*

Captain “Little Joe” & Kathy, “Conniving Kate,” Pantilione of Vineland, NJ have been impersonating pirates since 2005. They are members of “Brethren of the Roast – pirates for all occasions.” It seems they became interested in “pirateering” when they and some friends gathered for an annual pig roast. Someone suggested that this get together become a “Pirate Pig Roast” so members of the group dressed up as pirates and it “took off from there”. Joe got the idea of dressing up and going on a sail on the AJ Meerwald. After purchasing tickets, off they went. Some of the passengers began asking questions and, the rest, as they say, is history. “Conniving Kate” didn’t join in at first since she really didn’t like sailing and just wasn’t interested in going out on the water.

But after her first experience, she was hooked. Asked to narrate on the Pirate Sails, they now participate in five sails a year.

Joe remembers that once the pirate crew was late for a sail so the Meerwald crew left a small rubber boat behind. When they arrived on site, they got in the boat, motored out, and commandeered the Meerwald as in olden times to the delight of the passengers.

Joe has done a lot of research so he is able to answer the many questions that are asked during an event. They have participated in the Capt. Kidd Weekend in Wildwood, NJ; the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire; the Pirate Festival in Hampton, VA; Pirates and Princesses in Disney World and are currently members of the Landi Comics Club that, for a couple of years, took second place in the Mummers Parade in Philadelphia, PA. The Pantilione children are grown but their oldest son still parades with them on New Year’s Day. Once in a while their nephew and niece dress as pirates and march in the parades or go on sails with them. They took part in the Haddon Township Halloween Parade in Westmont, NJ which led to being recruited to participate in the Philadelphia Mummer’s Parade. Locally they were part of Vineland’s 150th Birthday

Celebration Parade and the Vineland Police Department’s “2013 National Night Out”. They have also been involved in the Hereford Lighthouse Festivals for the past three years.

When asked what inspired this avocation, Captain Joe, a former Navy man, quoted Pat Croce, former owner of the Philadelphia 76ers and current owner of The Pirate Soul in St. Augustine, FL: “Anyone in the Navy has a little pirate in his soul.” They have had the fortune of meeting “pirates” from all over the United States.

*(Photo by M.Mulligan)*

*Continued from Page 1*

## YO HO HO...

Famous literary characters such as: Long John Silver; Sinbad the Sailor; and Captain Hook come to life in storybooks. Movies like “Pirates of the Caribbean” and the Gilbert and Sullivan Operetta, “Pirates of Penzance,” have helped to rekindle interest in pirates. “Captain Phillips” is the 2013 American action thriller depicting the 2009 hijacking of the US container ship, the Maersk Alabama, by a crew of Somali pirates. The hijacking took place 145 miles off the Somali coast. The Maersk Alabama was the first American ship to be hijacked by pirates in two hundred years. The US Coast Guard and Navy play a major role in capturing modern day pirates.

One of the most famous pirate stories ever written is TREASURE ISLAND by Robert Louis Stevenson. This is where we get the sea chantey that begins: “Fifteen men on a dead man’s chest; Yo, ho, ho and a bottle of rum.” It is believed that this is a possible reference to Dead Man’s Chest Island in the British Virgin Islands. It seems that Stevenson found this island named in a book by Charles Kingsley. Early in the 1700’s, Blackbeard punished a mutinous crew by marooning them on Dead Man’s Chest, an island surrounded by high cliffs. They were left without water; each was given a cutlass and a bottle of rum in hopes they would kill each other. When Blackbeard returned 30 days later, he found that fifteen men had survived; thus the sea chantey was born.

While piracy was predominately a male activity or occupation, there were a few of “the fairer sex” involved. Norway, Sweden, France, England, Ireland and China all had female pirates. They dressed and acted like men. Nothing was thought of this “cross-dressing” since the women were also trying to take advantage of rights, privileges and freedoms that were exclusive to men. One trend popular among females was incorporating sailing equipment into their clothing; hence, the term fishnet stockings. Some of the better known female pirates were Anne Bonny and Mary Reed who worked with the pirateer, Calico Jack. The most recent, Ching Chue Ping, also known as “Sister Ping” worked the seas from 1970 – 1990 smuggling Chinese immigrants into the United States and England. She was convicted in the United States and is currently serving 35 years in prison. Ping is due to be released in 2030.



# HOLIDAY MENU OF LIGHTHOUSES



**MAIN COURSE:** Choice of Turkey Point Light or Great, Main or False Duck Island Lights served with Dumpling Rock Light and Cranberry Island Light.

For those of you who prefer seafood, we have: Salmon Point, Sturgeon Bay, Whitefish Point, or Cape Croker.

Interested in an exotic dish? – Turtle, Caribou or Pigeon Island Lights

Dessert: Pumpkin Island, Plum Island, Raspberry Island Lights

Beverage: Brandywine Shoal or Scotch Bonnet Lights

## PICTURES



*An Ocean Classroom*



*Curator Rachel Dolhanczyk explains an exhibit to President Rigazio at the "Sheds"*



*Bill Geilfus & Katie Moser at the Challenge*



*The Harvey Gamage visits Bayshore Center*



*Bundled up for the Challenge*



*Tony Giletto & Angelo Rigazio at the Lighthouse Challenge*



*Melissa Small, Susan Bellon & Tony Giletto bundled up for the October cruise on the Meerwald*



*Melissa Small helping out with sales at the Challenge*

*Angelo S. Rigazio, Jr.*

Seven AM December 25, 1972, another dawn to another day. The only exception being that you're 3.5 miles off the coast of Delaware at Harbor of Refuge Lighthouse. As you climb the spiral stairs to the watch deck, you reach for the door, open it and say, "Good Morning" to the only other person with whom you will have contact for the next seven days. All went well on his watch. It's time for you to take over the watch, have breakfast and chat for a while. As he leaves to get some sleep, you realize that you're alone on Christmas Day.

Base Cape May calls for a weather report and radio check. Six weather reports every 24 hours: check the instruments and gauges, wind 18 knots, visibility 25 miles, seas 4 to 5 feet, swells 3 feet, air temp 25 degrees. This is your contact to the world. Step outside and look towards the northeast and you can see Cape May Point Light 17 miles away. To the southeast is Lewes, Delaware. To the west are ships in anchorage. Eastward is the Atlantic Ocean and nothing but Spain for the next 2,000 miles. The winds cut through you like a knife forcing you back inside.

Manfred, the cat, greets you with a rub and meow. You say hello and give him something to eat. Now watch TV. This is your solitude on Christmas Day. After watching some Christmas shows on TV, you give Cape May a call on the radio asking them to call your wife on a landline to wish her a "Merry Christmas". Fifteen minutes later, Cape May radios back with a message from her. The rest of the keepers on the various lighthouses are repeating the same message to their families on shore.

At 12:30 PM, you can hear a boat horn blowing outside the dock. There is a boat pulling alongside. On board is Santa Claus waving to you. It's the Coast Guard Santa

from Delaware bringing cheer to all the lonely keepers. There are cookies, presents and a small artificial tree. As you watch the lights twinkling on shore; it makes you realize you are not alone on Christmas Day.

*(Photo from Carole F. Reily Collection)*



*Merry Christmas to all...*