



The Bay Run



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

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Fall 2026

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

"PARADE OF SAIL" CELEBRATES OUR NATION'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY



The "Parade of Sail" was advertised as "one of history's largest maritime events". Featured ships from the United States and throughout the world came to honor the United States in celebrating our nation's 250th birthday. More than 60 ships from 20 countries were represented in this "global gathering". Ships were concentrated in the New York/New Jersey/Maryland and other Delaware Bay and Chesapeake Bay areas. Ships were also anchored in Norfolk, Boston and New Orleans. Escorting these tall ships was a major fleet of US Navy and Coast Guard warships. Other ships and boats taking part were numerous destroyers, aircraft carriers, Coast Guard cutters, ice breakers, pilot boats, etc. and of course, our own Coast Guard ship, the Eagle, and New Jersey's tall ship, the AJ Meerwald. What a beautiful tribute.

Leading this fleet was the USCG cutter, Eagle, commissioned in 1936 and currently used as a training ship at the US Coast Guard Academy, in Groton, Connecticut.

Representing New Jersey, was the AJ Meerwald, the state's official tall ship. It was originally a Delaware Bay oyster dredging schooner built in 1928 and refurbished recently. The Bayshore Center in Bivalve, NJ is the homeport of the Meerwald. The following information was received from Jessica York, Executive Director of the Bayshore Project: "Over the past two weeks, our historic oyster schooner has proudly represented our state, our community and, most of all, the people who have contributed to help make the presentation of the AJ Meerwald at Bivalve possible. The Meerwald sailed alongside some of the most majestic international and national sailing vessels still in operation. Our crew had the opportunity to board several vessels and to engage with the other crews in the maritime portion of our nation's celebration. After spending the last two weeks in the Chesapeake and meeting the fleet in Norfolk, VA, we are excited to be back in our home waters of the Delaware Bay for July 4."

Delaware's tall ship, the Kalmar Nyckel, is a recreation of the ship that brought the first Swedish colonists to Delaware. In 1638, these colonists established the first European settlement in Delaware. A Swedish ship built

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Reflections by Angelo S. Rigazio Jr.



Greetings from the President's Desk. Summer days will soon be behind us as we welcome the first day of fall on September 22, 2026. I am looking forward to cooler days and cooler nights coming our way.

The organization had two successful lighthouse cruises out to see the Delaware Bay Lights this year with full boats and beautiful weather. I would like to thank Teresa and Steve Rhoades for their time and commitment to putting these cruises together. Also thank you Maxine Mulligan for meeting us at the dock to help sign-in the passengers. Our organization would not continue without help from our volunteers.

The Delaware Bay Lights look in poor condition, except for Brandywine Shoal Lighthouse that is operated and preserved by the non-profit group headed by the Stewart family associated with the Cape May Whale Watcher. The ownership of the remaining Delaware Bay Lights is split among non-profit groups, and private buyers. The U.S. Coast Guard is responsible for operating and maintaining the active navigational lights and fog horns. We saw the solar panels used to supply energy for the lights and fog horns, covered in sea gull droppings and hundreds of birds nesting on each lighthouse. When I was stationed on Harbor of Refuge Lighthouse, it was the crew's responsibility to maintain the lights and building. Now you can see how much was lost when the lighthouses were all automated.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the Lighthouse Challenge of New Jersey on October 17th and 18th. We will be joining East Point Lighthouse at Leechester Hall in Leesburg, NJ.

Until next time, keep the lights shining!

Angelo

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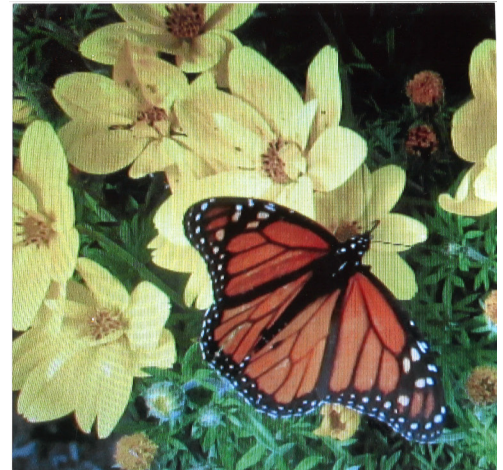
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FROM THE LOG OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

by *Rodney W. Mulligan, Chairman, Board of Directors*

Our fall meeting will be held on Saturday, September 26, 2026, at the Cape May Science Museum Center, 101 Lehigh Ave., Cape May Point, NJ 08232. (Note: Former nuns' retreat home). Our meeting will begin at 11 AM, lunch (brown bag) at Noon and our guest speaker, Bob Mullock, Owner of the Center, will present at 1 PM regarding the Monarch Butterfly Migration. Visitors may be able to witness the migration by visiting the area as it will be taking place at that time. This migration is usually visible in the fall along the Jersey shore and at East Point Light. A sight to behold!

Hundreds of thousands of North American Monarch Butterflies take to the sky each year in the fall traveling from their summer breeding grounds to the warmer climates and the fir forests of Central Mexico to escape the freezing weather of the northern winter. The eastern population flies from Canada and the United States to the mountains of Central Mexico, a 3,000-mile trek south. The western monarchs head to the California coast. There are so many of these butterflies in the area, an observer can actually hear the beating of their wings.



Cruises - Thanks to Nancy Patterson- Tidy, Mark Allen, Dolores Dunn for their help with publicity, our cruise narrator and former coastguardsman and lighthouse keeper Angelo Rigazio, and Terri and Steve Rhoades for organizing the cruises.

These cruises would not be possible without the cooperation of Mike Rothman, Owner and Captain of the Bonanza II. We have worked with Capt. Rothman many years. These cruises leave the tiny Bayshore fishing village of Fortescue, part of Downe Township in Cumberland County. Fortescue was settled in the 1700s and named after John Fortescue, who owned and settled the land prior to the American Revolution. It transformed into a bustling tourist and sportfishing destination in the 1800's, eventually becoming the "Weakfish Capital of the World in the late 20th Century. Fishing boats packed the bay so tightly during peak season that locals claim you could walk from boat to boat.

By the 1800's, Fortescue was a premier vacation oasis for Philadelphia and Wilmington residents who arrived by steamboat to escape the city heat and enjoy the beaches. Due to its remote location on the Delaware Bay, the village served as a popular speakeasy and smuggling hub for rum and liquor arriving from the Caribbean and Canada. The low-lying coastal community was hit hard by Hurricane Irene in 2011 and suffered catastrophic damage from Superstorm Sandy in 2012 which destroyed homes and infrastructure. (Wikipedia)

Our organization will be stationed at the Leechester Hall, Main Street in Leesburg, for the New Jersey Lighthouse Challenge the weekend of October 17 & 18. Volunteers are welcome. Hope to see you there.

-  Cape May once boasted “the largest hotel in the world”...the Mount Vernon built in 1853. It could house 2,100 guests and seat 3,000 in the dining room.
-  New Jersey was once divided into provinces of East and West Jersey. Four original West Jersey Counties were created: Cape May, Gloucester, Burlington and Salem.
-  Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ was once named Queen’s College. Years later the College of Agriculture was established here.
-  Virginia is the birthplace of the greatest number of our presidents: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, William Henry Harrison, John Tyler and Zachary Taylor.
-  At 2,323 miles long, the Mississippi River is the largest river system in North America.
-  Canada and United States share Lake Superior, the largest body of fresh water in the world. The Great Salt Lake in Utah is the largest body of salt water in the United States.
-  Crater Lake is the deepest lake in the United States and ranks 7th deepest in the world.
-  In 1609, Hudson sailed up the river in New York now bearing his name.
-  During the Civil War, the Confederate Navy built more than twenty iron-clads, ships that were armored with iron or steel plates. The most famous of these was the USS Virginia also known as the Merrimack. (Information taken from the “Book of American Trivia”)
-  Absecon lighthouse is the tallest lighthouse in New Jersey at 171 feet. Sandy Hook is the oldest working lighthouse in the United States. It was built in 1764.
-  Somers Point, settled in 1693, is the oldest settlement in Atlantic County. John Somers was the first European settler.
-  A pair of granite obelisks located near the mouth of Hope Creek and Alloways Creek, NJ directly across the river from Liston Point, DE marks the end of the Delaware Bay and the beginning of the Delaware River. These obelisks were erected in 1906 to settle a dispute between fishermen of the bay and those utilizing the river. Over time the markers succumbed to the tides and fell into the muddy waters of the Delaware. In the 1980’s, stones were salvaged, repaired and placed on the current concrete foundations. (Internet)
-  Before the Civil War, vessels crossing the Delaware Bay were part of the Underground Railroad maritime traffic, carrying the escaping slaves. Lanterns were used to communicate the fact that slaves were aboard. (Internet)
-  The Leni Lenape tribe were the first people to live in New Jersey, approximately 15,000 years ago.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES



In May of 1787, 55 delegates from 12 of the original 13 colonies gathered at the Pennsylvania State House (now known as Independence Hall) in Philadelphia to draft a new framework for the colonists. This framework was to replace the former “Articles of Confederation”. James Madison, who is known as the “Father of the Constitution” was the primary author of this document. A majority of these delegates ratified the document on September 17, 1787. In December of 1791, three-fourths of the representatives ratified the 10 amendments now so familiar to Americans as the “Bill of Rights”.

The first amendment of the Bill of Rights includes Freedom of Speech and the Press; Freedom to Assemble; Freedom to Protest and gather and petition the government and Freedom of

Religion. Others give Americans the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, the Right to a Fair Trial, the Right to protect against unreasonable search & seizure without probable cause, the right to due process of law, etc. The Preamble of the Constitution follows:

We, the people of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, Ensure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessing of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

The United States Constitution is the world’s longest-surviving written charter of government. The beginning of this document, “We the People” affirms the government of the United States, represented by its citizens, as the first branch of government and provides for 3 branches: Legislative, Executive and Judicial (intended to separate the government’s power) and a system of “checks and balances”. The Legislative branch establishes a Congress made up of the House of Representatives and Senate; the Executive branch includes the President and his cabinet and the Judicial branch is represented by the Supreme Court.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY AMERICA

THE SEVEN NATURAL WONDERS OF THE UNITED STATES

As part of the 250th Anniversary Celebration of our country, WPVI-TV (ABC-our Channel 6) along with National Geographic and David Muir explored the 7 Natural Wonders of our country. The statistics are from Wikipedia.

1. The Grand Canyon is a 278 mile long, 18-mile-wide canyon located in Arizona. This canyon was eroded by the Colorado River.
2. The Appalachian Mountain Range is an ancient mountain system covering 2,000 miles (the width of our country) running from Alabama to Canada.
3. The Everglades consist of 1.5 million acres covering a large part of Southern Florida. The source of these wetlands is Lake Okeechobee. The Everglades is the home of various types of flora, fauna and other forms of life.
4. Volcanoes forming the Hawaiian Islands. There are six active volcanoes in the Hawaiian Islands extending from sea level to a height of 13,800 ‘. This volcanic formation is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
5. Niagra Falls State Park forms part of the boundary between the United States and Canada. It is the oldest State Park in the country and is known as the last stop on the Underground Railroad.
6. Yellowstone National Park, in Wyoming, consists of over 2.2 million acres covering 3,468 square miles and is known for its geothermal attractions. It is the first National Park in the world.
7. The giant Redwoods have existed for over 2,000 years and are the tallest trees in the world. These trees are found along the coastal regions of Northern California extending into the SW corner of Oregon.

“PARADE OF SAIL” CELEBRATES OUR NATION’S 250TH ANNIVERSARY

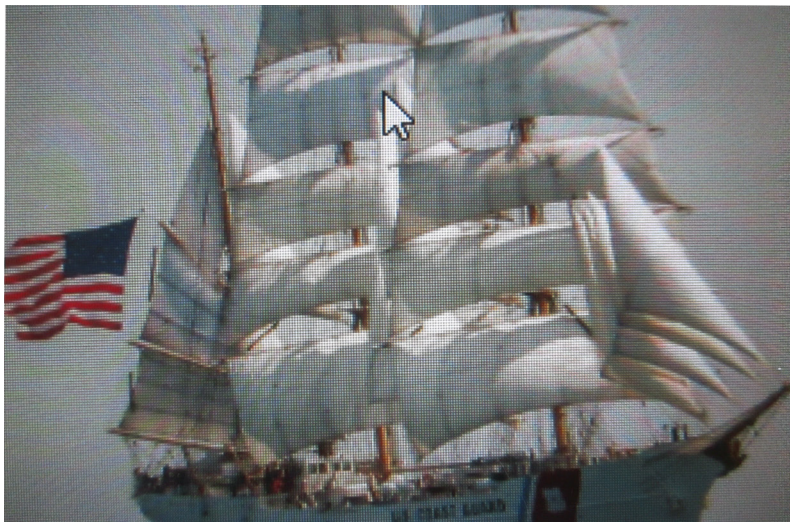
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by the Dutch, the name translates to “Key of Kalmar” paying tribute to Sweden which was a great power at that time. In 1986, a group of citizens organized and created a foundation to rebuild the tall ship. Wilmington, DE is the ship’s home-port.

Argentina was represented by the ARA Libertad, a training vessel launched in 1956. This 340’ vessel hails from Buenos Aires. It acts as a floating ambassador for Argentina and is also a training vessel.

The BAP Union, a 379’ tall ship, represented Peru and is one of the world’s newest sailing vessels whose keel was laid in December 2012. The largest sailing ship in Latin America, it has sailed in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans with cadets from Peru’s navy.

Some of the tall ships docked in Norfolk, VA are featured. Pictures courtesy of Jennifer Newman. Thanks, Jenn.



THE TRAGIC, HAUNTING TALE OF ROUTE 55 IN NEW JERSEY

FALL 2026

Route 55 in New Jersey (also known as Veterans' Memorial Highway and the Cape May Expressway) is a 40-mile-long highway connecting the Camden/Philadelphia suburbs to South Jersey's rural and industrial areas. This route runs from Maurice Rier Township (Route 47) north to Route 42 in Deptford traversing Cumberland and Gloucester counties. Native-American folklore states that the route is haunted due to the fact it was constructed over an area where there were sacred Indian burial grounds. A special 4-mile stretch starting in Deptford and heading south, is infamously haunted and is frequently referred to as "Indian Curse Road". In the early 1980's when construction began, warnings were given by several Native-American spiritual leaders that the desecration of this area would upset their departed ancestors who, in turn, would want to seek revenge. The dead did not wish to be disturbed; hence the curse. Many Indian artifacts had been uncovered during construction, and the exit assigned would be number 13 which added to the mystery. At the time, alternate routes were proposed...and ignored.



This "curse" has resulted in several fatal construction accidents and other tragedies. During the construction, a worker was run over by an asphalt truck; another was knocked off an overpass by an unexpected gust of wind that materialized "out of nowhere"; a construction worker's feet turned black; one worker died of cancer, and another had a brain aneurism. There were also sightings of a young girl in a wedding dress, carrying a bouquet of flowers walking on the shoulder of the road in the middle of the night. Investigations proved this "ghost girl" was a runaway from the area. Accidents continue to happen.

If you have ever traveled on this freeway, you would know the speed limit is 65 but many people drive much faster. Could it be these speedsters are trying to get away from the spirits that haunt this stretch of road? One never knows.

THE HORSESHOE CRABS RETURN



The Delaware Bay hosts the largest spawn concentration of horseshoe crabs in the world. Every year in May & June, millions of these ancient animals crawl onto sandy bay beaches during high tides around the time of new or full moons. The crabs deposit clusters of green eggs which provide food for thousands of long-distance migrating shore birds, the red-knots.

East Point Lighthouse UPDATE:

Sadly, instead of celebrating 250 years of American freedom and independence at East Point Lighthouse this special summer, the lighthouse remains empty, closed and falling into disrepair under the Department of Environmental Protection/State of New Jersey. Conditions continue to deteriorate with no sign of care or maintenance being done. Though it's not their property the Maurice River Township Road Crew continues to mow the grounds for the sake of the community, but other than that the lighthouse and property look almost abandoned.

The good news is Congressman Jeff Van Drew, Senator Michael Testa and the Cumberland County Commissioners are all still doing what they can to try to save East Point Lighthouse. Congressman Jeff Van Drew has written to the new governor and is also working on trying to get real erosion protection added to the point. Senator Testa and county and township officials met with the new Commissioner of the DEP in the spring and county officials have been trying get a workable management agreement for the lighthouse since then. For a while now, the report are they are close to an agreement but as of today(August 30) nothing has been signed.

From what we understand, Cumberland County hopes to get a reasonable management agreement between the county and the NJ DEP and then have the Maurice River Historical Society manage the lighthouse.

Nancy Patterson

President, Maurice River Historical Society

