



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”

LETTERS FROM FORMER MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Excerpts of stories have been taken from a collection of letters given to the editor by **Bob Lamb**, a former member of our association, former member of the USCG and a former lighthouse keeper. Bob spent time on Stepping Stones and Montauk Point on Long Island, NY and at Grand Island Range, MI. He felt that “we, an extinct breed of men, all have at least one story to tell about the lighthouse/ lightship/ light station experience;” consequently he contacted several members of the coast guard who spent most of their assigned time serving in lighthouses, light stations or on lightships. Here are some of their stories:



Jack E. writes about his time on Pilot Island and the Milwaukee Breakwater Light Station. “It was a good life except for stormy weather when landing the relief boat was tough. In the winter, when the harbor was full of ice, the McKinley Beach Coast Guard Station would transport us to the Base in their copper-clad 36’ motor lifeboat for the crew change day.”

“How well I remember the Christmas of 1962 when I stayed on duty to let another guy go home. By the 28th of December, I was so sick with pneumonia, I was sent to the hospital at Base Cape May. Not a pleasant memory.”
Chas. B.

Bob H. writes about a large Barracuda that lived under the lighthouse where he was stationed at Fowey Rocks, 12 miles off the coast of Miami, FL. “One day, out of boredom, I decided to make myself a ‘Barracuda Killer’. I spent some time putting together 12’ of galvanized pipe with a sharpened end; I was planning to harpoon the large fish as it swam by. As the fish swam under the area where I was standing, I threw the spear which hit the huge fish driving it to the bottom. The spear and the fish became stuck in a coral rock bottom. I had to jump in the water and pry the fish out with a crowbar. An adventure I will long remember BUT I’m happy to say, I got the fish.”

“I was stationed on the Detroit River Light located on Lake Erie. Right after I was discharged and after the light was automated, it was struck by an ore carrier. It was in the early morning hours when the fog was so thick you could barely see beyond the safety change. Talk about a close call!” **Mike B.**

Joe G. relates: “I spent the first year of my career at Five Finger Light Station in Southeast Alaska. Five Finger was the first and last manned lighthouse in Alaska. The locals were great and really took care of us. It was a one year tour on an island that was only 3 acres – 2.5 acres at high tide. What a tour.”

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Angelo S. Rigazio, Jr.



Thanksgiving is over and another holiday season is upon us. The hectic days of decorating, shopping and watching all the holiday movies has begun. I feel like the Christmas season started too soon after Halloween!!

The COVID Virus is still a part of our world but now with everyone having access to the vaccine, family and friends can spend time together for the holidays, unlike the isolation of last year. It was enjoyable watching Macy’s Thanksgiving Parade on TV; the parade did not take place last year. I am glad that life is starting to return to “normal”.

We have the inside of our home decorated with two Christmas trees and a large Christmas village with moving trains. Santas are all over the house and, of course, we have a beautiful Nativity scene. The only issue we continue to struggle with has been trying to keep Ed, the big, fat, yellow cat out of the tree.

The annual winter meeting is planned for January 29 at East Point Lighthouse. I hope you can attend and help us catch up on the past year. A good turnout of members and friends would be great.

So, until then, enjoy the holidays, stay safe and healthy. Buon Natale!

Remember – Keep the lights shining. Angelo

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FROM THE LOG OF THE INTERIM VICE PRESIDENT *by Rod Mulligan*



(NOTE: Due to the COVID pandemic, I haven't been writing a column since there hasn't been much to report so I have some catching up to do.)

Our August 22, our Delaware Bay Lighthouse Cruise to Ship John Shoal was a success, sold out with standbys. It was a pleasure to see some of our members participate and enjoy the sunset cruise. We were finally able, after two years of COVID 19, to have a gathering in the form of a picnic/meeting/banquet, etc. at the Cape May County Zoo on September 18. The “weather gods” were very cooperative giving us a beautiful day. Our guest speaker was USCG Retired Chief Engineman, Marvin White, who told of his experiences over the years serving in the coast guard. Ret. Chief White handed out and discussed some former coast guard documents. One of the documents explained that the “Department of Homeland Security in its entirety is NOT part of the Armed Forces; however, components of it are, such as the US Coast Guard. The USCG is a military service and a branch of the US Armed Forces at all times.” He related how they were involved in rescuing Haitian immigrants and returning them to Haiti. The Haitians were given food twice a day while onboard; their children were provided with necessities. He told about the drug runners the navy would run down off the coast of Africa; the coast guard then had to board the ships. After reenlisting, he retired right before 9/11. Marvin and I served together on the USCG Buoy and Lighthouse Tender Zinnia assigned to Base Gloucester, NJ in 1957. It was nice seeing the former members who stopped by to say hello. We all enjoyed reminiscing and catching up with old times.

October 16 & 17 was the NJ Lighthouse Challenge; our volunteers were at East Point Lighthouse. It was a nice sunny day on Saturday and a great day for sales. We met people from all over the United States including: Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, and, of course, New Jersey. All the “challengers” were very interested in hearing about the Delaware Bay Lighthouses; President Rigazio provided the information. We had many people sign up for next summer’s cruises. Sunday it was cool and windy but the “lighthouse lovers” still came. A total of 1,101 challengers visited East Point over the weekend. *(Please check out the pictures on p. 4.)*

We wish you Happy Holidays and hopefully 2022 will be a better year.

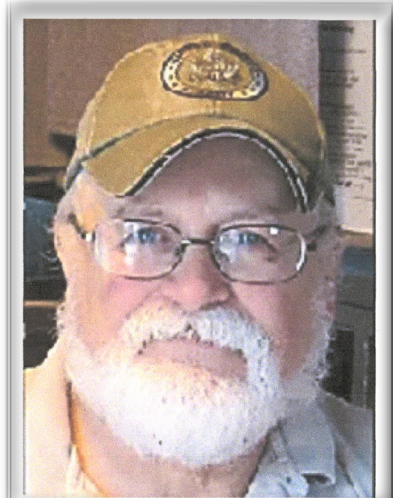
RICH CHIEMINGO PASSES OVER THE BAR

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Rich Chiemingo, on October 20, 2021. He was a member of our organization, a great lighthouse enthusiast. Born in Philadelphia on Christmas Day, he spent many summers in Cape May with his family when he was younger. He grew to love the Cape May Lighthouse and the area. Often a speaker at our meetings, Rich would relate his lighthouse experiences and other nautical tales. He was very proud to work as the Cape May Point Lighthouse Keeper, gifted lecturer and historical interpreter. He passed on this love of lighthouses to many school children and to tourist coming to Cape May to visit the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts where he took an active role.

Rich attended Kent State University and continued his education at New York University where he received a degree in Music Education upon graduation. He then became a professional musician working with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. It was only recently that we found out he performed with many celebrities such as Frank Sinatra, Billy Williams; he was a member of Guy Lombardo’s Royal Canadians and a Broadway pit musician for numerous productions including performances at Radio City Music Hall Christmas shows. Truly a Renaissance Man, a multi-talented “Man For All Seasons.”

A celebration of Rich’s life will be announced at a later date and will be held in Cape May, NJ. He truly will be missed by all.

(Editor’s note: I happened to visit the Physick Estate in Cape May, the home of Mid Atlantic Center for the Arts where Rich volunteered for many years. They have a beautiful Christmas village set up and have dedicated one of the lighthouses in the village to him.)





Meeting, President Rigazio expresses our appreciation to Ret. Chief White



Meeting, former "coasties" reminiscing. Left to Right R. Mulligan, C. Bolton, F. Ruddick, A. Rigazio



(Above) "Captain" Tidy checking the area



(Above) Carl Tidy, East Point Volunteer

(Below) Challenge Volunteers Left to Right M. Mulligan, D. Rigazio, R. Mulligan, A. Rigazio, & K. Moser



(Center) Steve Murray, author & lighthouse volunteer

(Below) Awaiting customers R. Mulligan & A. Rigazio





SAVE THE DATES – Mark Your Calendars:

Saturday, January 29, 2022 (tentative snow date set for February 12) – The winter meeting of our organization will be held at East Point. Agenda: 10 AM Meet & Greet (donuts and coffee); 11 AM – meeting; Noon -- lunch; 1 PM Guest speaker, Nancy Patterson-Tidy who will bring us up to date regarding East Point's battle with the State of New Jersey and the final outcome. All are welcome.

Saturday & Sunday, October 22 & 23, 2022 – Lighthouse Challenge of New Jersey. Our organization will be stationed at East Point. Volunteers needed and always welcome. Join the Challenge!! How many NJ lighthouses can you visit in a weekend?

DID YOU KNOW?



The schooners AJ Meerwald, built in 1928, and JE Riggin, built in 1927, met for the first time in the Delaware Bay. They were built in Dorchester, NJ and are 2 of the last 3 remaining oyster schooners. These schooners were built at the Charles H. Stowman & Sons Shipyard, considered to be the most productive shipyard on the Maurice River and in the NJ Delaware Bay region. (Thanks, Nancy)



The oldest town in each state was selected online. The quaint town of Lewes, DE was founded in 1631; Newark, NJ was settled by the Puritans in 1666 hence its biblical name – “new ark”. Philadelphia, PA was settled by the Dutch, English and Swedish who came in the early 1600's; William Penn, a Quaker, claimed the area in 1681. Cape May, one of the country's oldest vacation resorts, was founded in 1609. A few years later, Cornelius Mey explored and charted this region.



The State of New Jersey has allocated \$1.6 billion for deepening Nantuxent Creek, helping out the oyster industry and recreation boats in that area. Nantuxent Creek is one of the key boat passages to the Delaware Bay off Cumberland County.



Cape May, a town listed on the National Historic Registry, is Celebrating Hope and Togetherness this Christmas Season. Some of the events offered are: The Annual Christmas Candle Lighting House Tour (both real and virtual), the 1879 Physick Estate Tour, various House and Inn Tours, the Ghost of Christmas Past Tour, the Santa Trolley Tour, etc. The city also offers holiday shopping. Plan to “spend a day in Cape May”. (Press release received from MAC)



Marvin Creamer (1916-2020), Vineland High School Class of 1932, was the first recorded person to have sailed around the globe without navigational instruments. (Hurray for Creamer and my alma mater.)



A rare “one in a million Cotton Candy” lobster was caught. Thankfully its life was spared.



The first football game in America was played in New Jersey between Princeton and Rutgers on November 6, 1869. The Vineland-Millville football rivalry is one of the oldest in the nation. This Thanksgiving was their 150th meeting.



The oldest house in New Jersey is the Nothnegle Cabin in Gibbstown. Built in 1638 by Finnisle Settlero, it was inhabited until 1918 when it was put up for sale. Lower Swedish Cabin in Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania was built between 1640 and 1650 and remained a private residence until 1937. It was listed on the National Registry of Historical Places in 1980. The only remaining building from a settlement in Delaware is the Block House of Haaran's Creek. Attacked by the North American Indians in 1671, it was then commanded by the British Army during the Revolutionary War. Virginia claims the Jamestown Church as the oldest building in that state. (Information from Internet)

Icona Resorts is planning to build a Victorian version of the Grand Hotel that made the shore an international destination more than a century ago. The seven-story 108 room version would be built on Beach Avenue across the street from the Cape May Convention Hall and four blocks from the elegant Congress Hall Hotel in Cape May. The newly planned hotel is estimated to cost \$100 million. Icona is currently awaiting approval of the Cape May's Planning Board, Zoning Board and Historical Preservation Commission. (AC Press, November 7, 2021.)

LETTERS FROM FORMER MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD (CONTINUED FROM PG 1)

“At the time, I was stationed on the Zinnia, a buoy tender,” **Rod M.** recalls. “We were involved in Aids to Navigation which included taking care of the buoys and at times, delivering mail and other supplies to the men on the lighthouses out in the Delaware Bay. Needless to say, the guys were always happy to see us.”

“Very memorable,” **Tom S.** states. “I served on Eldred Rock in Alaska and we had some truly memorable experiences. No indoor plumbing after the sewage outfalls froze, cooking our own meals, wind going from 0 – 80 mph within 30 minutes, cleaning sea spray off the light tower windows 90’ in the air during the 80 mph blows, trying to work on electronics ourselves with directions from the ET’s coming to us over the radio, keeping the generators on line, etc. I understand the light was automated shortly after I left. BUT we all made the best of it.”

“I was stationed at Faulkner Island Lighthouse in Long Island Sound for my final 2 months,” wrote **Marvin W.** “It was quite an experience; I wish I could have stayed longer to enjoy swimming, fishing and relaxing. Quite a change after 30 months of 95’ boat duty. There was a 13 room house where we stayed on Faulkner Island and the fog horn was attached to the outside wall of my bedroom. I had a heck of a time getting some sleep until I got use to it. Then I would wake up when they shut the horn off.”

Tom W. tells about being stationed on Matinicus Rock which is located off the coast of Rockland, Maine. “I would walk down to the boat house early in the morning, as the lobstermen were going out and I would wave a bushel basket. When they came back in the evening they would stop by and drop off the small lobsters they wouldn’t be able to sell. It kills me to pay the going rate today. One morning we were awakened by gun fire. I quickly ran up to the tower where I could see what was happening. I suspect someone was caught pulling the wrong lobster pots. These Mainers were very possessive of their lobsters.”

And last but certainly not least, our organization President, **Angelo R.** the last lighthouse keeper on Harbor of Refuge in the Delaware Bay, who shares: “Living on the lighthouse was quite an adventure. We fished a lot during the summer and sold some of the fish to a fish market in Lewes, DE. Getting off and on the lighthouse was also quite memorable as we were picked up and dropped off by a helicopter lowering a basket. Those long, winter nights were boring but we managed to keep busy. My most memorable moment while on duty was on Christmas Eve when I found out I was going to become a father. Stationed on “Harbor” was truly a rewarding experience for me that I will remember for the rest of my life.” (NOTE: Angelo has preserved his memories by having a tattoo of “Harbor” on his upper arm.)



(Editor's note: Thanks to Bob Lamb for sharing these letters with me. Also thanks to all the US Coast Guard's men not only for their service but for sharing some of their memorable moments while serving on lighthouses, lightships and light stations. These letters certainly have provided an interesting read.)

WORLD'S LARGEST CRUISE SHIPS – THINK WARM



The **Symphony of the Seas** is the world's largest and newest cruise ship sporting a length of 1,188'. This ship, built in 2018, has 16 decks, 22 restaurants, 4 pools and 2,759 cabins. It has a maximum capacity of 6,680 passengers and a crew of 2,200. Containing a full size basketball court and an ice skating rink, it also features decks lined with thousands of tropical plants making the passengers feel that they are sailing on a large island. The Symphony is 98' longer than the largest military ship ever built in the United States.



The **Harmony of the Seas**, built in France in 2016, is also 1,188' in length. This ship has a total of 18 decks, (16 for guests), 24 elevators, 2,745 staterooms and an international crew of 2,200. It has the largest waterslide at sea, a high flying zip-line, a Royal Theater that presents Broadway shows and a stroll-through Central Park. The Harmony's maiden voyage took place May 29, 2016 in the Mediterranean Sea. Having a maximum capacity of 6,697 passengers, it sails out of Fort Lauderdale, Florida.



Allure of the Seas, although not an exact duplicate of its sister ship the Oasis of the Seas, they share some of the same features. The Allure, once the largest passenger ship afloat, is 1,187' long, was built in 2010 and refurbished in 2015. The maximum capacity of the Allure is 6,780 passengers with a crew of 2,100. It sports 16 decks, a 2 deck dance hall, an ice skating rink and 7 distinct "neighborhoods". The Allure even offers a Starbucks coffee shop. Its home port is Port Everglades, Florida.

Quantum of the Seas built in 2014, is a mere 1,141', has 15 decks and a maximum capacity of 4,180 passengers featuring connecting staterooms designed for families and friends. It offers the first skydiving experience at sea, has a glass observation pool and the largest indoor sports and entertainment complex on the sea. A special feature is an awe inspiring experience where guests can experience a simulated space journey taking them 300' in the air. The Quantum also has the first bumper car and roller skating offerings at sea. Its home port is Cape Liberty in Bayonne, New Jersey.



The **Disney Cruise Line** is the only cruise line to have 5 captains: the real captain plus Captain Mickey, Captain Minnie, Captain Hook and Captain Jack Sparrow. These ships are 964' in length, longer than the Main Street, USA at the Magic Kingdom in Florida. Beginning to build their fleet of cruise ships in 2011, Disney's ships feature 14 decks and have a capacity of 4,000 passengers. The Walt Disney Theater features first run feature films, the only cruise line to do so. They are also the first cruise line to receive permission from the coast guard to have yellow lifeboats enabling them to keep the theme of the ship. Their horn signal is the first 7 notes of "When You wish Upon A Star". Another special feature is the "Pirates Of the Caribbean" spectacular pyrotechnic display.

SEASONAL TRIVIA

Why is Thanksgiving Celebrated with Turkey? Turkey has become the traditional Thanksgiving fare because at one time it was a rare treat. During the 1830s, an 8 – 10 pound bird cost a day’s wages. Even though turkeys are affordable today, they still remain a celebratory symbol of bounty. Astronauts, Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin ate roast turkey in foil packets for their first meal on the Moon.

What is the Winter Solstice? The winter solstice is the day with the fewest hours of sunlight during the entire year. In the Northern Hemisphere, it always occurs around December 21 or 22. In the Southern Hemisphere, it is around June 20 or 21. The word solstice comes from the Latin for “sun” and “to stand still.”

New Year’s Traditions From Around the World. Many New Year’s traditions that we take for granted actually date back to ancient times. In ancient Thailand, guns were fired to frighten off demons. The early American colonists shot pistols into the air. Today the North Americans sound sirens and blow party horns to bid the old year farewell.

Some New Year’s traditions surround food and drink. In Spain there is the tradition of eating 12 grapes (one for each month) at midnight. In Holland, toasts are made with hot, spiced wine. Wassail, a punch like drink meaning “good health” is served in some parts of England.

The dawn of a new year is an opportune time to take stock of your life. Jews who observe Rosh Hashanah make time for personal introspection and prayer, as well as visiting graves. Christian churches hold “watch-night” services, a custom that began in 1770 at Old St. George’s Methodist Church in Philadelphia. The practice of making New Year’s resolutions is said to have begun with the Babylonians as early as 2600 BC. This is another way to reflect on the past and plan ahead.

(Folklore, Fun Facts, and Traditions, 2020.)

