



The Bay Run



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

Volume 44 Issue 30
Winter 2025

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

EAST POINT PADLOCKED

Nancy Patterson, President of the Maurice River Historical Society, had planned a 175th birthday celebration for East Point, New Jersey's second-oldest lighthouse. Sadly, she found that, instead of a celebration, she was busy packing up the gift shop and the many donated items inside the lighthouse to remove to storage sheds in the area. Why? Because the Department of Environmental Protection of the State of New Jersey, had made their final decision to padlock the lighthouse. Patterson and other members of the Maurice River Historical Society had until 10:30 that night to get out. No events were allowed on the grounds; anyone participating in an event there would be fined.

Historical records date the lighthouse's beginning back to 1849 on land once known as Haystack Island. A pair of local brick-laying brothers built the Cape Cod-style structure. The tower light became still in 1941; the State of New Jersey assumed responsibility for the building by the 1950s.

In the 1970s, the Maurice River Historical society saved the building from demolition. Through its stewardship, the society led a \$650,000 restoration completed in 2017, helping secure funding from the New Jersey Historic Trust Fund and the US Department of Transportation.

Under the leadership of Ms. Patterson-Tidy, her husband and the Maurice River group, East Point Lighthouse has been taken from an abandoned, empty, burned-out shell with no light, no cupola nor roof, to the beautifully restored, fully furnished, active lighthouse that once was. It faithfully served the public, not only as an active lighthouse/navigational aid (served by the USCG) but also a vital part of the southern Bayshore community and the State of New Jersey.

A notice was received announcing an annual fee the Society will have to pay to the DEP along with the full responsibility to pay all the costs of maintaining the lighthouse (*Continued on Page 7*)



In This Issue:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 - A Beam from the President's Desk | 6 - Organizational Information & Did You Know? |
| 3 - From the Log of the Chairman of the Board | 7 - Featured Article (<i>Continued</i>) & Fred Ruddick's Obituary |
| 4 - Continued from Page 3 | 8 - Carole Reily's "Back in the Day" & |
| 5 - Lighthouse Challenge | Oyster Capital of the World |

Angelo S. Rigazio, Jr.



Hello from snowy North Cape May, New Jersey. We are constantly told we live in the Cape May Bubble as most storms pass by us. I believe this storm has popped that bubble. It is predicted we will have between 8 to 12 inches of accumulated snow before the storm moves on. I grew up in western Massachusetts, so snow was a normal part of my winters. Not so true now that I have retired, and I can no longer shovel the snow off the sidewalks and driveway.

We hope you had a healthy safe holiday this year and for those members who were not feeling well, we hope you are feeling better each day. Our Christmas holiday is behind us now and it’s time to put the decorations away for another year. We spent Christmas day with our daughter Roxanne, Son-in-Law Matt and grandchildren Bella and Liam. We also had a great Executive Board meeting combining Christmas with a get together with Maxine and Rod Mulligan, Kelly Mulligan and Mary Ellen Walker.

We have some meeting ideas planned for 2025, and you will find that information in upcoming Newsletters, on our website and on the Facebook page “Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers and Friends Association”. We hope you can join us at the winter meeting on Saturday, January 25 at 11:00 AM at 1600 Delaware Ave., Cape May, NJ. It’s going to be an informative meeting with speakers Mark Allen and Gretchen Wilman. So, until next time, keep the lights shining! *Angelo*

THE BAY RUN is the official publication of The Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers and Friends Association, Inc. and is published quarterly throughout the year. A subscription to the newsletter is included with the cost of membership, Annual Membership dues are \$25.00 for the calendar year beginning March 1st. Back issues are usually available for members joining mid-year. Materials are copyrighted and may not be reproduced without permission of the DBLHKFA, Inc.

For Newsletter ideas, Contact

DBLHKFA c/o Maxine Mulligan

1049 Simca Terrace, Vineland, New Jersey 08360

Email: Memax1@juno.com

Board of Directors

Rod Mulligan, Katie Moser,
and MaryEllen Walker

DBLHKFA, Inc. Officers and Directors

President.....	Angelo S. Rigazio, Jr.	Sunshine/Hospitality	Katie Moser
Vice President Pro Tem.....	Rod Mulligan	Publicity	Dolores Dunn
Chairman of the Board.....	Rod Mulligan	Newsletter.....	Maxine Mulligan
Treasurer	Maxine Mulligan	Webmaster	Kelly Mulligan
Secretary	Darlene Rigazio	Membership.....	Mary Ellen Walker

Phone Numbers and Email Addresses

A. Rigazio- (609) 408-6692 • Keeperang54@yahoo.com

R & M Mulligan-(856) 691-8224 • Memax1@juno.com

Katie Moser-(215) 884-8548 • KatieMos@aol.com

K. Mulligan-(856) 691-8224 • Kellys.light.house@gmail.com

D. Rigazio- (609) 408-6692 • Darlenej50@yahoo.com

Mary Ellen Walker - (856) 447-3158

*The Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers and Friends Association, Inc. (DBLHKFA)
is a 501(c)(3) non-profit preservation and educational organization.*

FROM THE LOG OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD – MEETING SEPTEMBER 14, 2024

by Rod Mulligan

After our fall meeting at the Bay Shore Center and a delicious lunch prepared by the crew at the Oyster Cracker, we had an interesting presentation by Rachel Rodgers Dolhanczyk regarding the “Tidal Wave” in this area in 1950. A book has been written recently relating the “Appalachian Storm” that took place in that area in November of 1950. The information for the book was told to the researchers by the surviving residents of that time; researched and written down...enabling us to have an oral history of this event.

The Great Appalachian Storm of 1950

The storm was a complete surprise since there was no warning. As a result of this storm, there were 383 deaths and 4,000 people were left homeless. The storm ravaged homes from New Jersey to Maine. Rachel explained the difference between a tidal wave and a tsunami. A tidal wave is caused by gravitational interaction between the earth, moon and sun, a perfect or imperfect combination of the elements. A tsunami is caused by earthquakes.

The worst affected of Cumberland’s Bay shore communities were Thompsons Beach and Moores Beach. The area of downtown Port Norris, Shellpile, Bivalve, East Point and areas along the Maurice River were also affected. The story is told regarding one couple, still in bed at the time, heard water crashing through their front door and struggled to get away. Unable to start their flooded car, they tied ropes around themselves and climbed onto a garage roof which floated away and later broke dumping them into the frigid water. Another story related involved a young mother holding her infant child above her head to wade through the water chest high at the time. These people were all rescued by boat. Although they were lucky enough to survive, more than 30 others in New Jersey including at least 14 dead or missing and presumed dead weren’t as lucky.

In Fortescue, the Johnson Hotel and Sea Gull restaurant were destroyed. An old boardwalk on the beachfront at least as early as 1911, was smashed to bits. In these and other bayside villages south of Millville, countless numbers of cars were left underwater, and hundreds of summer cottages were destroyed or simply floated away after being torn from their footings. Some of the homes were rescued and towed to various areas where they were then referred to as storm houses.



Lunch on the wharfs



President Rigazio thanks our guest speaker



Listening to the speaker

LIGHTHOUSE CHALLENGE

Another Challenge; another interesting year. This year, due to the closing of East Point Lighthouse, our organization set up at the Leechester Community Hall. As in other years, there were over 2,000 visitors, some from various states and even other countries. We met challengers from Florida, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Arizona, many from New Jersey and even one couple from England. One lady accepted a marriage proposal while touring the grounds at East Point. These visitors were all sociable and anxious to share stories from their home states. It was truly an enjoyable, educational weekend. Thanks to all who volunteered.



Members Terri & Steven Rhoades



Member Mary Ellen Walker selling merchandise



Customers lining up for stamp

ORGANIZATION – EVENT CALENDAR

SAVE THE DATES – Mark Your Calendars:

Saturday, January 25, 2025 (inclement weather date, Saturday, February 1) Winter meeting scheduled Nature Center of Cape May. **Itinerary:** - **11 AM** = Meeting; **12 Noon** = Lunch (brown bag); **1 PM** Guest speaker, Mark Allen will make a presentation about the history, economy and culture of Cape May Harbor. He will be followed by the Sanctuary Director of the Nature Center, Gretchen Wilman who will present information about the ecology and challenges faced by the harbor including the issue with abandoned vessels as well as sharing some of the opportunities afforded by the Center.

The Nature Center is located at 1600 Delaware Avenue in Cape May, NJ 08204, and is situated on the south rim of Cape May Harbor immediately adjacent to the Coast Guard Training Center. We look forward to seeing all of you; bring a friend; all are welcome.

The following notice was recently received from the New Jersey Lighthouse Society:

It is with deep sadness that the New Jersey Lighthouse Society announces that it has adopted a resolution to dissolve and cease operations effective December 31, 2024. Due to declining membership, increasing operation costs and insufficient candidates for annual election, the Board of Officers and Directors did not see a way forward to carry on the goals and missions of the society without sufficient volunteerism. We are continuing all planned activities for the remainder of 2024. A Dissolution Committee has been formed to fulfill the necessary legal and financial steps to close a non-profit New Jersey Corporation. In accordance with Article IX of the New Jersey Light House Society constitution, remaining funds in the treasurer and assets or properties belonging to the Society at the time of dissolution shall be given to other non-profit lighthouse groups.

We are proud of all our accomplishments throughout the last 34 years fulfilling our goals and missions including:

Supporting and promoting restoration and public awareness of all lighthouses, lightships and light stations with our emphasis on New Jersey lighthouses –

Education, information and stimulating interest in and appreciation for lighthouses and their history –

Preserving, displaying, acquiring and making available for educational purposes information and memorabilia pertaining to lighthouses and the maritime history of New Jersey - It is with deep sadness that we receive this information and forward it to our members.

DID YOU KNOW?



There are 219 covered bridges in Pennsylvania, the most in the United States.



The Delaware River Bridge was later named the Ben Franklin Bridge in 1956.



The ancient Egyptians invented the 365 days a year calendar to predict the yearly flooding of the Nile River. The Nile is the longest river in the world.



The Suez Canal is one of the world's most important waterways. It connects the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea reducing the maritime journey between Europe & Asia.



Ollie, Shelley and the twins would like to take this opportunity to wish all our readers a very Happy New Year; may the year 2025 be prosperous, happy and healthy.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my friends for the cards, phone calls, visits, flowers, fruit baskets, etc. during my recent confinement. We are all hoping for a better year in 2025.

EAST POINT PADLOCKED

Continued from Page 1

as well as the costs of offering it to the public. There will be a new lighthouse management lease for which they will have to compete. The DEP hasn't restored or maintained the lighthouse for fifty plus years. The Maurice River Historical Society must pay the DEP for the privilege of taking care of the lighthouse.

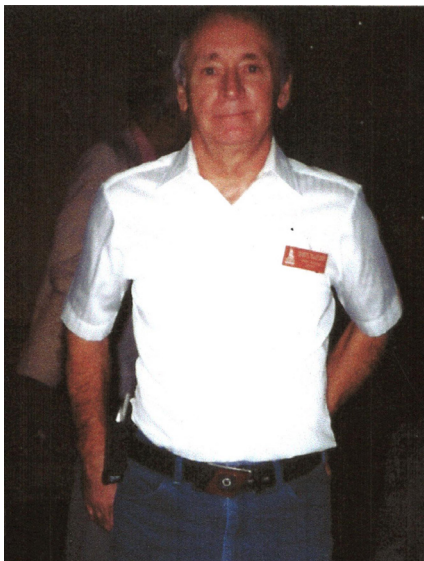
The DEP is extremely neglectful in taking care of the historic sites in New Jersey; these sites have ended up on the Preservation's 10 Most Endangered lists in the last 5 years. The Head of the DEP claimed during a visit to East Point last spring that his job was to acquire habitats for species like snakes. Other states have separate divisions that oversee their state parks and historic sites.

Aren't these departments supposed to PROTECT the states historic sites, not allow them to go to ruin. With no electric, the lighthouse sump pumps won't work pumping out the basement after a storm nor will the dehumidifiers go on to dry out the humidity that will accumulate in the walls. What will eventually happen to East Point? Will it just fade into the sands of time along with so many of the other historical sites in our state? Hopefully both sides in this disagreement will be able to come to a mutual agreement that is beneficial to all those concerned AND EAST POINT WILL BE ALLOWED TO REOPEN.

UPDATE: On a recent visit to East Point, it was noticed that mold was forming in various areas due to the dampness; erosion keeps getting worse; the lighthouse looks abandoned. The light is out; all is dark since the DEP never notified the coast guard. The light cannot be fixed without access to the oil house where the electrical panel is located. This is all unacceptable. As an active lighthouse/active navigational aid, East Point is part of the federal transportation system.

As in the mythological story of Pandora's box, all the bad things were allowed to escape from the box but HOPE remained and that is what we have – HOPE that all will turn out well.

FREDERICK EDWARD RUDDICK OBITUARY



A former member of the US Coast Guard, a lighthouse keeper on Ship John Shoal in the Delaware Bay and a member of the Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers and Friends Assoc., Fred was a very dedicated and hardworking man. In his spare time, he enjoyed many activities, such as gardening, wood working, playing guitar, singing, roller skating and enjoying time with his family. Another favorite pastime was building replicates of lighthouses including Ship John Shoal and other Delaware Bay lights. He met his wife of 43 years, Martha Lee (Endicott) Ruddick at Young's Skate Center. Fred is preceded in death by his parents Frederick and Helen Ruddick. As a child, Fred enjoyed going to Cape May, NJ with his mother and sister. This is where his love for the sea began. A member of the United States Coast Guard from 1960-1964; he was stationed at Ship John Shoal in the Delaware Bay from 1962-1964. Later in life he became a member of The Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers and Friends Association; and was also a member of The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary for 10 years.

Fred worked on boats for most of his life and was employed as an electrician at Egg Harbor Yachts; he retired from Post Marine Company. Due to his love of fishing and his love of the sea, these interests were passed on to his children when they were very young. Another favorite pastime was playing the guitar and singing; he was self-taught and had a beautiful voice.

Fred was a family man; he enjoyed being with the family and they were always welcome into the home. A modest man who enjoyed and lived a great life, he was loved by many and will be missed by all.

If you would like to make a donation in honor of Frederick E. Ruddick Sr. please send donations to: Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers and Friends Association. c/o Maxine Mulligan, Treasurer, 1049 Simca Terrace, Vineland, NJ 08360 or go on our website: <https://delawarebaylighthousekeeper-friend.org>

BACK IN THE DAY

August 2002 newsletter by Carol Reily

(NOTE: It has been suggested that I use some of our founder and former president, Carol Reily's memories in the current newsletters so – ENJOY!)



The Lightship Nantucket (CLV-112), the largest lightship ever built in the United States, is now owned by the National Lighthouse Museum in New York. The Nantucket is one of just a few lightships left in existence. They need to be preserved.



When you purchase an 8 oz. glass bottle of Coca Cola in New Jersey it will feature the state's Barnegat Lighthouse as part of a promotion to raise money for the Shore Partnership, a group that lobbies state and national politicians on beach protection.



The Danbury Mint has reproduced a cold-porcelain replica of Harbor of Refuge Lighthouse off the coast of Lewes, DE. It is priced at \$39 plus \$5 for shipping.



Are you collecting the new state quarters? If so, you'll like Maine's picturesque Pemaquid Point Lighthouse that appears as the winning design for that state's 2003 quarter. It is due to be issued by the US Mint in May of 2003. At last...a lighthouse quarter!



Last summer, the Lighthouse Maintenance Team painted Miah Maull Lighthouse a bright red.

THE “ OYSTER CAPITAL OF THE WORLD”

At the turn of the last century, this nickname for the Maurice River Cove area of the Delaware Bay and its ports of Bivalve and Maurice River near the river's mouth was no exaggeration. Since pre-Columbian times, American Indians in the area were utilizing the oyster as a food source. Early European settlers followed suit, and by the 18th century, oysters were being cultivated in the Delaware Bay, regulated by the government and became a popular street food in major cities like Philadelphia.

Today, standing on one of the old piers in the aptly named town of Bivalve—now home to only a handful of permanent residents—one can only imagine what life must have become like here during the first half of the 20th century.

Undertaking a major reconstruction and expansion of the original 1880 structures built on the site, the Central Railroad Company in 1904 constructed the two-story shipping sheds seen in Bivalve today, and subsequently, added on to the sheds and wharves to accommodate the booming Delaware Bay oyster industry as it continued to grow through the 1920s.

The wharves accommodated dockage for hundreds of schooners and a ferry the loading of tons of oysters into freight cars for transport to markets in Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York and beyond; and a passenger terminal for the railroad and trolley lines bringing in great numbers of workers from throughout southern New Jersey.

The oyster industry reached its peak during the 1920s, when some 67 boxcar-loads of oysters left the area every day of the harvesting season shipping about 7,000 carloads of oysters annually. In 1929, New Jersey produced one-third of the total output of oysters in the United States.