



THE OVERFALLS BEACON

The Newsletter of The Overfalls Maritime Museum Foundation

Volume 3 Issue 4

Winter 2005

\$275,000 Save America's Treasures Grant Awarded to OMMF

The U.S. National Park Service has awarded \$275,000 in dollar-for-dollar matching funds from the Save America's Treasures program to support repair of the Overfalls Lightship's damaged hull ribs and reinforcement of the hull. The Overfalls grant application was one of 61 chosen nationwide and the only Delaware project to be awarded funds this year.

Overfalls president Dave Bernheisel said, " We have always stated that ours is a ship with great national significance and with this grant the National Park Service makes that statement as well. With the grant and the \$275,000 in matching funds which we'll raise in the next year, we will be able to fully honor the service of the men who served on our ship. As they risked their lives to keep the waterways open and guide mariners to safe harbor, it is fitting that we make their legacy a permanent and sustainable museum. Just as the lightship sailors answered a call to duty years ago, our foundation members, with the support of the Park Service, are answering the call to save their ship for all ages. Now we can move into the projects that will do for the hull what over 7000 hours of our Dirty Hands Gang's labor has done for the rest of the ship."

The Capital Campaign Committee is launching a two-year major capital campaign to raise the matching \$275,000. Some exciting initiatives are in the planning stages and will be announced soon. The resulting \$550,000 will fund activities, led by project coordinator Bill Reader, to reinforce the hull, build the bulkheads, install pilings, lift the ship, and place it in a permanent cradle. As soon as the permitting is completed through DNREC and the Army Corps of Engineers, the "Big Lift" projects will begin!

Elaine Simmerman



Dave Bernheisel presented departing board members, Denise Jackson, Jack Leshner, and Elaine Simmerman with Certificates of Appreciation at the October monthly meeting.

You are invited !

The Overfalls Maritime
Museum Foundation's
Fifth Annual Holiday Party

Friday, December 9, 7:00 p.m.

The Inn at Canal Square
Conference Room
On the Canalfront in Lewes

Bring your favorite hors d'oeuvre or
finger food

Drinks will be provided

For information, please call Helen
Schneobelen 645-8805

**Come celebrate the
season with us!**

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Jon Joyce, Director and Historian
Joan Reader, Director and Events
John Kyritsis, Director and Special Projects
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Ship Guides Plan for Changes

Many exciting changes are in store for the Ship Guides! We are looking for a 'few good people' to join our group. A task force of Bob Humes, Pat Leshner, Penny Long, John and Evelyn Krysitis, and Bill and Silvia Ritchie will be working hard to recruit as well as teach necessary skills as we develop the expansion of our service. We also hope you will enjoy an original play we will offer during the January 2006 Meeting. It's certain to be up for an Academy Award.

Volunteer Hours Count:

5,106 Hours! That's the number of volunteer hours this year through September 30. Each hour is important and our thanks go to every one of our volunteers.

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Dave Bernheisel, President

The annual meeting saw the election of three new members to replace those retiring from your board. In the election of officers at the next board meeting, I was given the helm of the Foundation—at a time when we are well positioned and moving with great momentum. To maintain this, your board and operating committees will concentrate on seven major goals or principles in the coming year:

- **Maintain momentum and good will in the community.** Our past progress was gained by much hard work by many people over six years. This effort generated strong community support and that support is vital to our continued progress.
- **Strengthen the operating committees.** If you are not active in the Foundation, you will probably be asked to serve on a committee. Better yet, don't wait to be asked, contact me and I will get you on a committee right away.
- **Improve computer and manual procedures.** We will bring our computer systems for membership and finance closer together and tighten the manual procedures in order to serve you better.
- **Increase membership.** Membership will grow from the low 300s to over 400 with a 90% retention rate.
- **Move toward National Historic Landmark status.** We seek the prestigious NHL designation for the ship. Our nomination will gain the support of the National Park Service staff in Washington.
- **Match our \$275,000 grant.** We will completely meet the match for the Save America's Treasures grant.
- **Initiate the "Big Lift".** The project to get the ship up out of the saltwater will be underway with significant progress.

The seven items above are most ambitious. We can do it the same way we have made all of our progress so far...with your support. I look forward to another outstanding year.

Dave

VIEW FROM THE STERN

Joan Thorsen, Overfalls Historian

Freddy Hudson—Early Overfalls Restorer

Freddy Hudson has maintained the buildings and grounds of the Historical Society for over 30 years. Elaine Simmerman interviewed him on a sunny day in June 2005. Freddy has wonderful memories of the things that he did for the Overfalls when it was first brought into Lewes and shares some of his thoughts with us.

The Lewes Historical Society obtained the Lightship LV-118 in November 1972. It was towed from Curtis Bay in Baltimore Md to Bowers Beach, and then towed by launch from there into Lewes in October 1973. At that time it was named “Boston” and it remained tied up at the city dock for two years.

In 1976 Freddy used the ship’s original heavy, large nylon rope to pull the lightship backwards down the canal and back it into its slip. He used the rear windlass to help get the power to do this. He said he had to pull the lightship out a little bit because they didn’t dig the slip quite right.

While it was still at the city dock, Freddy painted over the name “Boston” on the ship. Tracing around large letters he made from 1/4” plywood, Freddy stood on an eight-foot ladder on a float next to the ship and changed the name by painting the name “Overfalls” in big white letters on each side of the ship. He chalked around his sample letters and used oil-based paint and a brush. Over the years he painted the ship red two times. Once a 12 year old boy, Brian Hatter, helped him. Brian stepped backwards and stepped right off the float and fell into the water.

Freddy is still working to keep the Historical Society complex in good condition, and also contributing his excellent ideas for the restoration of the Overfalls.

From the editor: *Jon Joyce will be taking over the job of Overfalls Historian. He is intrigued with the history of the ship and will add a new dimension to the job. Joan Thorsen is retiring after five years on the job. We have all learned much about the history of our ship from Joan’s enjoyable articles and thank her for a job well done.*

OUR FORMER TREASURER WRITES

Volunteering with you folks to help restore the Big Red Lightship has been quite rewarding. My various experiences not only as your treasurer, but committee(s) member, ship guide, dirty hands gang, fundraising efforts and the parties have meant a great deal to me. The greatest experience, however, is the opportunity to meet and make new friends. Thanks to Everyone! All of you members participate through your dues, your special contributions, your many hours of volunteering with such good-natured spirit. I would like to single out two of you for my own personal Thanks! For a job that continues to be well done.

Ruth Helm, who records all the minutes for our Board meetings and monthly membership meetings. She does all this without a whimper. I believe I was her worst pest.

Chuck Oakes who guards Big Red for us all. He’s a great keeper of the Ship. We couldn’t do nearly as well without him and his unselfish spirit.

Sincerely,

Jack Leshner



Every Saturday during this past summer, T. Bayko, one of our new young members, enthusiastically gave an accurately detailed tour of the ship to visitors. He and a visitor completed this tour in the wheelhouse.

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Membership Renewal Time

It's time for renewal! Very soon you will receive our letter providing you with updated membership information, along with the membership application form. Please look over the form completely, because there are some new choices in the way you would like us to keep you informed of events, and also new volunteer opportunities for you to select.

A membership for a friend of yours would be a unique gift. We can send you additional application forms or make a photocopy of the blank form you have, fill it out and return it along with your own renewal.

Thank you. We love your support. It's your Lightship—and it continues to make history today!

Jack Leshner, Membership Chair

Mark Your Calendar

December 9—Christmas Party—7-9 pm
Inn at Canal Square—Bring an appetizer to share

January 13, 7:30 pm. Meeting at St. Peters. Mike DiPaolo, Chair of the Lewes 375th Anniversary Celebration will speak.

February 10, 7:30 pm. Meeting at St. Peters, Jonathan Schafner, Manager of Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge, will speak.

February 28 — Mardi Gras Parade and Party at Irish Eyes on the canal in Lewes.