



THE OVERFALLS BEACON

The Newsletter of The Overfalls Maritime Museum Foundation

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Spring 2007

Overfalls Goes To Sea

The Overfalls Ship will go to sea once again, "Well Maybe!" The primary goal of the OMMF is to Save the Lightship Overfalls. The Ship's hull below the waterline has been untouched by maintenance for more than 33 years. Without access to the hull for repair and maintenance, the Ship will inevitably disintegrate and be lost for future generations to enjoy. We have known this for years but about a month ago it became much more evident as corrosion made a small hole below the waterline. While we can patch that hole, it did increase the sense of urgency to get on with permanent repairs.

After a competitive bidding process administered by Lewes City Manager Tom Wontorek, the Foundation hired Duffield Associates to study options for saving the hull and to do the engineering design work necessary to implement the selected option. We met with Duffield in early March to review the options they developed and select the best based on cost, risk to the ship, esthetics and long term sustainability. Duffield is now in the detail design phase of the project.

The option we chose entails towing the Ship to a shipyard on the Maurice River in Dorchester, New Jersey, about 35 miles up river from Lewes. The Ship will be hauled out of the water on a marine railway and the shipyard will repair or replace the entire hull up to the water line, paint and make any other necessary repairs. A critical and high priority step, currently underway, is obtaining a permit from the U.S. Coast Guard to allow the Ship to be towed.

While the Ship is at the shipyard, we will be constructing a three sided slip at the current location, and performing dredging which will allow the Ship to be floating at all times. We will also be constructing a new, user friendly, public entrance for the Ship.

We anticipate the major work starting in four to nine months, as soon as all necessary permits are obtained. But, we do have physical progress already. The anchor that was dropped in the canal when the Ship was backed into her slip 33 years ago was retrieved last month as a first step in this project.



This anchor was dropped into the canal when the Ship was backed into her slip in 1974. Recently lifted, it still has traces of the original paint.

Photo by Barry Simmerman

The exact total cost for the project won't be known until we exercise the competitive bidding process for the construction work on the slip. But, if we can obtain all of the permits needed, this option should be far less expensive than other possible options. Funding will come from our Save America's Treasures grant, DelDOT's Transportation Enhancement Fund, and an aggressive fund-raising campaign.

Bill Reader, Chair, Restoration Committee

April 14th Breakfast Meeting

Our April 14th Breakfast meeting will return to the LHR Restaurant on the canal in Lewes. Mayor Jim Ford will be the speaker, and update us with his perspective on Lewes and the Overfalls. Reservations are a must. Call Joan Thorsen at 645-5189 for tickets which are \$13 a person. See you there!

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Past Newsletters

Back copies of *The Beacon* are available, with a topical index on our web site WWW.OVERFALLS.ORG. Under the "About Us" heading, select "Our Newsletters".

Ship's Store

The Ship's Store, with a great new look last year, will be even better this year with lots of exciting new items. Come and do your gift shopping. For information or to share the fun of working in the store, contact Evelyn Kyritsis at 645-7168.

Trenny Marvil Elliott

June 27, 1938—December 30, 2006

Charter Foundation Member
Hardworking Volunteer
Generous Contributor
Good Friend

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

David Bernheisel, President

Bill Reader's article on the front page of this issue conveys the best news ever carried in *The Beacon*. This project has been the Foundation's top priority from day one. But, in the past we never had sufficient funds to get the attention of firms with the expertise and equipment to do the job.

Last fall, the conditions came together for us and, under the direction of Lewes City Manager Tom Wontorek, we took advantage of those conditions. The engineering study described by Bill gave us new insight into an old problem. Even though it had been discussed from time to time over the years, we had never believed that having the ship floating was a viable option.

Duffield Associates was able to see a way to do it. In addition to being less risk for the ship and esthetically more pleasing, this option will cost far less than any other option that we ever considered. Previously, optimistic estimates had us a million dollars short of the funds needed to finish the project. We won't have precise figures until we obtain the necessary competitive bids, but, with the floating option, our shortfall could be less than half that of previous estimates.

This is good news but the reduced shortfall is still a lot of money. Elaine Simmerman and her Fundraising Committee know they have a major task ahead and are preparing to meet the challenge. While fundraising is always difficult, having the end in sight should work in our favor.

So, as we start the new season, I am more optimistic than I have ever been and that optimism is shared by your Board members and committee chairs. This year's season will have a full slate of our regular activities such as the April breakfast meeting, Dirty Hands Gang work, the Opening Party and ship tours. Plus there will be new activities such as the project with the ship and the Delaware Maritime Hall of Fame induction in October. Since our founding, every year with the Overfalls has been better than the one before. This year will be no exception!

Dave

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Its Time To Renew Your Overfalls Membership for 2007

Mark Your 2007 Calendar

April 14, 8:30 am, at LHR Restaurant, Buffet Breakfast Meeting. Mayor Jim Ford, Speaker. Call Joan @ 645-5189 for tickets

April 17—Dirty Hands Gang—8:00 am on ship—bring a shovel—lunch included.

May 25, 6-9:30 pm at Virden Center. “Fall for the Overfalls” Opening Party and Silent Auction. Call Joan @ 645-9290 or Bonnie @ 645-2140 for tickets.

May 26—Gift Shop Opens and Ship Tours Begin

June 8, 7:30 pm Monthly meeting on board the Overfalls. Dennis Forney, Speaker.

July 4, Lewes Boat Parade

July 13, 7:30 pm. Monthly meeting on board the Overfalls. Wendy Carey, Speaker.

July 21, Overfalls 3rd annual Aquathlon.

Oct 6, Maritime Hall of Fame Inaugural Dinner at Lewes Yacht Club.

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Support the Overfalls Lightship
Purchase Your Rivit for \$250
Call Elaine Simmerman at 302-645-4733
for more information
or send a tax-deductible contribution to
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