



THE OVERFALLS BEACON

The Newsletter of The Overfalls Maritime Museum Foundation

Volume 7 Issue 1

Spring 2009

She's Done!

The last newsletter touted towing the ship to Colonna Shipyard in Norfolk as the most significant event in the Foundation's history. Indeed it was. This issue tops that with the completion of the hull repair!

On December 6th, the dry dock lifted the ship out of the water and the repair started. First, the 40,000 PSI pressure wash took off the marine growth, rust and old paint. Second, the new hull plates were cut, bent to approximate shape, sand blasted and painted (both sides). Third, the Foundation's steel patches installed two years ago were removed and the old hull plates painted. Fourth, the tedious process of installing the new hull plates entailed lifting them into place, welding them across the top, bending them into the final shape and welding them all around. Fifth, the new plates were given two more coats of paint. Finally, 40 big zinc anodes to guard against galvanic corrosion were affixed to the hull below the waterline. This was all completed, tested for leaks and back in the water on March 3rd.

In addition to the major repair, the yard did several other tasks such as:

- Removing the propeller which will be displayed on our grounds.
- Installing an anchor in the hawse hole, and
- Cleaning and painting the ship's tanks and other inaccessible places.



A small section of the hull after pressure wash. Note the Foundation installed patch and small holes revealed when the rust was removed. She got to the shipyard just in the nick of time!

BRING HER HOME!

We can see the finish line...it's within full view. After 10 years of hard work, the ship's interior and exterior have been restored. Like most great projects, at the start many thought it couldn't be done. We've proven the skeptics wrong and have done the darn near impossible.

You've helped get her this far and we hope you'll continue to help. The ship's renovation is paid for and we have more than half the money needed to complete a new berth. We are within \$300,000 of completing the entire project.

The \$300,000 must be raised, or the ship will return to its old berth of mud in the canal this summer. You ask - how can I help? We know money is tight, but please consider a gift to make this new berth happen.

Purchase a rivet, or name part of the ship after yourself or a loved one. Naming opportunities make a wonderful gift for a person who already has everything...and you don't have to feed it or walk it!

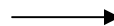
Please, please send what you can and make the dream a reality...let's Bring Her Home!!

You can make a donation online at www.overfalls.org or send a check to: OMMF, BOX 413, Lewes, DE 19958 or contact Elaine Simmerman at 302-645-7377 or Elainesimmerman@earthlink.net.

Back in the water!

She's ready to come home in the spring. More information on the yard work is at WWW.OVERFALLS.ORG.

For 75 more photos of the shipyard work, go to HTTP://PICASAWEB.GOOGLE.COM/OVERFALLS/COLONNA.



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Dirty Hands Gang Award

Congratulations to Bert Long, recipient of the 2008 Dirty Hands Gang Award. Bert is well known for his trips to the top of the mast and the bottom of the bilges.



VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Bob Humes, President



The view from the bridge continues to brighten with each quarter. I visited the ship in February on my way to the Outer Banks (I know, who's dumb enough to go to the Outer Banks in February? – now you know!) and she's in the final stage of her preservation. The article on page #1 describes the process but the quality of work was what impressed me as it was obvious the workers felt honored to be saving an historic ship. She now looks good enough to go back on station and deal with whatever Nor'easters Mother Nature might throw at her, but I'm sure she'll be happy to return to Lewes and resume her current role of teaching others about the exciting, and dangerous times when floating lighthouses guided ships to safe harbor.

For years the Foundation had expressed a sense of urgency about the need to repair the hull before the ship was lost. While we succeeded, Bill Reader reports that we were at the "tipping point". In another year, it probably would have been too late. When the ship was pressure washed and the rust removed, lots of little holes opened in the old hull plate (see the photo on page #1). In another year these would have rusted through creating too many leaks to either patch, isolate, or pump.. The additional cost to deal with the problem would have priced the project beyond the Foundation's ability to raise funds. This is just one more example of the magic in the old red ship that refuses to die.

We are very actively pursuing the \$300K needed to build the bulk headed berth for the ship, applying for grants from as many sources as we can identify, requesting both stimulus and earmark dollars, and even applying for a loan to bridge the gap between funds in-hand and the cost to build the berth. If you know anyone looking for a safe and worthy place to park some money at reasonable interest, please have them contact us.

With everything breaking our way this year, I remain confident that we will be able to complete the project and bring the Lightship Overfalls home to a new and environmentally safe slip where she can float above her former prison of mud.

VIEW FROM THE STERN

Jon Joyce, Historian

ON the eve of the US Bicentennial Celebration, many newspaper articles were written reminding us of our heritage. Not surprisingly, one focus of attention was the Lewes Historical Society's collection of historic houses and the newly acquired Overfalls Lightship. Bonnie Bagett, wrote in the *Delaware Today* magazine, December 1975 issue:

"The most unique thing in the entire collection is the lightship "Overfalls." Donated to the Historical Society by the United States Coast Guard in 1973 with the provision that it be maintained as a museum for a minimum of ten years, it arrived in Lewes amid great enthusiasm complete with a reception featuring "Fish House Punch." One of only four such floating lightship museums in the country, it was moored temporarily at the municipal dock, but by the time this appears should be in its permanent berth a little farther up the canal."

Overfalls Board member, George Elliot recently found 1973 photos of the ship while "cleaning out his desk." Two interesting questions are posed by this photo. First, the photos reveals some changes to the ship that have taken place over the years. Can anyone identify them?



The second issue of interest is the location of the ship when this photograph was taken. Not at the "municipal dock," where the ship later resided when Ms. Bagett's article was written. But where? Buildings in the background are no longer in existence. Note the landmark antenna and a boat ramp visible at the far left of the photo.

Members are invited to write some of the Overfalls history by providing answers to these questions. Send comments to me at jandljoyce@comcast.net, and I will report them in a future issue

Gala Spring Season

Great things are happening with the ship and the event side has its biggest spring ever coming up. We had a most successful and fun Mardi Gras party at Green Turtle, and our thanks for their financial support which will help build the slip. Now, as we look forward the calendar is full. Join us:

- On **March 13**, our own world renown lightship author, Wayne Kirklin, will curtail his travels and give us insight into his years of research (and autograph a book for you).
- The next **Monday (3/16)** we will celebrate St. Paddy's day at the Beseme Restaurant from 5-9 PM with traditional Irish fare, spirits, live entertainment and lots of merriment. Don't forget to wear green!
- On **Saturday (4/18)** at 8:30 AM, Mayor Jim Ford will give us the View from City Hall at our annual breakfast in a new location (Cadbury in Lewes, off Gills Neck Road). The cost is only \$13.00 for their fabulous breakfast buffet with too many items to mention here, but seating is limited so call Madeline (645-0108) or Joan (645-9290) for reservations today.
- The Opening Party is **Friday (5/22)** at the Virden Center. Every year the committee outdoes the fabulous event from the year before. They have already been working for months to ensure that this year will be no exception.

Another Grant Award!

In December, the Foundation received a \$20,000 grant from the Chichester DuPont Foundation which will be used in constructing the ship's permanent berth. This is the third sizable grant that we have received from a DuPont foundation. Our thanks to Chichester DuPont's Gregory Fields. Delaware is fortunate to have such philanthropic organizations dedicated to saving the State's treasures.

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Mark Your Calendar

Mar 13, 7:30pm. Monthly Meeting at St. Peter's. Wayne Kirkland, Lightship researcher and author, speaker. Lighthouses and Liners—topic.

Mar 16, 5-9pm, St Patrick's Day Party at Besame. Share of proceeds go to OMMF.

Apr 18, 8:30am Annual Breakfast Meeting at Cadbury in Lewes, off Gills Neck Road.

May 22, 6-9:00pm Opening Party at Virden Center, save the date, more information will be on the web site and in the next newsletter.

May 23, Ship's Store opens for season, with lots of exciting new merchandise available.

Jun 12, 7:30pm Monthly Meeting on the ship. Joe Booth will give us an update on Legislative Hall.

Jul 4, 2:00pm Independence Day Boat Parade on the canal. If you have a boat enter it, if not watch from the ship (free either way).

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

With the new season, volunteers (the Foundation's power) are needed more than ever. Qualifications are the experience you have and lots of enthusiasm. You will meet the most interesting people in Lewes. Some of the opportunities to support the effort are:

- **Ship's Store** With exciting new products and increased interest in the ship, Evelyn (645-7168) says she will need more help in the store (more customers too).
- **Ship Guides** Everybody in town and all of their friends will want to see the *new* ship, George (645-5071) will need help to keep the ship open enough to show her off.
- **Dirty Hands** Colonna is finished with the ship but Bill (645-9290) says he has more work than ever. Join this group and you could be the next recipient of the coveted Dirty Hands Award!

To find out more about the above, call the person indicated. These are just a start of what it takes to run the Foundation, call Bob (645-4968) to discuss the many other opportunities and how you can play a more active role.