



THE OVERFALLS BEACON

The Newsletter of The Overfalls Maritime Museum Foundation
Volume 7 Issue 4
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The Ship Will Slip In

It has finally started! After a long, tedious process the procurement document to secure a contractor to build the new slip should be advertised in the *Cape Gazette* on December 4th. Bids from prospective contractors are to be due on Santa Claus' run on December 24th and construction should start in February.

This is behind the schedule the Foundation expected earlier. The delay has been due to the lengthy procedural approval required to use the Federal stimulus funds. This is not a condition unique to this project but rather to use of stimulus funds in general.

The new slip will be in the same place as the old. It will include steel bulkheading to stabilize the banks and stop the erosion into the canal. The resultant slip will be 50 feet wide, as was the original before the banks eroded in. Following slip construction, the grounds will be improved to integrate well with the new Canalfront Park. All of this should be completed for the opening of the 2010 season, bringing to closure the project to save and display the ship which has consumed the Foundation for eleven years. It's been a long time but the results will justify the wait.

OMMF's 9th Annual Holiday Party

Friday, December 11th, 7-9 pm

The Inn at Canal Square Conference Room

Bring your favorite finger food to share

Drinks will be provided

For Information Call Joan Reader 645-9290

Come Celebrate the Season with Us!!

Fall Events



Hazell Smith accepts the Delaware Maritime Hall of Fame trophy on behalf of her late husband Otis H. Smith. Presenting the trophy are event co-chairs Ruby Schaeffer (center) and Elaine Simmerman (right). The October event held at the Lewes Yacht Club was a tremendous success. (For complete coverage see WWW.OVERFALLS.ORG).



Linda Dickey presented her painting "Almost Home" depicting the ship's return from Norfolk to Merrill Kagei. Linda donated the painting and 10 numbered prints to the Foundation. The Board determined that the original should be placed with Merrill for safe-keeping for her role in initiating the project to save the ship. Prints are on sale in the Ship's Store.

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Barry Simmerman, Membership
George Elliott, Ship Guides
Charles Oakes, Ship Management
William Reader, Restoration
Evelyn Kyritsis, Ship's Store
Elaine Simmerman, Fundraising
Marsha Davis, Sunshine

Changes on the Board

At the October General Membership meeting four Board members' terms expired. Bob Humes and Mary Ann Malewski were eligible for another term, agreed to serve again, and were re-elected. George Elliott and Barry Simmerman stepped down; Bob Gibson and Pres Lee were elected to fill their seats.

All Officers' terms were expiring, and at the Board meeting, offices were filled as follows:

- President, Bob Humes stepped down and Dave Bernheisel was elected
- Vice President, Joe Stormer stepped down and Tracy Mulveny was elected
- Secretary, Mary Ann Malewski was re-elected
- Treasurer, Jack Leshner was re-elected.

The Foundation is grateful for the service of George and Barry as they leave the Board, as well as of Bob and Joe as they leave their offices. In true Overalls style, we look forward to their continued active participation and contributions.

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Dave Bernheisel, President



I am back at the helm for another go. This will be a “dog watch” (marine speak for only half of the normal tour). My time on the Board (a requirement to be President) will conclude in October 2010, so the watch will change again at that time.

This will be an exciting year. The project to save the ship and put her in a permanent berth will come to a successful conclusion. When we started the project eleven years ago we knew our objectives and the cost (\$1.2 million) but we had no idea of where we would get the money. Lots of folks thought we were crazy, maybe we were. Through Herculean fund raising efforts, we always had enough money to keep going just a little longer. It was a combination of faith, strong community support and that old red ship urging us on. Now the funding is secure and the end is in sight. What a tribute to all who have worked tirelessly against impossible odds!

We are now in our 2010 membership campaign which is the most successful in the Foundation's history. Thank you to all who have already sent in your membership renewal. To those who have not yet gotten to it, remember that our members are the power that drives the Foundation and makes the progress possible.

In the year 2006, the Foundation developed a five-year strategic plan to cover the years 2006-10. The highest priority project in the plan was to save the ship. As that project comes to closure with the end of the planning period, it is the perfect time to develop a new plan. We will do that over the winter and should be able to report on the highlights in the next *Beacon*.

A very important point to keep in mind as we celebrate the saving of the ship is that she will always need our time, attention and resources. She's an historic ship and maintenance is an on-going requirement. While there is no question that she brings magic to the Foundation, we have to keep in mind that it is a two way street.

I look forward to seeing all of you who can make it to the Holiday Party at the Inn at Canal Square.

Dave

VIEW FROM THE STERN

Jon Joyce

DOUBLE JEOPARDY

The principal concern of lightship sailors was the fear of collisions while on station. Some lightship stations were notorious for such disasters; one of the most dangerous was the Cornfield Point Station, which guarded Long Sand Shoal in Long Island Sound. Sandy shoals are treacherous to navigation because ships aground on them are often beaten to pieces by the sea. These seemingly benign shoal structures took a particularly heavy toll on sailing ships because they had no effective means of escaping them. Our LV 118 began its career of service on this Cornfield Point station, serving there from 1939 to 1957 when the station was abandoned. LV 118 avoided collision while in service there; however, one of its predecessors, LV 48, posted at Cornfield Point from 1895 to 1925, holds the record for being the most pummeled lightship in the station's history.

According to Robert G. Bachand in his book, *Northeast Lights*, the first incident occurred on May 30, 1901, as a fog worsened at dusk. By dark, the visibility had deteriorated so greatly that the vessel's steam fog signal, began operation. Just before midnight, the steamer *City of Worcester*, which was slowly making its way up the Sound, suddenly saw the lightship emerging in the fog. Unable to react, the steamer struck the lightship a glancing blow. Incredibly, a mere hour later, a barge in tow struck LV 48 again in almost the exact same spot as the steamer. Luckily, neither collision caused serious damage

Six years later, history repeated itself. Barely an hour into the day of April 12, 1907, the schooner *Rose Miller*, bound for Fisher's Island, hit LV 48 broadside. While the crew was on deck assessing damage, a second schooner, the *Nat Neader*, rammed the lightship on the same side. Remarkably, the two collisions occurred in clear weather with LV 48's lights burning brightly. The official Coast Guard website, U.S. Coast Guard Lightships, does not mention these collisions, but does cite another, a collision on April 16, 1912 with the steamer *Pequannock*. LV 48 experienced other narrow escapes over the next few years before retiring in 1925.

West Marine Helps the Overfalls



Matt Ostendarp, manager of the local West Marine store donates equipment and supplies to be used on the ship by the Dirty Hands Gang. Bill Reader (left) accepted the material for the Foundation, he said that it would be put to good use, and it would stretch his tight budget. He was especially pleased to receive the rope which will be used to restrung the bunks in the seamen's cabins. Ed Rayner, a member of the crew who brought the ship back from Norfolk, wishes that the task had been done a year earlier. When he got in his bunk, it gave way and he wound up on the deck below.

Painting Will Be Significant Fund Raiser



Jack Wiberg, noted maritime artist, donated this original oil on canvas depicting the ship entering the canal on the trip home from the shipyard in Norfolk. It is beautifully framed and ready to take a place of honor in any home. The Foundation will auction it off as a fund raiser at the Opening Party to be held at the Virden Center on the evening of May 26, 2010.

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Mark Your Calendar

Dec. 11, 7-9 pm Holiday Party at the Inn at Canal Square. Bring a dish to share.

Dec. 31, Midnight. Toot your horn on your very own ship!

Jan. 8, 7:30 pm Monthly Meeting at St. Peter's Parish Hall.

Feb. 12, 7:30 pm Monthly Meeting at St. Peter's Parish Hall

Feb. 16, 5:00 pm Mardi Gras Party at Irish Eyes (Lewes). Come for the fun, stay for dinner.

Mar. 12, 7:30 pm Monthly Meeting at St. Peter's Parish Hall

Apr. 10, 8:30 am Annual Breakfast at Cadbury. Mayor Ford will give the view from City Hall

May 28 6:30 pm Opening Party at the Virden Center

Newsletter Distribution Changes

Like many nonprofits, the Foundation is planning to use e-mail to distribute the newsletter. This will both save cost and provide information to the membership in a more timely fashion (cut two weeks from the distribution cycle). Please ensure the Foundation has your correct e-mail address, if there is any doubt, send your address to Cathy58@AOL.com. If e-mail won't work for you, a quick note to the P.O. Box 413 address will ensure that you are not abandoned.

Membership Renewal

The Foundation is in the midst of the 2010 membership campaign. Responses are coming in quickly making this easily the most successful campaign ever.

The Foundation sends its best wishes to all of you for a safe and happy holiday season.