



THE OVERFALLS BEACON

The Newsletter of The Overfalls Maritime Museum Foundation

Volume 4 Issue 3

Autumn 2006

WWW.OVERFALLS.ORG

The foundation has a new web site and it is super. In addition to a great new look, it will have a host of new features to be implemented over the next couple of months. The previous web site served the Foundation well for many years, but this one takes us to a new level.

The most important aspect of the site is its capability to grow in features and sophistication as our needs increase. A few of the features that we anticipate adding in the future are:

- a virtual tour of the ship where a visitor can see layouts of the three decks, and, by selecting a specific spot, see a photo of that spot;
- a “Members Only” section where foundation members will be able to review key material such as minutes of Board of Directors meetings; and
- An area accessible to foundation officers and committee chairs that will allow them to get their information out more quickly to better serve our members.

Madeline Lewis, our web master, and her committee, worked closely with INCLIND, Inc., a web site development company in Georgetown, to make sure the site has all of the capability that we will need for the foreseeable future. The Delaware Tourism Office, the state agency that funded our ship’s brochure, completely funded the new web site.

Did you know that only Finland had women in Lightship crews?

From WWW.FEUERSCHIFFSEITE.DE/STARTGB

Improvements at Ship’s Site

The newly opened Ship’s Store is an attractive addition to the ship’s grounds. This building, previously known as Sylvester’s Bait Shack, was donated to the Foundation by the Lewes City Council. (See Beacon, Summer 2006). A former lieutenant governor and Delaware senator, Gene Bookhammer, the brother of Sylvester Bookhammer who built the Bait Shack, attended a dedication ceremony on August 4th. Mayor Jim Ford and Lewes City Council members Ted Becker and Barbara Vaughn also joined the celebration.

Ed Rayner led the restoration of the building which now offers shirts, hats and other nautical items for sale. Open Thursday through Monday until Columbus Day, and also Coast Day, the store is staffed by thirty volunteers working in three hour shifts.

Along with the reborn Ship’s Store our ship is getting a bright new coat of red paint. A factor that has kept the Dirty Hands Gang from this task in the past has been the inability to reach the hull. This gap was bridged (literally) with the loan of an aerial lift platform from Mike Cassidy of Cassidy Painting in Newport and the gift of an abandoned pontoon boat from Short’s Marine.



Dirty Hands Gang members painting from the aerial lift platform.

THE OVERFALLS BEACON is a publication of The Overfalls Maritime Museum Foundation, a 501 (c)3 non-profit preservation and educational organization. Copyright 2003 by The Overfalls Maritime Museum Foundation. For address changes, contact Trenny Elliott, 645-5071, or Trenny@Verizon.net

The Overfalls Maritime Museum Foundation
P.O. Box 413
Lewes, DE 19958
(302) 644-8050
WWW.OVERFALLS.ORG

David Bernheisel, President
Bob Humes, Vice president
Cathi Bost, Secretary
George Elliott, Treasurer
Polly Magargal, Director and Ship Guides
Jon Joyce, Director and Historian
Joan Reader, Director and Events
John Kyritsis, Director and Special Projects
William Ritchie, Director
Ruth Edwards, Director
Penny Long, Director
Ruth Helm, Recording Secretary
Trenny Elliott, Data Base Administrator
Jack Leshner, Membership
Elaine Simmerman, Fundraising
Charles Oakes, Ship Management
William Reader, Restoration
Helen Schnoebelen, Social
Barry Simmerman, Outreach
Hugh Councill, Photographer
Madeline Lewis, Webmaster
mlewis@overfalls.org
Mary Bernheisel, Editor, The Beacon
bernheisel@juno.com

OMMF Hosts Chamber of Commerce Mixer

OMMF hosted a Chamber of Commerce Mixer aboard the Overfalls the evening of July 20th. About 45 Chamber members enjoyed a tour of the ship, a power point presentation on lightships and the history of the Overfalls, and refreshments, including a seafood lasagna and a tortellini pasta salad, courtesy of La Rosa Negra and Bob Cirelli. Jim Edwards tended bar with Burt Long as a backup. Penny Long, Ruth Helms, and Evelyn Kyritsis made dessert, Elaine Simmerman presented the power point show and gave tours with Merrill Kaegie. Barry Simmerman took pictures and Amy Weist also assisted with the evening. Joan Reader coordinated arrangements for the mixer. Our thanks go to everybody who helped with this event—an important step in telling the Overfalls story to our community.

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

David Bernheisel, President

It has been a long, frustrating time in coming but we are on the verge of beginning the project to stabilize the hull (often referred to as the Big Lift). As *The Beacon* was going to press, the City of Lewes was formally soliciting firms interested in doing the engineering study to identify alternatives and the design work to specify exactly how it will be done.

The design phase will produce the specifications needed to move into the construction phase, when action on the site will be visible. We are anxious to start this as quickly as possible, probably in the late winter. The construction phase will be broken into discrete tasks which will be addressed as funds are available, so you may see the construction phase start and stop multiple times.

At this point, nobody knows the cost of the entire construction phase. But, there is no doubt that it will greatly exceed the funds that we have in hand and those committed through grants (the Save America's Treasures of \$275,000 and Transportation Enhancement of \$200,000). Therefore the Foundation will continue to run its aggressive fund raising campaign because, until the construction phase is completed, our ship is still at risk.

The fund raising campaign will target major donors such as philanthropic foundations and corporations. But, given success with these donors usually hinges on the level of support the project enjoys locally, you can expect to hear our pleas. On page 4 of this issue, Elaine Simmerman explains that a new option in the Tax Code allows a person with an IRA to direct the custodian to send funds directly to a charitable organization with no tax consequences to the donor. For many, this could be a painless way to give the Overfalls a lift.

I look forward to seeing all of you at our annual general membership meeting on October 13th. There we will be able to summarize the last year and give you a preview of the next. Most important, we will get your feedback on how you feel about how your foundation is running.

Dave

VIEW FROM THE STERN

Jon Joyce, Overfalls Historian

HYMN SINGING SAVED SHIP

Engineer's Idea Inspired Exhausted
Crew to Renew Efforts

Special to "The Record."

Lewes, Del., Jan. 30- Among the many tales related by crews of vessels which managed to weather the recent storm none is more thrilling than that of the Winter Quarter Lightship, the men of which, after once abandoning hope, were spurred on to make one more battle for life by Engineer Charles West starting the hymn, "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

The 30-foot house of the vessel was torn away by a big wave, which also injured the captain, and the water soon began to flood the hold. The pumps refused to work and some of the crew had begun to offer prayers, which they believed would be their last, when the notes of the familiar hymn were heard. One after another, the men took up the air, and with renewed courage, patched up the pumps and managed to work them until a revenue cutter hove in sight and towed the disabled ship to port.

Thomas Pratt, cook of the barge Fannie, who was rescued with the other members of the crew by the life-line when the barge went ashore in the bay, died yesterday of pneumonia caused by the exposure. The remains will be sent to his home at Norfolk.

This lightship story was passed to us by Susan Trone from an undated newspaper article. Ms Trone's grandfather, Charles West, served on the Winter Quarter Shoal Lightship which nearly sank in a fierce storm sometime around 1905.

It seems likely that the ship would have been LV-45 which manned the station from 1888-1908. Coast Guard records show that the Winter Quarter Shoal was about 8 1/2 miles from Chincoteague and was manned by lightships until 1961 when a lighted buoy replaced them.

An alternative is that it could have been a Winter Quarter ship serving relief on the Five Fathoms station. Both possibilities have inconsistencies with other 'known' facts, a dilemma historians face constantly.

OUR OPENING PARTY SPONSORS—THANK YOU!

Wilmington Trust Company

The Villages of Five Points

Wal-Mart

John and Sally Freeman

Lewes Printing, Inc.

Bost and Bost LLC

Artisan Electric, Inc.

Williamson Building Corporation

Avon Corp.-Site & General Construction

Lee Ann Wilkinson Group

Design Ideas, Inc.

Russ Palmer Builders, Inc.

Lewes Realty, Inc.

The John Penrose Viriden House B&B

The Comfort Inn

Elegant Statuary Fountains

Bayside Carvings

Harbor Wicker

Brenda B. Jones

RE MAX Realty Group (Steve Cooper)

RE MAX Realty Group (Dick Bryan)

The fabulous 2006 Opening Party was our most successful to date and the largest fund raiser we have had. The support of our sponsors (above) and the work of our party planners (below) made it possible. Thank you!



OMMF
P.O. Box 413
Lewes, DE 19958



PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 605
Seaford, DE 19973

«AddressBlock»

TWO FUND RAISING INITIATIVES

IRAs Can Help Save the Lightship—

A new federal law allows IRA owners to share the wealth of their retirement savings by giving directly to charity—without first counting it as income and paying income tax. Experts estimate heirs will receive less than 25 percent of most IRA assets that pass through estates. In 2006 and 2007 holders of traditional and Roth IRAs who are at least 70.5 years old can make direct charitable transfers up to \$100,000 per year.

Own a Rivit—By donating \$250 to OMMF you can become the sole owner of one of the Lightships rivets, with your name permanently listed on the ships Rivet Log.

All donations matched by state and federal grants. Contact Elaine Simmerman at 302-645-4733 for information on these or other donor options.

Mark Your Calendar

Sept. 8—Closing Party -5 to 7 pm. On the Ship. Bring a dish to share. Beverage provided by the Foundation..

Sept 14-17 “Sail Ops” with Tall Ships. OMMF will have booth at Ferry terminal.

October 13-Annual Business Meeting at St. Peter’s Parish Hall—7:30 pm

November 10-Monthly Meeting– William Ullman, College of Marine Studies, will speak on Groundwater Issues .-7:30 pm.

December 8, Christmas Party—7 - 9 pm. Bring a dish to share—beverage provided

December 31-Greet the New Year at Midnight on the deck of the Overfalls