



THE OVERFALLS BEACON

The Newsletter of the Overfalls Foundation

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Eleven Years of Hard Work and Close Cooperation Brings Success and a Grand Celebration

The Foundation celebrated OverfallsFEST, “We’ve come a long way together!” on September 10th. This was the party to express our appreciation to all of the people who made the goal of saving the ship and putting her into a proper setting a reality.

Everything was perfect. The weather was ideal, the grounds exceeded expectations, and the ship sparkled. The occasion was marked by words of remembrance, drum rolls, a toast to the accomplishments, and finally, an ear-splitting salute by Richard Perez’s Lyle guns.

While the ship and its grounds are perfect, the project is still not quite finished. Left to do is to create a little over 6,000 square feet of wetlands to mitigate the area filled to create the ship’s beautiful setting. We will do this in the spring of 2011 on land near the University provided by the City of Lewes . The original permit for slip construction called for creating the wetlands on site. This would have made virtually all of the land in the photo above, as well as the land to the left which houses the Hall of Fame monument, wetlands.

Thanks to Chet Poslusny for photos for this issue.



The way we look now and will look forever



Lest we forget, we can’t let this happen again!

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The Foundation's New Name

The Foundation's new name and mission statement are now official. The idea came out of the management retreat last February and it took the intervening months to work out the implementation details. The name was shortened from "Overfalls Maritime Museum Foundation" to "Overfalls Foundation". It was felt that the shorter name was less cumbersome and it was the name by which the public knew the Foundation.

The mission statement was also changed to tighten the focus. The new mission statement is, "*Using the Lightship Overfalls as its centerpiece, the Overfalls Foundation will collect, preserve, honor and teach maritime history for the benefit of current and future generations.*"

The decision to make these changes required a great deal of thought and deliberation both at the retreat and in subsequent Board meetings. In the end, it was the consensus that these changes would serve the Foundation well in the future.

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Dave Bernheisel, President



This column allows the president the opportunity to share with the membership a view of what's to come. After seven years on the Board and two terms as president and given this is my last column, I will first take a quick peek in the rearview mirror.

It has been an exciting ride. The progress we have made is unbelievable. In eleven years we have saved a significant piece of America's maritime heritage and put it in a beautiful setting. Along the way there were high points with great exuberance and depressing times when any rational person had to conclude that there was no way this project could succeed. Through it all, one constant was the support from our local community, support that maintained the momentum and made other good things happen when they were needed most.

So, is that it? Have we done it? In the words of Winston Churchill, it's not the end but the end of the beginning. We are transitioning to a different kind of organization, one with more emphasis on education and outreach. While this was the emphasis of the management retreat in February that gave us a new name, mission statement (see article on this page) and strategic plan, it is not a new concept for the Foundation. We have always had an educational component and the Delaware Maritime Hall of Fame, initiated in 2007, was another move in that direction. In the future these will increase in importance as our membership expands to support them.

The ship remains our centerpiece and that will always be. Not only are we dedicated to maintaining the ship in her current fine condition, we will also make periodic capital improvements. This will keep her relevant to the needs of the Foundation and the community at large. If we expect her to keep on exerting the magic that she has for the last eleven years, we have to do our part.

With our transition, it is appropriate that we have new leadership. Tracy Mulveny will assume the helm in October. She is bright and energetic with new ideas that can lead us on into the future. I very much appreciate the support that you have given me over the years and, now I ask you to do the same for Tracy as she takes the helm.

Dave

VIEW FROM THE STERN

Wayne Kirklin

The Things We Take For Granted

In 1838 the United States passed an act requiring steamboats running between sunset and sunrise to carry one or more signal lights; color, visibility and location were not specified.

In July 1846 the United States Senate charged the Secretary of the Treasury to investigate the “expediency of requiring vessels navigating the Delaware Bay to carry lights in the night-time, in order to avoid collision.” A circular was sent to “...experienced navigators and other persons interested in the subject.”

The responses were quite mixed and a letter signed November 19, 1846 by fifteen Lewes pilots (including three Marshalls, two Maulls, a Rowland and a Burton) stated: “In answer to your request,..., that we should submit our views upon the expediency of providing by law that vessels navigating the bay and river Delaware shall carry lights to avoid the danger of collision, we, the undersigned ... respectfully submit that in our opinion the lights should be confined entirely to those vessels riding at anchor in the bay or river, or in her harbors. We believe that the danger of collision is rather increased than diminished when vessels under sail are carrying light, as it is almost impossible to tell the course they are steering. ... In all our experience, we have ever found it difficult to discover the course of a vessel in the dark with light; thus increasing the difficulty of deciding ourselves which course to steer to avoid collision.

The narrowness of the channel in the river, from Delaware City to Philadelphia, renders the objections to compelling vessels under sail to carry lights still more obvious. There is scarcely room for three vessels of the larger class to sail abreast, much less when coming in opposite directions, and when each is doubtful of the course of the other, to steer entirely clear of all danger. On the one hand he has the danger of collision, and on the other of running his vessel aground or on shore. As it regards vessels at anchor, we believe it would result to the general safety of all, were they to carry lights during the night.”

Other responders had different views and in 1849 the U.S. Congress extended the light requirements to sailing vessels.

Principle source: Congressional Record, 29th Congress, 2nd Session



Refurbishing and Displaying the Prop

Jake Mocci, grandson of Ernie and Meg Mocci, took on this task as an Eagle Scout project. When he started the ship’s propeller was suffering from 35 years in saltwater with no maintenance. He took the prop down to shiny metal, painted it, designed and built the stand and put it all together on the grounds. Here he is touching up the paint that was scarred in transit to the site. The display is at the stern of the ship and is one of the highlights of the grounds. Our thanks to Jake for a job very well planned and executed.

Lil Red’s Debut

At the OverfallsFEST, Lil Red, the 12’ skiff built by John Kyritsis and his committee made her debut. She was all prim and proper in her Overfalls colors and looking her best. Unfortunately, everybody was so busy partying that nobody took her for a spin in the canal but she rows beautifully, tracks nicely and goes like a rocket. Despite his parental attachment, John has talked of putting her up for adoption (only to a good home). If you qualify, get in touch with John at 645-7168 or JohnKyritsis@AOL.com.



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Mark Your Calendar

October 8, 7:30 pm Annual Membership Meeting at St. Peters Parish Hall. Election of Board members, a recap of the year's activities and a look into the future. Light refreshments will follow the meeting.

October 9, 6:00 pm Delaware Maritime Hall of Fame at the Lewes Yacht Club. Tickets are \$75.00, check the web site for ticket info (a great event that sells out every year). See article this page or the web site for more information.

November 12, 7:30 pm Monthly Membership Meeting at St. Peters Parish Hall. The speaker, George Elliott, will introduce the Foundation to Dr. James E. Marvil, a published maritime historian, founder of the Lewes Historical Society and architect of bringing the Lightship Overfalls to Lewes. Following the meeting we will have light refreshments.

December 10, 7-9:00 pm Holiday Party at the Inn at Canal Square. To begin the holiday season, bring a dish to share and the Foundation will provide drinks and paper products.

December 31, Midnight on the deck of the ship, New Years celebration. It's your ship, come toot your horn. In the event of inclement weather, this event will be canceled.

Delaware Maritime Hall of Fame

A key element in the new grounds is the monument pictured below, honoring the inductees in the Delaware Maritime Hall of Fame. On the sides of the monument are inscribed the names of the honorees grouped by year of induction. The monument is the focal point of the grounds on the starboard side of the ship. Assuming an average of five inductees per year, there is room on the monument for 28 years.

The next induction ceremony and banquet is October 9 at the Lewes Yacht Club. For those who have not yet attended, it is a moving experience and very much in the mission of the Foundation. For ticket information call Marjorie Miller on 644-1040.

