



THE OVERFALLS BEACON

The Newsletter of the Overfalls Foundation

Volume 9 - Summer 2020

From The Crows Nest

William Battista, President

Title	Page #
From the Crows Nest	1
Financial Support	1
“Free” Money	2
Community Support	2
Website Support	2
The “Dirty Hands Gang”	2
DMHOF	3
Memorial Service	3
Canal Shoreline Repair	4
Lightship Stories	5
Editorial / Opinion	7

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The year 2020 started with many great ideas and plans. The Overfalls annual fundraiser was being redesigned with a new date and venue for Memorial Day Weekend. Then the coronavirus appeared on the horizon. As things got worse we had to prepare for the changes we might have to make. Realizing that businesses that support our fundraiser were having to close, we decided to cancel the 2020 “Gala” but will continue to plan for 2021.

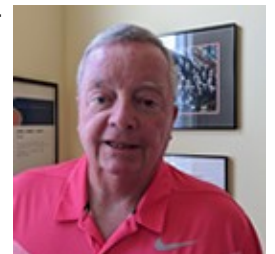


As the weeks went by, the reports of the pandemic kept getting worse. After many virtual meetings the Board of Directors decided to have the ship and museum remain closed for the 2020 season and not initiate our outreach programs. This was not an easy decision but had to consider our dedicated volunteers and their safety as well as the safety of our visitors. We will now plan on how to operate for the 2021 keeping everyone’s safety as our main focus.

Financial Support

Bob Garry, Treasurer

As you can imagine, due to the coronavirus outbreak and the many social distancing guidelines/restrictions instituted by the Governor of Delaware, the Overfalls Foundation has decided, like many museums and historic sites, to close our store and lightship to the general public and cancel our annual fund raising dinner for 2020.



This of course greatly effects our fundraising ability to meet our operating expenses and continuing restoration costs in maintaining Lightship Overfalls (LV-118). However, we were able to obtain three grants to help with our operating expenses.

The first is a CARES Recover Grant in the amount of \$5,027 through the Cares Act and the National Endowment of the Humanities (NEH). Delaware Humanities has funds available to organizations committed to the humanities that have faced Financial hardship due to the coronavirus. The grant can only be used for operating expenses.

The second from the Delaware Grant-In-Aid Program for \$5,000 is an

[Financial Support Continued on Page 2](#)

Financial Support Continued from Page 1

appropriation made by the General Assembly to support the activities of non-profit organizations which provide services to the citizens of Delaware. The purpose of this funding is to provide supplemental funding to service agencies and shall not be construed as a sole source of funding. Each year we must submit an application for funding. Applications for Fiscal year 2022 can be submitted beginning September 1, 2020.

The third was in response to their Facebook social media video challenge where your “liked” or “shared” responses to our video provided us an additional \$5,000 grant.

If you got to our website you will see the many forms of public support that are available to help us collect, preserve, honor and teach maritime history for the benefit of current and future generations. Links to the support opportunities are also shown further in this newsletter.

“Free” Money

Well, almost. The Overfalls Foundation receives donations from Amazon based on the amount of money you spend. There is no additional charge to you as a customer.

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support the Overfalls Foundation every time you shop at Amazon, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you’ll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate 0.5 percent of the purchase price to the Overfalls Foundation. More information can be found by [clicking here](#).

Community Support

Since 2016 the Overfalls Foundation has provided scholarships to graduating Cape Henlopen High School students whose chosen college course of study is maritime related. You can review those awards by clicking on the award year below:

[2020](#) [2019](#) [2018](#) [2017](#) [2016](#)

Website Support

Tom Wrubel, Webmaster

The Foundation website ([click here](#)) is the source for “Everything Overfalls”. The Ship’s history can be found by clicking on the menu system tab “The Ship”. Here you will find articles, photos, video links, literature and virtual guides about the ship and what it took to make the ship the National Landmark it is today.

Under the “Visit Us” tab you will learn about our store, museum and Monomoy lifeboat as well as links to other websites of local and maritime interest. By clicking on the “Join Us” tab you will learn about our various levels of annual memberships, ([click here](#)) and how you can become a valued volunteer ([click here](#)). The “About Us” tab provides more useful information including our community involvement providing scholarships to graduating high school seniors ([click here](#)), our support of the Delaware Maritime Hall of Fame ([click here](#)).

In addition to thousands of volunteer hours, maintaining the Ship is a huge annual financial expense. The “Support Us” tab lists ways you can make financial contributions and help maintain the Ship in pristine condition. From “purchasing” a part of the Ship ([click here](#)), such as rivets ([click here](#)), cash donations, sponsorships and Planned Giving ([click here](#)) to direct Charitable 401(k) tax deductible contributions ([click here](#)) and memorial walkway “bricks” there are many ways to help us fulfil our mission.

Those who make “purchases” are “honored” on the interactive part of our website ([click here](#)).

The Dirty Hands Gang

Don Gansauer

For several years now the Overfalls has looked it’s very best. After returning from the dock yards in New Jersey she has glistened as she sits proudly at its berth at the Canal. Thanks to the “Dirty Hands Gang” she is well taken care of. Years ago the “Dirty Hands Gang” rescued the ship from the brink and the honored tradition continues today.

This past winter a small number of “hands” made repairs to the Ship Store including replacing a wall and floor. Water damage from a leak around the window was the cause. When the green light is given they will finish the job. Additionally,

[Dirty Hands Gang Continued on Page 3](#)

[Dirty Hands Gang from Page 2](#)

The Ballast tanks were drained and the inside repainted as to prevent rust out.

We had a total of six workdays with entire crew until being shut down due to Covid-19. Some of the jobs completed included fabricating covers for the deck winch pistons and the stack exhausts, Also, they painted the Wheelhouse floor with two coats of non-skid paint before closing down for the season.

The overall paint from the haul out two years ago in Dorchester, NJ is holding up as expected. There are some rust streaks, but none serious. We must remember that it is a metal ship sitting in salt water. We do expect it to hold up until the next repainting with just occasional touch ups.

While the gang is anxious to return to work, they understand, not until it becomes healthy to do so. Occasionally some of the gang meet for breakfast on Friday mornings at the Ocean Grill in Five Points. Masks and social distancing required.

Delaware Maritime Hall of Fame

The Delaware Maritime Hall of Fame (DMHOF) honors those who have given uniquely and generously of skill, energy, heart, and time in building Delaware's maritime heritage. This event is sponsored by the Overfalls Maritime Museum Foundation (OMMF), a volunteer organization that is committed to preserving one of America's last remaining lightships. An important part of its mission is "to collect, preserve, honor and teach the maritime history of the Delaware Bay and the coastal region."

Annually outstanding inductees into the Delaware Maritime Hall of Fame will be honored for their contribution to Delaware's maritime heritage.

Since its initial 1631 whaling settlement, Delaware has had an intimate relationship with the sea. Watermen, pilots, lifesavers, navigators, tradesmen, businessmen, and military personnel depend on their proximity to the Delaware Bay and the Atlantic Ocean for their life's work. The Delaware Maritime Hall of Fame will educate future generations about Delaware's maritime heritage.

The Delaware Maritime Hall of Fame selects and inducts individuals who meet the criteria and spirit of contribution of Delaware's maritime her-

itage. In prior years, a total of 59 individuals have been honored for their contributions and inducted into the Hall.

You can review those awarded the DMHOF honor by clicking on the award year below:

[2018](#) [2016](#) [2015](#) [2014](#) [2013](#) [2012](#)

[2011](#) [2010](#) [2009](#) [2008](#) [2007](#)

Memorial Service



On July 8, 2020 we held our annual Memorial Service for members who "crossed the bar" in 2019. This was originally scheduled for Memorial Day Weekend but needed to be rescheduled due to the virus.

We celebrated the lives of Ruth Helm, Claude Yul Benner, and James Maguire. The presentation of the Wreath was made by founding members Elaine and Barry Simmerman. Pastor Hayden of Lighthouse Baptist Church, Lewes, Delaware delivered a timely message.

Looking ahead The Memorial Bricks are now being placed in our Memorial Pathway annually for an end of May service. Because of the restrictions in group size only the Board of Directors were invited. We plan on having future memorial services combined with our Opening Festivities in May, 2021.

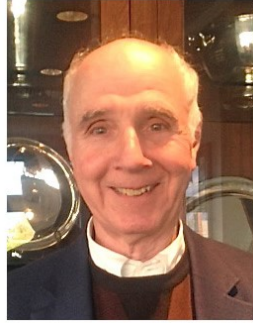


Shown L to R: Pastor Hayden, Foundation President Bill Battista, Elaine Simmerman and Al Klineburger.

Canal Shoreline Repair

Albert Didden

The canal bank along the Overfalls Foundation property line has suffered considerable erosion due to storms and tidal action and must be rebuilt. Part of the Lewes Historical Society bank also needs repair and will be done jointly with our repair.



During a survey review in preparation for this work it was discovered that

the net reel belonging to the Lewes Historical Society was on Overfalls property. The net reel has been relocated to the society's main campus and will be rebuilt and this valuable maritime



artifact will remain on display.

After consulting with Coastal and Estuarine Research, Inc. and Precision Marine Inc. the Overfalls Foundation Board has contracted with Precision Marine to complete this work for a price of \$12,740. Some landscaping will also be needed.



Repairs will consist of removing and disposing of existing concrete rubble and replacing with rip rap stones weighing 200 to 400 hundred pounds with a life expectancy of thirty plus years. This work should be completed this year.

The Overfalls Foundation and the Lewes Historical Society have received proper and required permits for this work.

Lightship Stories

The following was submitted by James Akimchuk. Mr. Akimchuk was a former crew member (1958-1969) of the LV-118 when it was the Cross Rip (WAL-539) Lightship.

Cross Rip Lightship Station 1959

While on Lightship duty, the normal cycle for the crew would be four weeks at sea then two weeks compensatory leave ashore. Some trips were tougher than others depending on Fog & Weather. After an especially tough trip, there was an article in the Navy TIMES that seemed to catch everyone's imagination.

Because boredom was always an issue, some crew members would bring personal items aboard and would repair them while at sea which seemed like a good idea. The Article in the NAVY TIMES stated that a member of the Portland Lightship had bought a lawnmower with him on board to repair.

One night during nice weather, a yacht came close by and the crew member as a joke started to mow the metal decks and was waving to the yacht as it went by. It turns out that there was a Congressman aboard who called CCGDONE and told the Admiral that the crew had been out there too long and they needed additional time off.

Rumor has it that they received an extra two weeks ashore and you can imagine how that sparked the imagination of all Lightship Sailors. The next trip out looked like Home Depot Repair shop, however, we never did get anyone's attention other than the normal fishing boats as they

passed by. I still chuckle when I think of it.

Cold Water Incident

While on Cross Rip Lightship Station, maintenance (even in December) was an ongoing process. We were experiencing somewhat rough seas (5 to 8 feet) and there was some port holes in the bunk area that needed immediate attention.

This process required a staging hung over the side to access the area and since my porthole needed repair (I experienced a cold water wakeup from the leak that night), I volunteered to help in the repairs.

While over the side, the ship swung around and we were on the windward side where the waves were somewhat larger. One huge wave hit the platform and I was sent into the sea. I was wearing a life vest, but I was not tethered to the ship. Because we were all Coastie's and well trained, a Life ring was immediately thrown and I was able to reach it before I went past the stern of the ship. I held on to it until a rope ladder was put in place off the stern, and I can tell you that climbing the rope ladder, fully clothed and wet in December was probably the toughest 20 steps I have ever climbed.

Times like this make you appreciate your shipmates. I guess every now and then you have to take care of your own.

The following was submitted by former Overfalls Director and current Foundation Curator of Artifacts Dr. Ray Glick. Dr. Glick is a veterinarian who has served on the boards or held offices in community groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, Red Cross, Junior Achievement, and other assorted Arts and Community service organizations. He is an Elder of the Presbyterian Church.

In the Overfalls Foundation's artifacts collection is a builder plate for a rebuild of LV 76/WAL 504. Builders plates are the "birth Certificate" of ships. They should remain with the ship thru out its life, even if the name is changed. Additional plates are also added when a ship undergoes extensive ship



yard work.

This is the history of the ship attached to that plate. In 1932 LV 76 underwent a rebuild" according to the builders plaque from General Engineering and Dry Dock Co. of Oakland, Calif. This is the plate in our collection. LV 76 was built by Burlee Dry Dock Co. Port Richmond, Long Island, NY in 1903. Her sister ships were LV 78 thru 83 (except LV 82).

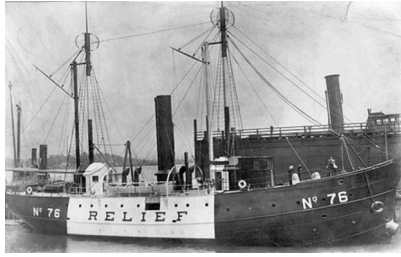
[Dr. Glick Continued on Page 5](#)



Dr. Glick Continued from Page 4

She was built specifically to be the Relief ship for the West Coast Stations.

The “rebuild” of 1932 is not listed on Flint's extensive history book of Lightships. However in the mid 30's her sister ships were all ongoing extensive renovations such as;



conversion to diesel propulsion, fog horn upgrades, conversion of the signal light to electric power. One might assume this was true for LV 76 as well.

During WWII she was moved off station and became a training Vessel. Our Overfalls LV 118 was one of six Lightships that remained on station

during the entire war. While safety for the crew was a major concern, navigation reference points for the enemy was another.

She was decommissioned in 1960 and there were plans for Seattle to use her as a Museum. While those plans failed she was sold in 1961 and re-named the Ark. In '63 her power was upgraded to diesel thus either rules out the previous rebuild in '32, or the new owners requirement of

additional power. She was again sold and re-named the Claire Anne.

In 1978 history indicates she was sold again and relocated to the Frazer River, in Canada. Sold again in 1980 and listed as “in disrepair” her new owner lived on the ship and in 1985 she underwent another “rebuild” of the engine, generator, and compressor, and was listed in Canadian Ship Register as a barge. History of her was silent until 2005 when it is stated the current owner still lived on her and her new name was Maudi Morgan. She was sold again in 2007, moved further up the Frazer.

Now comes the frustration in researching a ship's history. In 2017 finds the ship as “sank at its dock and doubtful to be refloated. According to a posting by the USCG web site is a photo of the the LV 76 in a breakers yard in 2013!! Three years before the report of her sunk at her dock. I doubt the USCG post is correct as the vessel in the breaker yard can not be identified. Also, a research report published by the Lighthouse Friends has evidence, thru a 2003 report by Jim Gill, past president of the LightShips Sailors Association the the ship was still on the Frazer River. In 2017 The Canadian Marine Registry listed the ship as sank at its dock.

Regardless as to the exact history as to the loss of LV 76, she suffered the fate of so many other proud lightships.

The Engine Room

Al Klineburger

Contributing Editor

No doubt that 2020 has been a very trying and discouraging year for everyone. The Overfalls Board of Directors thought long and hard and it was painful to announce the closure of LV118 for the calendar year 2020. But above all we must put people first and the safety and health of all our members and friends tops the list.



We still have the vision “To provide a world-class museum experience that honors, preserves and promotes the valuable contributions of the United States Lightship service to this nation’s history.” While we wait to reopen in 2021 we are developing educational programs, creating an updated Five Year Business Plan which covers both financial and operational planning, maintaining the outstanding condition of LV118, Membership, volunteers, and planning for a very positive future.

Volunteering, we have always felt that a volunteer needs just two reasons do so. First, it must be with purpose. The restoration of LV118 has created an iconic fixture in the Lewes Town Harbor. Next to its big brother the Lighthouse it is the most photographed object on DelMarVa. Historical and good for the community. Yes indeed it is with purpose. Second, a reward, satisfaction...and you get it by the boat load when you step back and see what you and your team members have accomplished.

We are looking for our membership to ask what they could do to contribute to the many tasks at hand. Sort of like going to the Bench, gathering the strength in membership.

We appreciate all that have come forward before and look forward to seeing more of you.

This is the very first edition of The Beacon in many number of years. We are reviving this News Letter to keep our members and friends informed, up to date. Our plan going forward is to make this a quarterly electronic publication with a special Events Calendar for our “Open Season”.

If you have suggestions feel free to email us. Click [here](#) to complete the form.

From the entire Board of Directors , “stay safe, stay healthy”.

We Need Your Help

Tom Wrubel

Contributing Editor

As Overfalls Foundation President Battista has stated “...the ship and museum remain closed for the 2020 season...” As the Foundation is a non-profit and reliant on membership dues, grants, fees from tours and contributions for support this is a critical loss of income.



Regardless, it’s of paramount importance to ensure the safety of all our volunteers, the public and to remain closed until the pandemic is declared over.

We have been very fortunate to have received three grants to offset our loss of revenue as a result of Covid-19 but those grants do not come with future guarantees.

This purpose of this newsletter is to remind everyone of the critical role the Overfalls Foundation plays within the Lewes community. We award scholarships to graduating high school seniors, conduct summer educational programs, host off-season speaker programs and participate in sponsored maritime related events.

Although our volunteers devote many hours of their time making these events happen it still takes money to pay for maintenance supplies and cover the cost of operations. As you consider your annual tax deductible contributions please keep the Overfalls Foundation in the forefront.

Our website, [click here](#), provides many ways to contribute.