New Jersey’s Newest Lighthouse

New Jersey has a new lighthouse! The Ambrose Light-tower, built in 1968 but damaged beyond repair in 1996 when the Greek oil tanker Aegeo ran into it, has been replaced by a $4.5 million platform.

The new device is solar powered and equipped with a light that flashes every five seconds. Its 60,000 candle-power light can be seen 18 nautical miles. The new tower was built by Offshore Specialty Fabricators, Inc., a marine construction company based in Houma, Louisiana. They began the installation of the new light and the removal of the old Texas-tower on September 18, 1999. The work took about two weeks to complete.

(Continued on page 4)
This Page:
The new Ambrose Light-tower being loaded on the barge awaiting transportation to the new site.

Opposite Page:
Piles upon which the lighthouse will rest being driven in the sea bed; the new tower being lowered onto the new foundation.

Photos courtesy of U.S. Coast Guard, via Lt. Scott Washburn, CEU Providence, Ocean Engineer – Design Team 3.
Despite clear visibility, on October 5, 1996, the tanker Aegeo  wallowed the Ambrose Light-tower, damaging a leg. The ship did not report the incident to the Coast Guard. Temporary repairs were made, which included removing a 15 foot section in one of its four legs, until funding for the replacement tower could be obtained.

The new light is located 1.5 miles southeast and 2,900 yards seaward of the old light, (position changed from 40°27'35.3"N by 73°49'49.9"W to 40°26'59.9"N by 73°48'00.0"W) in order to provide more space for inbound and outbound vessels. It is painted red like its predecessor.

The original Ambrose Light-tower went into operation on August 23, 1967. When the last keepers left Ambrose in 1988, they were also the last keepers to be removed from a Texas-tower lighthouse. The station required a crew of six, four men on and two off. On one corner of the 70' x 70' roof sat a 46-foot tower which contained the light. The roof doubled as a helipad. The focal plane of the light was 136 feet above sea level. The tower had a dayroom 90 feet above the waterline. The crew served two weeks onboard, one week off, and their tours at the station usually lasted 18 months. The station cost $2.4 million to build. Located in 74 feet of water about 7.4 miles east of Sandy Hook, the light could be seen most days from Twin Lights. The platform was two decks high. The lower deck housed the fuel and water tanks. The upper deck provided living quarters not only for the six keepers, but also for three transient personnel, as well as housing the radio-room, generator, laundry, galley and dayroom. The leisure activities of the keepers included TV, reading, fishing, and shooting pool. Since automation, the functions of the tower have been controlled from a computer on Governor's Island (some sources say Sandy Hook).

The Coast Guard maintains some 5,700 aids to navigation in the First Coast Guard District, which extends from Maine to New Jersey.

IPPA Bus Trip to NYC

The IPPA (Inlet Public/Private Association) is sponsoring a bus trip to New York City to see the musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic tale, "A Christmas Carol," on December 11, 1999. The bus will leave from Pan's Parking Lot, Pennsylvania Avenue, between Atlantic and Pacific Avenues, Atlantic City, NJ, at 8:30 a.m. The cost is $90.00 per person ($81.00 for IPPA members).

The cost includes round trip bus fare, admission to the show at the Theater at Madison Square Garden, a lunch at one of NYC's finer restaurants, video movies on the bus, raffles and fun!! Contact the IPPA for more information and reservations at 609-449-1360. The offer is first-come, first-served. Proceeds benefit the Absecon Lighthouse.

"An Eagle's View of Irish Lighthouses"

Noted photographer John Eagle has a new book out on Irish Lighthouses, An Eagle's View of Irish Lighthouses, published by Peter Williams Associates. It is available from Lighthouse Depot or direct from John Eagle in Ireland at (353) (0) 27 74275.

Sandy Hook LH site of Reenlistment Ceremony

Sandy Hook Lighthouse was the scene last spring for a U.S. Navy reenlistment ceremony. Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Joe Fellion, right, has been in the service for 17 years. He is a resident of Atlantic Highlands and is stationed aboard the USS Seattle, an ammunitions ships, at Earle, NJ. Ship's Boatswain CW03 Robert Prest, left, was Fellion's reenlistment officer.

Notes from Near & Far

Donna Elias Absecon Lighthouse Holiday Print

Absecon Lighthouse will host the unveiling of the first holiday print of the Absecon lighthouse created by renowned artist Donna Elias on November 27, 1999. The prints will go on sale that day and Donna will be available for signing from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Anyone who cannot attend but is interested in the holiday print may contact Sara Cureton, Executive Director of the lighthouse at 609-449-1360 or write to:

Absecon Lighthouse
300 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 102
Atlantic City, NJ 08401

All proceeds from the sale of the print will go to the Absecon Lighthouse.

Society News

NJLHS Lighthouse trips

by Carole Di Napoli

October was a busy month, both on land and sea! A full bus of enthusiastic lighthouse travelers left Rutgers University early on October 4th and headed to Cape Cod for 5 days.

Up at the crack of dawn every morning, we visited many sites in Massachusetts. Some of the highlights were climbing Highland Lighthouse, taking dune buggies out to Race Point, a beautiful sunny day on Martha's Vineyard and dinner at the (Continued on page 6)
NJLHS Cape Cod Trip

Photos by Carole Di Napoli

Clockwise: Nauset Light, Nauset, Cape Cod, Mass.; Scituate Lighthouse, Cedar Point, Scituate, Mass.; Watch Hill Lighthouse, Watch Hill, Rhode Island; NJLHS trip participants (photo by Jim Wilkinson); Edgartown Light, Martha's Vineyard, Mass.
Bass River Light (The Lighthouse Inn). Potato chips at the Cape Cod Potato Chip factory, the Hull Lifesaving Station and Scituate Lighthouse were also enjoyed by all. Our trip home included a visit to Watch Hill, Rhode Island.

Barely catching our breath, on October 16th, a full boat of travelers left Atlantic Highlands for a 5-hour cruise. A beautiful day and calm seas allowed us to see 7 lighthouses in Sandy Hook Bay and New York Harbor. Among them were Romer Shoals, Robbins Reef, Coney Island and Great Beds. Thanks to everyone who participated.

Upcoming activities for 2000 are now being organized. A 5-hour cruise of Long Island Sound (New London area) is scheduled for May 20. Reservation forms will be included in the March Beam. Tentative plans are in the works for a bus trip to Prince Edward Island in the late summer.

"Guiding Lights of the Delaware River & Bay"

NJLHS members Jim Gowdy and Kim Ruth have just published Guiding Lights of the Delaware River and Bay, a comprehensive history of the lighthouses, lightships and depots from Five Fathom Bank to Philadelphia to Fenwick Island. Over 10 years in development and a year and a half in the writing, the book is available at the Wind Chimes Bookstore in Millville, through Jim Gowdy at 609-965-3485 or Kim Ruth 609-386-4296.

The book is 310 pages including bibliography and index and contains 183 B/W pictures and 27 illustrations. It sells for $24.95 + 1.50 tax (NJ residents only). Shipping is $3.50 per copy.

Danbury Mint Sculptures For Sale

NJLHS members John and Rosemary Siegel, of Astoria, New York, have two Danbury Mint Lighthouse Sculptures by Colin Gough for sale. "Lighthouse Point" and "Fisherman's Cove" each features stylized lighthouses. If interested you can call them at 718-728-0385.

New Jersey Lighthouse Guide

The brochure, New Jersey Lighthouse Guide, an Enthusiast's Guide to New Jersey's Majestic Beacons, is published by the New Jersey Commerce & Economic Growth Commission, Office of Travel & Tourism. This 24-page brochure features color photographs of most of the existing lighthouses in our state. For your free travel guide call 1-800-VISIT NJ, ext. 0923, or visit www.visitnj.org.

DBLKA (Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keeper's Association) Meeting – January 8, 2000

The next DBLKA meeting will be held at the Anglesea Fire Company, in North Wildwood, New Jersey, on January 8, 2000. The Hereford Inlet Lighthouse will be open for tours. For more information about the meeting or about joining the DLYKA, contact Carole Reilly, 279 Mayflower Drive, Buena, New Jersey 08310, call 609-697-3260, or e-mail DLYKKeeper@aol.com.

Annual Preservation Raffle

by Al Smith

Yes, it is that time again. Time for the annual preservation raffle. Next year is our tenth anniversary, and in honor of that anniversary we will have 10 prizes this year. THAT'S RIGHT, 10 PRIZES!

We will continue with what appears to be a favorite First Prize and that is a two-night stay for two at The Elms Bed and Breakfast in Camden, Maine, with a weekend lighthouse tour. Ted and Jo Panayotoff are gracious hosts; they operate a delightful inn and they are very knowledgeable lighthouse people. And the BREAKFASTS! Oh, boy, they have the MOST DELICIOUS and INTERESTING breakfasts I have EVER encountered.

Second Prize will be a two-night stay for two at Saugerties Lighthouse in Saugerties, N.Y., about an hour above Kingston. This is a great little lighthouse on the Hudson River and has been nicely restored. The town boasts some fine antique shops and Kingston is just an hour away. Betty and I were there a couple of years ago and enjoyed it immensely. I'm sure you will too.

Third Prize is a gift certificate to The Lighthouse Inn, Dennis, Massachusetts, in the amount of $220. This certificate may be used for a one-night stay for two with a 5-course dinner and breakfast in the spring or fall or can be used toward a summertime visit.

Fourth Prize is a handmade lighthouse quilt. This one-of-a-kind quilt is sure to become a family heirloom. Fifth Prize is a professionally matted and framed Steve Harrington print of Sandy Hook Lighthouse. Sixth through tenth prizes will be woven 'throws' depicting Barnegat Lighthouse (or other NJ Lighthouses).

Ticket Prices? You would think we would raise them, right?! Wrong! Still just $1.00. We will be including 2 books of tickets in each person's package in the hope that this raffle will stimulate more interest and thereby enhance our Preservation Fund. We would like this to be the largest contribution to the Preservation Fund that the raffle has ever made. More information will be included with the ticket books that will be going out with the March Beam.

Please support this worthwhile project to the best of your ability. The monies from the Preservation Fund have made possible various projects at New Jersey Lighthouses in the past and, with your support, we can continue this assistance in the future. Thank You.
WANTED: Volunteers!

by Al Smith

We have just finished our 1999 Sandy Hook tour season and here I am asking you to think about NEXT year!

The current issue of the 'Sandpiper', which all Sandy Hook volunteers will receive next year, gave the “highlights” of the past year (NPS is on an October to September year). 571 tours were conducted with 3,916 people climbing the tower. We talked to another 1,915 people about the lighthouse or lighthouses, etc. All this in 72 DAYS! NJLHS volunteers invested 1,728 hours in making sure visitors got the most out of their visit.

THANK YOU to each of you for your efforts. I heard many complimentary comments from the public concerning the conduct of the tours and the helpful nature of our volunteers; I hope you heard them too.

Now we must get ready for Y2K. Our training dates will be March 4th and March 12th, a Saturday and a Sunday. Of course, you need only make one of the dates. This year we will do a 'Park Tour' as part of the training. We'll start at the Visitor's Center at 10 a.m., continue to the Guardian Park, then Battery Potter. Finally, we will congregate at the theater and walk over to History House. We will then cover any new material about the Lighthouse and/or procedures the National Park Service may have. We will break for lunch (provided by NJLHS) at the Keeper's house. After lunch we will cover those things important to our running of tours and reporting requirements (you know, ALL that paperwork).

We expect (with fingers crossed) that the lighthouse will be open when we start tours on April 1st (Please, NO April Fool's joke!). If not, we will continue showing the video, answering questions and praying for the OPENING of the lighthouse.

At the request of several members we are considering resurrecting the Thursday night summer tours. We felt that every other Thursday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. (last tour goes up at 9 p.m.) would be good. If we are to do this it must be done without sacrificing our regular weekend tours. There are just too many people on most summer weekends to eliminate any of them, so we must have enough volunteers for both. Those of you who live closest to 'the Hook' would be our best bet for the Thursday tours. Please let me know what you think. If there is enough interest we will go with the idea. The National Park Service has agreed with the proposal but they have no people to 'lend' us.

Tom has asked me to be Volunteer Coordinator for the coming year (hand firmly pulled up against my shoulder blade) and, of course, I agreed (I need THAT arm!).

I look forward to working smoothly with all of you in the coming year as well as I hope we worked together this year. To all those who attended the Thank You “picnic”, I meant what I so poorly said. You ARE appreciated. My phone number is (856) 546-7810 or e-mail me at cmagsmith@juno.com.

Y2K NJLHS Photo Contest

The Y2K NJLHS Photo Contest will be held at our March 18, 2000, meeting. A flyer with rules and entry blank is enclosed with this issue of the Beam.

Membership Renewals

Memberships expire on 12/31/1999. If your mailing label has a “1999” please renew your membership. If it has a “2000” on it, you have already renewed. Most of our operating expenses come from dues, so your prompt renewal will help us to better plan for the upcoming year.

President’s Corner

by Tom Laverty

The Board of Trustees of the National Lighthouse Center & Museum met in September at the studios of Channel 13 (WNED) in New York. Work has begun on stabilizing some of the six historic structures of the former Staten Island Lighthouse Depot that will be part of the new Museum and Center. The NLC&M Board is also looking into the acquisition of a Lightship to moor at the museum dock.

If you are interested in the progress and happenings of the NLC&M you can visit their Web Site at www.lighthousemuseum.org.

NJLHS members may remember the December, 1996 meeting held at the Tip Seaman Park in Tuckerton, New Jersey, when representatives of the Barnegat Bay Decoy and Baymen’s Museum shared their plans to build a Seaport Museum there. The new seaport would feature a replica of the Tucker’s Island Lighthouse. Well, a few weeks ago I was invited to tour the work that has been completed to date. If you haven’t driven through Tuckerton on Route 9 lately, you need to! The lighthouse building is about finished and looks great sitting along the side of the highway. The building is one of about a dozen under construction at the Seaport and will serve as a general exhibition hall featuring, among other things, exhibits on New Jersey Lighthouses and the Life-Saving Service. This is an impressive effort and when completed will give New Jersey a maritime museum similar to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and Mystic Seaport. The Seaport is scheduled to open in April. You can get more information about the project on their web site at
www.TuckertonSeaport.org or at PO Box 52, Tuckerton, NJ 08087.

I hope to see you at our next membership meeting in Spring Lake Heights and afterwards at the Sea Girt Lighthouse.

**Program Signals**

*by Yvonne Miller*

The December 4, 1999, meeting will be held in the cafeteria of the Spring Lake Heights Elementary School, Spring Lake, NJ at 11:00 a.m. There will be no vendors at this meeting. Hospitality will be served from 10:30 am. Sea Girt Lighthouse will be open for our members from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Our speaker will be Ken Black, Director and Curator of the Shore Village Museum in Rockland, Maine. Conrad Yauch will speak on the Sea Girt Lighthouse.

Anyone willing to bring cake or cookies to the December Meeting, please call Betty Smith at 856-546-7810 or e-mail her at bksmith@juno.com.

**Directions to the meeting:**

Travelling from the North or South via the Garden State Parkway take exit 98. Bear onto Route 138. E. Go through 4 traffic lights (only if they are green!). Follow sign for Highway 35 South (sign says Spring Lake/Sea Girt). Make a left at the second light onto Allaire Road. Go one mile to the next light (Route 71), make a right onto Route 71 South. Go two blocks and make a left onto Brighton Avenue. Pull into school parking lot on the right. Enter through the gymnasium doors and proceed to the cafeteria.

Since this is the final meeting of the year, I would like to thank everyone for their support and help in planning, setting up and cleaning up at the meetings. Your help with our outreach efforts this year was greatly appreciated. Your participation is always welcome. Fred & Yvonne wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year and New Century.

**Fall Meeting Recap**

Ninety to one hundred members and guests attended the meeting at the VFW Hall on Brandywine Blvd. at Bellefonte, DE. The Marcus Hook Rear Range light was within walking distance to the hall and our members took advantage of the photo opportunity. Unfortunately, due to the many emergencies in Pennsylvania and Delaware caused by Hurricane Floyd, the Coast Guard couldn’t spare any personnel to open the lighthouse for us that weekend. We could only view the outside of the lighthouse. NJLHS member Linda Pierson gave a presentation on the lighthouse and had some inside shots of the lighthouse. I want to thank Linda not only for giving the presentation but for finding and arranging for our meeting place and also for opening and closing the building for us. Also thanks to Bob Eldridge for the map he provided and his help at the meeting. Bob also made the contact with the Coast Guard and planned to help in the light. You never know how a hurricane is going to affect you!

**From the Editor and staff**

We want to wish everyone, especially our contributors, a very Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and joyous, healthful and prosperous New Year. – Kim Ruth & Sharon Fitzpatrick

The volunteer envelope stuffing and stamp lickin’ team of Kevin, Sean Colin, Eamonn and Mike Fitzpatrick-Ruth.

---

**The Beam**, the official journal of the New Jersey Lighthouse Society, Inc., is published quarterly, March, June, September and December. Membership dues are $15.00 single and $20.00 family, and are for the calendar year. Back issues are available free for members joining mid-year. All materials are copyrighted and cannot be borrowed or reproduced without permission of the New Jersey Lighthouse Society. The NJLHS - New Jersey Lighthouse Society, Inc., is a non-profit educational corporation (501-c3).