Absecon Lighthouse Celebrates Its 150th Birthday

Rich & Elinor Veit

On January 15, 1857, without ceremony or fanfare, Absecon Lighthouse was first lighted. Its fixed white light could be seen twenty miles out to sea and across Absecon Inlet, thus establishing it as an aide to navigation. It sat among the pine trees and Bayberry bushes in the newly established Atlantic City. For 76 years, five months and 26 days it faithfully served as an aide to navigation. As the city grew up around the lighthouse, tall buildings obscured the beacon from the water. On July 11, 1933 Absecon Lighthouse was decommissioned as an aide to navigation.

In the years that followed, numerous attempts were made to save the lighthouse from demolition. In 1946, the city of Atlantic City took over the lighthouse as a tourist attraction. The city tore down most of the buildings, leaving only the tower and the oil house and turned the grounds into a park. In 1966, the state of New Jersey took possession of the lighthouse. The state placed it on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places on September 11, 1970 and on the National Register of Historic Places on January 25, 1971—this saved it from demolition. However, all attempts to open it to visitors ultimately failed. It wasn’t until the Inlet Public/Private Association (IPPA) leased the lighthouse from the state of New Jersey and raised the money for its restoration that the lighthouse as a visitor’s attraction became a reality. In 1999 the tower was opened to the public. In 2001, just in time for The New Jersey Lighthouse Challenge®, the keeper’s house with its museum and gift shop was opened.

On January 15, 2007, Absecon Lighthouse celebrated its 150th birthday with a great deal of attention from the media and local officials. Entrance fees were waived for the day. Between 400 and 500 people, both local residents and many distant travelers, passed through the doors to climb the tower, visit the museum, make purchases in the shop and join in the festivities.

Highlights of the birthday celebration included visits by costumed actors, a children’s art contest won by a local school boy, Ramel Bey, and visits from a number of descendants of the keepers of Absecon Lighthouse. However, the main attraction of the day came with the cutting of the giant birthday cake created by Ruth Latorre, pastry chef at the Borgata Casino.

Jean Muchanic, Executive Director of Absecon Lighthouse and Michael Flynn, Education Director, did a superb job of planning and directing the activities for the day.

It was truly a celebration to remember.
I hope this issue of *The Beam* finds you well, and you are in the midst of planning your lighthouse adventures for 2007!

Don’t forget to take pictures and write articles for submission to *The Beam*. We are continuously looking for “news” to print. We will do our best to print what we receive—as space allows—in each issue.

Our webmaster, Howard Wright, is looking for pictures for our web site especially from activities hosted by NJLHS. He is also starting something new on the web site—Lighthouse Trivia Questions. If anyone wants to submit trivia questions, email to him: webmaster@njlhs.org Just make sure your information is accurate!

So, get out there with your cameras and a pen in-hand…and let’s see where you’ve been!

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**THE PRESIDENT’S COLUMN**

As I write this letter, flashes of years of membership in NJLHS come to me. Fred and I started out in the Society, going to lighthouses to help clean up whenever there was a need. We attended several meetings and then I volunteered to be Programs Chairperson, not knowing what a Programs Chairperson did. That was thirteen years ago! Then I was invited by the nominating committee to run for Second Vice President. Within a few months, I moved up to First Vice President as a result of the untimely death of Jack Thompson. Over the next twelve years and through the mentoring of Tom Laverty, I was privileged to meet and work with some nationally known lighthouse “celebrities” as I represented the Society in state and national conferences and projects. With all of this, Fred and I still managed to travel to see and photograph most of the lighthouses in the US.

That was the past. Now, I move on to the present and future. As President of NJLHS, I am humbled and proud to be a part of this great organization.

Some very exciting things are in the future of the Society. The Challenge continues to bring us international and national attention. Our members, by volunteering, have brought us close association with the New Jersey lighthouse communities and we have received New Jersey State recognition.

Along with Brett Franks, Doreen Berson and Marty Hudspeth, my first official act as NJLHS President was to host a meeting of the New Jersey Lighthouse Managers on January 10, 2007. It was an overwhelming experience to have these managers thank NJLHS for the support that we give them and their appreciation for sponsoring the Challenge each year. This is a direct result of the financial support and all of the volunteer man hours you, our members, give each year.

I am looking forward to the future with the dialogue and working relationship with Finns Point Lighthouse. The lighthouse will be open for climbing at the 2007 Challenge and NJLHS is hoping to work with Virginia Rettig, the Assistant Superintendant, at Supawna Meadows in other projects.

The restoration of the Ludlam Beach Light is a project that NJLHS is all about, as is Conover Beacon. So our work is cut out for us and I look forward to accomplishing the groundwork for getting these two lighthouses on the road to recovery during my term of office. I ask the support and assistance of the membership in these and other projects in the future.

Very truly yours,

**Yvonne Miller Thies**

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**OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS**

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A postcard of the old and new Conover Beacon, circa 1941
A New Season at Sandy Hook

Al Smith

Before we talk about the up coming season at Sandy Hook, there is some unfinished business from the last news letter.

At the year end volunteer dinner, Betty and I thanked all the volunteers and passed out Certificates of Appreciation for the hours they spent helping visitors appreciate ‘our’ lighthouse.

The top ten volunteers for the year were: Lois Mumie, who had more hours than the next two volunteers together, Al Smith, Michael Smith, Betty Smith, Grace and Ken Schumacher, Annette Colt, Ed Sampson, Pat Hospador and Jean Burgess. The top ten volunteers accounted for over half the volunteer hours for the year. We thank them and ALL the volunteers; without you, visitors would not be able to enjoy the oldest lighthouse in the US.

The new season at Sandy Hook opens on Saturday, March 31, 2007. We are planning an orientation meeting on March 24, 2007 starting at 10:30am. After lunch we will split into two groups with Tom Hoffman attending to the tour guides, and Al and Betty meeting with the greeters in the newly refurbished gift shop.

Over the winter, we had a few new volunteers join our ‘merry band.’ We welcome the return of Myles and Alice Hillary who were among the original band of volunteers ‘eons ago.’ And we also welcome Bob Zarling.

Unfortunately, I received a letter from one of our original (and much loved) volunteers, Dixie Amento, who, due to the looong drive out of LBI to Sandy Hook, will no longer be able to join us. We can only hope that our loss will be Barnegat’s gain.

Are you looking for something to ‘occupy’ your time this year? We are not only looking for weekend volunteers but, since the Park Service wishes to give tours all week long starting in April and continuing through October, we are looking for volunteers to ‘man’ the gift shop from 1pm to 5pm during the week. Interested? You can reach me by phone at 856-546-7810 or 609-504-3032 and by e-mail at: cmagsmith@juno.com.

Come join us! We have good time doing a very worthwhile volunteer ‘job.’

Who’s Who in NJLHS

Elected Board Members

Seated: Yvonne Thies, President; Debbie Megonigal, Treasurer. Standing 1st Row: Laura Portée. Corresp. Secty.; Mary Beth Doherty, 1st VP. 2nd Row: Marion Hudspeth, Board Member; Tom Laverty, Board Member; Bob Gleason, Rec. Secty. 3rd Row: Brett Franks, 2nd VP; Cindy Mitzen, Board Member; Jim Cope, Board Member; Doreen Berson, Board Member.

IN THE NEWSPAPERS

From the Brooklyn Eagle, Nov. 18, 1892

RAN DOWN A LIGHTHOUSE

London, November 18 — A curious accident occurred today in Belfast lough lighthouse No. 2 which warns vessels from running aground near the entrance to the lough. It is built of wood and not a very heavy structure. The steamship Medway was proceeding on its way without paying any attention to the lighthouse, when the steamship suddenly came in collision. Instead of the steamship being wrecked the lighthouse was wrecked and toppled over into the sea, but floated on the waves, while the inmates shouted for help. The crew of the Medway hastened to lower a boat and rowed to where the lighthouse was floating. Two of the inmates of the lighthouse were drowned and two were rescued alive.

The Recipe Corner

Marty Hudspeth

Quick Shrimp Scampi

By Pat Evans

1 lb. med shrimp, peeled

1 stick butter

½ bottle white cooking wine (found in the supermarket)

½ tsp. garlic butter

Melt butter (don’t brown) in large frying pan, shake in garlic powder, put in shrimp and stir around until pink. Add wine and stir. Pour over cooked angel hair pasta. Sprinkle generously with grated Romano/Parmesan cheese.

The NJLHS cookbook is available from Ways & Means. The cookbook includes 150 recipes from NJLHS members, family & friends. $8.50 ea., S/H $3.00, ea. add. book $1.50.
An Icon in the Lighthouse Preservation Movement Crosses the Bar

Ken Black, a leader in the lighthouse history and preservation world, passed away on January 28, 2007 at the age of 82. Ken was a retired Coast Guardman who had a vision and saw the value of keeping lighthouse “junk” that was being discarded. Over the years he amassed a large collection of junk that first out grew the Coast Guard Base at Rockland Maine, then the Shore Village Museum he created to house it. That high quality lighthouse junk now sits in a modern building in Rockland Maine, known as the Maine Lighthouse Museum.

I can’t tell you the exact date I met Ken, I actually knew of him long before I had the pleasure of meeting him. He produced a wonderful newsletter. Folksy, simple, and to the point—his Shore Village Newsletter connected those of us working in lighthouses around the country. It was in the early days of the lighthouse preservation movement, before the United States Lighthouse Society’s Keeper’s Log was widely available, and certainly long before Lighthouse Digest appeared on the scene. In fact, it was long before a lot of printed materials were available about lighthouses at all.

When I transferred to the Navesink Twin Light, my knowledge of maritime history, and in particular lighthouses, was lacking. Ken’s newsletter provided a wealth of information. He reviewed lighthouse books, often referring to them as a nice item, or a good history. He talked about people he met in his travels around the country, and about those lighthouse folks who were doing things. Through that small, but very helpful publication, I began to learn what I needed to tell others about this great building I had come to work in. It was a valued source of information allowing me to make a lot of contacts with knowledgeable people. In its early days, the newsletter was composed on a typewriter, then photocopied, and mailed out by hand. It always ended with Ken’s salutation, “be neighborly”.

Meeting Ken was equally low key, but informative. I imagined that he used the same technique when he was in the Coast Guard. He just quietly showed up one day, much the way I envisioned the District Lighthouse Inspector would do to the keepers. It was a Sunday; I was doing collateral duty, cutting the grass at Navesink. A duty that was typical for a lighthouse keeper, but not so typical for the historic site curator. Ken was quietly amused; he recorded the moment on the video camera he always seemed to carry on his visits. Later he circulated that video as part of his documentation of Lighthouses in New Jersey. I cannot tell you how many people saw me tooling across the lawn on a riding mower at Navesink, but I can tell you somewhere in the piles of VCR tapes I own, there is a copy of that tape (I found it amusing as well!).

Ken will be missed, but he has left behind a legacy for both those who knew him, and those who now will only be able to know of him—this unassuming retired Coast Guardman who had a vision for lighthouse history and admonished everyone to “be neighborly”.

2nd Annual NJLHS Recognition Awards Nominations

Last year, through the dedicated efforts of Board Member Bill Volpe, the New Jersey Lighthouse Society launched its first Recognition Awards Program. The ceremony held at our March 2006 meeting was a smashing success and a great way to thank all the dedicated people who made the New Jersey Lighthouse Society the organization it has become.

We are now soliciting nominations from our members for this year’s awards program scheduled for September 2007. Nomination categories are: a) Keepers Award—Dedicated and exemplary service in a Society support role; b) Presidents Award—Extraordinary performance of a function that furthers the Society’s role (must have performed some function to further the goals of restoration, preservation, education, historical research or has stimulated public awareness in NJ lighthouses or those in the NY Harbor or Delaware Bay waters or has performed exceptionally dedicated service as a volunteer); and c) Society Award—Contributions made by outside organizations for sponsorship, participation or other forms of support.

If you have a nomination, please write a description outlining why the person or organization should be given the award and submit it to the New Jersey Lighthouse Society. You may mail it to: Tom Laverty, Chair, NJLHS Recognition Committee, P.O. Box 332, Navesink, NJ 07752; email it to: tom.laverty@njlhs.org; or hand deliver it to Committee Chair Tom Laverty or President Thies at the March meeting.

All nominations must be received by FRI-DAY JUNE 1, 2007. Early submission will allow the Recognition Committee time to review the nominations and make the necessary arrangements for the September meeting. We look forward to hearing from our members.

Page 4
Having spent most of my working career in an accounting related environment, I tend to view numbers as a means of measuring and evaluating an activity. In Educational Outreach terms, I would track the audience attendance, donations, Education Kit sales, etc. My focus on the bottom line, while valuable in some respects, is also vulnerable in that there are other aspects of the program that are worthy of recognition.

During a recent conversation with two Society members at the Sandy Hook Keeper's House, I was asked how I viewed the experience of giving talks to children. After a brief pause I responded, “Rewarding.” The more I think about my response, the more convinced I am of the appropriateness of the term as it relates to Educational Outreach (see December Beam article on “Talks and Tours at Sandy Hook”). Of course, there are times when kids tend to get a little overactive, but I usually enjoy their excitement. It often indicates interest in the subject matter and generates many interesting questions. For example, these questions were raised by Second Grade students of the Sussex Christian School: Did Sandy Hook Lighthouse have a foghorn? Does the “leaning” lighthouse (Sharps Island, MD) have a fixed or a rotating lens and does it still work? Where is the shortest US lighthouse located, and what is its height?

*Rewarding* also describes our efforts to reach out to Scout groups. For example, our Lighthouse Education Kit played a key role in helping the Scouts in developing both a lighthouse badge and Brownie award. *Rewarding* also captures our efforts in providing historic groups, senior groups and others with lighthouse history and stories of lighthouse people, the life they lived, the loneliness and isolation they endured, the courage they displayed, the heroic acts they performed, the hope that they gave to mariners back then, and the beauty and romance they give to us today. Truly, our impact on these groups has been and continues to be appreciated and is validated by the positive feedback we receive.

Of course our success is only possible through the selfless and dedicated efforts of our volunteers and to these individuals, we owe our gratitude. Our sincere thanks go to Joe Kelly who is known as the “ever popular Joe Kelly” for his lighthouse talks in Ocean County; to Al Smith who enlightened maritime enthusiasts at the Calvert Museum Winter Lights Festival in Maryland and also to his fellow PSE&G retirees here in New Jersey; to Bill Schneider who gave an impromptu talk to a lighthouse group in Bay City, Michigan; to Dennis Robins who spoke to this year’s largest crowd, the Corpus Christi Senior Group in Willingboro, NJ; to Mary Beth Doherty who delighted the children at Lafayette School Chatham, NJ, with a presentation and video on lighthouse ghosts; and to Jim and Nancy Cope who provided their impressive lighthouse slide show and gave an interesting talk to the folks at Sea Girt and to the AAUW at the Trenton College Club. Their talk has been described as “rich in compelling detail and highly instructive”.

Obviously, 2006 was a very successful year. However, just in case anyone’s interested, our audience numbers were again at the 1,000 level, but then who’s counting.

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*A NOTE FROM THE NEW COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE CHAIR*

*Anthony J. Albence*

I am honored to carry on the fine work of Yvonne Miller Thies, our wonderful new Society President! Yvonne invited me to join the Outreach team—and now it is my pleasure to take over the coordination of this important work!

The New Jersey Lighthouse Society’s Community Outreach Committee coordinates the public presence of the Society at various events throughout the state and region. The team of volunteers who serve on this committee utilize a variety of materials that engage the public and encourage all to develop an appreciation of our shared nautical heritage. The standard outreach setup includes a three-dimensional diorama of New Jersey’s land- and water-based lights, copies of The Beam newsletter, and a host of additional materials (e.g., info on our annual Lighthouse Challenge). The majority of the events at which we are present have some connection to nautical or maritime concerns—but this is not always the case. Some events are sponsored by other lighthouse societies, others by governmental entities, and still others by non-profit organizations. Any opportunity to spread the word about the lights, though, is always welcomed!

Additional volunteers are also most welcome…and are ESSENTIAL to ensuring the Society’s continued…and, hopefully, increased…presence in the community! Please consider joining the Community Outreach Committee…even if you only are interested in staffing an event close to your home. You need not be an “expert”…just willing to talk up our shared interests! There’s always a knowledgeable person who can “fill in the blanks”!

If your town/county/area has a festival, craft show or any event that might be a potential site for exhibiting, please let me know about it. My postal address is:

*Anthony J. Albence*  
P.O. Box 8184  
Wilmington, DE 19803-8184

You may also contact me via e-mail at: cues20064@verizon.net. I will be happy to make contact with the sponsoring organization and hopefully set up an exhibit. I also invite all of our membership to come out to our exhibits! You’ll be glad you did! Many thanks…and keep the lights shining bright!

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*The Beam*
A trip to the Galapagos Islands off the coast of Ecuador was a dream-come-true vacation for me in late 2003. This first entailed a flight to Guayaquil, then another flight to San Cristobel, where I boarded a live-aboard dive boat for a week of scuba diving among the Galapagos Islands. I was one of nine divers, four from the USA, four from Ireland, and one from Belgium.

The main purpose of the trip was to dive with sea lions, marine iguanas, hammerhead sharks, and hopefully to see a whale shark. I did not get to see a whale shark, but did see the rare Mola mola, a giant 12-15 foot ocean sunfish, which can weigh up to 2-3 tons! Also we had several land excursions guided by naturalists to see wild life: blue-footed boobies, land iguanas, seals, red crabs, and giant tortoises at the Darwin research center.

On diving trips I am always watching for lighthouses. Immediately, in the San Cristobel Harbor I spotted a small red and white lighthouse, named Faro Margarita. Then another on the way out of the harbor, named Faro Lido, built in 1976, 14 meters high. Later at the island of Baltra, when we stopped to fuel the boat there was a pretty red and black tower named Faro Aoeian. Built in 1973, it is 14 meters high.

On an excursion to the island of Bartolome, we hiked up a mountain topped by a little red lighthouse with the legend "Farolete Bartolome", and details of the location. Built in 1989 it is only 4 meters high, but shines for 24 nautical miles due to the elevation of 85 meters. What a beautiful view of the sunset over the famous Pinnacle Rock.

It was a wonderful week! On the return flight to Guayaquil, a fellow passenger told me that she had visited a lighthouse there, so of course I decided to do the same. I arrived at my hotel 5pm Sunday evening, dropped all my luggage and dive gear with the bellman, and grabbed a taxi right away! “Take me to the lighthouse” brought me to the bottom of a very high hill festooned with many colorful shops and cafes along both sides of a wide stone stairway meandering up the hill. Everything was so neat and clean.

From the road you could see a veeery tiny lighthouse at the top. I was puzzled by the crowds of people there so late, (not tourists) all seemed to be local families. There was a carnival atmosphere all around. Vendors with various foods, fried bananas were tasty!

The steps each had a number plate, in all there were 444 in varied flights to the level of the “Santa Ana Lighthouse”. Flags flying and crowds of people all around. Long lines waiting to climb the lighthouse. There is a limit to the number of people allowed in the lighthouse at one time, I’m guessing about 30-40. Soldiers also impose a time limit, about 30 minutes. At the top you could see the walkway around the lantern room just filled with families waving to those below. I have never seen anything like this.

Inside the lighthouse there are 52 steps to the lantern room. Beautiful stained glass windows with sun steaming through, degrees of longitude stenciled around the tower wall, as well as maps. Now I ran out of film and had to go back down the 52 tower steps as well as down 200 of the stone steps to a shop for more film. It is not easy to get film, between the language barrier, and the differences in film boxes. Anyway, I got the film and climbed back up 200 steps to again wait on line to climb the tower. Now it is really dark, the flags have been taken down. The lantern room windows have twisted vertical astragals with gothic arches above each pane. The lens reflects on all.

There is also a little white chapel with a cross on the top, many people all around. I shot the entire film roll; these pictures after dark are best. The lighthouse is even more beautiful at night. The lights of the chapel, and the city below are just gorgeous!

Finally, the point of this story is the 2003 Santa Ana Lighthouse stamps!! I bought these stamps to mail postcards during the diving portion of the trip. Only when I was actually at the Santa Ana lighthouse and the little white chapel did I realize that I was at the same location pictured on the postage stamps. What a perfect ending to a great trip!

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THE LIGHTHOUSE !

1) South & North Mole
2) Europa Point
3) Gibb’s Hill
4) Cabo Espiritu Santo
5) Punta Celerain
6) Elbow Cay
7) Rubjerg Fyr
8) Inishowen Head
9) South Stack
10) Tranoy Fyr

A) Jutland, Denmark
B) Hamaroy, Norway
C) Cozumel, Mexico
D) Holyhead, Wales
E) Freemantle, Australia
F) Gibraltar
G) Southampton, Bermuda
H) Strait of Magellan, Chile
I) Abaco Island, Bahamas
J) County Donegal, Ireland

Answers on Page 9
The Colors of the Lighthouse

Nancy Craven

Six ethnically diverse friends meet every Friday on the grounds of the historic Absecon Lighthouse in Atlantic City, to play football, 'lighthouse tag', and other childhood games. In between games, they would make up stories about the lighthouse keepers (maybe even ghosts?) who used to work there.

One Friday they hurried to the lighthouse after school to find that a big fence had been erected around the property. One of the workers explained to them that the lighthouse was being repaired and would be painted to one of its former colors.

On Monday when the children returned to school, and told their teacher about the high fence, she challenged them to each draw a picture of the finished lighthouse, with the colors they thought it would be when painted.

Each child came up with a different picture – brick, blue and white, orange and black, red and white, at night with the light lit, and rainbow. In early spring, a tour guide from the lighthouse came to talk with the children. They showed him their pictures, and he told the children that all of them were right, and all of them were wrong! How could this be? You will have to read this delightful book to find the answer to that puzzling question.

The author, Elinor A. Veit, included many interesting historical facts in this whimsical book about Absecon Lighthouse. She and her husband are frequent volunteers at the lighthouse and are members of the New Jersey Lighthouse Society. Illustrator of the book is Krishna Mathias. The book, written on the 4th-6th grade level, can be purchased thru NJLHS Ways & Means.

Photo Contest 2007

Cindy Mitzen

It's time once again for our member's annual amateur photo contest. The categories are as follows:

- NJ lighthouses;
- National lighthouses;
- International lighthouses;
- Lighthouses in Black and White;
- Winner's Circle

Those in the Winner's Circle may submit 2 lighthouse photographs of any type in the Winner's Circle. You may also submit one photo in the Lighthouse in black and white category. Postcards were mailed out in February as reminders to all members of the Winner's Circle. Any other NJLHS member may submit up to 3 photographs in any category or combination of categories.

Who's in the Winner's Circle? Anyone who was in last year's Winner's Circle for the first time is still in the Winner's Circle. If this is your second year in the Winner's Circle and you do not win a first, second, or third place this year, you will drop into the general contest.

How do you get in the Winner's Circle? Anyone member of NJLHS who is an amateur photographer. What is an amateur? For the photo contest, you are considered an amateur if you don't sell your photos or make a profit from them. This is a fun "lighthouse" photo contest not a "Photo Contest". The best technical picture may not place because our photos are judged by the general membership. And we all know lighthouse people look at lighthouse photos differently than the rest of the world.

All pictures must have a registration slip with them. The photographer's name should not be anywhere on the picture. The lighthouse in the picture may be identified. Please feel free to make copies of the entry form, more blank forms will be available at the meeting for each contestant to fill out if needed. You will notice an area on the entry form to sign giving NJLHS permission to publish your picture on our web site.

Jim Woodward, who has been doing the assessment of the state's lense, will be our feature speaker. If you have any lens pictures you would like to share with the membership please bring them along and we will set up a display. (Not a contest.)

Now, on to more exciting news this year! I have made arrangements with Pat Alcoro at the Sandy Hook Keeper's house to display the winners of this year's contest there. They will be displayed in the media room (where the kitchen used to be) for the month of April.

Thank you to all those who have volunteered to help with the photo contest as registrars, etc. I can still use more help, please show up early and see me before the meeting and I will get every one set up.

Any questions call me at 908-281-6879, if you get the machine, leave a message and I'll get back to you.

NJLHS 2007 Member's Annual Amateur Photo Contest Entry Blank

Name: __________________________________________ Phone # (     ) __________________________
Address: _________________________________________________________________________________
City/State/Zip:___________________________________________________________________________

CATEGORY:
New Jersey L/H_____ National L/H_____ L/H in B & W_____ International L/H_____ Winner's Circle____

TITLE OF PHOTO: _______________________________________________________________________

Writing 'yes' here gives permission to the NJLHS to publish my picture on their web site. ___________
Signature _____________________________________________________________________________

The Beam
CALENDAR OF EVENTS
Faith Giamboi

Send the necessary information to njlhsevents@netzero.net as an attached “MS Word” document or inline text. The Beam is published 4 times a year—March, June, September and December. Information must be received at least 8 weeks prior to publication to be included in the next issue. If you have any questions, call Faith Giamboi (732)580-0155.

PLEASE NOTE: If no specific time is listed, you should call before heading out. Some special events require advance reservations. There may be additional events not listed below.

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absecon</td>
<td>Thurs-Mon (thru June)</td>
<td>Tower &amp; House</td>
<td>11-4</td>
<td>(609)449-1360 $5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sat March 24</td>
<td>Murder Mystery</td>
<td>7pm</td>
<td>(609)449-1360 call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sun April 15</td>
<td>Teacher Appreciation</td>
<td>11-4</td>
<td>(609)449-1360 call</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sun May 6</td>
<td>Arthritis Walk Registration</td>
<td>8:30am</td>
<td>(609)449-1360 call</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tue May 15</td>
<td>Front Porch Day</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>(609)449-1360 call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fri June 15</td>
<td>Anniversary &amp; Wine Tasting</td>
<td>5:30pm</td>
<td>(609)449-1360 call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnegat</td>
<td>Wed-Sun</td>
<td>Tower</td>
<td>9-3:30</td>
<td>(609)494-2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April 4-Oct 31</td>
<td>Lighthouse Open</td>
<td>10am-4:30pm</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sat April 14</td>
<td>Piping Plovers</td>
<td>9-12noon</td>
<td>(609)494-2014 call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape May</td>
<td>Tower &amp; Visitors Center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(800)275-4278 call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Point</td>
<td>Third Sun Apr-Oct</td>
<td>Tower &amp; House</td>
<td>1-4pm</td>
<td>(856)691-5934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June 9 &amp; 10</td>
<td>Bay Days</td>
<td>12-4pm</td>
<td>(856)691-5934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hereford</td>
<td>Wed-Sun-mid May</td>
<td>House &amp; Grounds</td>
<td>10-3pm</td>
<td>(609)522-4520 $4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daily May-Sept</td>
<td>House &amp; Grounds</td>
<td>9-3pm</td>
<td>(609)522-4520 $4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Hook</td>
<td>Sat &amp; Sun Apr-Jun</td>
<td>Climb the Tower</td>
<td>12-4:30</td>
<td>(732)872-5970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sat &amp; Sun Apr-Jun</td>
<td>Keepers House</td>
<td>12-5pm</td>
<td>(732)872-5970</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekdays Apr-Jun</td>
<td>Climb the Tower</td>
<td>1:30-4:30</td>
<td>(732)872-5970</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekdays Apr-Jun</td>
<td>Keepers House</td>
<td>1:4-3:0pm</td>
<td>(732)872-5970</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sat June 9</td>
<td>Lighthouse Day</td>
<td>12-5</td>
<td>(732)872-5970</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Numerous Events</td>
<td>Visit <a href="http://www.nps.gov/gate">www.nps.gov/gate</a> or call</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sea Girt</td>
<td>House &amp; Tower</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tincum</td>
<td>4/21, 5/19, 6/16</td>
<td>Tower</td>
<td>10-3pm</td>
<td>(856)423-1152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/22, 5/20, 6/17</td>
<td>Tower</td>
<td>12-4pm</td>
<td>(856)423-1152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wed July 4</td>
<td>Fireworks</td>
<td>9pm-7</td>
<td>(856)423-1152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuckerton</td>
<td>Seaport Events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(609)296-8868 call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twin Lights</td>
<td>Wed-Sun</td>
<td>Tower &amp; Museum</td>
<td>10-4:30pm</td>
<td>(732)872-1814 call</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Get Ready for Lighthouse Challenge 2007!**

**Doreen Berson and Laura Portée**

Planning has begun for the 8th Annual New Jersey Lighthouse Challenge, which once again will be held during the third weekend in October: Saturday, October 20th and Sunday, October 21st. Since the puzzle souvenirs were such a hit last year, we are using the same idea for this year but with antique photos of the lighthouses. In addition, the Challenge Committee has been discussing ways to “make the Challenge more challenging” and is looking into the possibility of adding another site to the New Jersey Lighthouse Challenge for either this year or next year. We’ll keep you posted!

Back by popular demand are the Night Climbs; this year at FIVE lighthouses: Sandy Hook, Absecon, Cape May, Tincum and for the first time: Tucker’s Island! These lighthouses will be open for an additional 2 hours - from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm - on Saturday night. (The other 6 Challenge sites will close at 6:00 pm on Saturday.) Based on last year’s attendance, you will need to get to these lighthouses early if you want to climb them during the Night Climb hours! *(We promise that things will run more smoothly this year.)*

Now that the wheels are in motion, **WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!** If you are interested in volunteering during the weekend of the Challenge please sign-up.

As has been done in previous years, you will need to sign up even if you volunteered last year. Laura Portée, who is acting as Volunteer Coordinator this year, has arranged for the Volunteer Sign-up form to be posted to the Challenge page of the web site. It is a pdf version which you can print, fill out and either email or snail-mail to Laura directly. In addition, there will be a Volunteer Sign-up table at the March meeting. Be sure to stop by and volunteer!

For those interested in completing the Triple Crown of Lighthouse Challenges (Long Island – Maryland – New Jersey), the 3rd Annual Long Island Lighthouse Challenge will be held May 19th and 20th. For more information, visit their Chapter web site at: www.LILighthouseSociety.org.

The Maryland Lighthouse Challenge is celebrating their 5th year this year. Their event will be held September 15th and 16th. Nine lighthouses and one lightship in two days! New this year will be an optional three-hour cruise out of Annapolis on Friday, September 14th to see the Chesapeake Bay icon and National Historic Landmark, Thomas Point Shoal Lighthouse, Sandy Point Lighthouse and Baltimore Harbor Light. For more information on the Maryland Challenge and Friday’s cruise, visit: www.cheslights.org or call 410-437-0741.

Whether you plan to participate or volunteer, we look forward to seeing you “on the Challenge”!
Happy New Year to all our members! As Yvonne mentioned, I have signed on as the new Chairperson of Programs. I want to thank Yvonne for her many years of service in this position. I have some big shoes to fill, but I look forward to the challenge!

Suggestions on meeting places and after meeting activities are always welcome. Please feel free to email me at jnbfranks@yahoo.com.

If you wish to bring goodies, please contact Martha Brown at 609-877-0134. Please remember that we are bringing coffee ready to serve. In order to continue this, donations are greatly appreciated. We really don’t want to go back to using the old coffee urn that takes forever to perk.

Our next meeting will be in Sea Girt, NJ. This is also the big photo contest, so don’t forget to bring your lighthouse pictures for the contest!!!

DATE: March 31, 2007
PLACE: St. Uriel’s Church Hall, 219 Philadelphia & 3rd Avenues, Sea Girt, NJ 08750

ITINERARY:
10:30 am Hospitality will be served.
11:00 am Meeting called to order.
   Our guest speaker, Mr. Jim Woodward, renowned Fresnel lens preservationist and owner of The Lighthouse Consultant, LLC, will be introduced at this time.
12:00 pm Lunch. Please bring your lunch with you. You may also use this time to vote for your favorite photos entered in the NJLHS 2007 March Photo Contest.
12:30 pm Presentation. Mr. Jim Woodward will give a presentation on the Fresnel lens assessment project he is currently performing for the New Jersey Lighthouse Society and he will also speak about lens preservation in general.
1:30 pm Final voting on the photos entered in the Annual March Photo Contest.
1:45 pm Announcement of photo contest winners.
2:00 pm Meeting adjournment and tours of Sea Girt Lighthouse.

DIRECTIONS: To St. Uriel’s Church: Garden State Parkway exit 98 to I-195/Rt-138 East. Right on New Bedford Rd. South, crossing Allaire Rd. (Rt. 524 and Rt. 35) to Ocean Rd. Left on Ocean Rd. to 7th Ave./Rt. 71, (7-11 store on corner). Right on 7th Ave.; cross over the bridge and water to Beacon Blvd. Left on Beacon Blvd., right on 3rd Ave. to Philadelphia Ave. and to the Church.

DIRECTIONS: To the Sea Girt Lighthouse: Back up 3rd Ave. to Beacon Blvd. and make a right to the lighthouse.

RECAP: WINTER MEETING/DECEMBER 2006
Yvonne Miller Thies

The December meeting was a very lively meeting with many activities. 114 members attended. The Preservation Committee held both a Silent Auction and a Chinese Auction. The Membership Committee conducted an early membership renewal that was very successful and the Ways & Means Committee had a great selection of merchandise for Christmas shopping.

After the meeting and elections, Bob Uhrmann and Phil Burr, members of the Friends of Ludlam Beach Lighthouse, gave a presentation on Ludlam Beach Light’s past and their group’s effort to preserve and restore the lighthouse.

Next on the agenda for the day was a visit to Cape May Lighthouse and the Holiday Social at Cape May Point Fire Hall. As usual, our members rose to the occasion and were very generous at the lighthouse gift shop. Thank you also to those who brought goodies for hospitality and the social. We had too much food, but it was all delicious. A special thanks to Al and Betty Smith for filling in for the Brown’s for hospitality and to Sue Mazza and her crew for hosting the Holiday Social. It was a memorable meeting for me since it was my last as Programs Chairperson, a very special job for me over the years. I sincerely hope the membership will support Judi Franks as she takes on the role of Programs Chair.

Answers to the puzzle on Page 6:
1-E, 2-F, 3-G, 4-H, 5-C, 6-I, 7-A, 8-J, 9-D, 10-B
What’s the Story on the NJLHS Lens Study

Brett Franks

For over a year you have heard and read about our Society doing an assessment of all NJ Fresnel Lenses. Wondering what this means and why the Preservation Committee is doing this? Fair questions, I’m going to try to explain. We are trying to accomplish several things. Our first goal is to catalog all the lenses we have in NJ and their current condition. Probably doesn’t sound too impressive, does it? Sounds like a relatively simple task and one that any knowledgeable lighthouse enthusiast in the state could do from memory. Well it’s not quite that easy.

What we are actually doing is putting together a plan for restoration and preservation of these lenses so that future generations can appreciate the art and science that went into building them. This first step, as in any good historical restoration, is to develop a plan based on what you have to start with. The assessment is our road map to the future. It tells us the actions and decisions needed to keep these pieces of history in good condition. So the assessment evaluates and records three things: what condition is the structure of the lens in; what condition is the lens housed in; and what needs to be done to ensure the preservation of the lens?

Very few of these icons exist today, which is a testament to the fragile and brittle nature of the glass. But luckily, the current lens inventory of our state is impressive. I’ve positively located 16 classic Fresnels in our state and I’m still tracking down a few more leads—and just about every manufacturer of lenses supplied to the USLHS is represented! Problem is the location and condition of the lenses is as diverse as the makers and models. So our collection is a very valuable piece of history, but not the most easily accessed. That’s another thing we hope to remedy. Regardless, we need to be diligent in caring for these rare artifacts and protecting them from damage you might not even consider.

Here are a couple of examples that most people think are very safe.

Ever notice the small lens in the base of the Cape May Lighthouse on display? That lens is from a range light, but which one we don’t yet know. A quick look says it’s being well cared for, and generally that’s true. But, if you look closely, you see that small vibrations from all those feet going up the tower are actually damaging that lens. This is a real concern considering it’s a rare American-made Fresnel. The prisms in the lens’ bullseye are ground to fit perfectly together when properly aligned. These prisms have moved out of that alignment over the years and now are just loose enough to shake. That makes the very brittle edges hit each other and fracture small pieces off. Or worse, eventually a prism could fall out and shatter. This happens with many lenses, unfortunately.

We found another rare American-made Fresnel at home on the Coast Guard Training Center in Cape May. This, too, has the vibration problem from thousands of recruits marching by day after day.

Who would think that the lens—proudly displayed by the Coast Guardsmen who know its history and value best—is being damaged every day by those same people. Obviously this condition is unknown to both groups who are trying to protect and preserve these works of art. This is what we are trying to help them with. Both of these can be stabilized and protected with relative ease, and we hope to help make that happen someday soon. But other lenses have far more problems, and in contrast, may have far more impact.

An example of the restoration effort plans we’re gathering from this work is the lens from Finn’s Point Lighthouse. Currently the lens lies at the base of the tower as seen in the accompanying photo.

Efforts like this aren’t pipe dreams. Take the example of the Cape Hatteras Fresnel—lost for years, it’s slowly being brought back to its true glory. Our expert is the same man heading up that impossible job, and he’ll talk more about that project and what he’s finding in our statewide adventure at our Society’s Spring meeting. So please come out and hear from one of the last true Coast Guard Lampist trained experts, it should be a very interesting presentation.
The Power of Light–Part 1

Brett Franks

What do you think of when I say ‘Fresnel Lens’? Lighthouses naturally come to mind as well as light, beam, glass, fragile and rare. All good answers but not the one I’m thinking of. Mine has more to do with Napoleonic Wars, France and England, industrial espionage, technology, tariffs and entrepreneurs. Curious as to how I make this link between a Fresnel lens’ shining beam of benevolence and the conflagration of 19th century Europe? I think of one word, I think of power.

Possibly in present day society, it’s hard to equate a lens with cutting edge technology, but it was. Today we have computers, jet airplanes, nuclear submarines and cell phones. This is technology, not some glass and brass cousin to a chandelier. Well, that depends on your point of reference. Ours begins in 1815. This country has just ended a war that resulted from, in very simplistic terms, lost profits by big business. It ended in a stalemate here but over in France things were a bit different.

For Augustine Fresnel, he had found himself on the on the wrong side of Napoleon and out of work. So without our modern wonder of television to suck up his idle time, Auggie tinkered with his hobby. After Waterloo, Fresnel returned to his government job, but he’d made some significant strides in understanding the wave theory of light. Between 1815 and 1819, he had come up with the mathematical model on which the lens would be based. In four years of work, during a period when light, heat and power in your home was provided by fires you built and tended, Fresnel had come up with a scientific technology that you could compare with the wireless phones we all tote around today.

In 1821, Fresnel set about building his prototype lens. He gets the firm of SaintGobain to manufacture the glass. These were the people responsible for the “Hall of Mirrors” in Louis XIV palace at Versailles. They are the top manufacturer, and work for the King. This is how important this discovery is. Fresnel is a government employee; he’s not paying for this on his salary. The French government is developing this lens because it has a far reaching effect on things very important to a world power. And that’s what France was at the time. Equate this to you dreaming up a way to melt ice using sound. You did it because you hate scraping your car windows on winter mornings. Now President Bush says “Good idea, citizen. I’ll have Lockheed build a prototype for you.”

That is what this event was like. We’re not talking about a “Pet Rock” here that’s value makes you rich in the flash of an eye, then (pardon the pun) drops like a stone. You just see not having to scrape your windows; the government sees how commerce can benefit from this. Airplanes and airports de-iced, roads cleared, power lines cleared, waterways always passable and crops never freeze. And as commerce benefits, there’s more money and money is power. So Fresnel’s invention was supported by the government because of what it represented in money.

If all the lens did was to prove Fresnel’s math correct and save a sailor’s life, no one would remember him. Not true? Then who invented the life ring, the life preserver, the breeches buoy? Need I go on? It’s the fact that his discovery could and would affect commerce that made it a valuable thing, and therefore something to be protected and kept for France. Okay, so if the lens was this great money generating item, why do we have them in America? Well, why do we sell jet fighters to Kuwait? That’s the power end of the equation. We can sell it because we know no one else can reproduce it. And that gives us the ability to use our technology as an enticement. Side with us and we’ll share, trade with us and we’ll both get rich.

To be continued in the next issue of The Beam.

The Bergen Point Lighthouse was taken out of service in 1949. Built of wood, it cost $4,969 to construct and had six rooms. The lantern room extended from the center of the 2½ story keeper’s house and was 54-feet high. The tower had a fixed white light that could be seen for fifteen miles. It was located on a sixty foot caisson just fifty feet over the New Jersey-New York state line just south of Bayonne, NJ and north of Staten Island where the Kill Van Kull and Newark Bay/Passaic River merge. The Kill (Dutch for water channel) connected the lower NY Harbor and Newark Bay and the industrial towns along the Passaic River in New Jersey.

An 1853 report stated the tower was in sad shape and should be replaced with a more suitable building. Congress approved $20,000 for work on the Bergen Point Lighthouse, the Passaic and Corner Stake lights. Work started in 1857 and was completed in 1859. The 2½ story brick house had an attached granite tower that was also 54 feet high. During its service, the Bergen Point Lighthouse had thirteen keepers, two of which were women. Hannah McDonald replaced her husband John when he died in 1873 and served until 1879. The other woman was Francis Kelly who was assigned as an acting keeper for 30 days in 1902.

The Bergen Point Lighthouse was taken out of service in 1949 with the widening to the Kill Van Kull. The lighthouse was destroyed and it was replaced by a pole light that is still in use today. To find out more about the Lost Lighthouses of New Jersey, go to the NJLHS web site at: www.njlhs.org.
The Morris Island Lighthouse off the Charleston SC coast will have work done to stabilize the tower before it falls into the sea. The US Army Corp of Engineers, in October, requested bids to repair the foundation. When built in 1876, the lighthouse sat 2,700 feet from the water. Today the tower is 1,600 feet from the shore and sitting on what is left of Morris Island. A cofferdam will be built around the foundation so a concrete cap can be put on the foundation. The second phase will be pouring grout between the timbers and bricks. The project will be paid for by public funds and the lighthouse group, Save the Light, is raising money for the project.

Montauk Point Lighthouse, at the end of Long Island, will be receiving some erosion protection in the near future. The Army Corp of Engineers will receive $12 million if federal funds to build a stone revetment. Montauk Point Lighthouse was built in 1796 and was 300 feet away from the pounding surf. Today the tower is a mere 100 feet away. The Coast Guard put 400 feet of beach erosion protection in 1992. The project will put another 840 feet of protection and cost $14 million dollars, with the other $2 million coming from New York State and the Montauk Historical Society. Bids for the work have to go out and the work will begin in 2009.

Cape Disappointment Lighthouse, in Washington State, will be handed over to the Washington State Parks sometime in 2007. Less than a mile walk from the shore and sitting on the foundation. The second phase will be pouring grout between the timbers and bricks. The project will be paid for by public funds and the lighthouse group, Save the Light, is raising money for the project.

Another nearby Rhode Island lighthouse is in the news, Beavertail Lighthouse. Plans were announced to expand the museum by four additional rooms and a small theater in the old keeper's quarters; the caretaker quarters will move to the second floor of the building; the entrance will be moved to the rear of the building; and the oil house will also be used by the museum. The tower, built in 1856, will also get some needed repairs. New double-hung windows will be put in the tower and keeper's houses. Other work needed is to fix broken steps and railings, corrosion and water getting into the tower.

Somewhat closer to home—the lightship Nantucket—is up for sale! The cost of this relic is $1.00. It was built in 1936 to replace the older Nantucket lightship that was rammed, cut in half and sunk by the R.M.S. Olympic on May 15, 1934, killing seven of the eleven crewmembers while on station marking Nantucket Shoals. There is a catch, the current owners, the National Lighthouse Museum, wants it to go to a group that can maintain it at roughly $25,000 a year. It also needs to be put in dry dock so work can be done on its hull for approximately $150,000.

The New Canal Lighthouse, in New Orleans, was severely damaged during Hurricane Katrina and was standing up by just the second floor stairway. Hurricane Rita did some more damage to the structure. Then in November, the building collapsed. The second floor was partially intact but the rest of the building was just kindling wood. The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation has taken on the unprecedented task of rebuilding the 1901 building. After a year of bureaucratic headaches and red tape, the Foundation received a five year lease from the Coast Guard to rebuild the former building. It's going to be a $2.7 million project. After the site is cleaned up, the former lighthouse needs to be stabilized before anymore damage is done—which will cost $75,000.

Michigan’s famous Holland Harbor Lighthouse, known as “Bid Red,” was given to the Holland Harbor Lighthouse Historical Commission on February 8 of this year. Located on Lake Michigan it marked the entrance to Black Lake and the town of Holland. It is the thirty-sixth lighthouse, and the twelfth in Michigan to be transferred by the Coast Guard to a non-profit group thru the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act of 2000. It was built in 1932 to replace an 1872 lighthouse. Abandoned by the Coast Guard in the 1970’s, the local citizens formed the Holland Harbor Lighthouse Commission to take care of the town’s icon along with windmills and tulips.

The City of New York has selected a developer—but will not confirm it—to develop the 10 acre site of the former home of the US Lighthouse Service depot on Staten Island. After several setbacks and changes to the zoning issues, the site will be developed with new housing, shopping and the National Lighthouse Museum. More to come about this later.
How goes, folks? It's me again—Brick Towers, your lighthouse detective back with another case I could use your help on. This one hit me like a five gallon oil can from three flights up. I had been working late, combing the stacks of reference material we have when I found a story from 1882 called "Brief Summer Rambles near Philadelphia, (during the summer of 1881)" by Joel Cook. Being somewhat a rambling man myself, I sat down and perused the contents, reminiscing on bygone summers of my misspent mid-life crisis.

Under the section on Atlantic City, I was attracted by the heading "The Great Beacon". Reading through it I came upon the following passage: "About twenty-five years ago a huge package was sold at auction in New York for unpaid custom duties, and brought about two hundred dollars. It had been consigned in France to a person who had never called for it. Being opened, an immense Fresnel lens of the highest order was found, and this is now the Absecon light. It had cost the government about eleven thousand dollars, and they thought it was lost."

Where had this story come from? Twenty-five years would put us at about 1856, which is the right timeframe for when Absecon got its lens. Could this story be true? Hard to believe a shipment of something as rare and valuable, as well as highly-coveted by both the government and military would not be better tracked and handled. But if something like this did happen, it makes sense that very few would know about it and those responsible might try to keep this a secret. Knowing stable leadership was in place by 1852 when the change from Stephen Pleasonton’s reign with the Lighthouse Establishment ended and the US Lighthouse Board took over, I can’t think it was caused by some breakdown in communication during that transfer. And knowing how few Fresnel lenses were actually on American shores in the late 1850’s, makes this lost package story even more difficult to swallow.

Another thing that comes down on the side of this being a tall tale is that most lenses were not shipped in one piece. They were far too fragile to survive the transport across a state, let alone across the ocean. In fact, the Absecon history does note that the lens arrived there in multiple crates. But that could easily have been from the lighthouse depot repacking it after the Lampist had aligned the prisms. On the surface, nothing appeared to give any credibility to the story. Even if record keeping wasn’t very reliable (and resembled the 1980’s DMV process) would that account for something like this being lost and sold at auction? I was starting to wonder if maybe this path of negativity was becoming my own convenient truth. There had to be some evidence that would substantiate this report, it’s stated so ‘matter of factly’ in the story that it seems common knowledge.

I headed over to the other side of the fence to see if I could rebuild what I’d just torn down. There are some interesting incidents that make this seem rather plausible. Losing a lens is something we can point to a direct piece of evidence on. Several lenses were lost during the Civil War. The most famous of them, the Hatteras lens, wasn’t found until recently and it had been a case of lost paperwork and bureaucratic indifference. The book by Kevin Duffus outlines this story very well. But that’s 1865 and far different circumstances. There’s also a very well noted event of the government not paying the shipping duty on Fresnel lens glass. That event chronicled the emergence of the American-made Fresnel lens. But it was in the late 1890’s if I recall correctly. I might be rebuilding, but believe me brother, this was looking like a house of cards.

I needed a lead, something I could bite into and hang on for the ride. But where was I going to find it. I turned to the lighthouse itself. Absecon is celebrating its’ 150th anniversary this year. And who would know best if the lens was lost but the man responsible for building it, George Meade. Could his papers and journals give some validity to the lens story? Only if we get lucky. However there’s a good chance luck is in our favor. Lt. Meade (lieutenant at that time, he didn’t get to be a general until the Civil War rolled around) was transferred from Absecon before it was complete.

Records mention he was shifted from the project due to delays with material receipts and sent to work on another lighthouse project. The bricks, mortar, and cast iron components of the lights were procured in the region. It would be doubtful that these items were the delay. But there’s a very good chance that if the Lighthouse Board thought the lens was lost it would move the chief engineer to another building project while they scrambled to reorder a replacement from France. It might also explain why Pensacola Light built in 1858 got a fixed first order Fresnel lens very similar to Absecon. And also why Pensacola suddenly got an additional $30,000.00 budget increase to complete the tower in 1856.

This is where I need your help. Can you find the missing pieces to prove this story, or the facts that prove it’s just a fabrication by the author for added interest? Do a little digging and see what you can find. The answers are there, just help me find them and wrap up this case. ‘Til next time…BT
Conover Beacon

The first meeting of the Conover Beacon Friends Society was held February 24th, 2007. The meeting was held at Croydon Hall in Middletown Township (in the Middletown Township Complex). Local residents from Middletown, Leonardo, and the Keansburg area as well as concerned lighthouse enthusiasts from throughout the state attended the launching of this society. This first organizational meeting outlined the future plans for preservation and promotion of the light.

Recently added to the ‘Lighthouse Digest’s Doomsday List’, Conover Beacon is a cast iron range light that was part of the Chapel Hill Range. That channel range runs from the tip of Sandy Hook to the town of Leonardo. This same tower once served as the Front Range for the Waackaack Range also located in Raritan Bay. Before being moved to its’ current location in Middletown, the light stood in Keansburg and was known as Point Comfort Light or Bayside Beacon. This lighthouse is the only one of this design remaining in existence. It is critical that it be saved.

Anyone interested in helping to save Conover and would like to join the Friends Society, please contact Dennis Robbins at (609)871-4425 or email him at DenRob45@aol.com.

Finn’s Point Lighthouse

In early January members of the NJLHS Board of Directors met with Virginia Rettig, Deputy Refuge Manager for Cape May National Wildlife Refuge and the Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge where Finn’s Point light is located. The closing of the lighthouse was discussed along with efforts for this year’s Challenge, the Fresnel lens assessment and the continued care for the lighthouse. Ideas were exchanged about friends groups working to maintain and open the light as well as supporting the mission of the wildlife refuge. Overall the meeting went well and a good foundation was set for continued interaction. The best news to come out of this meeting was a commitment that the wildlife refuge would have the light open for the 2007 Challenge to visit as well as climb.

Helping Hands Clean Up Project

The Preservation Committee plans for a Spring Clean Up event at various NJ lighthouses is well on its way. Tentative date for the event is May 5th and locations will be decided before our March meeting. Please consider helping out and sign up at our table during the meeting or on the web site. This first time out we’ll be doing some light landscaping, house cleaning and possibly painting. So if you can spare a bit of time from your own chore list to help us out, it would be greatly appreciated.

A Message from Membership…

Mary Beth Doherty, Membership Chair; email address: NJLHSMember1@aol.com

Thank you to those that have already renewed. For those of you who haven’t, this will be your last issue of The Beam. Please check your records, and if you haven’t paid, please mail in your dues so you receive the June issue.

Meeting Attendees:

There were 114 members and guests who signed in at our December meeting at Cape May. Please remember to sign the book—we want to make sure there are enough seats for you at future meetings!

Membership Numbers:

At the deadline for this issue, the membership numbers are as follows:

Single Memberships = 217
Family Memberships = 255 x 2 = 510
Total Members = 727*

*The membership number is always low this time of year due to the fact that renewals are still coming in.

New Members:

The following members have joined our Society since the December issue. Please note that if you become a member after the deadline for The Beam, you will be listed in the following issue. If you happen to meet them at a future meeting, please welcome them!

Graf, Beatrice Walsh & Frank, Bensalem, PA
Siegel, Howard, Milford, CT
Kovacs, Charles, Bloomfield, NJ
Drozdowski, John & Jean, Monroe Twp., NJ
Sargeant, Bruce & Jennifer, Landing, NJ
Herman, Glenn & Linda, Levittown, PA
Chambers & Family, Trish, Barnegat, NJ
Pikowski, TJ, Denise, Josephine & Danielle, Mahwah, NJ

Wall, Robert, Tinton Falls, NJ
Groff, Lynn, Atco, NJ
Armbruster, Bob & Judy, Mt. Laurel, NJ
Burger, Lisa & Joe, Wallington, NJ
Zasadinski, Gene & Lorraine, Clifton, NJ
McEachin, Jr., Michael, Little Egg Harbor, NJ
Slater, Helen, Morrisville, PA
Wolfson, Nina & Bob, Guilford, CT

Nametags:

We have a new format for the nametags. They are $6.00/ea. including shipping & handling. You have a choice of backings—standard pin, military clutches (2) or magnetic (for $1.00 extra). Orders are placed four times a year—after the meetings. If interested, stop by the Membership Table for an application.

WHAT’S NEW IN WAYS & MEANS

Sheila Hines, Anthony Albence and I went to a gift show in Reading, PA and found some new and exciting lighthouse items; which will be introduced throughout the year.

As I mentioned at the December meeting, I am again collecting recipes for the next edition of our cookbook. The recipe form is on the web site at: http://www.njlhs.org and you can download it. The categories are Appetizers & Beverages, Soups & Salads, Vegetables & Side Dishes, Main Dishes, Breads & Rolls, Desserts, Cookies & Candy, and This & That. Ignore the PS on the back of the form about needing the recipe in 5 days; I will collect recipes until I have 150 recipes; so look thru your cookbooks. And send me some good recipes.

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### NJLHS ORDER FORM

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<th>Color/Size</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<td>Lights &amp; Hereford Inlet</td>
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<td>S/H $2.00</td>
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<td>Phone: 609-877-1393</td>
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<td>Feel free to call or email for color/sizes and availability</td>
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**Make check payable to: NJLHS**

Visit the New Jersey Lighthouse Society web site to see many other items for sale

www.njlhs.org

Mail check & order form to:

Marty Hudspeth
15 Petunia Lane
Willingboro, NJ 08046

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**SUPPORT THE GOALS OF YOUR LIGHTHOUSE SOCIETY**

**A SAMPLE OF SOME OF THE ITEMS FOR SALE**

1 @ $.50 & .50 S/H, 3 for $1.00 & $1.00 S/H

Weathering the Storms signed by Terry Webb $13.00 S/H $4.00 ea. add. book $1.50

Magnets Absecon, Twin Lights, Hereford Inlet & Cape May $4.00 ea. S/H $1.00

80 Piece Puzzle Available: Absecon, Barnegat, Twin Lights & Hereford Inlet Art work by Donna Elias $2.50 ea. S/H $2.00

Nail Files $2.00 ea. & S/H $.75 (the design doesn’t wear off) Assorted NJ lighthouses

1-2, 3 or more $1.50

Assorted NJ lighthouses Scramble Squares 3 puzzle choices Great Lakes, Outer Banks or Mixed Lighthouses $8.00 ea $2.00 S/H ea. add $1.00

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In This Issue


Save the Dates:

June 30
Tuckerton Seaport

September 29
Twin Lights

October 20-21
NJ Lighthouse Challenge

December TBD
Philadelphia area

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE BEAM IS MAY 19th