

NEW JERSEY LIGHTHOUSE SOCIETY
General Meeting
March 21, 1998
Fort Wadsworth, Staten Island, New York

President Tom Laverty called the meeting to order at 11:20 a.m. Minutes of the December 6, 1997, meeting were distributed to the members present. Ray Vliet moved, Elinor Veit seconded, approval of the minutes as submitted; motion carried.

Treasurer Debbie Megonigal reported the following financial activity for the previous quarter: receipts, \$15,590.32; disbursements, \$13,795.25; balance on hand, \$6,671.13; Preservation Fund balance, \$8,772.02; Memorial Fund balance, \$2,311.32. Marge Ridolfi moved, Loretta Wilkins seconded, acceptance of the treasurer's report; motion carried.

Audit of NJLHS Books. Al Smith reported that a committee comprised of Jean and Al Burgess, Yvonne Miller, Steve Martorano, Betty Smith and himself had examined the books and found all to be "in good order." Rick Weber moved, Marge Ridolfi seconded, that the actions of the committee be approved; motion carried. In other financial matters, the treasurer reminded members that all bills submitted to her for payment must be written under the company letterhead or on a voucher, as provided in the Society bylaws.

National Lighthouse Museum. Chan Graham and Tamara Coombs of the New York Harbor Lights group welcomed us to Staten Island. Chan reported that the old Staten Island Lighthouse Depot is one of the prime locations under consideration for a national lighthouse museum. Visitors would have easy access to the site, and there are many other tourist attractions in the area, he noted. Tom Laverty commented that supporters of the Staten Island site had made an excellent presentation to the steering committee. Selecting the site is the next major step in the process of establishing the museum; committee members will choose from among several locations, including some in New England and one in Michigan.

Sandy Hook Lighthouse. About 40 people attended a recent National Park Service training session for tour volunteers, but more are still needed, Tom Laverty said. Tours will be conducted every Saturday and Sunday from April through November (with the exception of Easter and July 4th.) The Society is awaiting a "memorandum of understanding" from the NPS to take over the keeper's house for a three-year period. The Board will not commit to anything until it is satisfied with all the details, Tom noted. Plans for the building include setting up exhibits and displays and selling lighthouse merchandise; there would also be room for a Society office, library and archives.

Al Smith reported on the work being done at the keeper's house and thanked individuals who had contributed their labors to cleaning and other work there. "We still need painters--we got more scraped than we could paint," Al said. He announced a work day

on March 28 and asked for volunteers to “bring shop vacs” in order to clean the inside of the lighthouse tower from top to bottom.

Lighthouse Preservation. NJLHS has made what Tom Laverty described as “significant contributions to lighthouse preservation around the state.” A donation of \$1,000 was made to Absecon Lighthouse in memory of Ed Renner, a lighthouse enthusiast and father of a Society member. When Mr. Renner died last year, his family and friends wished to have a means of contributing to the preservation of New Jersey lighthouses. This led to the establishment of the Memorial Fund, which grew to more than \$2,000 in donations in Mr. Renner’s memory. Anyone may contribute to the fund in memory of any person.

The Society has also earmarked \$5,000 for Absecon Lighthouse, payable in two annual installments, for education and program development, something they don’t have in their “bricks and mortar fund.” This money comes from the sale of raffle tickets.

The Tuckerton Baymen’s Museum, which is planning a large-scale project that includes a replica of the Tuckerton Lighthouse, received \$1,300 from the Society to have restoration work done on the Fresnel lens from Brandywine Shoals Light. The lens will be installed in the replica when it is completed. Finn’s Point Light near Fort Mott, where NJLHS will hold its June meeting, will receive a \$500 donation from the Preservation Fund.

Absecon Lighthouse. The Atlantic City lighthouse, currently undergoing major renovations, is expected to be open to the public at the end of May, reported Rich Veit, the Society’s liaison to the Inlet Public/Private Association. Yvonne Miller, coordinator for NJLHS Absecon volunteers, said that fewer tour guides are needed for Absecon than for Sandy Hook, and added that seven Society members volunteered in response to an insert in *The Beam*.

Membership. Mary Beth Doherty reported that NJLHS membership currently includes 216 singles and 181 families for a total of 576; 168 memberships have not yet been renewed. One hundred two members and 15 guests were present.

Ways and Means. Committee chairman Al Smith said that new items for sale include lighthouse magnets and Sandy Hook Lighthouse T-shirts and sweatshirts. NJLHS and Sandy Hook pins are expected to be available in September. Al thanked Ruth and Steve Martorano for all their work on behalf of Ways and Means.

Dinner-Dance. Bill Volpe, chairman of a fund-raising dinner-dance planned for April 18 in Atlantic City, said that there is not enough support for the event and urged cancelling it rather than losing more money. When asked why more people did not sign up, members offered the following possible reasons: other lighthouse-related events that weekend, the date too close to the Society-sponsored Maine bus trip, and, most significantly, the cost.

Being held in Atlantic City--which is more expensive than other locations and also would mean an overnight stay for many people--as well as the fact that it was to be a fund-raiser

perhaps made the event cost more than most members wanted to spend, several people commented. Tom Laverty thanked Bill for all his hard work and asked the membership if the idea should be pursued at a future date. The consensus of those present was that they would like such an event to take place but planned with cost and other factors discussed in mind.

Programs and Activities. Yvonne Miller reiterated information in *The Beam* about upcoming meetings. The summer meeting/picnic will be held June 27, 1998 at Fort Mott, Pennsville, NJ. The fall meeting will take place in the vicinity of the Stony Point, NY, park and lighthouse on September 26, 1998; the lighthouse T-shirt/sweatshirt contest is on the agenda. Heislerville, NJ, will be the site of the December 5, 1998, meeting. Society officers will be elected and a visit to East Point Lighthouse, scheduled to begin reconstruction in May, is planned.

“Programs” (Yvonne Miller) and “Activities” (Carole DiNapoli) will soon be combined into one committee with increased participation by the membership. Tom Laverty observed that planning a trip is a lot of work for one person, but when work is shared, it’s “not so bad;” he urged members who have ideas for a cruise or bus trip to make phone calls and find out details before passing on the information to the committee chairperson.

In the past, Yvonne noted, the Society has hesitated to go too far from home because of the cost. But, she added, the most ambitious outing to date--the five-day motorcoach tour of Maine arranged by Carole--was completely sold out. When asked for suggestions for future lighthouse trips, members proposed the following: Lake Champlain, Niagara Falls, Door County (Wisconsin), St. Lawrence Seaway Trail, Long Island and Faulkner Island (Connecticut).

1998 Budget. Treasurer Debbie Megonigal presented the NJLHS budget for the current year--a balanced budget with revenues and expenses of \$44,435. Debbie noted that the budget is approximately \$20,000 more than last year, primarily because of handling the money for the Maine trip. The budget, distributed to those present, includes revenues from membership dues, trips and raffle income, sales, donations and surplus from prior years. Education, Preservation and Administration categories make up the Expenses portion of the budget. The Budget Committee moved, Nancy Craven seconded approval of the budget; motion carried.

Lifetime Membership. The Board has proposed recognition of two members for their efforts on behalf of lighthouses and the Society by awarding them lifetime membership in NJLHS. The honorees are Katherine Van Ahnen, an author well-known for her interest in Cape May Lighthouse, and “Lighthouse Lady” Carole Reily, who has worked for the preservation of the lights of Delaware Bay. Bill Geilfuss moved, Bill Volpe seconded that the women be named life members; the motion was enthusiastically approved.

Members’ Comments. Member Bill Geilfuss congratulated the Society for the money it has spent for lighthouse preservation and suggested that NJLHS go on record as

supporting the image of Barnegat Lighthouse on New Jersey's 25-cent piece; each state will have its own coin in the set of 50. Bill moved, Debbie Megonigal seconded, sending a letter on behalf of our members to Gov. Christie Whitman requesting the Barnegat image; the motion carried. Bill also asked for Society support for the return to our state of the Battleship New Jersey, now located in the state of Washington. This matter was referred to the Board by Tom Laverty, who commented that his "inside sources" are certain that the move will happen.

Another member urged continuing awareness by the Society in funds that may be available through the Interstate Transportation Enhancement Act, known as Ice-T. Buildings and other attractions that enhance the enjoyment of the traveling public may be eligible for such funding. Lighthouses have benefitted in the past, and it is well worth the effort to apply for available money, he said.

Preservation Raffle. Tickets for the annual raffle to benefit lighthouse preservation were mailed to members, chairman Al Smith reported. The prizes this year are a weekend stay for two at The Elms bed-and-breakfast in Camden, Maine, including a lighthouse boat tour; a pair of binoculars; and \$50 worth of Society merchandise. The drawing will be held on June 27, 1998, at the NJLHS meeting at Fort Mott.

After urging members to visit the Society's excellent website created by Kim Ruth (address: njlhs.burlco.org), Tom Laverty asked for a motion for adjournment. After a motion by Debbie Megonigal and a second by Judy Swiencki, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

After a lunch break, well-known author and speaker Elinor DeWire presented a program of slides and information about some of the lighthouses she has visited. Following Elinor's enjoyable program, winners of the 1998 Photo Contest were announced by chairman Al Smith and presented with ribbons. The winners, voted on by those present, were:

Masters Category--1 Roland Fulde, Split Rock MN; 2 Lillian Fulde, Lighthouse at Sunset, Peggy's Cove; 3 (tie) Roland Fulde, Pemaquid ME, and Carole DiNapoli, Sunset at Romer Shoals; HM Rosemary Dixon, Lynde Point, and Al Smith, Port George, Nova Scotia.

Landscape Category--1 Steve Licht, Bass Harbor ME; 2 Jim Wolfrum, West Point; 3 Steve Casper, Five Mile Point; HM Skip Willits, Thomas Point; Skip Willits, Hooper Strait; Jan Koennecke, White River; Sue Greco, Peggy's Cove.

Close-up Category--1 Judy Swiencki, Workers at Great Point; 2 Rick Weber, Point-des-Cascades, Que; 3 Doreen Lagattuta, Reflection of a Sunset, Sandy Hook; HM Ed Davis, St. Augustine at Night; Joan Tabor, Chapel Hill.

Documentary Category--1 Jim Wolfrum, Coquille River, OR; 2 (tie) Bill Geilfuss, Room With a View, Marshalls Point; Bill Geilfuss, Reflections of Pemaquid; HM Walt Kushner, Marshalls Point; Barry Wood, Sullivan Island SC.

Best of Show--Mary Beth Doherty, Diamond Head.

New York Harbor Lights Category--1, 2 & 3 Jim Crowley; HM Henry Stevenson

Respectfully submitted, Judy Swiencki