



The Bay Run



Newsletter of
The Delaware Bay
Lighthouse Keepers
and Friends Association, Inc.

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Summer 2026

"Our mission is to preserve the history of the
Delaware Bay and River Lighthouses, Lightships and their Keepers"

FENWICK ISLAND LIGHT



The Fenwick Island Light, located on the southern border of the Delaware-Maryland State line, dates back to 1858 making it the oldest lighthouse in the state of Delaware. The area was named for Thomas Fenwick, a prominent English planter and colonial who was involved in the local government in name only. Lord Baltimore gifted the land to Fenwick; Fenwick was appointed Sheriff and Justice of the Peace even though it has been stated that he never visited the area. The area where the lighthouse was located was extremely isolated; it was necessary to cross "the ditch" to get to the lighthouse. Eventually a bridge was built from the land to the lighthouse making access more convenient.

Since the shoals around the area were very dangerous, in 1856 \$25,000 was appropriated for a lighthouse to be constructed there. The construction was under the direction of Captain William Reynolds of the US Corps of Army Engineers. Completed in 1858, the tower light was not lit until August of 1859. This lighthouse is 87' in height and contains a cast iron spiral staircase. Nearby was a two-story frame keeper's house built atop a brick cellar that housed a 2,500 gallon cistern for storing rainwater captured from the dwelling's roof.

Two families lived in the lighthouse in cramped quarters; the keeper and his family on the first floor, the assistant keeper and his family on the second. A new section was added to the lighthouse in 1878, providing both families with more living space. Eventually new quarters were built west of the lighthouse; the keeper and his family moved into the new

residence while the assistant keeper and his family now had more room in the original lighthouse.

Fenwick Island Lighthouse served to guide vessels into the Delaware ports. This lighthouse is not really on an island but on a very narrow peninsula. The 3rd order Fresnel lens was deactivated in 1940. After extensive fund-raising efforts and undergoing full restoration, the light was relit in July of 1998.

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Reflections by Angelo S. Rigazio Jr.



Greetings from the President's Desk. I am writing this from hot and sunny Cape May, New Jersey where the summer of 2026 is already handing out 90 degree days and lots of humidity. I cannot imagine what July's and August's weather will have in store for us.

Our granddaughter, Bella McKeown, who received the lighthouse scholarship in 2025, graduated from the Theater Arts and Preparatory School, in Las Vegas on March 24, 2026. She auditioned for a part in the summer musical at Cedar Point Amusement Park in Sandusky, Ohio and was accepted. She has already started performing in the musical "Vinyl to Viral".

Our grandson, Brady Herb, graduated from Wilson High School in West Lawn, Pennsylvania, on Friday, June 5, 2026. We were able to see photos of him in the community parade and watch the graduation on the school's website. We are immensely proud of our grandchildren.

Just a reminder the two lighthouse cruises to the Delaware Bay Lights are scheduled for Saturdays July 25 and August 22. Cruise details are available in the spring newsletter. If you have ever wanted to see these lighthouses up "close and personal" and learn their history, these narrated cruises provide a great opportunity. See the lighthouses before they disappear into the bay fading into extinction.

Speaking of disappearing, did anyone see the up-to-date news story on NBC Channel 10 News talking about the future of Harbor of Refuge Lighthouse? The structure is facing erosion issues beneath the lighthouse. The breakwater is collapsing into the bay as the rocks at the end of the breakwater are tumbling into the water at the edge of the wall. If this cannot be fixed, the lighthouse will collapse into the Delaware Bay. The Delaware Bay Lighthouse Foundation believes the cost to repair the structure will be between \$90 and \$120 million. The cost to move the lighthouse to a site on shore would cost between \$4 and \$6 million. The Lighthouse Foundation members would like to see the lighthouse moved to a site in Lewes, Delaware. It would be set up as an historical site. Harbor of Refuge just celebrated its 100th birthday. As the last keeper on Harbor of Refuge when it was automated in 1973, I would like to see it moved and preserved so my old home does not slip into the Delaware Bay.

Hope to see you all at our meeting on Saturday, September 26 at the Cape May Science Center. Check out end of "Fort Mott" meeting article for meeting information. Until next time, keep the lights shining! *Angelo*

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*The Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers and Friends Association, Inc. (DBLHKFA)
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SPRING MEETING HELD AT FORT MOTT STATE PARK

by Rodney W. Mulligan, Chairman, Board of Directors



It was a beautiful but breezy spring day at Fort Mott on the shores of the Delaware River in Pennsville, NJ. So breezy, we were entertained by visitors there flying their various kites. A lot was accomplished; we had a great speaker and good attendance. Our speaker, Kate Watt, representing the Greater Cape May Historical Society, related information regarding the Memucan Hughes House. The Society saved the House from demolition and ensured its continued existence as part of Cape May's heritage. It is thought to be one of the oldest colonial houses surviving on Cape Island. She explained that taverns were crucial during the Ameri-

can Revolution, acting as social hubs and political centers. This house and other Cape May establishments were once taverns--important gathering spots. They were used as informal supply depots and communication centers for the revolutionary forces.

Memucan Hughes and other leaders signed the Oath of Allegiance in New Jersey which moved the state from colony to statehood in 1778. Hughes was born in April of 1739; passed in January of 1812; and is buried in the Tabernacle Methodist Church Cemetery in Cape May.

The Memucan House is listed on the National Historical Landmark Registry. It is open on Wednesdays through Saturday from June 15 to September 15 and is located at 653 Washington Street in Cape May. Admission is free; donations are accepted.

The meeting continued with member, Mark Allen, giving historical background information on Fort Mott and the surrounding area. There are three forts in the immediate area: Fort Mott, Fort Delaware and Fort DuPont. Located on the Delaware River, they protected the ports of Wilmington and Philadelphia from attacks by forces during the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Mine fields were once located along the shorelines protecting the forts from advancing foot soldiers. "Disappearing guns" fired at invaders and then disappeared behind the parapets. Prisoner cells are still visible in the hills. There is a Confederate/Union Cemetery nearby at Finn's Point. Parade grounds and military barracks are available for your perusal. Liston Rear Range can be viewed on the road entering or leaving the park. A ferry is available to take visitors from Fort Mott to the other forts for a small fee. (Information taken from handout, Internet and presentations)



HAPPY 250TH ANNIVERSARY AMERICA

This year our country is celebrating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Celebrations will be held at Mount Vernon and Monticello in Virginia, the Smithsonian in Washington, DC, in the historic city of Philadelphia, PA; several celebrations will be held in other cities throughout the United States. Philadelphia's WAWA "Welcome to America" encourages all Americans to reflect on our country's journey. Philadelphia is also offering "52 weeks of 'firsts'" – the events that took place first in the nation; events such as inventions, traditions and historical events that began in Philadelphia. Among these events are the Mummers Parade, the Thanksgiving Parade, the opening of the first zoo, the first volunteer fire company, the first post office, the first free public library (Thanks to Ben Franklin), and our country's first flag (Thanks to Betsy Ross), to mention a few. Monies have been allocated to various neighborhoods throughout Philadelphia, enabling the neighborhoods to be decorated for the celebration. Check out all of this on the Philafirst web site.

The main celebrations begin on July 4, 2026. During the Maritime Celebration Sail250, tall ships will be visiting cities on the East Coast. There will be celebrations and educational programs in Independence Hall in Philadelphia where the Declaration of Independence was signed plus other celebrations in Washington, DC and in Disney Parks. A national volunteer initiative is planned and is aiming to make 2026 the largest year of service in American history. Philadelphia is the country's first World Heritage City where our Forefathers met, discussed, debated, formed and signed the Declaration of Independence establishing a new country and eventually establishing the "law of the land" – our Constitution.

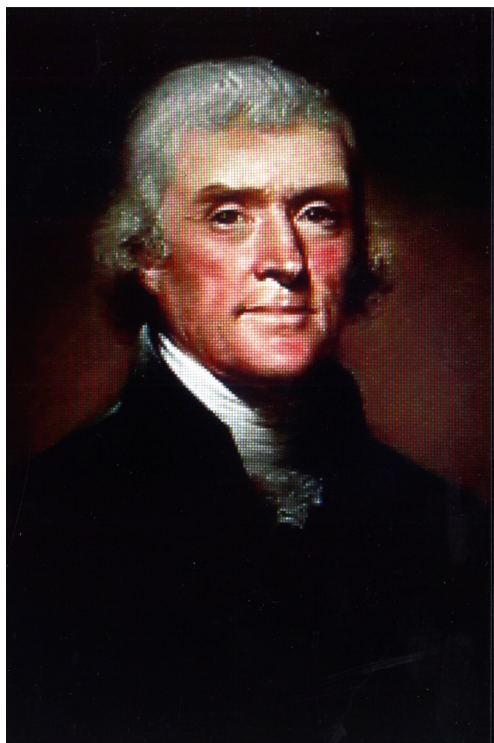
The US Mint is releasing new designs for the dime, quarter and half dollar to commemorate the anniversary.

The USS New Jersey, the most decorated battleship in the history of the Navy, will be part of this celebration. The battleship participated in battles in WWII, Korea, Vietnam and was part of the Cold War and the conflicts in the Middle East. The New Jersey was launched on the first anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. It is currently docked in Camden, NJ and is available for tours, so, if you are in the area, stop by for a visit and tour this historic ship.



THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

The signing of the Declaration of Independence, causing our country to become a separate entity free of tyranny, is what this 250th anniversary celebration is all about. With all this celebration dealing with the history of our country, it would be remiss not to mention the primary author of this important document, Thomas Jefferson.



Jefferson was born in Virginia and attended Virginia's William & Mary College where he studied law, various areas of science, astronomy and agriculture. He was elected Governor of Virginia in 1777 and was appointed the representative to France. Jefferson was the first Secretary of State under George Washington, the 2nd Vice President under John Adams and the 3rd President of the United States. One of our "Founding fathers," he was the architect of his future home at Monticello, and the designer of the University of Virginia located in Charlottesville.

With their rights slowly being taken away, the colonists, America's once loyal British subjects, became radicalized and fought for freedom. President John Adams knew Jefferson would be able to draft the document; Adams stated: "...you are much wiser and more importantly, you can write ten times better than I can." Jefferson replied: "I will do as well as I can". (TIME magazine, "1776" A Commemorative edition, 2026.)

Former President John F. Kennedy at a White House dinner highlights his opinion of Jefferson's genius and multifaceted abilities: "I think this is the most extraordinary collection of talent of human knowledge that has ever gathered at the White House with the possible exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone." (Wikipedia)

And now, for your reading pleasure Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you the Preamble, the beginning of this important document. It was written to declare the independence of the colonies from the tyrannical rule of King George and Great Britain. If interested, you can read the rest of the Declaration online, print it out, or get a copy at any bookstore.

PREAMBLE: When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinion of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.



BEGINNING OF DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely

FENWICK ISLAND LIGHT

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The Fenwick Island Light is now owned by the State of Delaware and maintained by a non-profit group, the New Friends of Fenwick Island. In 1929, the lighthouse was added to the National Register of Historic Places. It is not open for climbing.

Stories have been told regarding keepers going mad at the light due to extreme isolation, monotonous routine and harsh weather conditions. It has been stated that former keepers have also disappeared never to be seen again.

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

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to affect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

Jefferson then lists the “tyrannies” suffered by the 13 colonies under the rule of the King of Great Britain. (Wikipedia)

SPRING MEETING HELD AT FORT MOTT STATE PARK

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Thanks to all who attended making the meeting a success. Our fall meeting will be held on Saturday, September 26, 2026, at the Cape May Science Center, 101 Lehigh Ave., Cape May Point, NJ 08212. (NOTE: Former nuns’ retreat home) Our meeting will begin at 11 AM; lunch (brown bag) at Noon and our guest speaker, Bob Mullock, Owner of the Center, will speak at 1 PM regarding the Monarch Migration. Visitors may be able to witness the migration by visiting the area as it will be taking place at that time.



EMMA BOLTON, 2026 CAROLE F. REILY SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

Emma Bolton, granddaughter of members Charles and Joanne Bolton, is our Carole F. Reily Scholarship winner this year. This scholarship is awarded each year in memory of our organization's founder and first president. Relatives of members are eligible. Emma is a graduate of Cumberland County Technical School (CCTEC), maintaining a 3.8 average.

Throughout Emma's technical high school career, she was involved in a multitude of extracurricular activities and clubs including CCTEC Technical Players, Dance and Jewelry Clubs, and the Tech Ambassadors, using her skills to help advertise various events and shows to the community. She aided incoming CCTEC students by giving them tours, sharing information about the school and helping to ensure that they feel comfortable in their new environment. As a cosmetology student, Emma also had the honor of competing in the Skills USA state competition two years in a row. She was the recipient of the John M. Adair Scholarship.

Emma is planning on attending Rowan College of South Jersey majoring in Liberal Arts. After two years, she will continue her education by matriculating to Stockton University to study Hotel Management and Hospitality. Her goal is to manage a hotel or become an event manager in the future.

We wish her the best of luck in all future endeavors.

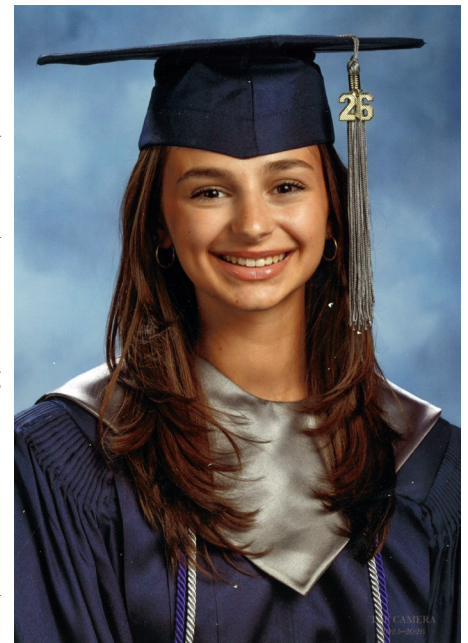
(EDITOR'S NOTE: CCTEC is a highly rated public-school in Vineland, NJ, housing 1,000+ students in grades 9-12. Applicants must reside in Cumberland County, submit an on-line application, a 7th and 8th grade transcript and pass an entrance exam to be accepted.)

FORMER SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS:



Bella McKeown, our scholarship winner for 2025, auditioned and was accepted to the Theater Arts Preparatory School (TAPS) located at Dance Dynamics in Las Vegas, NV. She graduated March 24, of this year. Before graduating, she auditioned as a Dancer/Singer with the Preparatory School at Cedar Point Amusement Point in Sandusky, Ohio and was accepted. Arriving in Ohio on May 19, she began rehearsal with the cast for "Vinyl to Viral". The show is a presentation of music from Woodstock to the present and will be performed 6 days each week...5 shows each day running June 6 through August 16. Also participating by dancing in the Boardwalk Nights presented by Blue Bunny, Bella will be involved in shows which will be held nightly from July 17 until August 16. This will include Cedar Point Beach and The Boardwalk at Cedar Point in Ohio. Bella is a graduate of Lower Cape May Regional High School.

Elizabeth Bolton, was our 2024 award winner and a graduate of Schalick High School located in Centerton, NJ. Elizabeth is currently a junior at Montclair State University working towards achieving a BFA in Illustration. During her time as a student at the university, she has achieved a spot on the Dean's List three times while sporting a 3.4 GPA. As an illustration major, Elizabeth's focus is Pre-Production; she has completed classes such as Visual Development, Character Design and 2D Animation working towards becoming a Story Artist for film and television. She is currently working as a part-time art teacher at Edgerton Christian Academy in Newfield, NJ teaching grades K – 8.



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Madison Tomasso, our scholarship awardee for 2023, is entering her senior year at the College of New Jersey. Her major is Public Health Services; when she is not in class, she keeps busy working as a receptionist in a chiropractor's office. Madison is currently obtaining a 3.8 average and is an active member of the Sigma Cappa Sorority. The sorority deals with public health issues and is involved with various charities. She will be doing her internship this year in the public health field. Madison is a 2023 graduate of Vineland High School. She previously has worked as an aide at Edgerton Christian Academy in Newfield, NJ during the summer.

Caitlin Muller, the recipient of the Carole F. Reily Scholarship in 2016 is currently pursuing a master's degree in school counseling and will graduate in December of this year. After earning an associate's degree, Caitlin continued her education, receiving a bachelor's degree in Psychology with a concentration in Education. She began her career in education as an elementary school teacher. Caitlin decided to further her education bringing to fruition her goal of obtaining a master's degree. When awarded this scholarship, she stated: "I am sincerely thankful for this scholarship and thank the organization for their investment in my future and for helping to make my educational journey possible."

Best of luck to all these scholarship winners as they pursue their dreams.

GREETINGS FROM OLLIE AND FAMILY

I believe it's about time for me to get in touch again; it sure doesn't seem it has been this long. Seems the older I get, the faster the time passes. Filtering about 30 to 50 gallons of water a day has enabled me to put in a lot of overtime; consequently, I am exhausted when I arrive home after work. I am sure you all can relate to that.

The family is fine; Merle and Pearl are growing up too fast. Merle has a girlfriend, one of those Windowpane oysters that are harvested for translucent shells. She is a beautiful fresh, plump specimen who is a native of the Delaware Bay. As you all know, the best oysters come from here. Merle and his girlfriend attended the Festival of Love around Valentine's Day. Oysters attach themselves to rocks and to each other. We feel he is much too young to get "tide" down.

Pearl is shy and has been busy paying attention to her studies; she doesn't do as much socializing as her twin brother. After graduation, Pearl is planning on working with one of the experimental oyster colony research projects taken on by Rutgers University to help clean polluted waterways. New Jersey has been rapidly moving ahead with research for cleaner water.

Merle is thinking of taking part in the establishing of an oyster colony in either Barnegat Bay or possibly the Delaware Bay. Projects are underway to restore oyster reefs, and he would like to be part of the project.

Shelley manages to keep busy working at the oyster industry center off Port Norris in the Bay. The farms in this area produce close to 2 million oysters a year. The discarded shells are recycled and help build the reefs. This program is the initiative of the American Littoral Society and Stockton University's Marine Science and Environmental Field Station in Galloway, NJ. This serves as a storage area for these shells before they are placed in the bay to create a habitat for young oysters—similar to a day care center. Here the oyster shells are cured for one year before they are reused.

I just can't believe the twins have graduated and are heading off for higher education. Shelley and I are assured they will eventually come out of their shell, take time to coast without making waves and not be subject to "pier" pressure. Their future is in the decisions they make. After all, as we all know, "the world is their oyster".

