



# CHESAPEAKE LIGHTS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE  
CHESAPEAKE CHAPTER, U.S. LIGHTHOUSE SOCIETY

Herb Entwistle, Founding Chapter President, 1989-1997

**Maryland Lighthouse Challenge**

**Special Edition No. 3 - 2005**

## Lights of the Maryland Lighthouse Challenge

by Sandra Sableski

As you travel along the Challenge route, I hope you enjoy reading this article that provides some information about the nine lighthouses and one lightship that make up the Maryland Lighthouse Challenge.

### Concord Point Lighthouse

Concord Point Light is a 36-foot tower that was built in 1827. It is the second oldest tower lighthouse on the Chesapeake Bay and the oldest continuous lighthouse in Maryland. The tower is built at the point where the Susquehanna River meets the tidal flow of the Chesapeake Bay and navigation is very hazardous around this area. John Donohoo was the designated builder and also built the keeper's dwelling (known as the O'Neill House) across the street. The lighthouse is constructed of Port Deposit granite. This lighthouse has the distinction of being the only lighthouse on the Bay to be tended throughout its manned history by a single family, the O'Neill's. The lighthouse is maintained by The Friends of Concord Point Lighthouse. The phone number at the lighthouse is 410-939-9040.



### Cove Point Lighthouse

Cove Point Lighthouse was built in 1828 to mark the shoal that extends outwards toward the shipping channel at Calvert Cliffs. It is 51 feet tall and was built by John Donohoo. The light tower and the keeper's house were constructed of locally manufactured brick. In 1857 a fourth-order Fresnel lens was installed. It is visible for 12 nautical miles. On August 16, 1986, Cove Point Lighthouse was officially automated. The lighthouse is maintained by the Calvert Marine Museum ([www.calvertmarinemuseum.com](http://www.calvertmarinemuseum.com)).

### Drum Point Lighthouse

Drum Point Lighthouse was constructed in 1883 at Drum Point, MD, about 2.1 miles east of its present position at the Calvert Marine Museum. It was on the north side of the mouth of the Patuxent River. The white hexagonal wooden structure housed a fourth-order Fresnel lens. Because the lighthouse was located 1/16 of a mile offshore and in shallow water, the keeper was able to have his family living with him. By the 1970's the lighthouse sat on dry land. The lighthouse was moved in March 1975 to the grounds of the Calvert Marine Museum ([www.calvertmarinemuseum.com](http://www.calvertmarinemuseum.com)).



### Fort Washington Lighthouse

This light station was established in 1857 and at first it was nothing more than an 18.5 foot iron pole with a light that could be hoisted to the top in the evenings. In 1882 the present bell tower was erected. In 1883 permission was granted by the Secretary of War to build a keepers house close to the light and the bell tower at the base of the Fort. In November 1901, a platform was built on the fog bell tower to support a lens lantern. The sixth-order light in the light tower was then extinguished. The current light is 28 feet above the water. The light is located in Fort Washington National Park, which is managed by the National Park Service ([www.nps.gov/fowa](http://www.nps.gov/fowa)).

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## Pasek's Puzzlers Books & Authors

by Tony Pasek

Late summer is a great time to catch up on some "light" reading and there are several great lighthouse books available that focus on the Chesapeake Bay. Your challenge is to match the book with its correct author.

- (1) *Maryland Lighthouses of the Chesapeake Bay*
- (2) *Bay Beacons, Lighthouses of the Chesapeake Bay*
- (3) *The Lighthouses of the Chesapeake Bay*
- (4) *Lighthouses of the Mid-Atlantic Coast*
- (5) *Lighting the Bay: Tales of Chesapeake Lighthouses*
- (6) *Mid-Atlantic Lighthouses*

- (A) Bruce Roberts & Ray Jones
- (B) Robert de Gast
- (C) Pat Vojtech
- (D) F. Ross Holland
- (E) Linda Turbyville
- (F) Elinor DeWire

see **Pasek's Answers** on back page



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**Chesapeake Lights**  
is the official publication of the  
**Chesapeake Chapter,**  
**U.S. Lighthouse Society.**  
A subscription to the newsletter  
is included in the cost of membership.  
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Individual membership in the  
**USLHS is encouraged.**

## Glimmerings

by Henry Gonzalez

Welcome to the Chesapeake Chapter of the United States Lighthouse Society! If you like lighthouses, their history, enjoy seeing them, and want to help preserve them, you've come to the right place. The U.S. Lighthouse Society, which is celebrating its 21<sup>st</sup> year, has about 10,000 members nationwide. The Society has several regional chapters, such as the Chesapeake Chapter, which is celebrating its 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary and has about 700 members. We are the Society's most active and diverse chapter and offer something for just about anyone.

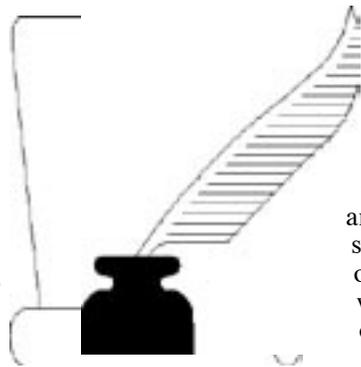
We offer a quarterly newsletter, of which this is a special sample. The newsletter typically contains articles about recent trips, information about upcoming trips, articles about lighthouse history and preservation, and news about the lighthouse community. But if reading a newsletter and seeing pictures of lighthouses isn't enough, then you can come join us on one of our several trips and cruises that we take every year to visit lighthouses. Quite often we are allowed inside an active lighthouse by the Coast Guard or the lighthouse owner, a treat not normally available to the general public. Most of our trips are within the Chesapeake Bay extended area, but we conduct one or two trips a year a little further up or down the east coast; we have been as far south as South Carolina and as far north as Rhode Island. It's a lot of fun seeing lighthouses with a group of other people that share your passion.

We have a preservation program that has offered its services to many lighthouses up and down the Bay area, the National Park Service, as well as to the Coast Guard itself. Authorities throughout the area have recognized our volunteer program. That experience helped lead us to our latest and largest opportunity – the preservation of the Thomas Point Shoal lighthouse, located offshore of Annapolis, and the only remaining operational cottage-style screwpile lighthouse in the country still located in its original location. We have a wonderful partnership on this effort and have a lease with the City of Annapolis to manage the lighthouse for the next 90 years! Stay tuned to our progress at [www.thomaspointlighthouse.org](http://www.thomaspointlighthouse.org) and come join us as a volunteer preservationist or volunteer docent!

But what about the next generation of lighthouse lovers? For them we have an education program. We go to schools in the area and teach our youngsters about the importance of lighthouses as aids to navigation. The kids love it and teachers keep asking us back for more.

We sell great and unique lighthouse merchandise, we hold an annual photo contest, and we sponsor the Maryland Lighthouse Challenge where you have an opportunity to see all of Maryland's land-based lighthouses in one weekend.

So whether you want to go on unique trips to lighthouses, get your fingernails dirty working on them, teach school children about them, take pictures of them, research their history, or just read our newsletter, you've come to the right place. Welcome aboard to our all-volunteer lighthouse society!



## To Preserve

by Anne Puppa

For the last nine years or so I have sent out a registration form to the Chapter volunteers with a schedule of the year's preservation activities. Every year I get around 20 to 25 forms back and each year there may be a sprinkling of new names while others drop out. This last year

was a bit different because we added Thomas Point to our list of preservation efforts so there were more people interested. Those who register for these activities are the folks who like the hands on participation in the preservation effort and they have made a huge difference over the past several years. We have had the opportunity to work with the Coast Guard, area museums, and the National Park Service in these projects and the rewards for participants are evident after a good day's work. This is truly a win-win scenario.

But this is not the only way to help save our lighthouse heritage. Preservation of lighthouses is something everyone can participate in either directly as a volunteer or indirectly by supporting organizations that do preservation work. The Chesapeake Chapter of the United States Lighthouse Society had an interest in starting up a volunteer program because many members wanted to do something more than visit and photograph the lighthouses they loved. So a program was begun and we started with a few projects. A core set of volunteers started making a difference and as word spread our list of projects gradually grew. The volunteers consisted of all ages and genders, people who are still working and those who are retired. The projects were varied from working on lighthouses, to working at the National Archives or researching and writing histories. To support the program we established a fund to raise the money used for supplies on these projects. The H.E.L.P. (Herb Entwistle Lighthouse Preservation) Fund honored the Chapter's first President and his dedication to the lighthouses in the region.

Every volunteer has their own reasons for spending many of their weekends toiling away at a lighthouse in the Chesapeake area, but I think everyone of them enjoys the company of other like-minded people. There is a lot of work that gets done, but there is also a lot of laughter and good time. There is a certain amount of pride in saying "I worked on that lighthouse" and there is a sense of being part of something a little bigger. Now is a time when the Coast Guard is trying to turn over many of the lighthouses to non-profit organizations and many people have stepped forward to take on the rewarding, but challenging obligations that come with caring for a lighthouse. It is gratifying to see how many groups are doing this type of work all across the country; thousands of people donate their time and special talents to help preserve the maritime heritage. Each lighthouse has a unique history and we can honor that history and the men and women who worked at these lights by preserving them.

The Lighthouse Challenge you are participating in, is one way to support these efforts. By visiting the lighthouses you are helping to send a message that there is an interest in them. State and local officials do take note of that and this improves their appreciation for the value of these historic properties. So by visiting these lights, you are doing your part to help preserve them. If you'd

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### Hooper Strait Lighthouse

The first lighthouse was constructed in 1867 and destroyed by ice during the winter of 1877. The second screwpile lighthouse was constructed in 1880. The structure was designed and built in Baltimore, then dismantled and re-erected at the site in October of that year. It had a fifth-order Fresnel lens. The lighthouse was slated for destruction in 1966 when it was acquired by the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum ([www.cbmm.org](http://www.cbmm.org)) in St. Michaels, MD. The move required the lighthouse being cut from its original pilings and cut in half before being transported up the Bay to its new site in November 1966. This was the first successful move and restoration of a working lighthouse to a museum location in the Chesapeake Bay area.



### Lightship Chesapeake

The Dry-dock & Machine Company in Charleston, SC built LS116 in 1929. She was considered “the finest afloat”. The LS116 was built for crew comforts. There were three toilet compartments, each with its own shower. A water distiller on the upper engine room catwalk converted seawater for use in these areas. The *Chesapeake* had a crew of 16, including a cook. There were four or five men ashore at any one time. Crews served two months aboard, one ashore. She was decommissioned on January 6, 1971. Later that year the ship was transferred to the National Park Service and used as a floating environmental classroom at Hains Point, Washington DC until 1980. The lightship is managed by the Baltimore Maritime Museum ([www.baltomaritimemuseum.org](http://www.baltomaritimemuseum.org)).



### Piney Point Lighthouse

John Donohoo built the Piney Point Lighthouse in 1836. The tower is 35 feet tall, much the same as the other lighthouses that Donohoo built, such as Concord Point and Cove Point. The tower is painted white with the lantern painted red. Piney Point is the oldest light on the Potomac River and at times was the summer vacation spot for various presidents. The light was decommissioned in 1964 and in 1980 the Coast Guard transferred ownership to the Saint Mary’s County Department of Recreation and Parks, ([www.co.saint-marys.md.us/recreate/museums/ppl.asp](http://www.co.saint-marys.md.us/recreate/museums/ppl.asp)).



### Point Lookout Lighthouse

The Point Lookout Lighthouse is located at the mouth of the Potomac River at the Bay and was originally constructed in 1830 as a one-and-a-half story wooden and masonry building. The lighthouse was of little importance to navigation since the lantern was only 24 feet off the ground. It was rebuilt as the two-story present structure in 1883 with the light at 40 feet. At one time there was a Union hospital and later a Confederate prison at this location. Many people have reported seeing ghosts including a former lady keeper cleaning the lens. In 1951 the US Navy purchased land near the light. The US Coast Guard gave the U.S. Navy the lighthouse in 1966 upon deactivation. Information on the lighthouse can be found at [www.southern-maryland.info/County%20Guides/Saint\\_Marys/city\\_town\\_guide/point\\_lookout/point\\_look\\_lighthouse.htm](http://www.southern-maryland.info/County%20Guides/Saint_Marys/city_town_guide/point_lookout/point_look_lighthouse.htm).



### Seven Foot Knoll Lighthouse

Seven Foot Knoll Light was the second screwpile light to be built on the Chesapeake and the first to be built in Maryland. It is built entirely of iron and in a circular design, which is unique among the Bay’s screwpiles along with its barn red color. It was constructed in 1855 at the mouth of the Patapsco River and had a fourth order Fresnel lens. One keeper, James Bolling, kept farm animals on the lower deck platform. The hogs, goats and chickens provided meat for his family who lived with him on the light. In October 1987 ownership of the lighthouse was transferred to the city of Baltimore. It was moved by barge, in 1988, to Pier 5 at Inner Harbor waterfront where it stands on its own legs. It is the oldest surviving screwpile lighthouse and the only one of its design. It is managed by the Baltimore Maritime Museum ([www.baltomaritimemuseum.org](http://www.baltomaritimemuseum.org)).



### Turkey Point Lighthouse

John Donohoo built the Turkey Point Lighthouse in 1833 with a tower and keeper’s quarters. The tower is 35 feet high and is situated on a 100-foot bluff where the North East and Elk Rivers converge. This lighthouse was the home of the last woman lighthouse keeper, Fannie Salter. She served from 1925 until she retired in 1947. The lighthouse holds the distinction of being tended by more women keepers than any other lighthouse on the Chesapeake Bay. The Turkey Point Light Station, Inc, maintains the lighthouse ([www.caracove.com/tpls](http://www.caracove.com/tpls)).



### Pasek’s Answers from page 2

(1) D, (2) E, (3) B, (4) F, (5) C, (6) A

For more information about our Chapter, visit our web site at: <http://www.cheslights.org>

### To Preserve from page 3

like to get even more involved, just visit our Chapter web site and become a member. If you are already a member, see if you would like to volunteer on one of our projects. The schedule is available on the Chapter web site [www.cheslights.org](http://www.cheslights.org). Thanks for your support of our lighthouses.