SOUTHERN MARYLAND LIGHTS
Standing Lighthouses in Southern Maryland

Lighthouses continue to fascinate those of any age who are interested in maritime matters. The museum is witness to this interest by visitors to the Drum Point Lighthouse on its grounds, to those who visit the Cove Point Lighthouse during its season, and by two programs in winter and fall. The “Winter Lights” program on January 15 and 16 at the museum brought exhibitors, authors, lecturers, and visitors to share their love of lighthouses. An annual “Lighthouse Challenge” in the fall, sponsored by the Chesapeake Chapter of the United States Lighthouse Society, expands on this fascination through challenging participants to visit lighthouses around the bay, including the museum’s two lights.

Because of this interest, the museum has promoted a number of these local lighthouses, while others have their own support groups. The Point Lookout Lighthouse is being considered for transfer from the jurisdiction of the U. S. Navy to the state of Maryland, to be managed as part of the state park at Point Lookout. St. Mary’s County increased in recent years its interpretation of the lighthouse at Piney Point, making it an easily accessible point on the Potomac River. The most recent transfer from the federal government to local control is the Thomas Point Lighthouse, now under a group supported by Anne Arundel County. Of the six lighthouses in the Southern Maryland area (broadly defined to include lower Anne Arundel County), only one is still under federal jurisdiction — Point No Point, just offshore in the bay from lower St. Mary’s County. This article summarizes the current status of these six lighthouses, from north to south.

Continued on page 4
Antique Boat & Marine Engine Show Returns to CMM

Calvert Marine Museum will host the fifth “Chesapeake Antique Boat & Marine Engine Show” on Saturday, April 30, 10:00 – 5:00, and Sunday, May 1, 10:00 – 3:00. Beautifully restored antique and classic boats and vintage marine inboard and outboard engines will be on exhibit. In past years, collectors have come from as far away as Louisiana and Vermont to display and operate rare boats, as well as engines crafted of iron and brass. Admission to the show, held on the museum’s grounds, is free. For information about the show, please call Richard Dodds at 410-326-2042, ext. 31.

RECENT CHANGES

At an election in January, the museum’s Board of Governors chose Gregory Wells as its chairman for 2004, with Kirk Swain as vice chairman. Both men have served on the CMM board for several years. Mr. Wells is an attorney and is currently Master for Domestic Relations and Juvenile Causes for Calvert County. Mr. Swain is a marketing counsel for the DM Group and has served on a number of county boards.

Two staff members have left CMM in the past three months: Karen Stone, curator of education, and Paula Bohaska, aquarist. Their replacements have not yet been announced.

The long-running exhibit of outboard motors on the mezzanine level of the exhibition building has closed, to be replaced later in the year by a new exhibit on the oyster packing and crab picking industries in Southern Maryland. Space needs have dictated the closing of the touch tank in the Estuarium, but there is planning under way for a new location.

CMM now accepts credit cards (Visa and MasterCard) for museum admission fees.

Tennison Season Starts

The museum’s tour boat, Wm. B. Tennison, will start its season on May 1st, and model skipjack races begin on Sunday at 1:00 p.m. For information about museum activities, please call 410-326-2042, or visit the museum website.

CMM Volunteer Council Yard Sale

On April 29-30, Friday and Saturday, the CMM Volunteer Council will hold its benefit yard sale. Donations of sale items are currently being sought. Anyone wishing to donate can drop off items on the third floor of the exhibition building. Tax receipts are available upon request by calling the Development Office at 410-326-2042, ext. 17. All donations are appreciated, but books and/or clothing cannot be accepted.
RAFFLES TO BENEFIT CONANT FUND

The Patuxent Small Craft Guild is raffling one of its well-known twelve-foot rowboats, built by skilled volunteers and suitable for up to three adults. Included with the boat are oars and bronze oar locks. This fine rowboat is sure to attract a lot of attention.

The Solomons Island Model Boat Club is raffling a beautiful model of the famous three-masted schooner Atlantic II. This model was built a few years ago by Buck McClellan and has been donated for the raffle by Christa Conant.

Proceeds from both raffles will go to the Melvin Conant Memorial Youth Fund, established to encourage young people – particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds – to participate in small-craft-related programs offered by CMM. The fund covers all or a portion of the cost of participation.

Both of these raffle items may be seen on display in the lobby of the CMM exhibition building. Tickets are $1.00 each or six for $5.00, and are available in the museum gift shop, the Small Craft Center, or the Model Shop. A drawing for the winning tickets will be held on July 4, 2005 (winners need not be present). (George Surgent)

BOATBUILDING EVENTS

Another boatbuilding class – Build a Canoe in a Weekend – will be held on Saturday and Sunday, April 16 and 17, from 9:00 until 5:00 both days. This class is open to adults and children (10 and older, working with an adult), but no more than four participants per boat. For information and to register, call Melissa McCormick at 410-326-2042, ext. 41. This has been a very popular class in the past.

WINTER CONCERTS

The museum concerts drew many fans, beginning with the New Orleans Cajun party band, The Iguanas, in two appearances on January 29.

CMM photo by Bob Hall

On February 25, Edwin McCain also had two appearances in the auditorium, and on March 12 an enthusiastic crowd enjoyed the single appearance of Captain Quint with their tropical rock and roll.

CMM photo by Bob Hall

These – and other – concerts succeeded in large part because of the wonderful support of loyal volunteers. The development staff treated these volunteers to a luncheon on February 23.

CMM photo by Bob Hall
Southern Maryland Lights

(Continued from page 1)

Thomas Point Shoal Light Station

This is the most recent of the Chesapeake Bay lighthouses to be turned over by the Coast Guard to local control. Although it is not in one of the three southern Maryland counties, it is well known to boaters from these waters. It is also one of the "local" lighthouses that can be seen from the shore.

Thomas Point Light is one of only three of the wood-framed, cottage-style, screwpile lighthouses remaining in Maryland, and the only one in its original location (the other two are Drum Point at Calvert Marine Museum and Hooper Straits at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum). This style was prevalent at one time, when there were over forty throughout the bay. Thomas Point was built at its present location in 1875 (earlier lights were on the shore) with a fourth-order Fresnel lens. Despite potential problems from ice flows, protection was provided by various methods of pilings and riprap. In 1972 the Coast Guard announced its intention to automate the light and dismantle the cottage, but public efforts saved it and resulted in its eventual designation as a National Historic Landmark in 1999. The last staffed lighthouse on the bay, it was finally fully automated in 1986 with the light and fog signal still active as navigation aids.

In 2004, the Thomas Point Lighthouse was turned over to a public-private partnership under the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act. The partnership consists of the city of Annapolis, the actual owner; under a lease from the city of Annapolis, the United States Lighthouse Society and its Chesapeake Bay Chapter will serve as the manager, responsible for all aspects of preservation and operations; the Annapolis Maritime Museum will serve as the shore-based component, housing lighthouse exhibits and being the point of departure for planned public tours; and Anne Arundel County will provide preservation and environmental expertise. The Coast Guard will continue to maintain the light as an aid to navigation.

Since the lighthouse is located a mile and a half offshore, it is not possible to visit it directly. It can be seen, however, from the Thomas Point State Park, traveling from Aris T. Allen Boulevard and Forest Drive. Further information about the lighthouse and the state park may be found on the Internet at: www.thomaspointlighthouse.org and www.cheslights.org/heritage/thomaspt.htm.

The Chesapeake Bay Chapter of the U.S. Lighthouse Society displayed photographs of lighthouses during the "Winter Lights" program at CMM in January 2005.

CMM photo by Bob Hall

Cove Point Light Station

This lighthouse is the oldest on the bay in continuous operation. Built in 1828 by John Donohoo, who also built the Concord Point Lighthouse in Havre de Grace in 1826 (deactivated in 1975) and others on the bay, it has served actively in its present location, with few changes to the tower, but many changes in the auxiliary buildings. It is located on land at a particularly strategic point in the bay, both for vessels traveling in the bay and for providing information on vessel movements. A fourth-order Fresnel lens was installed in 1857; the light was electrified in 1928 and automated in 1986. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1970.

In 2000 the Calvert County Commissioners agreed to accept the light station from the Coast Guard, to be managed by the Calvert Marine Museum, with tours (May through September) conducted from the museum beginning in 2001. Although flooded during Tropical Storm Isabel in September 2003, the facility was open for limited tours in 2004. Current information about the scheduling of tours in 2005 is in the calendar and on the museum's website (see page 2). That website includes a link to a long article on the history of the Cove Point Light Station in the museum's newsletter, the Bugeye Times.

Drum Point Lighthouse

This lighthouse is part of the permanent exhibits at the Calvert Marine Museum, and as such is the most accessible of the Southern Maryland lighthouses. It is open daily, year-round,
for conducted tours as part of the admission fee to the museum. It is frequently featured in photos of Calvert County and the southern Maryland area.

This screwpile, cottage-style lighthouse in another one of only three of this style remaining in the Chesapeake Bay area. Built in 1883, with a fourth-order Fresnel lens, Drum Point remained in service until it was decommissioned in 1962. After extensive negotiations, the lighthouse structure was moved in 1975 from Drum Point to the new grounds of the museum where it was restored, furnished, and opened to the public. It was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. As with the Cove Point Light Station, current information may be found in the museum calendar and on the website, including a link to an article on its history that appeared in the Bugeye Times.

Point No Point Lighthouse

Although two miles out in the bay, this lighthouse is within the boundaries of St. Mary’s County. In contrast to the other lighthouses in this article, it is a caisson-style – an iron cylinder sunk into the bay bottom with a house and light on top – a style favored at the time because the structure withstood ice better than the screwpile lighthouses. Located in over twenty feet of water, the light is over fifty feet above the water. The building above the metal caisson consists of two stories of brick, and a third floor – the watch room – of wood frame, with four dormer windows. The watch level supports the iron lantern room that displays a fourth-order Fresnel lens.

Point No Point Lighthouse was constructed by the Toomey Brothers of New Haven, Connecticut, from 1902 to 1905, with the construction process suffering a series of unfortunate delays due to weather conditions. It was lit for the first time in April 1905 and operated until automated in 1938. Coast Guard personnel were removed in 1962. Of the six lighthouses in this article, it is the most difficult to see from land, but is a prominent feature when cruising between the Patuxent and Potomac Rivers. A lengthy description of the construction of the light appeared in the Bugeye Times for spring 1996, linked from the list of Bugeye Times articles on the museum’s website. More information about the lighthouse, including good maps, a possible location for viewing, and photos of restoration work are included on the following Internet site: www.cheslights.org/heritage/pt-nopoint.htm.

Point Lookout Lighthouse

This lighthouse is located on land at the mouth of the Potomac River at the end of St. Mary’s County where it is near the road but fenced off. Although within the Point Lookout State Park, the area immediately around the building is owned by the U.S. Navy. It is opened to the public only one day a year in November. Constructed originally in 1830 by John Donohoo as a house-with-tower lighthouse, it was much modified over the years, especially in 1883 when the present two-story structure was constructed with the light at forty feet. As with other lights on the bay, it had a fourth-order Fresnel lens. The navy purchased land near the light in 1951, but assumed full ownership when deactivated by the Coast Guard in 1966. (It was replaced by a beacon in the water.) The original fog bell tower is now located at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels. There is an active website for history and lore at www.ptlookoutlighthouse.com.

Piney Point Lighthouse

This is another John Donohoo lighthouse, built in 1836 on a point in St. Mary’s County fourteen miles up the Potomac River from its entrance from the bay. A circular tower thirty-five feet tall, it is the oldest light on the Potomac River. Decommissioned by the Coast Guard in 1964, the lighthouse and keeper’s quarters were unused until the property was deeded to St. Mary’s County in 1980. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976, it has since 1990 been the responsibility of the Museum Division of the county’s Department of Recreation and Parks. The Piney Point Lighthouse grounds are open daily.
Southern Maryland Lights (Continued from page 5)

from sunrise to sunset, easily reached by road from State Routes 5 and 249, then Lighthouse Road to its end. The museum, gift store, and tower itself are open during the season from May to October, but the keeper’s house is not open to the public. This spring there will be a grand reopening of the lighthouse museum, with new exhibits, the museum store, and special activities. Information may be obtained from the Museum Division at 301-769-2222, or through the Internet at: www.co.saint-marys.md.us/recreate/museums/ppl.asp.

Former Lighthouses

On the bay side of Calvert and St. Mary’s Counties only one lighthouse has disappeared - the Cedar Point Lighthouse on the south of the entrance to the Patuxent River in St. Mary’s County. This was once a very significant light station on 1.54 acres, with a large brick lighthouse/dwelling, oil house, boathouse, fog-bell tower, outhouse, and barn. It was completed in 1894, but abandoned in 1928 and replaced by a day beacon. In the subsequent years, a combination of dredging on part of the land, accompanied by erosion, left the deteriorating lighthouse building surrounded by water. After the navy acquired the land on Cedar Point to establish the NAS Patuxent River during World War II, it eventually bought the island containing the lighthouse. In 1981, the navy removed the light tower and installed it at its museum. Further deterioration of the structure occurred, resulting in the final demolition of the building, with the gabled roof and some bricks coming to CMM. These few pieces and photographs are all that remain of this light station. A chronology may be found at www.somd.com/Detailed/2866.php.

Along the Potomac River, however, there were a number of lighthouses that have now disappeared, but most of these were in the river or near the shore on the Virginia side, technically in Maryland. (The Maryland state line is along the Virginia shore of the river.) Only two of these “Southern Maryland” lighthouses were actually on or close to the Maryland shore: Cobb Point Bar Lighthouse (1889-1940), just off Cobb Island at the entrance to the Wicomico River, and Blakistone (Blackistone or Blackston) Island Lighthouse (1851-1932/1956), a John Donohoo building and tower on the island better known as St. Clement’s Island - the first landing place of the Maryland settlers in 1634. Of the other lighthouses on the Potomac, the base of the Lower Cedar Point Lighthouse in the river is still visible from the US 301 bridge at Morgantown, in Charles County. There is a website devoted to Potomac River lighthouses at: www.members.aol/valights/potomac.htm.

Other Sources of Information

There are many published sources for Maryland lighthouse information, of which the following are generally available in libraries: F. Ross Holland, Maryland Lighthouses of the Chesapeake Bay (Annapolis: Maryland Historical Trust, 1997, 200 p.); Linda Turbyville, Bay Beacons: Lighthouses of the Chesapeake Bay (Annapolis: Eastwind Publishing, 1995, 138 p.); and Pat Vojtech, Lighting the Bay: Tales of Chesapeake Lighthouses (Centreville, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1996, 194 p.). In addition to books, there are videos, the specific Internet sites mentioned throughout the article, and three general websites: www.cheslights.org, www.baygateways.net, and www.cr.nps.gov/maritime/midatl.html. The annual Lighthouse Challenge of the Chesapeake Bay Chapter of the United States Lighthouse Society (September 17 and 18 in 2005) attracts many visitors to the lighthouses on the bay.
WATERSIDE 2005
WELCOMES COUNTRY ARTIST
MONTGOMERY GENTRY
IN CONCERT

Ralph’s Dodge-Jeep and Cumberland & Erly, LLC present Waterside 2005 with country artists Montgomery Gentry, on Sunday, June 5. Showtime is 7:30 p.m. Tickets are $35/reserved, $45/premium. See the enclosed member’s order form for ticket ordering instructions.

SPRING BASKET BINGO FUNDRAISER

The Development Office will be sponsoring their second annual Spring Basket Bingo Extravaganza on Sunday, April 24, 1:00 p.m., at the Calvert County Fairgrounds. Over $8,000 in collectible Longaberger baskets and pottery will be won, including a special basket drawing for CMMS members who attend the event. Tickets are $20 each, and include a package of 20 regular games.

All players will have a chance at a beautiful 18kt gold necklace with a red heart enameled flip-flop pendant valued at $550; this generous donation to the bingo is provided by G&H Jewelers.

To join in on the fun while supporting the museum, please call Melissa Carnes at 410-326-2042, ext. 17, or visit the museum website for more information.

Many thanks to our 2005 Sponsors!

Ralph’s Dodge-Jeep & Cumberland & Erly, LLC; Bozick Distributors – Coors, Coors Light, & Killian’s; G&H Jewelers; RadioShack – Prince Frederick/Dunkirk/Charlotte Hall; Solomons Landing; DM Group; 98 Star FM; Mom’s in the Kitchen Catering; Southern Maryland Newspapers; Bay Weekly; Quick Connections; Comcast; Booz/Allen/Hamilton; Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative; and Holiday Inn Select–Solomons.

CMMS LIGHTHOUSE CRUISE
SOLD OUT!

Thanks to everyone who purchased tickets to the April 23 Members’ Lighthouse Cruise. The cruise sold out in a record three weeks, with 110 museum members signed up for the exciting trip. If you haven’t sent in your lunch menu requests, please send to Debbie Strozier, CMMS, P.O. Box 97, Solomons, MD 20688, or email your request to strozida@co.cal.md.us. Watch your Bugeye Times for upcoming member events and future lighthouse cruises.

2004-2005 YEAR-END APPEAL
STILL IN FULL SWING

We all know that planning for our future is a long and tedious process, but is crucial to the success of any business. Over the next year, the museum will be undertaking this arduous process and will need not only your financial support, but also your insight and knowledge. The 2004-2005 Year-End Appeal is still under way, and is working to raise much-needed funding to help support our initial planning expenses. Please join our other members who are supporting this exciting process for our museum’s future, and send in your contribution to our appeal. Watch future issues of the Bugeye Times for upcoming member surveys so you can be a part of the museum’s growth and expansion.

Name: ____________________________
Address: __________________________
Phone: ____________________________
Contribution: $ __________________

Make checks payable to CMMS and mail to:
CMMS, P.O. Box 97, Solomons, MD 20688
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

2004 Volunteers of the Year – Paul Berry and Pam Platt

By Leslie King, Volunteer Coordinator

It’s Monday morning and even without an infusion of caffeine coffee or talk of weekends, I don’t have to think hard to know it’s a Monday.

“Hi, Paul,” I say to our volunteer librarian (who normally volunteers his time three days a week).

“Hi, Pam,” I say to our volunteer who works on our whale skull exhibit (enduring the sound of a dental drill as she methodically cleans the fossil).

Yep. It’s Monday for sure and I know this because both our 2004 Volunteer of the Year recipients are busy in their service pursuits. It’s the harbinger of the beginning of the week.

But the year is different. With aforementioned coffee in hand, I sat down a few weeks ago to tally the staff voting ballots for our 2004 Volunteer of the Year and discovered an interesting phenomenon. The votes for all the candidates for this award were pretty close, but two tied for the position – Paul Berry and Pam Platt. So, this year we have two volunteers of the year to celebrate.

Paul Berry is an icon of a volunteer. On most Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays you will find him quietly ensconced in our library. Often quiet and reserved of comments, his thirty-five years in administration work with the Library of Congress betrays a sense of humor that when lit, illuminates his entire face with a sparkle of intellectual mischief that makes him instantly approachable. Yes, this columnist is in awe. Since 1982, he has logged almost 20,000 hours (guess what we’ll celebrate next year) in museum service. Not only is he our librarian, but also the editor of this esteemed publication (since 1984). He was the Volunteer Council’s first treasurer and joined the museum’s Board of Governors in 1985. From 1987 through 1990 he was chairman of the board and is still serving on the Budget and Finance Committee. The museum staff is ever grateful for his interest in boating, which brought him and his wife Doris into our museum world. It was with this interest that they first brought property on Battle Creek. In the early 1980s they built their house and moved to Calvert from Silver Spring. It was through an ad in the Bugeye Times that he saw a call for volunteers. What pleasant irony!

Pam Platt is another fine specimen in our volunteer midst, preferring hands-on time with our famed fossils, including last year’s addition of the baleen whale skull. As glamorous as it may seem, cleaning and preserving such an incredible find, her Monday morning determination is something unparalleled. If one were to close one’s eyes, it might sound as though one were in a dental office, as Pam cleans the bone matter with a dental drill.

As it turns out, Pam’s dedication to the museum caused her to retire a few years early so that she could volunteer more with the paleontology department. In 1969, she and her husband Bob moved to Baltimore, but their interest in fossils drew them to Calvert County, where they have a weekend residence. But that, too, is about to change. They are selling their Baltimore property and moving to Calvert for eight months of the year. The other four months will be spent out in Montana where their children and grandchildren reside.

Though Pam didn’t become a regular volunteer until the 1990s, she has made her own mark in museum history. She and her husband were founding members of the CMM Fossil Club. She has served as secretary to the club and is currently in charge of membership.

Interesting and amazing in their own ways, both Paul Berry and Pam Platt are more than worth their weight in precious metal. One could write volumes on their loyalty and service to the museum, and experiencing both on Monday mornings is always a harbinger for a positive week ahead.

Thank you both for the many years of relentless service you have given to our museum community!!