

Summer 2024



NATIONAL LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM NEWS



*Barbara Kraemer & Suzi Hoffman stand by their artwork
at the opening of their Lighthouse Log exhibit on June 23rd.*

“Lighthouse Logs” Exhibit

Exhibit featuring paintings and tales of many of the world's storied lights

June 23-July 21, 2024

MUSEUM ADMISSION

Adults: \$7

Seniors/Military & Veterans/Students: \$5.00

Adults: \$7.00

Museums for All: \$3.00

Children Under 12: Free

Members: Free

HOURS

Tuesday-Sunday

11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Closed Major Holidays

Call to Arrange Group/Class Tours.

www.lighthousemuseum.org

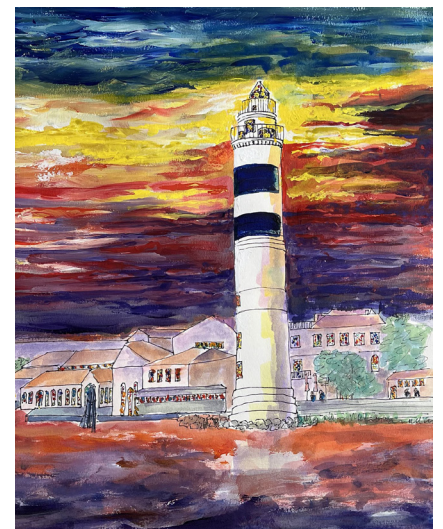
[www.FB.com/NationalLighthouseMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/NationalLighthouseMuseum)

[@nationallighthousemuseum](https://www.instagram.com/nationallighthousemuseum)

[@NLMSINY](https://twitter.com/NLMSINY)



Key West Lighthouse
hiding 14 ghostly spirits since 1846



Murano Lighthouse
guardians of the stained glass island

A Tidal Wave of Change

The Lost Lights of Old Orchard Shoals and of Bergen Point Lighthouses

By Wade R. Gorla



Old Orchard Shoals Lighthouse

1893- 2012

The shoals of Old Orchard are located approximately two miles to the southeast of Crooke's Point, Staten Island, at the tip of the hook that forms Great Kills Harbor, where the environment is ever changing, potentially tumultuous and sometimes deadly.

Just two miles from the lighthouse, Crooke's Point forms a part of Great Kills Park, as a Unit of the Gateway National Recreation Area. It is a natural and beautiful place that's popular for hiking, fishing and bird watching.

In 1860, the businessman and pioneering naturalist, John J. Crooke, bought a small, idyllic piece of land along this portion of the Staten Island waterfront, and he lived there in a wooden house on the beach that he named Crooke's Point.

By 1916, however, severe water erosion, emanating from the forceful currents of the Atlantic had ruthlessly cut through the narrow spit of land on which he resided. Crooke's Point had become its own island.

In 1929, the Chairman of the NY State Council of Parks, Robert Moses purchased Crooke's Point, as well as lands adjacent to it, so it could become a part of his vast public park system. In the effort, landfill would be used to reconnect Crooke's Point with Staten Island in order to create a giant public park. The devastating economic impact of the Great Depression and WWII had delayed this plan until 1949. In that year, the 523 acre Great Kills Park finally opened to the public.

The seascape of the area has always been fragile, holding the potential for further violent change on land. In the 19th Century, the formation of winter ice often closed down Staten Island Sound, as well as the waterway that separates New Jersey from Staten Island.

However, with thousands of tons of goods shipped each day throughout the area, and with great profits at stake, many pilots were often forced to navigate through a narrow and hazardous channel that ran along the eastern shore of Staten Island close to shoals. A bell buoy and a lighted buoy marked this dangerous area. Mariners generally considered these navigational aids to be entirely inadequate to their purpose.

In order to effectively address what mariners and businessman believed to be a dire situation, Congress appropriated \$60,000 to finance the construction of a lighthouse, one to be situated on the southeastern portion of the shoals. Funds were also appropriated to rebuild the tower at Waackaack, near Keansburg, NJ, on the Raritan shore, which, would serve as a rear range light on behalf of a future Old Orchard Shoals lighthouse.

A fifty-one foot tall cast-iron spark plug styled tower was built at the site, one selected by the Lighthouse Board. Its 4th Order Fresnel lens produced a white beam of light to the southeast, and a red light in the remaining directions.

Old Orchard Shoals began operation on April 25, 1893. An additional siren fog signal powered by an oil engine was also installed. The hexagonal rear range Waackaack lighthouse was situated three quarters of a mile to the rear of it at Point Comfort, NJ.

Old Orchard Shoals Lighthouse served its purpose extremely well during the 129 years of its existence. It employed some notable and colorful Keepers. Interesting stories associated with it abound, but fall out of the scope of this essay. Suffice it to say here, the structure provided Staten Islanders a much cherished site to view until the early evening of October 29th 2012, when Tropical Storm Sandy's ferocious and devastating tidal wave ravaged Staten Island's south shore and completely obliterated Old Orchard Shoals Lighthouse.

A tidal wave reported to be as high as 30 ft in height, left only the caisson base of the structure, some remaining rip rap, and a variety bird life that inhabited a completely flattened minuscule island.

The devastation upon the South Shore of Staten Island in residential communities such as South Beach, Midland Beach, Ocean Breeze and Oakwood was horrific. In a subsequent memorial tribute, Staten Island's current Borough President, Vito Fossella, somberly read the names of the 24 people from Staten Island who tragically lost

their lives during the storm and noted: "We don't forget those of the 102nd observation squadron and we'll never forget the 24 Staten Islanders." Many citizens inhabiting the Great Kills shore of Staten Island well remember and miss the site of Old Orchard Shoals lighthouse and the familiar comforting light that it cast upon the waters.

The fate of Old Orchard Shoals and the awful devastation wrought by Sandy in Staten Island and elsewhere in NYC serves as a stark reminder to all of us not to live at or near to low lying coastal areas. A few of the neighborhoods hardest hit by Sandy, which, suffered the highest death toll, had once served the land as protective wetlands. These are environments, where numerous houses probably should never have been built, regardless of their direct, no doubt glorious and seemingly safe proximity to the sea during its calmer times.

The loss of Old Orchard Shoals lighthouse, reminds us that our ability to successfully control the devastating effects of a powerful natural tidal wave heading full force into low lying lands is, in actual fact, exceedingly limited. This is especially true given the pre eminent power and potential ferocity of the North Atlantic. Once the destructive force of a tidal wave moves forth, high land, something that's fortunately much in abundance in Staten Island, serves as our greatest ally and protector. We ignore this reality at our peril.

Stay tuned for another Lost Light in the next Newsletter!

Wade R. Gorla is the principal lecturer for all National Lighthouse Museum Boat Tours. He is the NLM Historian, an author and a former Professor of International Relations at New York University.

Upcoming Events



Summer Lights at First Fridays

July 5 @ 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm



City of Water Day: Picnic By the Bay!

July 13 @ 11:00 am - 4:00 pm

The Outside Promenade of the
National Lighthouse Museum
FREE!

Live Music • Family Games
Guest Expert Speakers
And much more!

Don't forget to bring:

A blanket or lawn chair • Your favorite picnic dish
Sunscreen and hats for protection •
Your family and friends!



The Duffy Family at the June Father's Day Boat Tour.

Summer Boat Tours

Sunday, July 14th • 11am-2pm

The East River and Long Island Sound

Pass through Hell's Gate to Long Island Sound,
out to Execution Rocks Lighthouse learning about
several lighthouse facts along the way.

Sunday, August 4th • 6-9pm

Sunset Signature Tour to Sandy Hook & Twin Lights

This popular boat tour familiarizes passengers with
key lighthouses that facilitate safe passage from the
Atlantic Ocean into Lower New York Harbor.

Sunday, August 18th • 6-9pm

Full Moon Sunset Tour

Pass through Hell's Gate to Long Island Sound
and Execution Rocks Lighthouse.

Sunday, September 22 • 11am-2pm

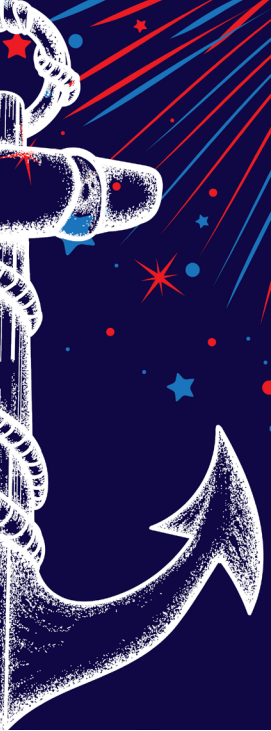
Circumnavigation

View lighthouses on and off shore. Encircle Staten
Island and explore fascinating and mysterious sites
unfamiliar to most New Yorkers.

Saturday, October 20th • 11am-2pm

****Hudson River Cruise • Lighthouse / Fall Foliage Tour**

Up the Hudson River to Tarrytown Light near
the legendary Sleepy Hollow. See the Little Red
Lighthouse under the George Washington Bridge
along this scenic boat tour.



Celebrate 10 Years!

NATIONAL LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM LIGHT KEEPER'S GALA

Friday, August 2nd, 2024

Aboard the Cornucopia Destiny

Annual Light Keeper's Gala

August 2 @ 5:30 pm - 11:30 pm

5:30pm Doors Open

Parking not permitted on Museum Plaza

(*See Parking Information)

6:00pm Awards & Champagne Reception

National Lighthouse Museum

7:00pm Board the Cornucopia Destiny

Pier One/Museum Site

7:30pm Dinner Cruise Leaves Port

Sponsorships:

\$20,000 10 Year Anniversary Lighthouse Weekend

Sponsor: 2 Tables of 10 at Gala, 20 tickets to Signature Boat Tour, Full Page color Ad Inner Cover of Journal, Your Company Name and Logo

\$10,000 Event Sponsor: Table of 10 at Gala, full page, color ad in Journal, your company name and logo displayed prominently at Gala on banner

\$5,000 Dinner Sponsor: 8 Gala tickets, full page color ad in Journal, company logo on centerpieces

\$2,000 Cocktail Sponsor: 2 Gala tickets, half page color ad in Journal, signature drink

\$1,500 Museum Awards Reception Sponsor: Half page journal ad, company logo displayed on banner at reception

\$1,500 Entertainment Sponsor: Half page journal ad, company logo displayed on the dance floor

\$1,000 Bar Sponsor: Sign on bar with company name and logo, quarter page color ad in Journal

Gala Tickets:

\$2,000 Gala Table of 10

\$275 Lighthouse Weekend Ticket Gala Awards & Reception, Lecture, & Signature Boat Tour

\$225 Gala Ticket

Gala Printed Journal Sponsorships:

\$1,000 Full Page Color Ad:

Journal Ad – 3.75" W x 10.5" H

\$500 Half Page Color Ad: Journal Ad – 3.75"W x 5"H

\$250 Quarter Page/ Business Card Color Ad:

Journal Ad – 3.75" W x 2.25"H

\$100 Gala Supporter

*PARKING:

Empire Outlets: 55b Richmond Terrace, Staten Island, NY 10301, entrance to parking lot is on Wall St. off Richmond Terrace St.

George Ferry Terminal: 12 Staten Island Ferry, Staten Island, NY 10301, entrance to Ferry Terminal

Munimeter Parking is off Richmond Terrace

Along Bay St.: 2 hour metered parking

Buy Tickets!



Visit <https://lighthousemuseum.org/events> for more information and to reserve your tickets!

NLM Notes



Ben & Liu enjoying First Friday at Museum!



Linda receives President's Medal at the College of Staten Island/CUNY Gala.



Linda received the SI Chamber of Commerce's Lou Miller Award. She is standing with Maryann Piazza at left and John Killcullen, Museum Advisor at right.



Tabling at the Connecticut Maritime Association Conference



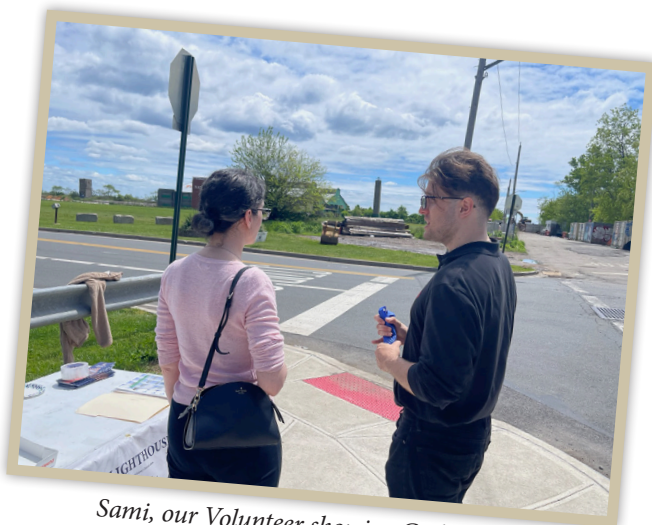
Linda, Jan Foster, Mayor Eric Adams & Capt. Joe Ahlstrom, NLM President



Prayers for those Merchant Marines who died through the years on Merchant Mariner's Day, May 22, 2024.



Sun breaking through as Robert Marraciano and Jan Foster- await more visitors at the Overlook at the Fort Wadsworth Light below!



Sami, our Volunteer showing Catherine from the Tottenville Library the Elm Tree Light



New Dorp Lighthouse with Marion Mammana; Hill Girl volunteers and Nick Dianto.



Donald DeRosa, Advisor and Krista, intern in front of Staten Island Rear Range Light



Electronic Billboard at SI Ferry



Francis Scott Key Lecture with Capt. Joe Ahlstrom



Billion Oyster Project is restoring oyster reefs to New York Harbor in collaboration with New York City communities. Oyster reefs provide habitat for hundreds of species, and can protect our city from storm damage — softening the blow of large waves, reducing flooding, and preventing erosion along the shorelines.



In late April 2024, the Alfred La Banca Exhibit "Lighthouses of the United States" were featured at the museum. The La Banca family attended the Opening.



Board of Directors at Annual Meeting at The Stone House



Linda and Produce Pete share Fig stories anticipating Produce Pete being a highlight at the upcoming Fig Fest at the National Lighthouse Museum scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 15 2024.

Produce Peter was recently at Gerardi's Nursery and Farm center signing his recent book, "They Call Me Produce Pete!"

Produce Pete stars on Channel 4 on Saturday mornings.