

THE MUSEUM NEWS

CELEBRATING THE HISTORY AND COMMUNITY OF CAPE CHARLES

CAPE CHARLES HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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John Griffith, President
Dora Sullivan, V. President
Brittany Cannon, Secretary
Marion Naar, Treasurer

CCHS Board Elections

Our Bylaws specify that elections for the board take place every two years, traditionally at our regular November meeting which this year falls on Wednesday Nov. 17. A nominating committee prepared the slate of candidates below, * indicates a new member.

Mike Ash, Jennifer Ash, Michael Bowers*, Brittany Cannon, Carol Carnegie*, Jim Carnegie*, Andy Dunton*, Damion Geist*, John Griffith, Dawn Kern*, Melinda McPeck, Lenora Mitchell, Marion Naar, Bill Neville, Jan Neville, Barbara O'Hare, Laura Smith, Dora Sullivan.

All CCHS members may vote – a quorum of 10% of the membership is required. If you are unable to attend the meeting, a vote by email to madnaar2@gmail.com would be greatly appreciated. You may vote for selected candidates or the entire slate.

Outdoor Railcar Information Signs

Although most visitors spend the majority of their time inside the museum, there is much to see outside. We have long had signs providing information on the history of the Bloxom Station, the Jetty House, and the caboose. This year we added signs for the baggage car, tank car, locomotive, box car, pilot house, a sign honoring Jerry Lewis as the last engineer to drive the locomotive, and a QR code sign for the virtual tour. The signs describe the use and provenance of each car and required a good bit of research. The Sign Company of Waterford NJ owned by CCHS member Joseph Garvey generously created and shipped the signs to us at no cost.

Keeping the Museum Open

With the help of wonderful volunteer docents and tireless scheduling by President John Griffith, who covered many days himself, we kept the museum open daily all summer and plan to continue through October. Many docents were new to the job, and we asked them to provide some views of their experience:

“Being a docent is not boring like you might think it could be. It's a chance to familiarize yourself with the exhibits in the museum and you meet a lot of interesting people.” - Jan Neville

“We began as docents at the Cape Charles Museum and Welcome Center this year. Being new residents of Cape Charles, we saw it as a way to serve our community, meet new people and learn the fascinating history of Cape Charles. We were warmly wel-

comed, and the museum staff took us under their wing to guide us every step of the way. We have found the experience to be all we had hoped it would be.”

- Carol and Jim Carnegie

“As a new, occasional docent, I have been amazed by the number of daily visitors to the museum and their interest in our exhibits. To start, I did not think being a docent was 'my thing', but I have really enjoyed the time spent with the visitors and have enjoyed introducing them to Cape Charles.”

-Mike Ash

Funding, Memberships & Grants

We've had a steady stream of visitors all season, a record 981 in August! Visitors have been generous with donations and sales brisk at the museum shop, with several new book titles. Most important to our funding of course are memberships. Please send in your membership if you haven't already done so. If you have been a member in the past but our records indicate that you have not yet renewed, you may find an enclosed membership form as a reminder. You can also join or renew by credit card from the web page, Capecharlesmuseum.org.

For the second year in a row, the Town of Cape Charles did not provide us with any direct funding. In previous years we have received annual support – \$5,000 in the years 2015 - 2019 and other amounts in earlier years. This year the town recommended that instead we apply for Cape Charles Small Business Recovery Assistance, a program funded by the State of Virginia, administered by Main Street Cape Charles, which reimburses certain utility expenses. We applied and received \$2,087.44.

Meanwhile, to start the restoration of the Pilot House, we applied for a grant of \$50,000 from the Eastern Shore of Virginia Community Foundation. To start the project, the building needs complete sandblasting for which we have received a bid of \$15,000. We also received \$1,000 from the Tourism Commission Infrastructure Program which we intend to apply to the costs of rail car paint and materials used to mount the new outside signs provided by the Sign Company of NJ. Regular maintenance of our three buildings is of course ongoing – recent repairs to the Bloxom Station sewer line cost \$1,295.

November 13 Yard Sale & December Seafood Sale

Yes, another yard sale is in the works. Donations of merchandise (no electronics or large items please) can be dropped off at the museum or Bloxom Station. We are again offering vendor stalls at \$10 with or without a table. Volunteers to assist at the sale are also needed. Call Dora Sullivan

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at 757-695-0966 or Brittany Cannon at 757-331-2960 for questions on donations, to be a vendor, or volunteer at the sale. The seafood sale of clams and oysters will take place in mid December in concert with the town's holiday schedule. Watch for information on Facebook and our web page.

Virginia Savage Memorial

Virginia loved trees and all growing things, so a small tree at the museum entrance seemed a fitting memorial for her. The longtime trees on both sides of the entrance had grown so tall and full that they had had to be removed. Virginia herself had suggested replacing them with a smaller tree. With advice from Phil at Hortco Nurseries, a fringe tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*) was selected and planted in the garden to the left of the entrance. It is a slow growing, small tree that has lacy white blossoms from May - June. Beside it is a rose bush with bright red flowers, all mulched by Tony, the gardener sponsored by member Dawn Kern. Come spring, it will be surrounded by the annual flock of daffodils.

Captain Gregory Kim Lohse

CCHS lost a great friend on May 19 of this year when Greg Lohse passed away. Greg's early years included mastering many skills along with adventures and experiences in a variety of places. In 1993 Greg and his wife Laura moved their family to Cape Charles. At the time they had just completed a sailing trip from Hawaii through the Panama Canal and up the east coast. One of the first signs that they had arrived was their impressive entrance into Cape Charles harbor on the tall ship *Tole Mour*. They lived in Cape Charles until 2005, when they moved to Yorktown to expand their day sail business.

During their years in Cape Charles, Greg and Laura were very active in the life of the town and a great help to the historical society. In the early 2000s they loaned a variety of carefully captioned nautical tools and instruments to the museum exhibits. These included items like a Walker's excelsior – “a mechanical device to measure the distance traveled over time and hence the speed of a boat” – the caption also included an explanation of how it worked. Also slicks, adzes, rigging knife, Swedish fid, marlin spike, and others. Greg was proficient in using all of them. For a couple of years the museum exhibits featured a huge sail which Greg hung from the ceiling by perching on the travel arm that moves just below the ceiling to enable repairs in high places. Greg and Laura attended many oyster roasts over the years and have continued as CCHS members until the present.

The couple was also instrumental in revitalizing Cape Charles and its waterfront with their day sail business, historic building restoration, traditional crafts, and hosting of tall ships. Greg helped preserve Cape Charles commercial history through his metal working skills.

In the blacksmith forge which he set up in the Kellogg Building he created unique pieces including oyster knives made from old Cape Charles railroad spikes. The Lohse legacy lives on. During the July Clam Slam weekend son Erik brought the schooner *Virginia* to Cape Charles for day sails. Laura, a highly skilled master mariner who remains active in the tall ship community, accompanied Erik on this trip.

CCHS will sorely miss Greg. He was truly an amazing person who made a lasting impression on so many as he lived life to the fullest. We are grateful to have had him with us. A full obituary is at <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/dailypress/name/gregory-lohse-obituary?pid=198750883>

Letter from a Member Inspired by a Newsletter Article

“I enjoyed the June 2021 newsletter article on the VFC ferries. It brought back memories of a past era. Several generations of my maternal and paternal families were from the Shore. My parents moved across the Bay to Hampton, and in 1942 I was born and raised there. I rode the ferries to come visit grandparents. And now I am retired and live on the Shore.

I remember well the old "Elisha Lee", the "Pocahontas", and the other ferries. My happy memories of the crossings include a sunny day going to the rail on deck to watch us pass by a sister boat going in the opposite direction. Then there are memories of crossing the Bay on a winter stormy day.

In the 1940s we boarded the ferry in Hampton at the Old Point Comfort dock by the Chamberlain Hotel and Fort Monroe. During the WWII era, we landed in Cape Charles and then took the Pennsylvania Railroad up the Shore. My mother would tell about traveling with me as an infant and how polite the young soldiers traveling were and helped her with her suitcase going from ferry to train. On a hot summer day traveling on a train coach car with windows opened, you got very dusty. Air-conditioned train cars were an appreciated improvement.

In later years, we were able to drive the family car on to the ferry in Norfolk to cross the Bay. In the 1950s, a "new" ferry terminal was built down the county, where the present Kiptopeake State park is located today. The war was over by then and everyone was driving cars. There was a motel above the ferry dock for travelers wanting to spend the night and cross the Bay by ferry in the morning. It was not unusual to hear an Eastern Shoreman say, "Yep, ferry must be in. Look at all those cars going North." And then that too ended in the mid-1960s when the CBBT opened. Travel by water and rail have always been a part of Eastern Shore life.
Joyce F. White (Creekside Lane, Bay Creek, Cape Charles)

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