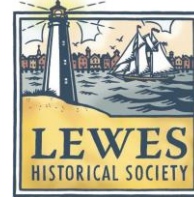


PRESS RELEASE



May 1, 2023



Lewes Celebrates 2nd Annual Maritime Day and the 50th Anniversary of Lightship Overfalls Arrival

Free Public Event to take place at Canalfront Park on the Lewes Canal Waterfront

LEWES, Del. – Experience and celebrate maritime history and its impact on the region at the annual Lewes Maritime Day celebration at the Lightship *Overfalls* and Canalfront Park on Saturday, May 20, 2023 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Lewes, known as the First Town in the First State, enjoys a heritage that is rich in both its maritime history and its current maritime interests. Co-organized by the Cape May – Lewes Ferry and the Overfalls Foundation and supported by the Zwaanendael Museum, Lewes Historical Society, the Lewes Chamber of Commerce and the City of Lewes, this celebration – complete with events, displays, boat rides, vessel tours and activities – is free and the public is welcome.

A brief Opening and Remembrance Ceremony will be held to start the day at 10:00 a.m. to kick off the event and reopen the Lightship *Overfalls* (LV-118) for her 50th season on the Lewes waterfront. The ceremony will include the laying of wreaths to honor and remember local mariners and Overfalls Foundation members who have “passed over the bar.”

“Lewes has always been an important maritime community for the region and a critical part of American maritime history of which the Ferry is a part,” said Heath Gehrke, Director of Ferry Operations. “The festival is a fun and interactive way to learn more about maritime history, industry and its many vocations. Come and join us as we celebrate the U.S. Merchant Marine, its historic support of the Nation’s military, and the many careers it offers.”

“Our objective for Maritime Day is to help inform and educate the public about the contribution of merchant marine resources in the local community and to share the community’s rich maritime history, including that of the U.S. Lighthouse Service and U.S. Lifesaving Service, precursors to the U.S. Coast Guard,” said Michael Safina, President of the Overfalls Foundation. “The Lightship *Overfalls* (LV-118) and the nearby Overfalls Lightship Station played major roles in the safe navigation of ships and their mariners throughout this nation’s history. This year we commemorate the 85th anniversary of the ship’s construction and the 50th anniversary of her arrival in Lewes. We look forward to having the community join us for the day.”

The Lightship Overfalls and museum property will be open for free tours throughout the day. Various maritime participants will have displays at Canalfront Park, adjacent to the *Overfalls*, and various vessels, including New Jersey's Tall Ship, AJ Meerwald, will be open for public tours and boat rides. It is a great way for scout groups, school groups, or parents and kids of all ages to spend the day. Other activities include a life raft demonstration by the Ferry and a water cannon display by the Lewes Fire Boat. Lewes Historical Society interpreters will be portraying unique historical figures from the *De Braak* at both Canalfront Park and the *Lewes Maritime Museum-Cannonball House*.

Additional exhibitors include Bowers Maritime Museum, Cape Water Taxi, Cape May-Lewes Ferry, Delaware River and Bay Lighthouse Foundation, Fort Miles Historical Association, Freedom Boat Club, Lewes Fire Department, Lewes Historical Society, Overfalls Foundation, Pilots Association for the Bay and River Delaware, Sea Scouts, University of Delaware, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, and Zwaanendael Museum.

In 1933, the United States Congress declared May 22 as National Maritime Day. The designation honors the contributions of the American merchant marine – civilians who have defended the freedom of the United States since 1775 and who executed the largest sealift the world has ever known during World War II. Observance of National Maritime Day also honors the maritime industry and the benefits it brings Americans in terms of transportation, jobs, goods, and recreational opportunities.

Owned and operated by the Delaware River and Bay Authority, the Cape May – Lewes Ferry is open year-round and has carried more than 43 million passengers since its inception on July 1, 1964. As an integral transportation system connecting the communities and economies on both sides of the Delaware Bay, the Ferry service is a significant catalyst for economic growth and regional tourism activity in New Jersey and Delaware. Its operations sustain over 4,000 jobs while generating tens of millions of dollars in local taxes and hundreds of millions in regional economic activity. For schedules and rates, please visit www.CMLF.com or call 800-643-3779.

The mission of the Overfalls Foundation is to preserve, teach and honor the United States lightship service and the maritime history of our community through the preservation and display of the Lightship *Overfalls* (LV-118) and its collection of associated maritime artifacts.

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