By Jasmine Foeman and Connie Morrison

Eastern Shore lighthouses have a history of guiding vessels safely along bayside and seaside shores, helping them avoid treacherous shoals. Assateague Island has had a lighthouse since 1833, but the 1867 brick lighthouse that stands today — and is still operational as a navigational aid — guides more visitors than vessels, attracting them with its promise of panoramic views of Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and Assateague Island National Seashore.

Beth Hanbeck, executive director of Chincoteague Natural History Association, a group that raises money to keep the lighthouse open and operational, says that the lighthouse sees approximately 25,000 to 30,000 visitors each year. The main appeal of the lighthouse is that it is still functional. There aren’t many functional lighthouses left, and that is what draws so many people to the Eastern Shore lighthouse, which is located within the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge.

At 142 feet tall, it can be seen for miles, and has a base 27 feet in diameter. There are 175 stairs in a winding wrought iron spiral staircase to the top — not counting the entry stairs and the landings every 25 steps. Those energetic enough to make the climb are rewarded with stunning views.

The 1833 lighthouse was authorized as the first lighthouse between Cape Henlopen, Del., and the northern entrance to the Chesapeake Bay. It quickly became functionally obsolete and fell into disrepair and by 1860, Congress had approved funds for a new lighthouse. The Civil War delayed work, but once the war was over, the lighthouse was completed within a couple of years.

The Assateague lighthouse is unique; unlike any other lighthouse on the east coast, this one has twin rotating lights producing a double flash every five seconds, made possible since electricity was run to the island in 1961. The light system is a far cry from oil lamps and reflector light sources of the original 1833 lighthouse. Until 1961, Fresnel lenses had been the light source since the lighthouse was placed into operation in 1867 (Fresnel lenses have concentric grooves that concentrate light toward a central focal point), although a battery-based electrical system predated commercial electric power of the 1960s.

The Chincoteague Lighthouse is under ownership of the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, a division of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which received it in a 2004 transfer from the

(Continued on Page 7)
Built to Guide Ships Safely, Lighthouse Also Beckons Tourists to Nature

By Jasmine Foeman and Connie Morrison

Eastern Shore lighthouses have a history of guiding vessels safely along bayside and seaside shores, helping them avoid treacherous shoals. Assateague Island has had a lighthouse since 1833, but the 1867 brick lighthouse that stands today — and is still operational as a navigational aid — guides more visitors than vessels, attracting them with its promise of panoramic views of Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and Assateague Island National Seashore.

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What Do Readers Love About Chincoteague? No Surprises Here!

Reporter Linda Cicoira recently surveyed Post readers to see what they liked best about Chincoteague. Their responses are found below, and we think readers will agree that there are no surprises. Good people, good food, and good times are at the heart of Eastern Shore life, and they are all found in abundance in our very own island paradise of Chincoteague.

“The people. Never a more generous kind. They share in your triumphs and pick you up when you are down. They are the best.”
— Denise Bowden, of Chincoteague

“Food: shrimp tacos at Pico Taqueria, banana splits in a cup from Mr. Whippys, and cheesesteak and pizza from Famous Pizza and Sub Shop. When I was younger, it also had the best nightlife.”
— Angie Crutchley, of Exmore

“Everything - the wildlife, the scenery, the ocean at Assateague and the ice cream.”
— Linda Cicoira, of Painter

“Bill’s Seafood.”
— Eyre Baldwin, of Cheriton

“Island Creamery.”
— Vic Peppler, of Captain’s Cove, and Carrie Jacobson, of Wachapreague

“Fish.”
— Melba Reid, of Columbia, Md.

“The people. Everyone knows everyone and if someone needs help, no one hesitates.”
— Marilyn Ailes, of Mappsville

“Nature.”
— John Ward, of Captain’s Cove

“Spectacular views and stunning sunsets.”
— Ellen Kellam Spence, of Chincoteague

“The beach, of course.”
— Judy Brunk, of Jamesville

“The National Park. I love the walks and seeing wild ponies and other nature. Makes me happy.”
— Linda Nicola, of Onancock

“I love the natural beauty of the island, the water views, and Assateague.”
— Lisa Cropper Johnson, of Horntown
The Ropewalk Swings Into Town: Familiar Location, But All New Feel

*Story and Photos by Jasmine Foeman*

Excursions on open-air deck boats are a fun way to tour the waters around Chincoteague and Assateague islands. A new Chincoteague restaurant is bringing that same concept to dining with the “barge bar.”

Although the location is familiar - it occupies the former Jack Spot - the look and feel, as well as the menu, are decidedly new. Ropewalk Chincoteague is a family seafood restaurant. Other Ropewalk locations have proved popular, such as those in Baltimore and Ocean City, said owner Chris Reda at the restaurant’s May 25 ribbon cutting.

Although not quite complete, the barge bar will be moored to the restaurant, giving customers a chance to enjoy drinks while floating in the bay. Reda expects the barge bar to be open before the summer is out.

But the restaurant is not relying on the uniqueness of the floating bar for its success. Its other attributes are waterfront dining, a great view, and a children’s play area to keep young ones entertained while waiting for their food. The Ropewalk menu has original dishes, such as a special crab cake egg roll with a signature thai aioli. Ropewalk’s smoked wings are smoked in-house with a dry rub, and they are served with a special “victory sauce.”

Reda, says he is “excited to be in Chincoteague” and thanks the community for being so welcoming. He also promotes the inside-outside feel that the restaurant has and mentions that at this restaurant “there is something for everyone to enjoy.”

Ropewalk opens daily starting at 11 a.m. and closes when the last guest leaves, although last call is at 1 a.m.
2017 TROLLEY SCHEDULE

**GREEN ROUTE**

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**GREEN ROUTE DAYS OF OPERATION**

- The Green Route will run the 3rd of June, and will run continuously June 6th through September 9th. The Green Route route will be run Friday and Saturday, starting September 15th through October 14th.
- The Red Route will begin on June 5th and will run every day through August 31st.

Trolley fare is 25 cents per person per ride. Exact change is appreciated. Free ride tokens are available at local businesses. Drivers do not carry cash. As a courtesy, please: no alcohol, no tobacco, and no pets. The Pony Express is seasonal transportation service provided by the Town of Chincoteague. This service is open to the public. Many of the motels, restaurants, shops, parks, recreational areas, ice cream parlours, and campgrounds are along our routes. Trolleys are equipped with wheelchair lifts. To inquire about Americans with Disabilities Act public transportation option, please contact the Town of Chincoteague during business hours at 757-336-6519, or The Pony Express at 757-854-8572, after 5 p.m.
What to do this week in and around Chincoteague

**Saturday, June 3**
*Chincoteague Island Farmer & Artisan Market*, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., Chincoteague Cultural Alliance, 6309 Church St., www.chincoteagueculturalalliance.org

*Investigation Station*, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., NASA Visitor Center. During this program, participants will investigate a STEM related topic through labs, demonstrations or activities. All Ages. For more information go to www.nasa.gov/centers/wallops/visitorcenter

*Free Kids Art Class*, 1-2 p.m., Chincoteague Cultural Alliance Community Center for the Arts, 6309 Church St., www.ChincoteagueCulturalAlliance.org All supplies provided. Young kids please bring an adult.

**Second Annual 5k Walk/Run**, 8-9:30 a.m., Assateague Island National Seashore, Register at https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/ChincoteagueIsland/AssateagueIslandNationalSeashore5k

**Saturday, June 10**
*Artful Flea Market*, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., and *Farmers Market* 9 a.m. until 1 p.m., Chincoteague Cultural Alliance, 6309 Church St., Rain or shine. www.chincoteagueculturalalliance.org

*Second Saturday Art Stroll*, 5 - 8 p.m., Main St. and Maddox Blvd., www.chincoteagueculturalalliance.org/2nd-saturday-art-stroll.html

*Solar System Activities*, 11 a.m., Wallops Flight Facility Visitor Center, Building J20 Route 175, Chincoteague Rd., www.nasa.gov/centers/wallops/visitorcenter

**Tuesday, June 6**
*Tuesday Nights at the Museum: Where Island Tales Are Told*, 7 p.m., Museum of Chincoteague, 7125 Maddox Blvd., www.chincoteagueuseum.com/ Each Tuesday evening features a different speaker and topic, May 30 to Aug. 29. This week's topic is "Rising Sea Levels on the Eastern Shore," by speaker Curtis Smith.

**Wednesday, June 7**
*Chincoteague Island Farmer & Artisan Market*, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., Chincoteague Cultural Alliance, 6309 Church St., www.chincoteagueculturalalliance.org

**Saturday, June 10**
*Assawoman United Methodist Church Yard Sale - Antiques, Collectibles, and Silent Auction*, begins 8 a.m., Atlantic Road, Village of Assawoman

*Roseland Cinema and Entertainment Center (RCEC) Presents “Peter Pan - National Theatre Live,”* 7:30 p.m., Roseland Theatre, 48 Market St., Onancock, www.roelandonancock.com/ Admission: Adults $15, Children $5. Also showing June 11 at 2:30 p.m.

All listings are provided for information only; call or check websites for updates and confirmation.

Day Trips and Side Trips Around the Eastern Shore

**Friday, June 2**
*Texas Hold Em Poker*, doors open 6 p.m., game at 7 p.m., Bloxom Volunteer Fire Company, 757-710-0408

*Franktown Players Present “Gigi,”* 7:30 p.m., North Street Playhouse, 34 Market St., Onancock, http://northstreetplayhouse.org/tickets/gigi to reserve tickets. Admission: Adults $20, students $10

**Saturday, June 3**
*5th Annual Parksley Community Yard Sale*, begins 8 a.m., Parksley


*Franktown Players Present “Gigi,”* 7:30 p.m., North Street Playhouse, 34 Market St., Onancock, Admission: Adults $20, students $10

**Sunday, June 4**
*Bingo*, doors open 1 p.m., early bird games start 2 p.m., VFW Post 2296, Tasley

Franktown Players Present “Gigi,” North Street Playhouse, 34 Market St., Onancock, Admission: Adults $20, students $10

**Monday, June 5**
*Bingo*, doors open 5:30 p.m., games start 7 p.m., Onancock Elks Lodge, Accomac, food served.

**Thursday, June 8**

**Saturday, June 10**
*Onancock United Methodist Church Yard Sale - Antiques, Collectibles, and Silent Auction*, begins 8 a.m., Atlantic Road, Village of Assawoman

*Roseland Cinema and Entertainment Center (RCEC) Presents “Peter Pan - National Theatre Live,”* 7:30 p.m., Roseland Theatre, 48 Market St., Onancock, www.roelandonancock.com/ Admission: Adults $15, Children $5. Also showing June 11 at 2:30 p.m.

All listings are provided for information only; call or check websites for updates and confirmation.
For the third consecutive weekend, the weather was more inconsistent than the fishing. Breezy conditions and rain muddied the waters along the seaside, producing a damper on the flounder fishing.

The first offshore trips have been made from Eastern Shore ports, resulting in catches of dolphin (mahi mahi). Large mako, hammerhead and dusky sharks are prowling the offshore waters from 30 fathoms out to the canyons for those who want to try their luck with those toothy critters.

And speaking of cobia, cobia season opened on June 1 and runs through Sept. 15. The VMRC has instituted a mandatory Recreational Cobia Permit for anglers wishing to retain the fish. Permits are free and available at [https://webapps.mrc.virginia.gov/public/mpermits/index.php](https://webapps.mrc.virginia.gov/public/mpermits/index.php). There is a one-fish per-person limit and no more than three fish are allowed per boat, with only one of those fish 50 inches or longer. The minimum size limit is 40 inches.

A reminder, it is illegal to gaff a cobia, so a large landing net is a must. In addition, all of your cobia fishing trips, as well as the fish harvested or caught and released, must be reported to the VMRC.

**Lower Shore** – Mark Snook, from Chris’s Bait & Tackle, reported catches of sheepshead have been made along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel and up around Buoy 13. Some small black drum remain near the bridge. The run of large red drum continues, with Nautilus Shoal being named as one of the most productive areas. Sea mullet (whiting) and a few croaker were caught over the Cabbage Patch. The shop has already recorded the first cobia releases of the season.

**Wachapreague** – Capt. Lindsay Paul, of Trident Tackle, reported that the windy and rainy conditions of last weekend have taken its toll on the flounder fishing, with a few successful catches being made on the flats on squid and minnow combinations. The first offshore trip of the season to an area 20 miles south of the Norfolk Canyon resulted in a catch of dolphin. Don’s Tackle reported that flounder fishing improved once the water began to clear. “Decent” catches came from Drawing Channel off Wachapreague and Sandy Island Drain off Quinby. The shop saw fish in the 20- to 22-inch class. Top baits were pink and white Fin Strikes in the clearer water, while the chartreuse/yellow color pattern produced in off-color water. The black drum fishery near the inlet has been on the decline.

**Chincoteague** – Donna Rae, at Capt. Bob’s blamed the recent winds for the downturn in flounder fishing. Catches were made in Assateague Channel and Queen Sound with silversides, live minnows and pink Gulp’s, all producing flatfish catches. Three- to four-pound bluefish were active in the Chincoteague Channel, preying on baits intended for flounder. Robert Lynch dominated the shop’s recent flounder tournament, taking first place with a three-fish aggregate weighing 9-15, he also had the largest bluefish in the contest at 3-7. Ray Fogle finished in second place with three fish totaling 9-12. The largest flounder weighed 3-14.

Jimmy, at Capt. Steve’s Bait & Tackle, reported that rockfish and drum catches have slowed in the surf, but the shop did see a bluefish measuring 35.5 inches caught from the beach. The shop has a supply of fresh bunker for anglers targeting blues. Flounder fishing took an upswing following the nasty weather, with some limit catches coming from Chincoteague Channel to Four Mouths, and further south near Gargatha. A few kingfish (whiting) have also shown up. Capt. John, aboard the Huntress, had a limit of seabass from an offshore wreck with the largest fish weighing in at 5-2. The run of black sea bass on Blackfish Banks have been mostly undersized.

**Upper Bay** – Matt Abell, at Sea Hawk Sports Center, reported that anglers casting over grass beds in the shallows were finding lots of small rockfish, but most are undersized, as well as some speckled trout. Top lures have been the Bass Assassins in the “albino ghost” color pattern as well as the Bomber Badonk-A-Donk SS in the blue black pattern. Red drum continue to be caught in the shallows form Bernard Island to Foxes Island, with soft crabs being the most productive baits. I can verify the abundance of small rockfish around the marsh islands, but have yet to catch a keeper!

Bill Hall was the first Eastern Shore resident to achieve Virginia Saltwater Master Angler Status. He has been named Virginia Saltwater Angler of the Year and Virginia Saltwater Release Angler of the Year. Hall is an I.G.F.A. International Committee Representative and a longtime member of the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament Committee. He is the Virginia Recreation Fishing representative on the ASMFC Striped Bass Management Panel and is a past recipient of the CCA-VA Virginia Outdoor Writer Conservation Leadership Award.
Coast Guard. Since the transfer, the lighthouse has undergone $1.5 million in maintenance in multiple phases, including complete repainting in 2013. Work on the floors and other maintenance is ongoing through a partnership between the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service and the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. The top of the lighthouse is accessible to the public between the months of June and September, daily from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (it is closed from noon to 12:30 for shift changes). There is no charge but donations are appreciated to help keep the lighthouse operational.

For more information about the lighthouse and its restoration, check out the sources used for this article:
- General Information: www.assateagueisland.com/lighthouse/lighthouse_info.htm
- Restoration: www.piping-plover.org/assateague-lighthouse/
- History: www.lighthousefriends.com/light.asp?ID=451 (This site has additional lighthouse reference resources)

Disclaimer: Tides are provided for information only and are not guaranteed for accuracy.

~ Assateague Lighthouse~
(Continued From Front Page)
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