

## Chesapeake Chapter USLHS and Outer Banks Lighthouse Society Joint Meeting

September 20-22, 2002 Portsmouth, Virginia

By Shirin Pagels

At noon on Friday September 20th, the first joint meeting of the Chesapeake Chapter, USLHS and the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society got underway. The first event for this combined group was a trip out to the Cape Henry lights in Fort Story near Virginia Beach. While at the site, participants had the unique opportunity to climb both the old and the new towers. Visitors are usually only allowed to climb the old tower since the new tower is still an active aid to navigation. For those who made the trek up both towers, they made it a total of 407 stairs (191 old tower, 216 new tower).

It was then back to the hotel in Portsmouth for dinner. The guest speaker for the evening was CWO White from the U.S. Coast Guard 5th District who gave us an update on the status of many of the lights in the Chesapeake Bay area. After dinner Cheryl Shelton-Roberts and Bruce Roberts, lighthouse authors and photographers, gave a slide show presentation and Lloyd Childers spoke to the group regarding the status of the battle over who the Currituck Beach Lighthouse should be turned over to. See [www.currituckbeachlight.com](http://www.currituckbeachlight.com) for more information.

Saturday morning started bright and early as the group made its way to the Virginia Beach Fishing Pier at Rudee Inlet to catch our boat for a cruise along the Chesapeake Bay. Blessed with a sunny day and beautiful blue skies, we made our way past the Cape Henry lights and then over to the Cape Charles light where we were only able to get a distant view of the light.

It was then on to the Thimble Shoal light where we were treated to a very up close and personal view of the lighthouse. Many of us were ready to hop from the boat to the ladder on the side of the light and climb up, we were that close! Our next stop was a water-based view of the Old Point Comfort light on the grounds of Fort Monroe.

This is the second oldest lighthouse on the Chesapeake Bay. The final light of the day was the Newport News Middle Ground Lighthouse, the oldest caisson light in Virginia. This light had been painted in the past year so it was looking pretty good for its age.

Back at the hotel, Bill Younger from Harbour Lights was available to sign pieces prior to our dinner banquet where he was also our guest speaker for the evening. During dinner, both societies presented their annual awards to several members from both groups. The evening wrapped up with a huge auction with proceeds to be split between both lighthouse groups.

The weekend came to a close Sunday morning when attendees were able to either visit the Virginia Beach Lifesaving Station or climb the Old Point Comfort lighthouse