

# The Excursion

SEA ISLE CITY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY ✦



## Big Finish for 2025, More to Come in 2026 Peter Greco, Vice President

We just finished an eventful 2025 and have some new and expanded events this year.

In April, we hosted a presentation on the history of train travel in the shore communities. Stockton University professor Bill Elwell covered the routes and offerings from Philly and throughout NJ. We explored the origin of the name "Shoobies," named for folks taking a day trip to the shore carrying their lunch in a shoebox, as well as the importance of the Excursion House as a center of activity and resources for travelers.

In 2024, our 62nd anniversary commemoration of the '62 Storm was so overwhelmingly popular (250 people joined!) that we decided to make it an annual event. In 2025, we moved the event to Excursion Park (where the Excursion House used to be) and are looking forward to being back there this summer.

Our Scavenger Hunt also got an upgrade. In addition to new artifacts to find and prizes to win, we also created a grand prize for one lucky hunter.

Over 290 children submitted their names. Our lucky winner was 7-year-old AJ from Sewell, NJ. Upon receiving her big box of prizes, she exclaimed, "I'm the luckiest kid in the world!" We'll take it.

In an accompanying article, you will read about our 2025 Grand Finale: our Annual Open House and the honoring of two important Sea Isle families, the Iannones and Fredas.

We are able to offer these programs and events thanks to the generous support of our members. Our annual membership drive kicks off in April. Please help us make it a strong one by renewing your membership. A membership renewal form is included.

We are always looking for new volunteers to staff the museum during the summer months. It is an enjoyable way to meet other "Sea Isle People," share stories, and learn some history. If you are interested, please contact us by email or phone.

Thank you for your continued support of Sea Isle City and our shared history!

### Upcoming Events

**March 2nd**  
*Museum Reopens*

**April 1st**  
*A Chat Around the Table*

**May 2nd**  
*Community Day*

**May 3rd**  
*Once Upon a Restaurant*

**July 24th**  
*Storm of '62 Presentation*

**TBA**  
*History of Lifeguards*



## It's a Wonderful Life at our Annual Open House

In December, we held our annual Open House, drawing over 80 people. We had several new events that we hope become annual traditions, including the unveiling of our 2025 Christmas ornament designed by 9-year-old RaeLynn and the Scavenger Hunt grand prize winner drawing. We also honored two families that were vital to the development of Sea Isle.

After honorably serving in World War II in the Marines and Navy respectively, Matthew Iannone, Sr. and Carmen Freda returned home to North Jersey and started working together doing construction and real estate development. In the early 1950s, Carmen purchased all of the land from beach to bay of what would become 59th to 80th Street in Sea Isle City.

Matt and others moved their families down and helped develop it to the island we know today. Carmen built the first grocery store, Food-A-Rama, which eventually became the Acme. Matt managed the real estate business and ran the Surf and Sand Department Store, now Sands.

Before Matt shipped out for WWII, he recorded a poignant message, available for listening in the museum. It made us consider how different Sea Isle would have been if Matt and Carmen hadn't come home, teamed up, or continued their legacy through their families. It was a real "It's a Wonderful Life" moment.

We hope to make the Open House an annual holiday tradition for any "Sea Isle Person" who can join us.



### Curator's Message Abby Powell, Curator

Thank you for your generous donations to the museum. Your support plays a vital role in preserving our collections, creating engaging exhibits, and providing meaningful enjoyment for our community.

Because of donors like you, we are able to protect our shared history, inspire curiosity for all ages, and ensure that the museum remains a welcoming place for learning and discovery for decades to come. Every contribution, no matter the size, makes a real and lasting impact. And your membership is the core of those donations.

We are deeply grateful for your commitment and belief in our mission.



May 3, 2026

### Dinner Fundraiser

We have fond memories of the many Sea Isle restaurants that served our residents and visitors over the years. Join us to reminisce and learn more about two of Sea Isle's staples, Mazzella's and Screnci's, while enjoying a traditional 7-course Italian meal and supporting the museum.

- Date: May 3, 2026
- Time: 5pm
- Location: The Tavern, Seaville, NJ
- Tickets are \$85/person
- Cash bar with paired wines
- Raffle featuring Sea Isle inspired gift baskets

Tickets are limited and reservations are required. Call Mary Pat at 609-675-5259 to reserve your seat!

## Upcoming Events



### A Chat Around the Table

In January, we hosted the first of this unique event. Long-time Sea Isle residents got together and shared poignant, hilarious, and connective stories, with a consistent theme of being there for each other.

Our next chat will center on Storm of '62 stories you might not have heard before. It will be held on Wednesday, April 1st at 12:30pm in the Museum.



### History of Lifeguards

Sea Isle author and lifeguarding veteran, Tom McCann, will share about the history of Lifeguards in Sea Isle City at Excursion Park this summer. Presentation date will be announced soon.

Lifeguarding is more than the story of strong, courageous protectors of our beaches. It is a culture of community, friendship, and lifelong connection. Come early for an author meet-and-greet.



### '62 Storm Presentation

The now-annual "Our Perfect Storm" presentation, which explores the Storm of '62 and its devastating impact on Sea Isle, will take place on Friday, July 24th at Excursion Park.

We anticipate another entertaining and informative presentation from Dr. Joseph A LaRosa, Jr. and Pat Haffert, two firsthand witnesses of the Storm. Come early for book signing and storm photos.



### Throwback Recipe

This Rice Pudding recipe is from Amanda Ellenberger, Secretary to Charles K. Landis, Jr. Her husband, Charles "Dutch" Ellenberger, was an engineer on the Reading Railroad.

Cook  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup rice in double boiler with  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt until done. Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar, 1 qt milk (1 can evaporated, the balance regular) and 1 tsp vanilla. Place in baking dish, sprinkle with nutmeg, and bake at 350 until brown and thick (about 1 hour). Easy peasy.



### A Few Facts About Sea Isle's Founder

Sea Isle was founded by Charles K. Landis in 1882. Here are some interesting facts about our founder:

1. Landis began to study law at the age of 15 at the office of F. Carroll Brewster. Central Ave was originally named for Brewster.
2. While enjoying prominence in the Philadelphia legal community, Landis got involved in real estate and founded several NJ towns, including Hammonton, Vineland, and Sea Isle City.
3. In 1875, Landis shot Vineland newspaperman Uri Carruth, after Carruth's reporting on Landis' wife, Clara. Carruth died seven months later due to complications from his wounds. Charles Landis was declared Not Guilty by Reason of Temporary Insanity, one of the earliest instances of this plea in the US..

Visit the museum to learn more!

## Lifeguards for Life

Mary Pat Padula, President

Wayne MacMurray began his Lifeguarding career at 15 yrs old. "Growing up in Sea Isle and being around the bay and ocean all my early years, it was always a job I wanted. I always looked up to the Lifeguards when I was little." Wayne started with Joe LaRosa on 43rd and became a Sr. Lifeguard on 61st. He spent 42 yrs as a Lifeguard including 15 yrs at SICBP, 10 yrs at Wildwood Beach Patrol, and 27 yrs at Upper Township Beach Patrol, achieving the rank of Sr. Guard, Rowing Instructor. Wayne placed in lifeguarding competitions nationwide. He is a member of the SIC and UT BP Halls of Fame.

Wayne is now retired but still rowing in Brennan's Masters' Race, Upper Township's 6 mile Bay Relay Race, and North Wildwood's Around the Isle Row, as well as participating in the annual SICBP Alumni Golf outing.

Asked about the impact of Lifeguarding on his life Wayne offered these thoughts: "Lifeguard for Life. Whenever you go to the beaches around the world, you're watching the water. Working the beach the last 54 years has kept me in great shape. I have made lifelong friendships with many men and women working the beaches of South Jersey. I have passed along the love of Lifeguarding to my sons and grandchildren. Our son, Joe, is the Captain of the Upper Township Beach Patrol. All of our grandchildren are involved in our Jr. guard program. I enjoy being a mentor for the Upper Township Beach Patrol's rowing program. My doubles partner, Jimmy Gibbons, and I work out regularly with both the male and female rowing teams."

## New Jersey Black Heritage Trail

Pat Haffert, Historian

The NJ Historical Commission has undertaken a state-wide effort to recognize places and events of importance in Black History. In 2025, the Museum's application for a marker on the Black Heritage Trail, noting the two final historic meetings of the Niagara Movement, was accepted and is being finalized.

The Niagara Movement, led by W. E. B. Du Bois and William Monroe Trotter, was established in 1905 to address and redress racial oppression in the US. The 1909 and 1910 Annual Meetings were held at the original Methodist Church at 45th and Landis.

On Aug 30, 1910, at the conclusion of the 1910 meeting, W. E. B. Du Bois gave his Annual Address to the Country. Dr. Du Bois ended his Address with: "Finally, we recognize as the greatest accomplishment of the year the organization of

the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in New York City. We urge our members to join and co-operate with it, and we willingly entrust to this organization the carrying out of the great objects of political enfranchisement, universal education, legal protection and social justice."

We will be holding annual events celebrating Black history and culture, starting with the Philly Redtails, a local chapter honoring the Tuskegee Airmen. We are open to suggestions for future events featuring black authors, activists, educators, historians, media, musicians, or performers.

The recognition that this marker brings goes well beyond our normal local footprint as a tourist destination and puts Sea Isle on the map as a destination of historical significance.

◆ Visit us online to explore more! ◆

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