



# Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission September 2010 Chronicle

## Artists to converge at East Point Lighthouse

Artists, art lovers—and anyone interested in observing one of the area’s historic treasures in a pristine environment—will come together on Saturday, September 18, for the annual East Point Light Open House & Artists’ Day.

East Point Light, in Heislerville, is the last remaining lighthouse on the New Jersey side of the Delaware Bay. In addition to celebrating the heritage of this historic structure, sponsors have invited artists to come down to the Bay and capture their impressions in a media of their choosing. This year, artists from Millville’s Barn Studio will be represented.

### Participating Artists

**Beverly Hughes**, the featured artist, is known as a “botanical artist” for her distinctive and colorful illustrations of flowers and other plants, including tropical, local and endangered species. She is a graduate of the Moore College of Art in Philadelphia and credits the Barn Studio of Art

and director Pat Witt with encouraging her during her formative years to pursue a career in art.

A Millville native and Vineland resident, she is an art teacher at the Cunningham Alternative High School in Vineland and has published her first book,

“Hidden Among the Petals.” The book will

be displayed at the “Navigating the New” annual conference and exhibition in Sacramento, Calif., from November 12 through 15. Hughes will also appear at the “Women in Transition” Survivor’s Network Fundraiser on October 29 in Philadelphia. She will do a book signing there and sell



*East Point  
Lighthouse*



*“Sultan Sunny  
Bela” by  
Beverly Hughes*

her unique “botanical cubes.”

**Kevin and Betsy Tasker** both attended the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Betsy graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and did graduate work at Rowan University in Glassboro. They have been married for 29 years and live in Vineland. Kevin is a landscape painter and Betsy is a painter and art teacher at Cumberland Regional High School, where she has taught for the past 27 years. She also serves as coordina-

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# East Point Lighthouse a fertile ground for artists

## Event Schedule

10 a.m.-3 p.m.-*Seining* (netting, with naturalists from the Nature Conservancy, small aquatic life) near the boat ramp; Maurice River Botanical Gardens open to the public; "Paint the Lighthouse" tent open for watercolor artists of all ages.

10 a.m.-4 p.m.-Artists render their impressions of the surroundings, guests encouraged to interact; Lighthouse tours of the cupola; Cape May Bird Observatory and Natural Lands Trust naturalists at the Thompsons Beach viewing platform with a scope and binoculars.

Noon-4 p.m.-Performances by the Snake Brothers and Steve Bryne under the tent.

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tor of the Fine and Performing Arts Department and teaches with Pat Witt at the Barn Studio of Art.

**Isabelle Samul** operates Isabelle's Studio 135 at 135 High St. in Millville. She leases wall space to exhibiting artists and sells art, jewelry and handmade gifts of art by clay, iron and glass artists. She previously owned the Wildflowers Garden Studio in Somers Point and is a member of the Millville Merchants Association and the Riverfront Renaissance Center for the Arts (RRCA) in Millville, where she is an associate artist. She will teach a class in acrylic painting for teenagers this fall at RRCA.

**Kandice Fields** started her studies at The Barn Studio when she was 11 and now is in her fourth year at The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Next year, she plans to attend Tamarind Institute in New Mexico to become a Master Printer. Fields was first apprentice, then monitor and intern at The Barn, eventually becoming Studio Manager and Instructor.

A professional artist since 1969, **Frank D'Autrechy** enjoys the creative process of producing art works in diverse mediums and styles. He is a graduate of William Paterson University in Wayne, where he earned a B.A. in Art Education. He has taught developmentally challenged adults at Bancroft NeuroHealth and continues to teach all grades at Creative Achievement /Downe Academy. The classes have produced award winning artists and multiple community based art exhibitions, such as at the Vineland Library, RRCA, Noyes Museum, Bank of America, and Sun Bank.

Another artist, Frank DeMaio, is also scheduled, but personal information was not available.

Sponsors of the Open House are: the Cumberland County Cultural & Historic Commission, the Cumberland County Board of Chosen Freeholders, the Barn Studio of Art, the Nature Conservancy, the Cape May Bird Observatory, the Natural Lands Trust, the N.J. State Council on the Arts and Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and Its Tributaries.

## History of the Lighthouse

East Point Lighthouse is the second oldest lighthouse in New Jersey. Built in 1849, it is located on the east bank of the mouth of the Maurice River. The original lens, illuminated by a lamp burning whale oil, was first lit at the lighthouse on or about September 10, 1849, when William W. Yarrington, the first keeper, was appointed at an annual salary of \$350.

Over the years, ten keepers and their families lived and served at the lighthouse. The last was Linwood Spicer, who began his tenure on December 12, 1905, and left near the end of September, 1911.

A resident custodian was in charge until 1941, employing automated acetylene gas tanks which would fuel the light for long periods of time. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, however, the light was extinguished for fear of its becoming a beacon for enemy ships.

At the end of the war, East Point Light was not re-lit. Vandalism and weather quickly took their toll, and by the time the Federal Government was ready to deed the property to the State of New Jersey in 1955, the lighthouse was in need of major repair.

It remained abandoned and boarded up until 1971, when a group of concerned local residents formed the Maurice River Historical Society to save the lighthouse. A fire broke out on July 15, 1971, destroying the lantern room and roof and severely damaging the interior. Through the Society's efforts, the lighthouse was stabilized and in 1980 reactivated by the U.S. Coast Guard as an aid to navigation. In the 1990s the Society successfully placed the lighthouse on the National Register of Historic Places and restored the exterior. The next phase of restoration will focus on the interior; donations are always encouraged. For information, call 856-546-7810.

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