

[From Spring 2006]

The President's Message

By Joyce Maher

Just wanted to thank everyone in CNHA who has helped so much over the past 20 years to create a co-operative Organization designed to assist the United States Fish and Wildlife Service on the Eastern Shore. In August of 1986, when some caring residents wanted to ensure that the refuges would be able to continue greeting and educating residents and visitors, CNHA was founded. Since then lots of exciting things have happened, and many changes have occurred. But one thing that has remained constant is the dedication of our members and other volunteers who have worked long and hard to assist both the Chincoteague and Eastern Shore Wildlife Refuges in giving out information, funding exhibits, operating Educational bus tours, participating in many events, offering sales Items at our gift shops and most recently tours of the Assateague Island Lighthouse. Our numbers have continued to grow; currently CNHA has over 300 members with more life and endowment fund members as well.

Luckily, our changes have been positive. A few years back we moved from a tiny corner of the small visitor center which was the information center on Assateague Island to The Herbert H. Bateman Center, a state-of-the-art visitor center featuring educational exhibits, a theater, an eagle cam, a wet lab and classroom combined and more. CNHA members led the way, and they continued their efforts until the dream along with other volunteers became a reality.

Our new attraction, the lighthouse, is continuing to be a popular spot. Visitors experience the awesome view and have continued to climb the 198 steps to the top in increasing numbers since the 3 day openings began. A total of over 37,500 visitors have toured the lighthouse since CNHA started managing the lighthouse in 2004. We also have an impressive lineup of artists for a great season of shows in the oil shed. Recently, Bob Marz, co-chair of the Lighthouse Committee, reported that much needed pipe railings were donated and will be installed quite soon. Wayne Bonde, refuge Volunteer and greeter for the lighthouse, donated his time to getting and installing a screen door on the lighthouse oil shed. Thank you, Wayne.

With the coming of spring, our work will increase and in order to do the best job we can, we are always looking for new Members and volunteers. So if you, or anyone you know, are interested in joining a fun and productive group we have varied volunteer opportunities.