

2025 Annual Report

Bayshore Center at Bivalve



WHERE HISTORY AND THE ENVIRONMENT MEET

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A Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Bayshore Center at Bivalve Supporters:

This year over 15,000 people engaged in activities through the Bayshore Center at Bivalve (BCB) focusing on history, culture, and our local environment. BCB strategically focused on building capacity through education programming and outreach partnerships, signature fundraising events, and executing a robust port plan with education and outreach activities. We built upon past work through partnerships, strategic planning, advanced marketing, and robust education programming throughout the organization.

The Bayshore Center at Bivalve (BCB) Board of Directors and staff are dedicated to building the infrastructure and long-term planning needed. Moving forward, key priority goals such as organizational effectiveness and membership growth will be a priority to continue the forward momentum from 2025. In addition, long-term planning and crucial financial investments for capital improvements are actively underway. The replacement of the Keel of the vessel A. J. Meerwald and planning phased repairs for the historic shipping sheds and wharves, located in Port Norris, NJ, are underway.

2026-2027 Key Priority Goals

- Organizational Effectiveness
- Membership Growth & Volunteer Engagement
- Programming & Partnerships (Ports & Education)

Membership is on a steady growth trajectory continuing to drive sponsors, donors, and educational partnerships. We have an opportunity to increase our impact and engagement in the communities we serve. In 2026, we look forward to continued member engagement in educational programs and events. This will be our third year sailing from the Cape May - Lewes Ferry terminal in Cape May. We look forward to visitors sailing with us in the summer of 2026!

We plan to continue to develop dynamic educational experiences and opportunities for our history and the environment to meet. We strive to foster a culture that inspires the next generation of leaders for our waterways and ecosystem.

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Jessica Yorke

Jessica Yorke
Executive Director



Our Mission, Vision, and History

Mission

Through the state's official tall ship, the Oyster Schooner *A. J. Meerwald*, and the historic waterfront museum, the Bayshore Center at Bivalve (BCB) will advance the understanding of the human impact on New Jersey's aquatic environment through education, advocacy, and programming.

Vision

BCB envisions a New Jersey with clean, safe and healthy water for recreation, consumption, and commercial fishing.

About

BCB, "Where History and the Environment Meet," was founded in 1988. It is an organization focused on using local history featured in our Delaware Bay Museum, combined with hands-on learning aboard our floating classroom, the 1928 Oyster Schooner *A. J. Meerwald*. The organization is housed in the historic 1904 oyster shipping sheds and wharves located in Port Norris (Bivalve), NJ.

BCB was founded by Meghan Wren and John Gandy to save *A. J. Meerwald*, a Delaware Bay Oyster Schooner. In 1996, *A. J. Meerwald* was listed on the National/State Register of Historic Places. She was given the title by Gov. Whitman as the Official Tall Ship of New Jersey in 1998, but without funding.

What started out as a grassroots effort, BCB has grown into a professional staff of 10 including a well-respected and proficient Museum Curator and a ship's Captain, in addition to a seasonal crew. The organization is a proud ambassador of New Jersey's maritime history both on land and sea.

Where We Work

The Bayshore Center at Bivalve works with schools and organizations throughout the tristate area of New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania. The majority of youth educational programs come from Cumberland, Cape May, and Atlantic counties.



Oyster Schooner *A. J. Meerwald*

In 2025 *A. J. Meerwald* visited and delivered programming in **11 ports**. (Bivalve, NJ; Trenton, NJ; Norfolk, VA; Cape May, NJ; Toms River, NJ; Atlantic Highlands, NJ; Jersey City, NJ; Philadelphia, PA; Baltimore, MD; St. Michaels, MD; and Chestertown, MD.)

A. J. Meerwald participated in **HarborFest** (Norfolk, VA), the **Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race** (placing 4th of 6 in our class), **Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum's OysterFest**, and **Sultana Downrigging Festival**, as well as offering public, education, and family education sails.



- **3,392 passengers sailed aboard *A. J. Meerwald* on “Public Sails” in 2025**, experiencing her history, connection with local waterways and the environment, and her ongoing support of the oyster industry.
- *A. J. Meerwald* offered **133 public and specialty sails** over **87** sailing days.
- **2,175 people visited *A. J. Meerwald*** for education programs and deck tours.
- **440 total passengers (students & chaperones) participated in Education Sails** (Sailing Field Trips). When sailing from our home port at the Bayshore Center in Port Norris, NJ, students participate in three land based interactive educational stations in the museum and then climb aboard *A. J. Meerwald* to meet our crew, hoist the sails, and participate in three hands-on education stations while underway.
- **348 passengers sailed on public Family Environmental Education Sails**, offered in Liberty State Park, Cape May, and Trenton. Liberty State Park Education Sails were offered for free to New Jersey residents through our partnership with Liberty State Park.

The vessel was brought into compliance with new Subchapter T requirements and can now carry overnight passengers. We welcomed overnight passengers aboard for a charter program with Cape May Point Arts and Science Center on our transit from Bivalve to Trenton, and hosted a group of Sea Scouts during the Sultana Downrigging Festival.

Additional boat updates include new bunk mattresses in the foc'sle and aft cabin, a new house battery bank, and adding an additional freshwater tank to increase capacity by 50 gallons.

Two capital improvement projects are currently underway thanks to the support of our donors and the New Jersey Historic Trust. The first is a project to increase maneuverability of the vessel by examining the propeller, transmission and engine. This project will be completed in the spring of 2026 with the installation of a new 40” custom propeller. The second is the replacement of the original Keel, which was identified as needing replacement in the fall 2025 USCG inspection. This project will begin in the late fall of 2026 at Mystic Seaport.

The Delaware Bay Museum

The Delaware Bay Museum had 3,177 visitors engaging in museum tours, education programs, and community-based events.

Of the 3,177 visitors, **250 were unique visitors** who came to specifically tour the museum. This does not include the many individuals who attended educational programs or community events. This year BCB strategically opened the museum on Wednesdays & Saturdays from 11 AM - 4 PM May through October without the support of the cafe and docks being opened to the public. This allowed the organization to focus staff resources on museum visitors and exhibits.



While BCB has been a leader in youth education for nearly 30 years, our work as stewards and as a repository of Bayshore Region history, has caught the attention of academics and higher education institutions. Professors brought their students from NJ and PA colleges and universities and invited BCB to participate in initiatives.

Museum Series:

- The **Spring Series** featured oyster films about the Delaware, Chesapeake and Barnegat bays and included *White Gold*, *A Passion for Oysters* and *The Oyster Farmers*.
- The **Summer Series** included short films on South Jersey Pine Barren traditions, shipwright Tim Clark's original presentation on the 2021-22 restoration of the *A. J. Meerwald*, and intern Claire's presentation *From the Archives*.
- The **Fall Series** saw the films: *A Meeting of Migration*, *UNFILTERED the Truth about Oysters*, and *Empire Oyster* shorts. Art presenters consisted of talks about Port Norris photographer Sam Cobb, photographers of the Delaware Bay, and Lenni Lenape art and traditions.

Exhibit Update

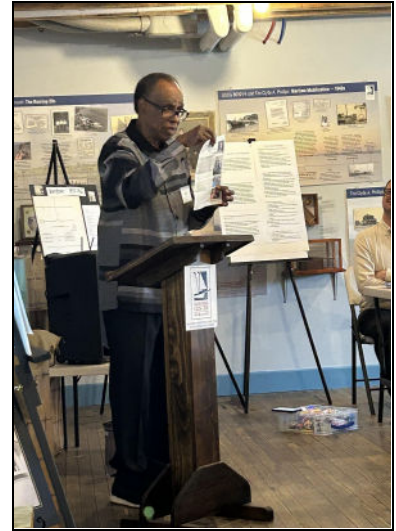
The *L. Albertson (Al) Huber Maritime Traditions of the Delaware Bay* exhibit and dedication of the **Huber Maritime Education Room** opened Second Friday on June 13th. Al was an early BCB supporter and trustee whose collection of artifacts formed the basis of our museum, now in its 32nd year. Meghan Wren and Michael Chiarappa shared stories and recollections. Al's children Trudi Hathaway and Joe Huber, and family attended.



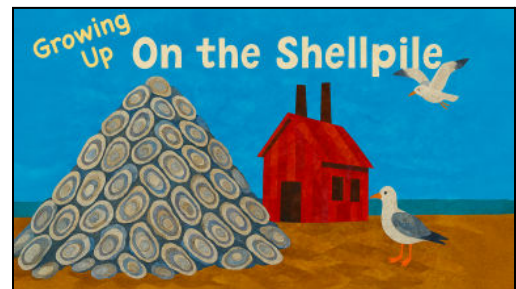
Monuments to Migration & Labor Project:

BCB is a proud partner of Dr. Andy Urban, of Rutgers New Brunswick Mellon Foundation, who funded the *New Jersey Monuments to Migration and Labor (NJMML)* project that uses the arts to explore the immigrant and migrant experience. BCB is one of nine partners statewide. Dr. Linda McBride and Dr. Cadmus Hull (children of African American migrant oyster workers) served as the facilitators for the community dialogue session held in June.

In November, BCB hosted *Flagship: Monument on the Move*, the first of three events that NJMML Monument Artist, Immanuel Oni, is organizing in the South Jersey project region. The event focused on exploring the migration histories of African Americans who came to Port Norris from the Chesapeake. These community-building activities are the basis for Oni's artistic process and will inform the mobile monument installation that he is designing.



The digital children's book *Growing Up on the Shellpile*, commissioned by the NJ Monuments to Migration and Labor project, was completed in late December featuring the voice talents of Port Norris children, Trayden Olin Doughty and Lantana Hope Doughty. The digital book was written and produced by Keith Wasserman of Shoot the Moon Communications.



Donations to the Museum & Collections:

- Rutgers Shellfish Research Laboratory - three wire oyster baskets.
- Elizabeth "Lisa" Otremsky - Steamer trunk and clothing belonging to Augustus J. Meerwald (senior) and family. Of particular significance is the shipping tag on the trunk "AUGUSTUS MEERWALD Planter and Wholesale Dealer in Maurice River Cove Oysters Dennisville, N.J." This is the only known printed material with the name Augustus Meerwald.
- Michael Harper, estate of Joan Riggin Harper – split oak woven oyster basket, *Man, the Sea and Industry* book and *Undersail the Dredgeboats of the Delaware Bay* book.

Museum Leadership

In April, BCB hosted the League of Historical Societies spring meeting. Speakers included Barney Hollinger on The State of the Oyster Industry, the NJ Cultural Trust, and the Preservation Center for Arts & Historic Artifacts on emergency planning and climate change. BCB attended the NJ Preservation Conference and NJ History Conference. In September, BCB hosted the NJ Association of Museums workshop on mold prevention, detection and mitigation.

Education

- **5,120 total youth participated in educational programming** offered all season from the Delaware Bay Museum, and dockside in additional ports. One area of growth in 2025 was the ability to provide education and outreach at events and away port visits. This year partnerships were built with NJ Parks and Recreation, youth sailing organizations, maritime museums and local non-profits. Your support helped make this impact possible.
- **1,344 youth engaged in land-based educational programming** with visits to the Museum, and dockside programming offered at Barnegat Bay, Trenton, and Liberty State Park with partnerships with AmeriCorp, Sea Scouts, United Mercer Interfaith Organization (UMIO), Tulpehaking Nature Center, and SPLASH Classroom.
- A variety of adult-programs on land and in the museum along with usage by outside organizations reached **2,726 individuals**.
- BCB also hosted museum colleagues from around the state during the League of Historical Societies spring meeting, and a NJ Association of Museums workshop led by the Conservation Center for Arts & Historic Artifacts.



Community Partners

BCB hosted tours for **85 college students** (including undergraduate, masters and PhD candidates) **and community groups** from University of Pennsylvania, Temple University, Rowan College of South Jersey, Rutgers University Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory, the American Littoral Society, ReClam the Bay, and Richard Somers Chapter of Questers.

The Bayshore Center at Bivalve expanded our impact in 2025 through partnerships, presentations, programs and events:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ● CU Maurice River, Wild About Cumberland | ● Cumberland County Tourism - Mauricetown RiverFest |
| ● Tall Ships America Conference | ● Greenwich Artisan Fair |
| ● Cape May County Historical Society | ● Cape May Nature Center Monarch Festival |
| ● Historic Cold Spring Village | ● Carpenters Hall Oyster Day |
| ● Cape May MAC | ● Back to School Night, Commercial Township School |
| ● Bridgeton Rotary Club | ● Cumberland County's Winter Eagle Festival |
| ● Rotary Club Vineland | ● American Littoral Society |
| ● Rutgers New Brunswick | ● Cape May Point Arts & Science Center |
| ● End of Summer Commercial Township | |
| ● Save Barnegat Bay | |

Fundraising

The Bayshore Center at Bivalve held several fundraising events in 2025. The biggest success was the NJ Oyster Festival with over 600 tickets sold, lots of local oyster vendors, and sponsors. Thanks to everyone who attended, sponsored, donated raffle baskets, and those that helped make all of our fundraising events possible.

Thank you to the individuals who came together to fund the 2024-2025 Education & Capacity Building Initiative resulting in \$750K raised in less than two years. Over 300 additional donors contributed gifts under \$500. Thank You!

Major Donors

L. Kay Roberts
Lea Sherk
John & Rona Gandy
Aimee Burgin & Jason Vail

Jerry Lanz
Jane & Peter Galetto
Dr. Jill Mortensen
Austin & Gwen Fragomen

Kathleen Pritchard
Joe & Louise Huber
Dr. Nils & Patricia Herdelin
Donald Moser

Foundations

Peter R & Cynthia K Kellogg
Foundation
Rennoc Foundation
Impact100 South Jersey

Sykora Family Foundation
Hyde & Watson Foundation
Ocean First Foundation
Switlik Foundation

NJ Arts & Culture Fund
Gardner Family Foundation
Mellon Foundation
Fox Foundation

Small Gifts (Level I)

Burt & Jean Doremus
Mary Pat McCann

Marcia & Tony Klock
Scott Eves

George Phelps

Small Gifts (Level II)

Mitchell Brodtkin
W. Scott & Mary Jo Williams
Laura Buonpastore &
Matthew Edson
Mary Smith
Janet Mackey
Joan Harper (In memory of)

Richard & Barbara Creek
Patrick Slavin
Henry & Barbara Colie
Victoria Skelly
Winfield Scott & Mary Joe
Williams
Polly & James Armour

Cora Holmes
Barbara & Richard Creek
James Perry
Walter Surdam
Zuleyma Guevara
Mark Showers
Ray Skelly (In memory of)

Small Gifts (Level III)

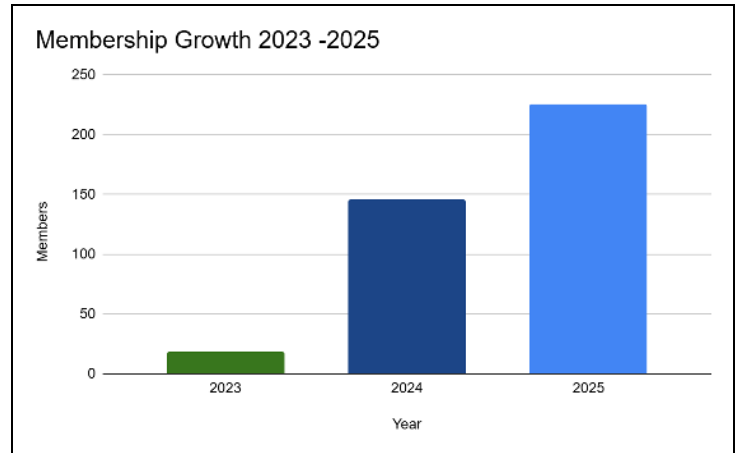
Gail Donner
Carol Steketee
Polly & Jay Armour
Cheryl & Gary Schenkel
David & Regina Surdam
Doug Faunt
Philip & Lauri Surdam
James Betz

William E. "Bill" Bowen, Sr (In
memory of)
Robert & Karen Bredehoft
Diane Gryger
Millville Moose Lodge #2488
Meghan Wren & Jesse
Briggs
David Bennett

Kathy & Bob Michel
Mike Vizzard
Capt. Thomas & Sue Carroll
Judy Jervis
Carol Walker
Nathan & Amber Hauser
Caroline Owens (In memory
of)

Membership

In 2025 membership grew significantly from 146 members in 2024 to 226 members in 2025. We are excited to welcome twenty-four new Barnegat Bay Society members (BBS) to the Bayshore Center at Bivalve. Port specific membership events took place in Barnegat Bay and Cape May, in addition to programs and events held at the Bayshore Center in Port Norris, NJ. Membership benefits were expanded to include discounts and free admission to educational talks and presentations.



Grand Mariner (\$1,000 and above)

A Cat "Ghost" **BBS*
 Mitchell Brodtkin
 Henry & Barbara Colie **BBS*
 Burton & Jeanne Doremus
 Matthew Edson
 Steve Fleetwood
 Austin & Gwen Fragomen
 Jane & Peter Galetto
 John & Rona Gandy
 Steve Gardner
 Dr. Nils and Patricia Herdelin
 Joseph & Louise Huber
 Peter K. & Cynthia K. Kellogg

Anthony & Marcia Klock
 Chuck Lammers
 Jerry Lanz
 Janet Mackey
 Greg & Roseanne Matzat
**BBS*
 Kathryn & Bob Michel
 Jill Mortensen
 Donald Moser
 George Phelps
 Chuck & Hilary Pritchard
 Kathleen Pritchard
 Kay Roberts

Robert Sawyer
 Lea Sherk
 Mark Showers
 Wade & Pamela Sjogren
 Victoria Skelly
 Patrick Slavin
 Mary Smith
 Stanley & Pam Switlik
 Yarrow & Mary Thorne
 Aimee Burgin & Jason Vail
 Scott & Mary Jo Williams
 Robert Woodruff

Captain (\$500)

William De Camp **BBS*
 Mary Pat McCann & Scott Eves

First Mate (\$250)

Craig & Angela Becker
 Don & Lil Boose
 Wayne & Gretchen Braunwarth
 Meghan Wren & Jesse Briggs
 Lee Buhrman & Stephanie
 Brower
 Carlton & Jane Chew

Robert & Paula Conner
 Wendy & James Daly
 Jay & Angela Gerken
 Robert Metz
 Richard & Barbara Moran
 David Morrow
 James & Rose Perry

Robert & Loretta Pickus
 Kieran Pillion
 Bruce Sanville
 Ron & Shirlee Schumann
 Walter Surdam
 Tom & Jane Verba
 James & Loretta Maguire

Bosun (\$100)

David Acree
 Mark Allen
 Glenn Aprill
 Amy Bagliani **BBS*
 Jordan Bailey

David Bennett
 Nancy & Robert Benz
 John Brady **BBS*
 Matthew Brazinski **BBS*
 Robert Bredehoft

Drew & Joy Castagna
 Julia Catini
 Patricia Cavender
 Ann Colie-Lewis **BBS*
 Robert & Valerie Conley

Bosun Continued

Fran Cossaboon
Michael & Barbara Crowley
Stephen D'Angelo
Henry Depue
L. John Dughi *BBS
Britta Forsberg *BBS
Katherine Frankovich *BBS
Robert & Elaine Frantz
Joel de Witt & Lynn Fylak *BBS
Barbara Guardiola
Mark Hanley
Ellen Hanley
Susan Hart
E. Wachtman & Joe Hochreiter
Barney & Debi Hollinger

Helen Jackson
Mark James *BBS
Barbara Justis
Joseph Krafft
Joe & Mary Linda Lacotte
Tony & Janet Maddox
Jean Mastrangelo *BBS
Elizabeth McCutcheon
Jason McLaughlin
Craig Mclean *BBS
Robert Morrisroe
William O'Brien *BBS
John & Kathy Osterholm
Kieran Pillion *BBS
Bob & Helen Reinhart
Philip Reynolds *BBS

John Romanik
Dale Rothrock
Suzanne Sawyer Battaglia
Save Barnegat Bay *BBS
Stephen Schmidt
Patrick Schmierer *BBS
Richard & Carol Shenton
Margaret Siefken
Pat & Richard Smith
Scott Snyder
Jack Tonzola *BBS
Donna Vertolli
Ed Vienckowski *BBS
Richard Westergaard
Kary Wilson
Michael Wynne
James & Penelope Yorke

Deckhand (\$35)

Barbara Ahrens
Joseph Ambrose
Betty Arink
Kathleen Arleth
Samuel Avery-Quinn
Terri Ballas
Tess Beckwith
Bonnie Beehler
Jonathan Beer
Denise Bendig - Fiske
Elizabeth Betsch
Dawn Boughal
Virginia Campbell
George & Lois Carr
Ken Cavender
Theodore Chase, Jr
Dan Chelius
John Colehower
Nancy Collins
Christopher Crow
Lorrie Czarkowski
Margaret Diorio Daily
Robert Deane
Mary Beth Dimeglio
Gary Dos Santos
Jen Duddley
Ann Duffy
Shirley Eggert
Margaret Feil
David Fiedler
Catharine Flaherty
Judi Fusaro
James Gerard
Gary Giampino

Shane Godshall
Gregory Gormley
Emma Hackley
Mark Hansen
Meilssa Harabedian
Carl Homan
Barb Horan
Mike Horan
Nick Horvath
George "Hug" Howarth
Sandra Ivanick
Deborah Jordan
Jackie Kehrmann
Gary & Claudia King
Arthur King
James Kneubuehl
Heather Levenson
Nancy Linden
Nick Lockyer
Charles Lownsbury
Nate Mackouse
Laura Malmquist
Robert Marceluk
Charles Marley
Rosco Masci
Ronald Matthews
Kathleen McCain
Mac McDougall
Doug McMahon
Brian & Susan Murphy
Terence O'Neill
Fred Ochs
Carl Penn
Rita Pettit

Kieran Pillion
Kathryn Pramuk
Michael Reehm
Greg Ritter
Gail Robinson
Dr. Gordon Robinson
Frank Rocap
Kathleen Salber
Mary & Duncan Shaw
Stephanie Simon
Bernie Simpkins
Elliot Sisson
James Sneathen
Steve Stolar
Ellis Stramer
John Barton & Jan Tarpine
Richard Taylor
Alexander Tewnion
John Turner
Gail Tweed
Annemarie Van Hemmen
Nickolas Wagner
Kathleen Wagner
Richard Williams
Erik Yang
Arthur Jervis
Judith Jervis
Susan Milner
Josh Mortensen
Barbara Mortensen
Al Mortensen
Henry Stadler

Financial Review

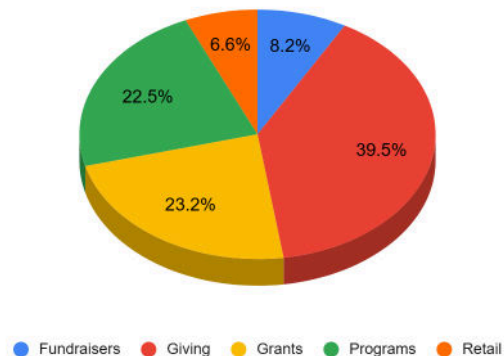
The annual operating budget was just shy of \$1M with increases in revenue in fundraisers and giving. Grants remained consistent from 2024. Program revenue was down due to refunds for significant weather cancellations. Expenses remained consistent with 2024 with additional expenses for education staff, interns and support. The year ended with a surplus.

Overall, the organization is in good financial standing with proven operational models in every area of the budget. BCB uses accrual accounting. The 2024 Form 990 is posted and the 2024 audit was completed by Tracey and Tracey Certified Public Accountants.

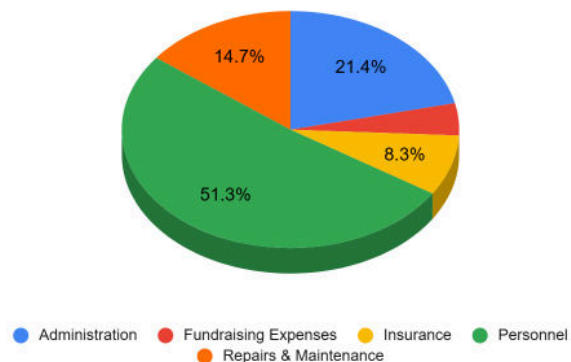
Grants

BCB had a very successful year in grant support. Two grants were awarded in 2025, with funds deposited in 2026 totaling \$360K. The 2025 Keel Replacement project, awarded by the NJ Historic Trust, will begin in the fall of 2026 requiring \$164K matching funds to be raised in 2026.

2025 Revenue



2025 Expenses



- Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage NJ State Council on the Arts Block Grant
- NJ Historic Trust - Replace section of A. J. Meerwald's keel. (Project scheduled for fall of 2026)
- NJ Cultural Trust - Stabilization grant to create a cash reserve.
- NJ Arts and Culture Fund - General Operating Support (GOS) Grant
- Commercial Township Green Team - Roadway/ Shoreline Clean-up
- Monuments to Migration - Project Grant
- NJ Historical Commission - GOS
- NJ Historic Trust - Covid Relief Grant. This special grant program is available to Trust funded capital projects (A. J. Meerwald restoration) that can demonstrate a cost overrun because of increased construction costs. Funds will only cover the overage relative to the original scope of work from 2021 grants.
- Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage - Marketing grant



2025 Board of Directors, Staff, and Crew

Board of Directors

John Gandy, President	Kathryn Michel
Jason Vail, Vice Chair of Development	David Acree
Edward (Ned) Gaine, Vice Chair of Operation & Programs	Patrick (Pete) Slavin
Marcia Stetler Klock, Secretary	Barney Hollinger
Mike Rothman, Treasurer	Mary Pat McCann
Anthony Klock	Dr. Nils Herdelin

Staff & Crew

Executive Director

Jessica Yorke

Delaware Bay Museum

Rachel Dolhanczyk, Museum Curator & Grants Manager
Claire Dell-Priscoli, Museum Intern

Museum Advisors

Dr. Michael Chiarappa, Historian-in-Residence
Pete Lesher, Historian and Ambassador-at-Large

Program

David Ferrara, Education Programs Manager
Eli Bisco-Werner, Education Programs & Summer Camp
Sarah Schuck, Education Intern

Operations

Candy Faunce, Chief Financial Officer	Scott Eves, Facilities Manager
Teri Watson, Office & Retail Operations	Joseph Sciancalepore, Maintenance
Bethany Snyder, Marketing & Logistics	Devin Cherlis, Food & Beverage
Diane Stevenson, Bookkeeper	

Schooner *A. J. Meerwald*

Fern Hoffmann, Captain	
Chip Gutsch, First Mate	Fae McCaslin, Deckhand
Naomi Nesbit-Weiner, Engineer	Ellis Stramer, Deckhand
Javi LeBouton, Bosun	Lexi Morningstar, Deckhand
Syd Bedgood, Ship's Chef	Syd Bedgood, Ship's Chef
Locke Huntington-Bradley, Education Coordinator	