



SALUTE TO OCEAN COUNTY

A CELEBRATION OF ARTS & CULTURE

The Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission's annual awards celebration, the 13th annual *Salute to Ocean County*, was held in person this year on April 13th at Ocean County College in Toms River. A virtual *Salute to Ocean County* is available on the Ocean County Cultural & Heritage website for those who were not able to attend the live event. vimeo.com/817055482



This year's awardees include some of Ocean County's leaders in the humanities – women and men dedicated to preserving history, culture, and the arts in their communities and regions. Each of the awardees received a short documentary produced by local high school students. To submit nominations for the Salute awards complete a nomination form: co.ocean.nj.us/OC/ch/frmAwards.aspx

2023 AWARDEES

Ocean County Lifetime Achievement in the Arts:

Harry Bower - youtube.com/watch?v=ZAJCHpyeYrA

Pauline S. Miller Lifetime Achievement Award for Ocean County History:

Gretchen Coyle - youtube.com/watch?v=qv6qRVWVAoU

Joseph H. Vicari, Ocean County Tourism Award:

Emery's Farm - youtube.com/watch?v=8fs4NK_FPsI
Joseph H. Vicari

Special Award of Merit:

Ralph Bertini - youtube.com/watch?v=ERgg5EmwDrU

Special Recognition for Advancement of the Arts Award:

Paul Hartelius - youtube.com/watch?v=Ah8HCDEtKlK

Historic Preservation Award:

Long Beach Island Historical Association - The Fisherman's Cottage - youtube.com/watch?v=qBpfmMSGpU



SALUTE TO OCEAN COUNTY

PREVIOUS AWARDEES

Ocean County Lifetime Achievement in the Arts

The Commission has created this award category to recognize the extraordinary achievements and contributions of those individuals and organizations to the quality of life in Ocean County. Recipients are selected from the distinguished list of Ocean County artists representing many art forms, nominated by various individuals and organizations

Past Awardees

2022: Mary May - Basket Weaver
2021: Art Birdsall – Decoy Carver
2020: Robert Popovics - Naturalist, Innovator, Artist
2019: Thomas E. Rutledge - Visual Artist
2018: Eva Lucena Welch - Dance
2017: Kate Leigh Cutler - Visual Artist
2016: Cathleen Engelsen - Visual Artist

Art Advocate Awards

The commission recognizes the singular contribution of the award recipients on behalf of Ocean County and New Jersey art communities. The sum total of their civic and non-profit involvement has enriched the shared cultural life of their hometown and county.

Past Awardees

2020: Carol Ann Herbert

Founders Awards

The commission presents the founders award to advocates for the arts in Ocean County have enriched the cultural fabric of our community through the creation of significant artistic institutions in Ocean County.

Past Awardees

2017: Sherry D. Schnepf from Our Gang Players

Pauline S. Miller Lifetime Achievement Award for Ocean County History

The Pauline S. Miller Lifetime Achievement Award is given to an individual who has demonstrated a passion for Ocean County Heritage and shared that history with the public. Criteria to receive this award is as follows: county wide impact, active in Ocean County for at least 10 years, advocate of Ocean County heritage, special emphasis on scholarship or teaching about Ocean County history.

Past Awardees

2022: Eleanor Ditton
2020: Deborah C. Whitcraft
2019: Margaret Thomas Buchholz
2018: Alfred T. Stokely
2017: Jeanette Lloyd
2016: Carl Jablonski

Virginia E. Haines Historic Advocate Award

The Commission gives this award to an individual or organization that has demonstrated significant efforts to promote and preserve the historic fabric of Ocean County.

Past Awardees

2020: Virginia E. Haines

John C. Bartlett, Jr. Government Leadership Award

The commission gives this award to those individuals in government who have demonstrated the highest professional and ethical standards in leadership in the Ocean County non-profit community. They champion the role of the arts and history in the County's vital tourism industry.

Past Awardees

2022: Bahiyyah Abdullah
2019: Elaine H. McConnell
2018: J. Mark Mutter

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PREVIOUS AWARDEES

Special Award

The Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission have created the following award categories to recognize the extraordinary achievements and contributions of those individuals and organizations to the quality of life in Ocean County.

Past Awardees

2022: Reisa Sweet

2021: Ocean County Memories Founded
1850! - Andrew Anderson and Patrick Leon
Asay

2019: William de Camp, Jr. -Recognition
for contributions to Barnegat Bay -
Documentary

2018: Joseph Lappin - Recognition for
lifetime of service to boating on Barnegat
Bay

2017: Richard Morris - Historic
Preservation Advocate

2017: Valerie Vaughn - Giving Voice to the
Stories of Ocean County

Joseph H. Vicari, Ocean County Tourism Award

The Joseph H. Vicari Ocean County Tourism Award is given annually to honor the business, organization or individual who made the greatest contribution to the \$4.7 Billion annual Ocean County tourism industry.

Past Awardees:

2022: Ocean County Tourism Workforce

2021: John Crisafulli

2020: Steve Steiner and the Surflight Theatre

2019: Anthony E. Vaz Ed.D. and Christopher J. Vaz

2018: Lori Pepenella

2017: The Storino Family

Ocean County Cultural Response Award

The Commission seeks to recognize the people and organizations that have responded to challenges of unanticipated disasters or challenges. The special award of merit celebrates those who set an example by responding to challenges of sustainability.

Past Awardees

2021: Brick Children's Community Theatre

2021: Lighthouse International Film Festival

2021: Ocean Professional Theatre (Surflight) –
Recognition for Covid-19 response efforts

Special Recognition for Advancement of the Arts in Ocean County

The commission recognizes the significant and important contribution of these awardees to the artistic culture of Ocean County and New Jersey. The recipients have shown excellences of artist production, support of the general artistic community, and have been a major advocate for the arts at a state and regional level.

Past Awardees

2018: June Sullivan

2016: Marshall Kern

Historic Preservation Award

This award honor individuals, organizations, and businesses that have made a significant contribution to preserving an historic property in Ocean County. The purpose of this award program is to recognize projects that preserve historical resources, and heighten awareness of the importance of historic preservation. Only exterior work is judged.

Past Awardees

2017: Ken Fredericks & Larry Midrano - 1877 The
Buhler Mansion Pine Beach

Check the Ocean County Cultural & Heritage website for awardees prior to 2016.

Ralph Bertini: Special Award of Merit

By Maria Scandale

Ralph Bertini inspired countless students as a teacher of television production courses for Lacey High School and Ocean County College. He was hired by the college in 2005 to oversee design of the college's studio and curriculum because of his knowledge and experience working with the facility for over 17 years. Retiring in June 2022, Bertini soon started working at the college again in a reserve capacity as a studio technician and will also be teaching video courses.



TV Studio Director-Producer-Instructor Ralph Bertini, 2013.
Photo credit: Ocean County College.

Now a Lanoka Harbor resident, Ralph Bertini was in broadcast television for over 40 years, starting out directing ABC Channel 21 KOLO news in Reno, Nev., and Channel 8 WHP in Harrisburg, Pa. After varied work and travel experiences, his involvement with the county culminated with his employment at Ocean County College.

As an educator, he said, "my attitude is this: be there to serve. The students are first and foremost in my mind. My number one objective, give them the most comprehensive experience, to learn what working in television really is."

A second priority was the community being able to make the college media production a resource, he said. "We made it as much as possible a resource to the community, as well as serving the needs of the college."

Involvement in the countywide community branched out over time. "We had a great relationship with the prosecutor's office - we have done plenty of work for them. We did political debates on campus that were broadcast live." The department helped publicize county events.

"There has been an ongoing relationship between the county and the college, and the TV facility has been very keen to support the county whenever we can."

His successor in the Ocean County College position, a former student 20 years ago, has developed a TV show spotlighting nonprofit and service organizations. Bertini considers it his greatest satisfaction that his students keep in touch. Many report success stories following their media path that Bertini helped launch. One student is a director of news in Philadelphia, another is at Sirius XM radio in New York, as just two examples.

Interestingly enough, Bertini had wanted to be a residential architect when he was a teenager. During his second year of college, a trip with good friends led him toward the eventual career that was suited to him. One of those college roommates got into 35-mm photography and challenged, "I want you to buy my camera, because I want to buy a new one."

Bertini fell in love with photography, and the rest of the story developed with training in Buffalo, his hometown. "I became part of a video group producing an on-campus soap opera when I knew nothing about video or television. I made a deal with the professor: you can use my van for the production, but you've got to teach me. That's when I really got the bug."

Ralph Bertini continued....

Again, it was the fortuitous association with a college friend that advanced Bertini's career. "On a lark, I went with him to San Francisco State University, and found out it had one of the very few broadcast TV curriculums at the time." He joined a creative video club; "we called ourselves The Vidiots."

Bertini was then hired as senior video specialist at Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station. It was a departure from broadcasting, he knew, but it fostered the community service angle that came to prominence in his years with Ocean County College. "The power plant was keen on community service, lending me out to Lacey High School helping the kids when they needed equipment." Lacey was documenting OCC graduation ceremonies since the mid-1990s.

After the plant closed, the plant donated their TV equipment to Lacey High School, a valuable gift which along with a grant helped enable the school to build a new TV studio. Bertini was needed to oversee the design of the new facility. He obtained a teaching certificate and was hired at the high school as well as Ocean County College.

"When I was hired at the high school, at the same time, the college was working with the county to build their own television facility," the teacher recalls. "I said, 'Why not come to Lacey and see what I've done here?'" He applied for the job at the college, and it was offered to him. He was there when the college TV studio was being constructed. "At the time, I had 25

years of broadcast television experience, and I knew how it had to be." The facility opened the next year.



Ralph Bertini and OCC Alumnus Paul Whitehead.
Photo credit: Ocean County College.

Video production has streamlined dramatically over the time Bertini has been in the business. "I've been involved in production in every format of TV that has ever been invented," he can say. From tape recorders the size of refrigerators to the digital memory cards of today's technology, he was immersed first as a student, then a teacher.

"I'm very grateful for the opportunity that the college has afforded me and grateful for the opportunity I had to work with the community in Ocean County, and truly appreciative of being recognized for my efforts."

GRETCHEN COYLE: LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN HISTORY

By Maria Scandale

Interested in history since she was a child, Gretchen F. Coyle's younger days were spent exploring Long Beach Island, and her adventures around the state and beyond have led to extensive research shared with others in books, magazine articles and museums.

She is honored to be the 2023 recipient of the Pauline S. Miller Lifetime Achievement Award for Ocean County History. "You have earned this honor by enriching the cultural fabric of Ocean County through your dedication to maritime history and the people of Ocean County," stated Timothy G. Hart, Division Director of the Ocean County Cultural & Heritage Commission.

"I was a child down here in the 1950s when you could leave on your bicycle or sneakbox and not have to come back until dark," she began. "It was an ideal way to spend summers, and I was able to explore some of the old buildings (I'm sure illegally) as a child," she said.

Old buildings held a key to the past. Gretchen can remember running through Beach Haven's Baldwin Hotel, footsteps echoing on floors that were sagging from age and use - "I just wanted to see the history." By the 1950s, the 1883-vintage Baldwin, spanning between Pearl and Marine Streets, had passed its heyday of accommodating up to 400 guests. It burned to the ground in 1960.

Reaching the vintage 1912 Ostendorf's Garage by Raleigh bicycle, she wandered inside around metal remnants on the floor where another generation's cars and boats had been stored and restored. "Now I know

where I got so many flat tires," she said of her bicycle's loyal partnership. "I knew it was historical. That started me on New Jersey history."

Over later days, she and her husband of 42 years, the late John Coyle, shared a passion to discover historic horizons by vehicle or boat when they took a day off as owners of the Sink 'R Swim shops complex in



Gretchen Coyle on the water.
Photo Credit Gretchen Coyle.

Beach Haven. They delved into old ports and boat works, which proved valuable in their guidance as the Tuckerton Seaport historic attraction expanded.

"We became very familiar with the New Jersey towns; I love the off-the-beaten-path places," Gretchen said. "There are some fascinating towns around Ocean County and all around New Jersey. I think that's what I'm getting honored for."

GRETCHEN COYLE CONTINUED...

Her curiosity about maritime history beyond Long Beach Island reached farther and farther, from up the “crick” in Tuckerton, as the locals called a creek, to co-authoring a book about the Morro Castle shipwreck, which led to visits to Cuba.

“When I was a kid a couple of us would sail up the crick to get ice cream and hope we had enough wind to get us back down the crick to Little Egg Harbor and get us home. Parents didn’t worry about their kids in those days; there were no reasons to worry. It made for a lot of independence to go and explore.” In fact, by sailboat, at the mercy of the wind, was the way that colonists from Tuckerton and Barnegat first arrived on Long Beach Island. Before them were Native Americans back and forth by watercraft, and, Gretchen added, “the mosquitos have been there longer than anybody.”

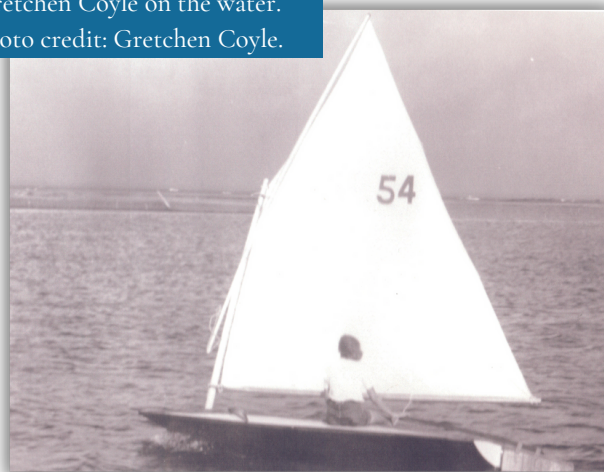
Gretchen Coyle's Sunday column in the Asbury Park Press tells true stories of shipwrecks, boat builders, hidden history of the Pine Barrens, and so much more. The graduate of The Baldwin School and Hollins University has co-authored four books, three with Deborah C. Whitcraft, who is a two-term Beach Haven mayor and President of the New Jersey Maritime Museum, where Gretchen volunteers. The co-authored books are: Inferno at Sea: Stories of Death and Survival Aboard the Morro Castle; and two books for Arcadia Publishing's Images of America series: Beach Haven and Tucker's Island.

Gretchen Coyle also wrote 100 Summers, the History of the Little Egg Harbor Yacht Club in Beach Haven, and a booklet on Beaton's Boatyard in Mantoloking with artist Katie Cutler, who was honored with this award several years ago.

All around Ocean County, the lure is strong into the lore of the past. Hiking with a friend is her recent close-up pace to follow historic pathways. Good signage and brochures are provided by Ocean County Parks and Recreation. From there, a person's interest can lead deeper and deeper into history, and Gretchen enjoys inspiring others to take their own literary or experiential trek.

Walks past saltwater marshes progress inland to where old foundations or remains of an icehouse stand as proof of past habitation. “The more you walk, you get up into the freshwater area where there was once a dam there.” A wooded area in the current Freedom Fields County Park in Little Egg Harbor once had a car racetrack. Enos Pond in Forked River once had a hotel and freshwater springs; Gretchen's hikes have led to the ruins. Cloverdale County Park is known for a past farm and cranberry bogs, in addition to its forever natural beauty.

Gretchen Coyle on the water.
Photo credit: Gretchen Coyle.



“I enjoy what I do, talking to people about local history. It is fascinating, and people are interested in it. I truly believe when people come to a new place, they should learn about what happened in the past.”

Harry Bower: Lifetime Achievement in the Arts

By Pat Johnson

After announcing that it was an honor to receive Ocean County's Lifetime Achievement Award in the Arts, Harry Bower made a small joke, "Does this mean I'm done? No, life is not over—I hope to have still more achievements."

At home in his studio in Island Heights his art-making abilities and passion to do so is immediately evident in the work that hangs all around the spacious room --and in the collections of buttons, plastic rings and other assorted doodads that enhance his constructions. Bower could be grouped under the heading of "fiber artist" though he calls himself a weaver. On the wall behind his antique counter/storage cabinet is a large memoir "quilt" made from the woven scraps of German language romance magazines his mother collected and the plaited scraps of his father's New Jersey Transit paychecks that his father kept in a shoebox. Above the quilt's surface are empty plastic hangers that held his parents clothes before they were donated after they passed. The hangers are now artfully connected in a pleasing color construct. The title is "Hanging Onto Memories."

Other works include pieces made for a show called "Animal Architects." Tubular-shaped weavings are Bower's interpretations of caddis fly houses. The woven 'baskets' are decorated with buttons, milk carton tabs and chopsticks. For this traveling exhibit, which was in the Princeton Art Alliance and the Monmouth Museum, he also created a squirrels' nest out of pink paper and spider dungeons out of paper and wire. A hanging paper 'bird's head' mask was for another exhibit on masks. Presently he is weaving a



Harry Bower in his studio.
Photo Credit: Pat Johnson.

kimono out of chopstick paper wrappers. When he eats at his favorite Asian restaurant he asks diners if he can have the wrappers, he said. Lately he also found a prince's ransom of plastic rings that he got for a song. "I haven't decided what I'll do with them yet." He suggested he might be a hoarder but there is nothing askew in his beautiful studio. Rather he is making art out of trash—not just recycling but up-cycling.

"I'm fortunate to have a really good art family and our slogan might be 'Push beyond where you have settled,'" said Bower. "I have lots of art in my head ready to go."

Bower keeps his pulse on contemporary craft movements by attending workshops around the country. He recently returned from Florida where he took a workshop in traditional paper-marbling. In 2006 he received a

Harry Bower continued...

Geraldine Dodge Foundation Grant to do an Artists Studio Residency at Peters Valley where he made standing baskets that appear able to walk on their own. “This was letting the material suggest the form,” he explained. In 2002, the Geraldine Dodge Foundation funded his work at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts where he learned to make tunnel books—three-dimensional books that can be read from the inside out.

Other workshops and opportunities he has attended included ones at the Savannah College of Art and Design, Vermont Studios, a stint in Japan and Spoleto, Italy. In Spoleto he learned about Masks and Performance Art. “I knew nothing about performance art at the time but we made four giant animal puppets that converged on a square in town. We heard the applause but I was inside the wolf puppet.”

All these workshop opportunities enhanced his teaching. Bower taught in Toms River Schools for 29 years. “I hope to always be a student and it helped to see how other teachers taught; it made me a better teacher.”

He has received Teacher of the Year status in both elementary and high school levels and in 2019 the Art Educators of New Jersey named him High School Art Educator of the Year and he received their Distinguished Achievement Award.

The furnishings and all the various items of the Peto house and studio had been packed up and put in storage years ago by his granddaughter. It was Bower’s task and pleasure to unpack these treasures and, with the help of photographs taken by Peto himself, to reconstruct a window into the artist’s life. Due to the dedication and hundreds of hours of work by Peto and others, visitors to the museum are transformed into a gentler time—when streets were lined with trees and horse and buggies traveled slowly in the summer heat. Inside, one can almost smell the paint and linseed oil and see the artist studying his arrangement of objects before mixing and adding another dab of color to his



John F. Peto Studio Museum.
Photo credit: Pat Johnson.

canvas. Bower is most pleased with the fact that objects and letters depicted in Peto’s work have been chance findings, found in the household’s storage boxes – one letter even fell out of a book Bower was shelving.

With Bower as docent, visitors learn not just facts, but a lasting impression of the artist’s family life and work. Bower also curates two to three contemporary art exhibitions upstairs at the museum. This April he is installing a portrait exhibit, “The Many Faces at Peto.”

Bower was nominated for Ocean County’s Lifetime Achievement in the arts by a former John F. Peto Studio Museum board president Judith Carluccio, “Harry was one of the very first volunteers who took on the task of turning the Peto family home into one of the premier Ocean County cultural and arts institutions.”



A hanging paper ‘bird’s head’ mask by
Harry Bower made for an exhibit on masks.
Photo credit: Pat Johnson.

Special Recognition for Advancement of the Arts Award: Paul Hartelius

By Pat Johnson

Paul Hartelius is many things to many people—a husband and father, artist, volunteer and friend. His Special Award for the Advancement of the Arts in Ocean County seems long overdue, as Hartelius has been an active force in both the Pine Shores Art Association and The Tuckerton Seaport. In a recent interview, Hartelius said he doesn't do things for recognition, "However it is nice to be recognized!"

The artist is an engineer who moved from Union County to Beach Haven West in 2009 and retired in 2011. That's when he joined Pine Shores Art Association where he organizes and hangs art shows, writes grants, is a past president, facilitates a portrait session on Sunday afternoons, sweeps floors and is a general all-around volunteer.

His mother and father were artists: his mom, Marge Hartelius wrote and illustrated children's books and his father, Paul Jr. was an art director in New York City. "I had an unlimited opportunity to learn art and all the art supplies you could dream of. I was encouraged by both parents, my mom—I couldn't do anything wrong but my dad always had some constructive criticism. Mom would say, 'Oh, I love that,' and he'd say, 'You should have done that differently,' It's funny but that's what sticks with me."

As a child, Hartelius also learned about deadlines and developed an aversion to them. His own business card states: "Procrastinart Just-In-Time Watercolors."

"They had a home studio and I was introduced to the life of a commercial artist—my Dad would come home from his office in New York City and we usually didn't finish dinner until 9 p.m. Then they would work into the night—my mom doing illustrations and my dad doing the mechanicals until 1 or 2 in the morning. I always thought there has to be a better way."

So he waited until he retired from engineering to do art on his own time. But he has a deep appreciation for his upbringing.

"If my parents were not doing art, we were taking trips with art supplies. My parents always carved out time while we were on vacation to do Plein air painting and



Paul Hartelius at Pine Shores Art Association.
Photo credit: Pat Johnson.

my sister and I tagged along. I think that's why I love Plein air painting today." (Plein air is creating artworks while outside in nature.) His family also had a vacation home in Beach Haven West and when his parents retired and moved to Ocean County permanently they became founding members of Pine Shores Art Association. "They were life drawing enthusiasts along with Alex Stilano (now deceased) and Brad Thomas."

Hartelius is always painting, watercolor is his favorite medium and he makes an effort to put a piece in each and every group show that Pine Shores hosts. "That means I do ten to 12 paintings each year and that forces me to practice."

Paul Hartelius continued....

Although he paints in the realistic style he's not a stickler for technique—"I like to paint and not to think—art becomes a chore if it's forced."

In 2014, Paul joined the Tuckerton Seaport and fast became an indispensable volunteer there. He worked with former boat-builder Ron Spodofora and Wayne Martin. "Between Wayne, Ron and I; we did everything that needed doing—paint a building, cut grass, build cabinets—I enjoyed it."

He also created an art gallery in the visitor center where Pine Shores artists could exhibit their paintings. "My wife (also a volunteer and then the business manager) would say—just tell these people 'no' whenever a new project came up, but the word no is not in my vocabulary, it drives her crazy."

For one example, when the Captain's House was re-imagined as a teashop —'Lady Magpie's Steam Punk Tea Shop,' Hartelius turned the entry hall stairs into 14 fake bookshelves to reflect book titles of the 1800s. "I researched them on the Internet and hand-painted the titles on the books spines. I really enjoyed that."

"I just like to facilitate activities for other people to make it easier for them. I hang shows and set up

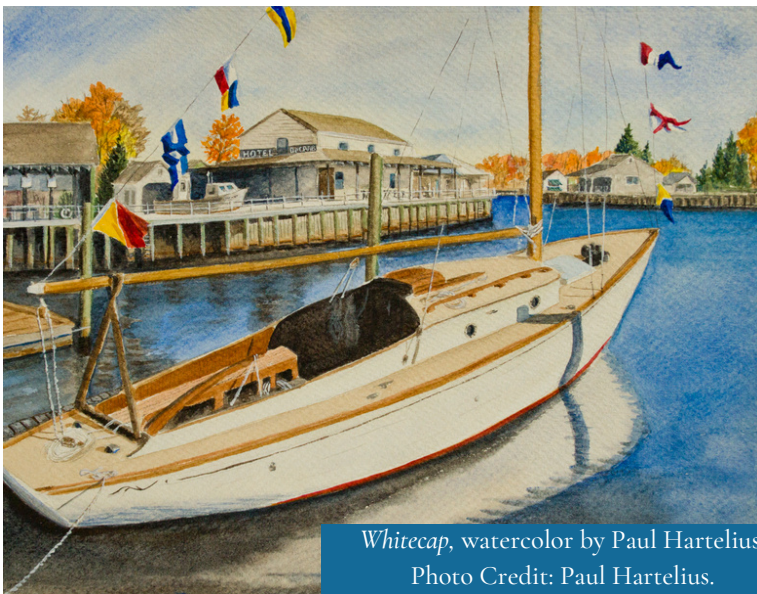


Rockport Fall Glory, watercolor by Paul Hartelius.
Photo credit: Paul Hartelius.

receptions. Before COVID, I was at the Seaport a lot. They had quite a lot of festivals; six to eight a year and I volunteered for all the events—Christkindlmarkt, Haunted Seaport the Seafood Festival. I did props using my artistic talents, helped set up and take down booths and did clean-up afterwards."

Every September Hartelius would also volunteer at the Seaport during the Ocean County Decoy and Gunning Show. Paul also joined folk artists and Seaport staff on a yearly school trip to the local elementary schools. "We did programs that were environmentally oriented with a tie to folk art and local history. I enjoyed that and hope we can do it again soon."

"I enjoy helping people and to make sure that we bring art into our communities. It fits with what I do."



Whitecap, watercolor by Paul Hartelius.
Photo Credit: Paul Hartelius.