



Belmar Treasure Trail – A Self-Guided Walking Tour

With guide map & podcast/webcast accessible online, through QR codes and via phone

Script by Merry Brennan

INTRO

Welcome to the Belmar *Treasure Trail* – a self-guided tour that features 50 stops with environmental, art and historical gems that make our beautiful shore town such a special place to live and visit.

Starting as a summer community of just 25 people in 1872, the borough was officially named Belmar – meaning French for “beautiful sea” – 17 years later. By the 1920s there was an influx of year-round residents and by 1940, Belmar’s commercial center was in full swing. Today, the vibrant one-square-mile borough retains its historical small town charm while earning a reputation for leadership in environmental sustainability and the arts.

The Treasure Trail tour is divided into two routes. One covers the Main Street and Shark River sections of town and features stops 1 through 27. It is about 4 miles and takes about two hours, done at a leisurely pace. The second route is an Ocean Area route that features stops 28 to 50. It’s about 2-and-three-quarters miles and will take you around an hour-and-a-half at a leisurely walking pace. Of course, you are welcome to use the Treasure Trail map to break the routes into shorter sections, or to create your own route, and visit the stops you’d like. Along the way, we are sure you’ll discover many beautiful homes,

H= historic stop A= art stop E= environmental stop

gardens and other sights that make you happy to be in Belmar.

The Belmar Environmental Commission wishes to thank the Belmar Historical Society, the Belmar Arts Council, the Belmar PUBLIC LIBRARY, and the Belmar Mayor and Council along with our partners in the N.J. Water Conservation program and NJ Sea Grant for their support of this Belmar Treasure Trail Tour.

If you want to find out more about Belmar's events, natural resources and fascinating history, visit Belmar's website at www.belmar.com. We hope you enjoy the Belmar *Treasure Trail!*

MAIN STREET- SHARK RIVER AREA ROUTE – Stops # 1-27
4 miles, 2 hours at leisurely pace

1. LIBRARY: H – 10th & E

You are at the **Belmar Public Library**, stop #1 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. This beautiful gem in the center of town got its start in 1911 when several local friends wanted to give young people access to books and educational activities. They opened a small library that was so popular, it needed to move to a larger building just a year later. Then, just two years after that, it expanded again into the Colonial style building you see here, which opened to the public in December 1914. The building was actually made possible through funding by the Carnegie Corporation; that is why it is also known as a “Carnegie Library.” In fact, the leaders at Carnegie were so impressed with the architectural plans for the Belmar Public Library, they adopted them as the standard for future Carnegie libraries all over the United States. In 1935, a portrait of Andrew Carnegie – a copy of one painted by the famed artist Luis Mora – was presented to the Belmar Library by the Carnegie Corporation. Today, the library, which celebrated its centennial in December 2014, features a media center and is also a hub for numerous community gatherings and special activities.

Of course, you can't help but notice our larger-than-life metal guitar on the library's front lawn. It commemorates a bit of Belmar's E Street connection to Bruce Springsteen. (Yes,

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the cross street really is the same “E Street” in Bruce’s song.) Created by sculptor Bob Mataranglo with metal pieces made by Denis Nalepa, the guitar is positioned so you can stand in front of it and take a photo with the E Street sign in the background. Hokey? Maybe. But for us, it’s a keeper!

2. BELMAR HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM: H – 9th & E

You are at stop #2 on the Belmar Treasure Trail: the **Belmar Historical Society Museum and History Room**. It is located in the Union Fire House Annex, which was the site of Belmar’s first police department and jail in the early 1900’s. Opened in April 2015, the Museum features displays, memorabilia, photos, oral histories and news databases that bring to life Belmar’s fascinating past. There is even a history to the opening of the Museum. After much hard work and organization, the museum was scheduled to open in November 2012. But just five days before, Belmar was pummeled by Super Storm Sandy, bringing flood waters into the fire house and new museum. In the midst of dealing with their own homes, BHS volunteers made sure as many items as possible were transferred to sites around the country for repair and safe keeping. Thanks to their efforts, the museum is packed with materials and information that will intrigue history buffs or anyone who appreciates Belmar.

3. UNION FIREHOUSE: H – 9th & E

You are at our historic **Union Firehouse**, stop #3 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. The Union Firehouse celebrated its 100th birthday in April 2011. It is one of three firehouses whose members work together to protect Belmar. Until 1889, the Ocean Beach Association – this is what Belmar was originally named – owned a small hook and ladder wagon used by men in the community who volunteered to keep water barrels and buckets by their back doors or woodsheds. But then in 1888, a New Year’s Eve fire left an entire block of what today is Main Street in smoldering ruins. Dozens of worried property owners circulated a petition to purchase a steam fire engine, and in June of 1889, a yellow fire engine came to town. A horse named “Major” was half of the team that pulled the bright new pumper until retiring in 1892, when he was replaced by the first motor-powered fire engine. Over the next decade Belmar’s other two volunteer fire companies, the Volunteer Hook and Ladder on 11th Avenue, and the Goodwill Hose Company on 7th

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Avenue, were incorporated. All three firehouses have interesting historical memorabilia, and welcome passers-by to stop in when volunteers are on duty.

4. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH: H – 9th & E

This is the **First Presbyterian Church of Belmar**, stop #4 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. The congregation was founded on March 20, 1877. It's interesting that before construction of Belmar's diverse churches, many people in the community worshipped in the same place – and that was a former pavilion from the Centennial Expo in Philadelphia, more commonly known as the World's Fair. In the summer of 1880, when Belmar was known as Ocean Beach, the pavilion was brought from Philly to Belmar. As a side note, several of our beautiful homes throughout town were originally structures from that same 1876 World's Fair. These huge buildings were transferred by waterway to Belmar, where they were then “rolled” on giant telephone-pole-like logs to their destinations. Anyway, the pavilion relevant to the churches was set up at the corner of 7th Avenue and A Street and called an Undenominational Summer Tabernacle. Later that summer, the First Presbyterian Church of Ocean Beach was incorporated and the small congregation started to plan for a church of their own. The Ocean Beach Association donated two lots at the current location of 9th Avenue and E Street. The current church building was built and dedicated in 1959. Prior to the construction of an Office Wing addition on the E Street side of the building in the early 1980's, there was a multi-purpose meeting space and gymnasium facility. During the summer in the early 1960's a young High School aged talent, Bruce Springsteen, and his band practiced in that church space. The congregation has an appreciation for music! On March 20, 2022, the congregation celebrated its 145th Anniversary.

5. ST. ROSE CHURCH: H – 7th & E

You are at **St. Rose Roman Catholic Church**, stop #5 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. The church was initially organized in 1888 as a mission. The cornerstone for the original church was laid two years later and the present church was erected in 1906. A large expansion in 1926 brought the Gothic Revival style church you see today. For the rest of the century and into this one, the slate steeple, visible for miles, was used as a navigational guide for ships. In fact, if you stand on the Belmar boardwalk at 5th Avenue,

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which is one of the stops on our Treasure Trail Ocean Area Route, you'll see the St. Rose steeple gracing the horizon.

6. BOROUGH HALL: H – 6th Ave entrance

You are at stop # 6, the **Belmar Borough Hall**. We're stopping here to tell you about a few important displays inside the lobby and we hope you'll take a few minutes to enjoy them if the building is open. The first honors the brave and gallant men who served aboard the U.S.S. Juneau, a light cruiser that took part in 17 major battles and earned five battle stars during World War II. It was torpedoed and sunk by a Japanese submarine on November 13, 1942, killing all but 10 of the 700 men aboard. Those who made the ultimate sacrifice included four young men from Belmar, whose photos hang in our memorial. Another display commemorates the legacy of first females to serve as lifeguards in Belmar among an all-male squad in the 1940's. Highlighting the display is a portrait of the late Jeanne Bonk Baldino, one of three women to officially guard our beaches to keep swimmers safe. The stunning painting was done by well-known Belmar artist Suzanne Anan. And don't miss her portrait of Howard Roland, who stood watch over the Belmar beachfront for nearly sixty years, at one time having the distinction of being the world's oldest active lifeguard. Our stop #44, the Howard Roland Pavilion, is named for this Belmar icon. Finally, enjoy the revolving display by the Belmar Historical Society, which always features some interesting and fun facts.

7. BELMAR ARTS COUNCIL: A – 608 River Rd

This is stop #7 on the Belmar Treasure Trail, the home of the **Belmar Arts Council**. Established in 2004, the BAC, as it's known, brings people together to discover, create, learn and celebrate the arts. Wander around and enjoy the Art Garden, which combines artworks from local artists with seasonal landscaping and flowers. A circular labyrinth path takes viewers to each of the artworks. On the adjacent wall you'll see "*Greetings From Belmar*," one of many murals that are part of the BAC Mural Project. Around the other side of the building is another mural, "*What Lies Beneath*." Both murals were completed by volunteer artists. If it is open, take a look inside the building, a former marine repair business that now is a thriving arts center, with revolving art shows, fabulous performances, creative workshops and special events.

8. DOUGHBOY: H – 7th & Railroad

You are at our treasured **Spirit of the American Doughboy** monument, stop #8 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. Doughboy was the popular name for a World War I foot soldier. Following the war, doughboy memorials were erected across America. Yet today, less than 200 remain. Belmar's doughboy was originally dedicated in 1930 but fell into disrepair over the decades. In 2002, the Belmar Historical Society began a campaign to refurbish the statue, and in 2006, it was rededicated. The names on the back of the monument are those of local area men and women who actively served in the armed forces in what was called "The War to End All Wars." The two names with stars commemorate those who made the ultimate sacrifice. This small, but much appreciated area, is known as Belmar's Doughboy Park.

9. BRESLIN MONUMENT: H – 9th Avenue Pier

You are at the **9th Avenue pier**, stop #9 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. At the front end of the pier, you'll see the **Breslin Monument**, which we are extremely proud to have in a permanent place of honor in Belmar after a 50-year absence. The Breslin memorial has a storied place in Belmar history. Pat and Sandy Breslin were the unassuming proprietors of a small luncheonette and boat rental concession at the Belmar Marina. On December 8, 1941, the day after Pearl Harbor, Pat and Sandy immediately wrote a letter to Congress offering their boating and fishing pier in the Belmar marina at no cost to soldiers, sailors and marines. Not only through the war years, but for another dozen years after the war ended, Pat and Sandy fed countless servicemen and women and lent them fishing tackle and rowboats. They would even insist the servicemen use their telephone to call home and talk to their loved ones. Over the years they received thousands of letters from servicemen and their families all over the world, and even from complete strangers thanking them for what they were doing. But they also heard about servicemen who shared their hospitality but hadn't made it back from the war. So, during the summer of 1949, the Breslins dedicated a granite monument outside their luncheonette to express their gratitude to all who served, especially those who gave their lives. Their countless quiet acts of kindness led all the way to the White House, when, in 1953, they were honored in the nation's capital by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. However, four years

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later, their concession license wasn't renewed due to a planned marina renovation. The Breslin monument was put in storage until 1960, when the Breslins wrote to President Eisenhower to request his help in finding a permanent location for the memorial. The next year, it was placed at Fort Monmouth, where it remained until Belmar petitioned for its return after the closing of Fort Monmouth was announced. In 2010, it was officially dedicated in its new permanent home, here on the renovated 9th Avenue pier.

If you walk to the end of the pier, you'll get a panoramic view of the 800-acre Shark River Basin and our Belmar Marina, one of the major marinas along the Atlantic Ocean.

10. MANUTTI MARINA: E – Midpoint, Marina Walkway

This is stop #10 on the Belmar Treasure Trail, a good place to talk a little bit about the **Belmar Manutti Municipal Marina**, named for the late Jack Manutti, who served as Police Chief and Borough Councilman for many years. Known as one of the premiere marinas along the Atlantic coast, the Marina offers a variety of opportunities, from charter, party boat and whale watch outings to kayak and paddle board rentals and popular pier fishing. There are newly renovated slips, transient docks, boat rentals, a bait and tackle shop, and more. Enjoy the vista as you stroll along the Marina walkway.

11. L STREET BEACH: E

You are at **L Street Beach**, stop #11 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. This is a manmade beach that is enjoyed by many visitors to Maclearie Park, which is named for Mayor Peter Maclearie, who was mayor for 20 years from 1947 to 1967, and before that served 12 years as a Commissioner. If you come here towards the end of the day, you will be treated to one of the most spectacular sunsets on the eastern seaboard. And if you visit L Street Beach in May or June, you may get to see hundreds of horseshoe crabs that flock to the beach for their annual spawning ritual. It is one of only a handful of spawning sites on the eastern seaboard for these amazing ancient creatures.

12. ED BROWN PLAYGROUND: E Maclearie Park

You are at stop #12, the **Ed Brown Playground at Maclearie Park**. Its fun transportation theme is a tribute to the late Ed Brown, a popular and well-known icon and aviator who founded Monmouth Executive Airport in Wall Township in 1938. The

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playground was constructed in 2014, thanks to a donation from his estate. Take a look at the nearby tennis and pickle-ball courts, the lovely picnic area, and the scenic views, and you'll see why this park is a huge draw for residents and visitors alike.

13. TT SIGN BY SAILING DOCK: E Maclearie Park

This is stop #13 on the Belmar Treasure Trail, where you'll find signs in our **Treasure Trail interpretive series**. Read the sign to learn about the 800-acre Shark River basin. This watershed is vital to the five towns that surround it, and to the thousands of birds, fish and other wildlife that it supports. In case you were wondering about all the kayaks and sailboats you see here, this section of Maclearie Park is also home to popular river programs run by the Friends of Belmar Harbor. Thousands of children and adults have learned not only to sail through these programs, but to deepen their appreciation and love for the Shark River and its habitat.

14. TT SIGN SOUTH OF SAILING DOCK: E Maclearie Park

This is stop #14 on the Belmar Treasure Trail, another in our series of **Treasure Trail Educational signs**. This peaceful resting area, including the sign, was completed by a local Eagle Scout for his Eagle project. Read the sign to learn more about some of the resident and migrating birds and waterfowl that call the Shark River home and add to its vibrant eco-system.

15. TT SIGN SOUTH END OF PARK WALK: E – Maclearie Park

This is stop #15 on the Belmar Treasure Trail, one of the original interpretive signs in our **Treasure Trail**. The Treasure Trail series of education signs was developed by the Belmar Environmental Commission in partnership with the New Jersey Marine Sciences Consortium, New Jersey Sea Grant and the Department of Environmental Protection. Read the sign to learn some of the legends behind how Shark River got its name. This is also a good place to mention the residential area you will see across the street. This part of town, historically known as Rhode Island Point, was annexed to Belmar in 1927. Different from the rest of Belmar, this section of town was a seasonal resort with summer bungalows and tents. Centuries before, it was a favorite summer Indian colony for the

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Lenni Lenape Indians, who frequented the area for summer camps and called the inlet and river “Nolletquesset.”

16. TRAIN MURALS: A – Train Station off 10th & RR Aves

You are looking at “*A Journey to Belmar.*” This **train station mural** is stop #16 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. Designed by Delia King, it presents a stylized train trip along the North Jersey Coast Line, seen from a slightly exaggerated, Belmar-centric viewpoint. The artist’s goal was to highlight the beauty and excitement of our unique beach community and also reflect the dedication of Belmar residents to overcoming ecological and property damage caused by Super Storm Sandy. The mural, completed in 2014, was painted on a synthetic textile “canvas” and then adhered to the specially-prepared wall of the New Jersey Transit station. Over 100 volunteers took part in painting and installing the mural, working under the direction of the artist. When you take a look across the tracks, you see **another mural** with mermaids and musical creatures that also brighten up the train station. This one was done by BAC volunteers in 2018.

17. RESTAURANT ROW: H – Plaza off 8th (10th Ave Burruto, etc)

We’re so fortunate to have dozens of terrific eateries throughout Belmar, and we hope you will explore our many options, from delicious take-out to fine dining from award-winning chefs. You’ll see a few of them right here in our own **Restaurant Row**, where residents and visitors alike dine inside and out. For a full listing of restaurants, with a variety of cuisines to suit any palate, don’t forget to visit our website at www.Belmar.com or follow us on social media, where we regularly feature our fine businesses.

18. PYANOE PLAZA: H – off Main across from 9th

You are at **Pyanoe Plaza**, stop #18 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. This central downtown location was named for former Mayor Francis A. Pyanoe, who served from 1979 to 1987. Whether hosting summertime concerts, farmers markets or winter holiday tree lightings, Pyanoe Plaza serves as a wonderful town square for Belmar.

19. SPRINGSTEEN MURAL: A – 921 Main

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As you walk south on Main Street from Pyanoe Plaza, look for the alley before 921 Main Street. Don't miss the enchanting **artwork on the alley wall**. But this is only a prelude to the bright large depiction on the other side of the building. High above street level sits an **exterior wall mural** on the building at 921 Main St., which is stop #19 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. The mural is another of the creative works in the **Belmar Arts Council Community Mural Project**. You can view it best if you cross the street and stand on the south side corner of 10th Avenue at Main Street. It was done by Bob Mataranglo – an award-winning video artist, animator, sculptor and muralist who also did the Guitar sculpture outside Belmar Public Library, the first stop on our Treasure Trail. As you might guess, this mural highlights Belmar's connection to Bruce Springsteen. A young Bruce used to practice regularly with his E Street Band at the home of original keyboardist David Sancious' mother, who lived on Belmar's E Street. But Bruce is not the only musical icon who frequented Belmar. In the Golden Age of the 1920's, George and Ira Gershwin spent many a summer night on the porch of an oceanfront hotel owned by the family of Ira's wife. You can see the former site of that hotel at stop 46 on the *Treasure Trail* on Ocean Avenue.

20. ANNIVERSARY CLOCK: H 10th & Main

You are at stop #20, the **Belmar Sesquicentennial Clock**, which was erected in honor of our 150th anniversary. This four-sided clock tells the time in all directions and also reminds us of Belmar's rich, storied history. We look forward to it standing as a beautiful central landmark for decades to come.

21. BELMAR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: H – 1100 Main St.

You are at **Belmar Elementary School**, stop #21 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. The historic school celebrated its centennial in 2010. A hundred years earlier, an election was held to decide if a new school should be built. Women at that time were only allowed to vote for trustees, not for appropriations. But with a vote of 99 for and 97 against, an exciting margin of two votes led to the new school, which was constructed at a cost of \$57,000. High school students originally attended the school, but in 1912, it became the pre-kindergarten-through-eighth-grade school it is today. There have been expansions and improvements over the years, but the front façade has remained the quintessential

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brick school building that you see today. The **playground on the north side** is a special area dedicated to the memory of six-year-old Avielle Richman, a first grader who died in December 2012 in the Sandy Hook School tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut. This playground was part of the Sandy Hook Project, which installed 26 playgrounds – one for each of the shooting victims – throughout the areas devastated by Superstorm Sandy. We're honored to say thousands of children will continue to enjoy this beautiful playground for years to come. If you walk to the south side of the building, you'll see another **art mural** on the cinderblock wall adjacent to the school. The image was created by the winner of a 7th grade design contest and painted by muralist Laurie Tobia, with the assistance of 8th graders. Belmar Elementary School proudly serves the residents of our beach town community.

22. BELMAR MEMORIAL FIELD/DUGOUT MURAL: H,A – 12th @ dugout/ballfield

This is stop #22 on the Belmar Treasure Trail, an area that has been a place of significance from the town's birth to the present. Initially a lumberyard, **Belmar Memorial Field** was purchased by the Borough in the 1920s and became a town center where people gathered for ceremonies, events and, of course, sporting games. In the 1930's, lights and a grandstand capable of seating thousands were installed, and our baseball diamond welcomed teams with Major League talent to compete against our own Belmar Braves. In fact, several of the greats who played here were later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY, including players from the Negro National League, who were regular visitors to our field. Legend has it that a homerun by Hall of Famer Josh Gibson flew across Main Street, landing in the rear parking lot of the new Post Office. Experts think it may have been one of the longest hits anywhere in history! Also, in case you're wondering, the delightful **mural on the back of our baseball dugout** was coordinated through the Belmar Arts Council and was done by Belmar native Doug Z, who uses spray paint and stencils to create unique designs that have earned him acclaim in galleries and by private collections.

23. FIRST AID: H 12th & Main

This stone monument and plaque memorialize the historic **Belmar First Aid Squad building**, which stood for nearly 90 years at the corner of 8th Avenue and D Street. The

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Belmar First Aid Squad was believed to be the oldest independent volunteer squad in the United States. It got its start in 1927 through the efforts of the late Daniel Traverso, a Belmar doctor who served as the Squad's physician until his death. The year after the doctor started the squad, another Belmar resident, Frank Mihlon Sr., authorized the purchase of an ambulance at his own expense. It was the first ambulance to be owned by a first aid squad along the Jersey Shore. Mr. Mihlon also donated the grounds and building for the old headquarters. In 1936, Mr. Mihlon's son, Frank Jr., unveiled this bronze plaque, honoring the squad's founder, Dr. Traverso. By the way, when Frank Jr. was just 13, he gave up his Christmas gifts so the money could go into that first ambulance fund. Today, the First Aid Squad answers an average 1,400 to 1,500 calls for service a year, with the majority during the summer months. In fact, members of the squad are stationed on-site at our beachfront during the summer season, which welcomes up to 20,000 visitors on a nice weekend.

24. MONUMENT ROW: H – 12-13th @ Main

You are at **Monument Row**, stop #24 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. Walk between 12th and 13th Avenues and take a moment to see the memorials that pay tribute to the brave men and women who served our country and community. The monument at the corner of Main Street and 12th Avenue, created by Belmar's dedicated volunteer firemen, is our Firefighters Memorial. The center memorial, which honors those who served or made the ultimate sacrifice for their country during World War II. Belmar lost 14 men in that war, and in the 1950's 14 trees – the ones you see lining Monument Row, were planted in their honor. The beautiful memorial was championed by the Belmar Historical Preservation Advisory Council. The monument at the corner of Main St. and 13th Avenue honors the uniformed airmen, Marines, sailors and soldiers who served in or died during the Korean, Vietnam and Persian Gulf conflicts. Belmar has special observances every Memorial Day and Veteran's Day that take place here on Monument Row, as well as at Doughboy Park, the site of our World War I Doughboy Monument. In addition, the borough has an annual commemoration to honor the men who served aboard the U.S.S. Juneau, a light cruiser that took part in 17 major battles and earned five battle stars. It was torpedoed and sunk by a Japanese submarine on November 13, 1942, killing all but 10 of the 700 men

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aboard. Four young men from Belmar were among those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

25. BELMAR POST OFFICE: H – 13th & Main

You are at the **Belmar Post Office**, stop #25 on our Treasure Trail. The post office received even greater distinction after it was dedicated in 2019 in honor of former Belmar resident Dr. Walter S. McAfee, a pioneering scientist who helped launch the Space Age. Dr. McAfee was a mathematical physicist who worked many decades at Fort Monmouth in the US Army Communications-Electronics Command, known as CECOM, and lectured in atomic and nuclear physics and solid-state electronics at Monmouth College, now Monmouth University. After becoming one of the very few African Americans of his time to earn an advanced degree in physics, Dr. McAfee gained recognition with a program known as “Project Diana,” which bounced a radio signal from the moon’s surface back to an antenna at the Evans Signal Laboratory in nearby Wall Township on January 10, 1946. It was his mathematical calculations that determined the feasibility of this first radar moon bounce, which is regarded as the beginning of the Space Age. Dr. McAfee went on to receive many awards and much recognition for his numerous achievements, including having President Dwight D. Eisenhower present him with one of the first Secretary of the Army Research and Study Fellowships, enabling him to study radio astronomy at Harvard University. In 2015 he was the first African American to be inducted into the Army Materiel Command’s Hall of Fame.

26. MAGICAL GARDEN + MITZI & EMILY’S Playground: E – 15th & E)

You are at stop #26 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. **The Magical Garden community garden** brings members together to grow and share organic vegetables, herbs, berries and flowers, as well as a lot of camaraderie. This flourishing garden and the adjacent playground used to be a vacant lot. But a group of determined residents set the wheels in motion, and with the help of local, county, state and private partners, the unsightly property was turned into one of the first community gardens of its kind in New Jersey in the year 2000 and has been thriving and expanding ever since. The garden, by the way, got its “Magical” name from a contest held with Belmar Elementary School students. On a more somber note, **Mitzi & Emily’s Playground** was dedicated in honor of Emily

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Gonzalez-Perez and Mitzi Hernandez – fifth and sixth grade cousins and beloved elementary school students who drowned while swimming unattended in the ocean in 2017. Prior to that, it was the E Street Playground, named not only for its location, of course, but also to recognize the young Bruce Springsteen who used to rehearse with his E Street Band in the home of original keyboardist David Sancious, whose mom lived on the famous street. But with its new name, we will always hold the beautiful memories of Mitzi and Emily as children enjoy this playground for years to come.

27. CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH: H – 13th & E

You are at the **Calvary Baptist Church**, stop #27 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. The congregation first formed as a Sunday School in 1896. Then they built a small church at the corner of 12th Avenue and Main Street, called the 12th Avenue Baptist Church. In 1906, a bigger church was constructed and the smaller building became a social hall. But 20 years later, in 1925, both buildings were moved to this location, where they were attached and named The Calvary Baptist Church.

OCEAN AREA ROUTE – Stops #28-50
2.75 miles, 1.5 hours at leisurely pace

28. FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF BELMAR: H- 410 9th Ave

You are at the **First Baptist Church of Belmar**, stop #28 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. Established in 1894, it is the first Black church and the first Baptist church in Belmar and has stood on this very site since 1900. Although its original year-round congregation was small, the church held services twice a day during the summer season to accommodate the numerous domestic workers who attended church while working in the resort town at that time. The Little Church by the Side of the Road, as it has been affectionately referred to by its congregation, has weathered its share of ups and downs, including a devastating fire in 1951 and the 2012 Super Storm Sandy. First Baptist Church has been resilient through it all, as it continues to follow God's Holy Word.

29. BUTTERFLY WAYSTATION & FERRUGGIARO PARK: E west end Silver Lake

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You are at stop #29 on the Belmar Treasure Trail: our **Butterfly Waystation**. There are many stunning landscape gardens throughout Belmar, but the real beauty behind this group of plantings is two-fold. First, the garden is what is known as a “rain garden,” which means it was designed to reduce pollution in Silver Lake. A major cause of water pollution throughout the industrialized world comes from rainwater that picks up pet waste, fertilizers, road oils and other toxins as it runs across paved surfaces and winds up in waterways. This garden is designed to keep those kinds of invisible – and not so invisible – pollutants out of our lake. It was created by the Belmar Environmental Commission to divert polluted runoff from the road into a vegetative system. The second purpose, as you can probably tell by the lovely sign and bench, is to serve as a breeding area and stop-over for butterflies and other pollinators. In particular, it is a beautiful waystation for monarch butterflies, who lay their eggs on the milkweed plants here. The eggs hatch into very hungry caterpillars that form their chrysalises here before emerging as beautiful butterflies. If you look a walk a little further south, you’ll see the sign for this park, **Ferruggiario Park at Silver Lake**. It was named in remembrance of John E. Ferruggiario, who was a Belmar Commissioner for 26 years. He served with John Taylor and Peter Maclearie, who are also honored with landmarks in our borough. Interestingly, Mr. Ferruggiario, the son of Italian immigrants, was a member of the first graduating class of Belmar Elementary School, and he threw out the first ball on the town’s ball field across from the school. Sadly, his brother Alfie was one of four Belmar men who died in the sinking of the USS Juneau during World War II, which we talk about in our stops at Monument Row and Borough Hall.

30. TT SIGN at SILVER LAKE & 8th + 209 S. Lake Dr: E

This is stop #30 on the Belmar Treasure Trail, with another of the borough’s ***Treasure Trail interpretive signs***. While you enjoy this relaxing overlook on Silver Lake, learn about the natural habitat, and the many plants and animals that call this lake their home. The 13-acre waterway was once part of a huge bay in ancient times, when all the lakes up and down the Jersey coast were connected.

When you continue around Silver Lake, look across the street for the private residence at **209 South Lake Drive**. This Victorian style home was built in 1890 by Henry Yard, one

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of the original developers of Belmar. While we could not include them all on the tour, Belmar still boasts a number of historic old homes, like this one.

31. JANE MAGOVERN PLAYGROUND: E, south side of Silver Lake at C St

You are at stop #31 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. This wonderful, **modern playground** is named for **Jane Magovern**, one of the community's most cherished art teachers who taught thousands of children and was also the late wife for former Belmar Mayor Brian Magovern. She had a 40-year career as an art teacher at St. Rose Grammar School and in Belmar's beloved summer arts and crafts program before she passed away in 2015. The colorful archway that bears her name is adorned with larger-than-life butterflies that greet everyone entering the playground.

32. TT SIGN at SE side of SILVER LAKE: E

This is stop #32 on the Belmar Treasure Trail, with another of our **Silver Lake educational signs**. These colorful signs are part of an interactive educational initiative developed in 2005 by the Belmar Environmental Commission in partnership with the New Jersey Marine Sciences Consortium, New Jersey Sea Grant program, and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. On this sign, you can learn about the geology and history of this small waterway, one of several coastal lakes that you'll find up and down the Jersey Shore. Silver Lake is home to a variety of aquatic life and waterfowl, and is a migration stop for many birds. The macadam trail around the lake is popular for jogging, strolling, dog walking and more.

33. HUISMAN GAZEBO: H south end Silver Lake

This beautiful open-air pavilion you see is called the **Huisman Gazebo**, named for former Borough Commissioner C. Andrew Huisman. Thousands of residents and visitors have enjoyed concerts, weddings and many other special events here over the years. And it also is a charming and peaceful place to come sit on your own and watch egrets, herons or many of the other beautiful seabirds who grace our Silver Lake, which is home to a variety of aquatic life and waterfowl, and is a migration stop for many birds.

34. SALT WORKS MONUMENT: H – Flagpole (@ Silver Lake)

H= historic stop A= art stop E= environmental stop

You are at stop #34 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. The monument seen at the base of the flagpole, often called the “**Salt Works**” **monument**, was dedicated by Belmar’s Bicentennial Commission in 1976 to commemorate the only Revolutionary War engagement that occurred here. Three British vessels arrived off the coast of Belmar in April 1778 and launched 150 men in longboats that landed south of Shark River Inlet and completely destroyed the Salt Works operating on the banks of the River. This raid was part of a British strategy to destroy the ability of colonists to produce salt, an essential commodity for the American War effort. The Shark River raiders, however, were driven off by 15 Monmouth Militia. The British left in such a panic that they swamped some of their longboats. Weeks later, the colonists would cheer when word filtered back that at about the same time the British were raiding the New Jersey coast, a young American captain in his sloop called “Ranger” was terrifying British coastal towns, sinking and capturing ships at sea and even in British harbors. It was the first time in 100 years British coastal towns were raided. That captain was John Paul Jones.

35. 28. FIFTH AVE CHAPEL: H 304 5th Ave & Former Fitkin Hosp 316 5th

You are at the **Fifth Avenue Chapel**, stop #35 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. The chapel was originally built as the *Church of the Holy Apostles* in 1873. By 1940, the frame building, constructed in the shape of a cross, was in poor repair, having been closed for many years. However, its beautiful stained-glass windows remained intact. The Fifth Avenue Chapel purchased the property for \$1,500 and began its ministry here in 1941. If you walk down the block to **316 Fifth Ave.**, you will not see a Treasure Trail marker because it is a private residence, but we wanted to share its history. What is now a lovely home was built in the 1890’s as a wellness clinic where city dwellers came for restful rejuvenation at the ocean side. It became known as **The Belmar Hospital** in the 1930’s, continuing as a wellness clinic, but also offering minor medical care. It was renamed Fitkin Hospital when it moved to Spring Lake and then found a permanent home in Neptune Township, where it has grown into today’s Jersey Shore University Medical Center.

36. SHROEDER PARK – E West Side Ocean Ave (@ 1st-2nd)

H= historic stop A= art stop E= environmental stop

You're at stop #36, the lovely **Shroeder Park**. This small triangle is a favorite photo op for visitors and residents alike, especially when the flowers in our rowboat bloom into the word, Belmar. The park was named for former Belmar Commissioner Carl W. Shroeder, who was appointed as a Belmar official in 1937 and served his community with distinction and honor.

37. 23. 1st AVE BEACH/NATURAL BEACH: E

You are at the **First Avenue beach**, stop #37 on the Belmar Treasure Trail route. First Avenue beach, or "Shell Beach" as many Belmartians call it, is the only natural, unmanaged beach between Sandy Hook National Park and Island Beach State Park. Belmar made a decision many years ago to keep this beach as a natural example of what all beaches would look like if left to Mother Nature. Take 10 minutes to read the colorful interpretive signs located right off the sidewalk and further down on the beachfront to learn more about the habitat and inhabitants of this special beach. The signs are among several **Treasure Trail Interpretive Signs** throughout the borough that educate about our coastal ecosystems and serve as an outdoor classroom for local schools. If you are here in late spring or early summer you may find our least tern nesting colony, which we are proud to say is among the largest in the state and very important for this threatened species. We are thrilled that oyster catchers are also now calling Shell Beach a nesting home.

38. BELMAR FISHING CLUB – H

This is stop #38 on the Belmar Treasure Trail, featuring the oceanfront **Belmar Fishing Club**. This historic fishing pier is one of the few ocean piers left in Monmouth County. The Belmar Fishing Club was first organized in 1909 with 49 members who paid dues of one dollar a year. Ten years later, in 1919, they arranged with the Ocean Pier Company to build a first clubhouse on the pier. But by 1929, the club had grown so much that the membership voted to build a new Club House here. This building, expanded again in the late 1900's, is a prime example of mission architecture. Today, the Belmar Fishing Club is a modern, members-only haven for socializing and fishing. But it still contains a treasure trove of historical artifacts, including signed photographs from Presidents

H= historic stop A= art stop E= environmental stop

Franklin D. Roosevelt and Warren Harding. And, built into the Club's fireplace is a stone mantel from George Washington's winter camp at Valley Forge.

39. 4th AVE BEACH - mobi mats: E

You are at the **4th Avenue beach** entrance, stop #39 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. We're stopping here to point out that Belmar is committed to making sure our beach is accessible to everyone, even those with limited mobility. In the summer months, all our beach entrances have **Mobi-Mats**. They are synthetic mats that make the sand underneath feel hard as concrete, so it enables people who use wheelchairs and walkers to reach the water's edge without worry. While the mats are put down to benefit those with disabilities, they also make life a lot easier for moms and dads with strollers and beach wagons, or anyone who wants an easier walk on the sand! This beach is also used in the summer for a popular surfing school. You'll see as you continue down the boardwalk that the beach itself becomes progressively narrower the further south you walk. This is a result of the interaction of wind, waves and currents.

40. TAYLOR PAVILION: H 5th & Ocean Taylor Pavilion)

This is the **Taylor Pavilion**, stop #40 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. For many decades, the old Fifth Avenue Pavilion had been the social centerpiece of Belmar during the summer months. Interestingly, during World War 2, the beautiful ocean-facing windows on the back of the original pavilion were covered with blackout paint. This was one of countless steps taken by Local Defense Councils along the Jersey Shore to darken the oceanfront at night so it would be harder for Nazi U-Boats that prowled our coast to stalk and sink nearby freighters. But once the war ended, popular activities returned to the pavilion. Some of our senior residents still remember the old "Rat Races" held here more than half a century ago. They were post-war teen dances and canteens that helped young men and women escape from their daily "rat race." The original Pavilion burned to the ground in the 1980's and its replacement was named in honor of beloved former mayor John A. Taylor. That Pavilion was destroyed in Superstorm Sandy in 2012. But the Pavilion was again rebuilt and continues to host many events and activities. Among them are a Big Band Orchestra series and Social Dancing series, free musical offerings that have been a summertime fixture of the Jersey Shore since the 1940s when the Works Progress Administration developed a Depression-era program that set-aside royalties to

H= historic stop A= art stop E= environmental stop

create work for musicians. The music in Taylor Pavilion continues to this day. The Pavilion is also a community hub for other summertime events, beach badge sales, private parties and more. As you look across Ocean Avenue, you will see **Silver Lake**, one of several coastal lakes that dot the Jersey Shore. The 13-acre lake is ringed by grassy areas and a macadam trail that is popular for jogging, strolling, dog walking and more. From here, you can see the slate steeple that graces the horizon beyond Silver Lake. It adorns the top of St. Rose Roman Catholic Church and served for decades as an important navigational guide for ships because, as one of the tallest structures around at the time, it was visible for miles.

41. 8th AVE PIRATE PLAYGROUND: E – 8th & Ocean)

Arrrrgh mateys! You're at stop #41 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. Swashbucklers young and old enjoy this **Pirate Playground**. This is also a good place to talk about our environmental **Dune Plantings**. As a small town that is surrounded on three sides by water, we are taking sea rise and flooding very seriously. Up and down the boardwalk, we have planted environmentally responsible native species that help keep sand from blowing into the streets during high winds. The plants also help fortify our small dunes, which provide natural coastal protection against storm surge and high waves, reducing coastal flooding and structural damage.

42. MAST OF THE MALTA POLE: H – 8th & Ocean by 7-11

43. KEEL OF THE MALTA BOARDWALK SIGN – between 8th & 9th

You are at our infamous **Mast of the Malta**, stop #42 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. Yes, it may look like a huge pole in front of 7-11, and for many years its origin was a mystery. But this tall white landmark is actually a part of Belmar's maritime history. As you will learn on the interpretive sign at its bottom, the pole is the foremast from the Malta, a ship that was wrecked off 8th Avenue beach in 1885. Look closely and you will see the guide rail that was used to guide the sail up the mast. At the bottom are the gudgeons, the metal fittings where the ship's boom was attached. Walk across the street and find our stop #43 with another **sign by the boardwalk** that has information about the remains of the shipwreck, which is about 100 yards offshore. The sternpost of the sunken ship can be seen at low tide.

H= historic stop A= art stop E= environmental stop

44. HOWARD ROWLAND PAVILION: H 10th Ave Beach

This is stop #44 on the Belmar Treasure Trail at the **Howard Rowland Pavilion**, named for the man who stood watch over the Belmar beachfront for nearly 60 years, at one time having the distinction as being the world's oldest active lifeguard. During his longtime tenure as Chief Lifeguard, Rowland devoted himself to water safety, saving as many as 6,000 lives and training several generations of lifeguards. He died in 1988 at age 81. Rowland is memorialized in a fabulous portrait by well-known local artists Suzanne Anan, who captured him standing next to his distinctive red Jeep and wearing his red lifeguard swim trunks, with his two-way radio on his hip. This building, constructed after Superstorm Sandy in 2012 and opened in 2017, serves as the headquarters for beachfront police, fire, first aid and lifeguard operations. This central point on our boardwalk is also a good place to talk about Belmar's approximately **1.5 miles of beachfront** that offer unlimited four-season opportunities for nature lovers, surfers and coastal enthusiasts. In the summer, movies on the beach, lifeguard tournaments and a popular sandcastle contest are just some of the special events that attract tens of thousands of visitors. Belmar takes very seriously its responsibility to protect and preserve the natural wonder of the waterways that surround our small community, and our one-square-mile borough has earned a national reputation as a leader in environmental sustainability. One small example of our effort can be found in the boardwalk restroom facilities, opened during the summer season, that feature waterless urinals, high-efficiency faucets, high-speed driers, and are cleaned with least toxic cleansers. In addition, the beachfront showers are fitted with low-flow showerheads to conserve water.

45. 13th AVE BEACH: E (Belmar geology & Titanic survivor)

This is stop #45 on our Belmar Treasure Trail. We're stopping here to mention some interesting **environmental and historical facts about the residential areas** you see across the street. One bit of trivia is about the land itself, or specifically, it's geology. The area from here south has soil that does not drain as well and has a higher water table than the northern section of town. Also, as you've walked along the boardwalk, you may have noticed that in the northern part of town, the size of the blocks were longer and the housing lots larger. After the town got its start as a summer community of just 25 people in 1872, more visitors and residents started flocking to the seaside get-away. In 1908, the

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new Belmar grew by annexing adjacent areas. One of them was called the Ocean Grove Park Tract, which started at 12th Avenue and went south to Spring Lake. The area was laid out with 700 new, smaller lots. To entice people to attend the sale of these lots, a marketing promotion offered 10,000 dollars' worth of prizes, like pianos, diamonds, watches and silverware. In case you're wondering, the asking price for the lots at that time? A whopping three hundred dollars! Another bit of trivia has to do with one of our historic residents, Elizabeth Nye Darby, a **Titanic survivor** who lived on the third block of 13th Ave. After a trip to England to visit her parents, the young widow was headed back to the U.S. to begin work with the Salvation Army. Her voyage was cancelled due to a coal strike in Britain so she was transferred to sail as a second-class passenger on the *Titanic*, which left Southampton on April 10, 1912. When the ocean liner collided with an iceberg in the North Atlantic four nights later, Ms. Nye was among the survivors in a tragedy that killed 1,500 others. In a letter home, she detailed the horrifying occurrences, but assured her parents, "My nerves are very shattered, I look and feel about ten years older, but I will get over it after a time." In fact, Elizabeth suffered such exposure that she would later require an operation and was awarded \$200 by the American Red Cross. When she finally arrived back on American soil, one of the first Salvation Army personnel to greet her was Captain George Darby. The couple kept in touch and married the next year, following Elizabeth's commissioning. In 1930, they built a duplex on this property, and lived in the left side at 315A 13th Avenue. Their son, Ray, was a long-time lifeguard in Belmar, and Elizabeth would spend hours in chairs on the front lawn with her neighbors, talking and knitting bandages for the Salvation Army. You'll find a book about her at the Belmar Historical Society (stop #3 on our tour.)

46. 15th AVENUE BEACH: H (Gershwin)

You are at **15th Avenue Beach**, stop #46 on our Treasure Trail. Over the years, Belmar has attracted millions of visitors, including our fair share of celebrities. You can hear more about our Bruce Springsteen connection at stop #1 and stop #16 on the Treasure Trail. But as you stand on this boardwalk right now, let us take you back to the 1920's, and the iconic Broadway hits of **Ira and George Gershwin**. Back then, the entire block across the street between 15th and 16th Avenues was taken up by the Atlantic Hotel. This trendy hotel, which catered to a literary and cultural crowd, was owned by the family of Ira Gershwin's wife. So Ira and George spent many a summer night relaxing and

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entertaining friends across from Belmar's oceanfront. Imagine strolling and hearing a live version of "Rhapsody in Blue?!?"

Interestingly, the Atlantic Hotel was one of several in Belmar that were originally part of the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition Fair of 1876, better known as the World's Fair. These former pavilions were sailed by waterways to Belmar then rolled on telephone pole-like logs to their locations. The Atlantic stood as a hotel under several names until it burned to the ground in 1972.

47. 17th AVENEU BEACH: H – (Cecil Lear Plaque)

We're stopping at our **17th Ave Beach** to point out a plaque on the jetty stone in front of the boardwalk by Ocean Avenue that we dedicated to a real Belmar legend: **Cecil D. Lear**. It's hard to believe now, but there was no such thing as surfboards on the east coast when Cecil was young. He was working in 1961 when he got hold of the first issue of Surfer Magazine and surfboard brochures from the west coast. He became the first surfer on Belmar beach and within two years, he and his water-loving friends petitioned the town leaders to open the area's first surfing-only beach in 1963. Cecil's passion only grew and he championed the sport of surfing, not only in his hometown of Belmar, but throughout the nation. You'll see some of his contributions on the plaque. Cecil remains beloved by countless residents and surfers around the world.

48. 19th AVENUE BEACH: E, (Surfing)

You are at **19th Avenue beach**, stop #48 on the Belmar Treasure Trail. **Surfers** enjoy Belmar's ocean waves year round and in the summer months, the 19th Avenue beach is dedicated just to those with their boards. Every September, thousands of people come to watch our annual Belmar Pro, where the wave-riding performances get better each year. The Pro features top surfing athletes from Central America, Australia, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Europe, South Africa and all over the United States. Plus, there are always a few local favorites in this fun-filled post-Labor Day surfing extravaganza.

The tour would not be complete without mentioning D'Jais, the well-known establishment across the street. D'Jais has featured countless entertainers who have gone on to make a name for themselves. But ask co-owner Frank Sementa what happened when he hired a young, aspiring singer-songwriter back in the 70s. Turns out he was so good, that patrons were too busy listening to the music to buy any food or beverages, so

H= historic stop A= art stop E= environmental stop

Frank had to let the musician go. In case you haven't already guessed, it was none other than Bruce Springsteen!

49. 20th AVENUE BEACH: E-- (Groins)

You are at stop #49 on the Belmar Treasure Trail, near the **end of the Belmar boardwalk**, although Belmar continues until the brick arches, which mark the boundary of our neighbor, Spring Lake. In the summer, the 20th Avenue beach is a haven for ocean kayakers and you'll see some impressive wave-riding feats. This is also a good spot to mention the rock-like piles seen along the oceanfront that most people call jetties. Jetties, however, are the rock barriers found on the sides of inlets, like those along Shark River Inlet between Belmar and Avon. The other rock formations you see along the oceanfront are actually called "groins." These groins are manmade formations originally built like solid rock walls jutting into the ocean to protect the beach from erosion. But in 1990, following a massive beach replenishment, the groins were notched near shore to allow for the sands to follow their natural south-to-north drift. The full length of the groins can be seen at lower tides, but the rocks mostly become submersed during high tides.

50. LAKE COMO: E

You are at **Lake Como**, stop #50 on our Belmar Treasure Trail. Three neighboring towns, Belmar, Lake Como, and Spring Lake, share ownership and oversight of the lake. Belmar only has a small portion of the lakefront, less than 20% of the actual shoreline. If you continue up to B Street, that is the transition from Belmar to Lake Como's portion of the lake. Spring Lake's portion starts at its Ocean Avenue border by the brick arches. Many millennia ago, this lake, like Silver Lake and others up and down the coast, were all connected as part of an ancient bay. Today, the lake hosts a number of anadromous fish – that means species that can live in both fresh water and salt water. The lake is also home to dozens of mute swans. Indigenous to Asia, a few pairs of these beautiful swans were introduced to Belmar in the early 1900's. These Belmar Swans gained a national reputation as the first flock bred in America, and the New York Zoological Garden was among several places that requested and were given a pair of breeders by the borough.

THE END