

**books** JEN MABE



Local columnist **Fay Jacobs** tells a funny story so well about moving to Rehoboth Beach that everyone will be heading for the shore.

# A real beach read

AS THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER BEGIN to wind down and life slowly returns to the school-and-work routine that greets us all around this time, many might become a bit nostalgic about the beach. Whether you've grown up around the shore or just visited from time to time, it's where most of us would rather be.

Longtime author Fay Jacobs, a New York native who for 30 years worked in journalism, theater and public relations in metropolitan Washington, D.C., is no different.

When she decided to move to Rehoboth Beach, Del., full time in 1999, it was a huge decision for her and Bonnie, her partner of 22 years. "As I Lay Frying: A Rehoboth Beach Memoir," Jacobs' most recent literary effort, proves this was the right decision, though it involved a fair share of consequences that she eloquently recounts in the book.

"As I Lay Frying" is comprised of nearly 10 years worth of essays written by Jacobs for the Letters from CAMP Rehoboth magazine. CAMP Rehoboth is an acronym for "create a more positive Rehoboth." And in each story, her beach adventures come alive.

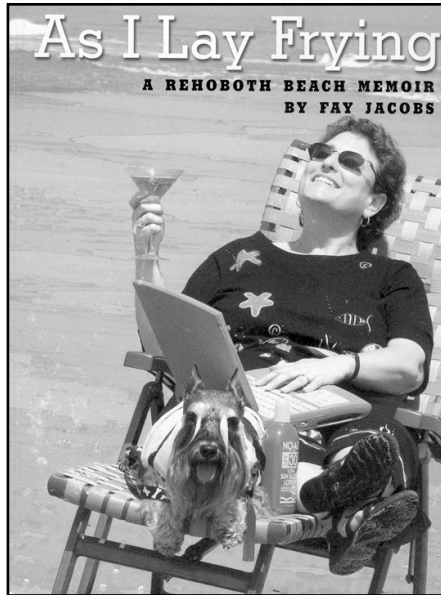
"For years, Fay's been sharing her personal stories with the residents of Rehoboth Beach," Eric C. Peterson writes in the book's foreword. "She's been nearly run over by a cargo ship, hunted down by the AARP, and known to shuttle stray animals across state lines.

"She lived through a frightening (and serious) family medical crisis in 2000 and eloped to Canada in 2003 ... and of course she and her partner 'adopted' a 25-year-old gay son (look for me in 'What I Did on my Summer Vacation.')

JACOBS RECOUNTS SCENES — OCEAN waves lapping up onto the bottom of a boat at the beach, martinis on the deck as the sun beats down, and sitting there with a laptop and just writing — that we've all either experienced or witnessed.

Such uncomplicated images immediately make one a companion on her journey toward becoming a full-time resident of Rehoboth.

At first there were just long weekend visits, stretching out the time spent by arriving on Thursday nights and waiting until the crack of dawn Monday to leave. Then Fay and Bonnie's stays became



more frequent. They were so frequent, in fact, that the couple decided it would be more economical to buy a house, rent it out when they weren't there, thus allowing them to spend more time at the beach.

Then, the life and atmosphere of Rehoboth seduced them even further, and in 1999, they took a leap of faith and moved to Rehoboth full time.

"As I Lay Frying," is written in accessible, conversational language that readers should be able to easily understand. The couple's debacles and eventual triumphs become personal because each essay, ultimately, is so intimate, whether it's a conversation about her partner's serious illness and recovery or a chat about a boat trip with friends.

"It was thrilling and exhausting — and if we learned anything, it's this: a boat's radar arch is not merely a design feature, London Fog is not really foul weather gear, and invest in fly swatters," Jacobs writes. "But nobody, but nobody, rained on our parade."

The book is filled with the life and times of actual people who are easy to identify with, and who represent about every type of person imaginable — rainbow-flag-waving activists, quiet homebodies, and those who have yet to come out but are searching for role models when they do. In the friends Fay and Bonnie keep, if you don't see yourself, you'll certainly see someone you know.

Very rarely does a book contain such interesting and comical characters, and so many almost unbelievable adventures. And each essay is short enough to savor one or two pages at a time.

Even when other distractions are vying for your attention, you'll enjoy this journey so much that you'll brush the interruptions aside and just keep reading.



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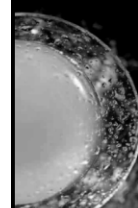
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