

In their own words

Volunteer Keepers of DeTour Reef Light are requested to write in the Lighthouse Log Book. Excerpts from some of these entries from last two summers are copied below. DRLPS already has reservations for the summer of 2018. We encourage potential keepers to make their application early, so they get the weekend they desire. Keepers can extend their stay extra nights at half the weekend rate and minors (under 18) are always half price.

Keeper Log Excerpts 2016-2017

Around 2:30 pm Turkish fleet sailed into the DeTour Passage and landed at the DeTour Reef Lighthouse. Four of us, ... are native Turks, although we all live in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Ladies of the Light showed little resistance and we captured the lighthouse with ease.....Despite a cloudy weathercast, the afternoon was very pleasant and even sunny. Three of us even jumped into the lake for a swim, however brief it has been. A few of us tried their fruitless fishing attempts. Overall an exceptional experience. Leaving with wonderful memories. ---- Nilufer Esen-Bilgin. Remzi Tayfun Bilgin, Ozgun Ulupinar, Hurol Ulupinar

Oh, my, gosh! We are staying in the lighthouse?! – was my reaction to finding out what our surprise vacation was! Being a lighthouse keeper was on my bucket list, but the this experience as once in a lifetime & makes me want it to be permanent. There is so much to this place; history, peacefulness, a getaway, solitude, endless water& light, fun memories & you get to be a part of keeping the lighthouse alive! Every moment here has exceeded my expectations of it all.

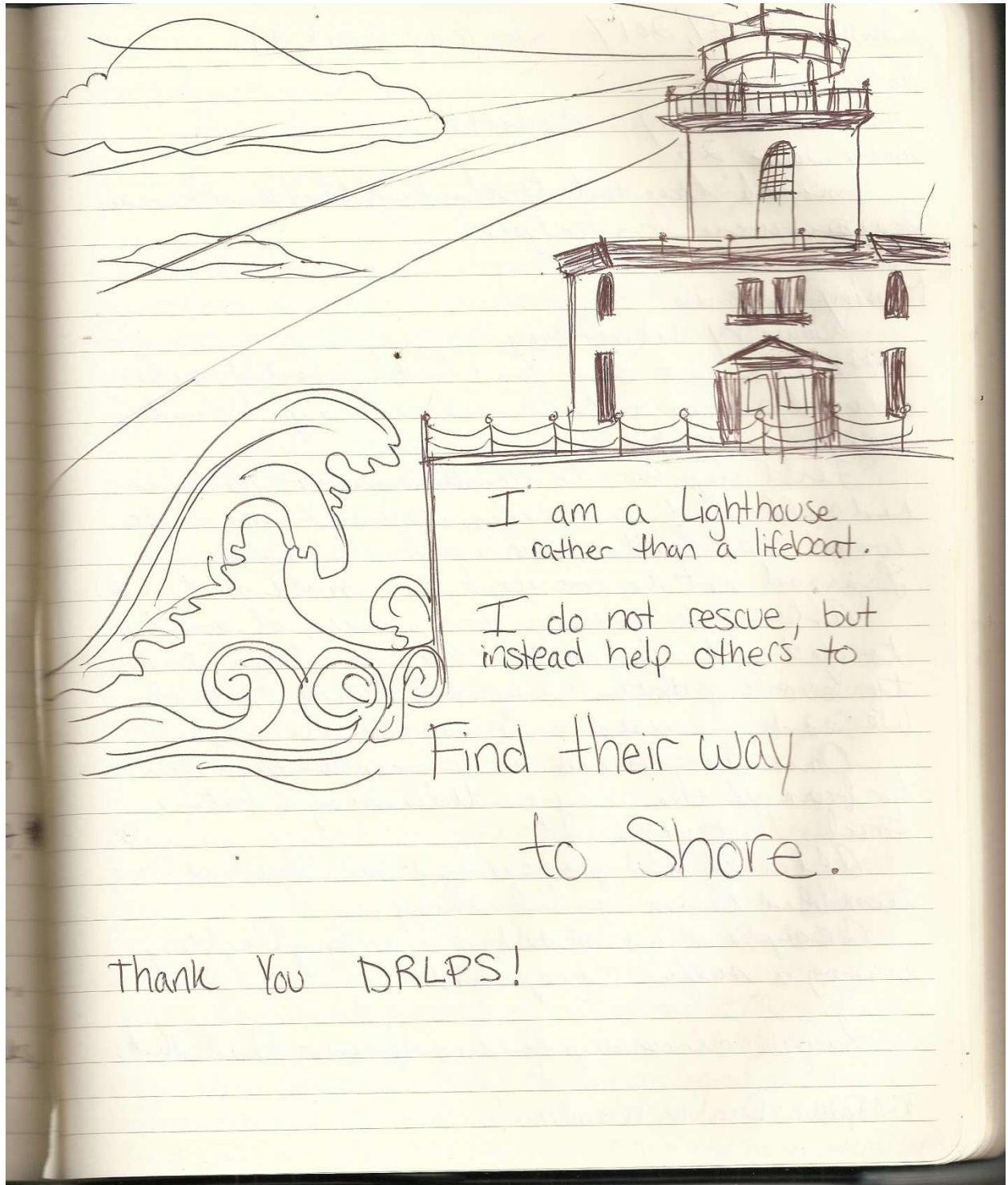
HE PROPOSED! I SAID YES! WE ARE GETTING MARRIED!! Proposed right in the light room, ring set in the beacon, at sunset with the light filling up the space around us – so much love & light. Unforgettable. Now, we will have to come here for every anniversary! *The stars ere amazing! With the sound of the water & the stillness of nature all around us this night has no words to describe it. “lighthouses do not fire cannons to call attention to their shining – they just shine” or in our case the blow a huge foghorn!! Aleece Balcheck. Petosky, MI

I woke up early this morning. Everyo9ne else was till asleep. I made coffee and started cooking the bacon (2 pounds). Walked down to the deck and watched the sun finish rising –surprising the sea gulls and a couple of fishing boats. The pure amazement of this structure is overwhelming. I somehow feel very at peace in this place even with 3 others along. The solitude of the morning is sublime.--- Adam Slowinski Petoskey MI

What a grand place! Loved every part, seclusion, solitude, wind, sun, waves, friends, great views, food & drink. Top of the lighthouse is spectacular, especially dawn or dusk. Wasn't expecting to be this enjoyable compared to camping but the experience surpassed all expectations. ...this is plentiful in satisfaction. Fantastic. Robert Simons.

We will never forget: Traci – Sheplers tour boat interrupting our sunbathing cat naps & blowing the foghorn for them, the whole boat cheered with joy & did a return

salute. Rob -- Endless skies & endless smiles. Adam -- The lighthouse. Once in a lifetime experience! Aleece -- getting engaged! The endless \$1,000,000 views 24/7. True natural beauty at its best.



I am a Lighthouse
rather than a lifeboat.

I do not rescue, but
instead help others to

Find their way

to Shore.

Thank You DRLPS!

EXCITEMENT! The Coast Guard came to the lighthouse to check some of their equipment. They were going to test the [modern, not the restored F2T] foghorn, but something was malfunctioning. ... Enjoyed sitting out on the deck watching sailboats & freighters.

First time to DeTour Reef – really awesome place! The Algocanada passed by out of the St. Mary's River around 7:50 pm. He turned east and headed into the Georgian Bay. Next came the 1000 ft American Spirit at 8:10pm. He was headed up the St. Mary's River and came from Lake Michigan. We blew the [F2T] foghorn at him and he answered back! Next in the parade of freighters is the 739 ft CSL Laurentien heading up bound and from Lake Huron at 8:42pm He also replied with his horn! At 9:50 the CSL Spruceglen leaving St. Mary's River. He also returned our salute! ... This is a busy place! ...It's been a great weekend despite the cool weather. Thank you DRLPS for restoring this awesome light and for the opportunity to share it with ! -- Eric & Lorinda Maki – Goodrich, MI

We arrived in calm water and warm sunshine. Beautiful views all around ...We enjoyed exploring every inch of the lighthouse. ...The 360 degree horizon view at sunset was quite amazing and the sound of the waves was a soothing lullaby. One thing about having young kids here is we got to see the sun rise. A beautiful orange sunrise reflected across the water to start our day. So many boats! We lost count of the freighters and saw a couple large sailboats. ...We'll miss the solitude, the water & the views, but we'll be back I'm sure. Parker says his favorite parts were: watching all the boats, climbing up to the light on the "circle stairs" and sharing the cookies and lemonade with tour guests. Marion's favorite part was getting to the top of the ladder, and they both enjoyed sounding the foghorn. -- Dennis, Cindy, Michael, Parker (5yrs), Marion (3yrs) and Nathaniel (6 months) Panik, Cassie Ayers -- Dafter, MI

60 years ago Roger [US Coast Guard] was on the lighthouse. Nothing has changed – the water still flows by – clouds & sky are the same & solitude is still incredible. ...Magnificent sunset – still rays of rose at 10:20pm. ... What a wild night, saw gulls fought all night long on the lee side! Roger Jansen and Bette Jo Jones – Holland, MI.

New Lighthouse Keepers have arrived, mother & 2 daughters – so excited to be here. We have sailed past this light house so many times. ...Boats going every which way – freighters, tugs & barges, fishermen and pleasure craft. ...[Tour] guests arrived! 5 people from Texas, 2 grandparents and their granddaughter and another couple. ...It was fun learning why they chose to come to the lighthouse. ...It has been a very special time for our family, many memories made – a wonderful adventure to remember always. Cindy & Melissa Tonkavich East Jordan, MI. Marsha Zimmerman Dewitt, MI

Thank you for a memorable experience. ...The sunshine provided great views and moments for photos. The night sky and myriads of stars were a sight to behold. The [tour] visitors and many ships passing by provided entertainment and new friends. Our Saturday night dinner and wine with my brother David and sister in law Bonnie was a 5 star, or million star movie waiting to be created with a cast of pirates and damsels in paradise on the open sea. May the Good Lord continue to guide your path with his light. We had a blast. Kevin Van Horn Lebanon IN.

On arrival, we all were very excited, to say the least. Kevin & I dressed as pirates for the whole weekend. People passing by loved the show we put on for them. We are now true SWASHBUCKLERS. (You can have the lighthouse back now). We are leaving with our wenches (Bonnie and Kahty) taking them back home ARRRRRRRR!! Matey. In short we had a blast & will be back. Thanks for a great time. David Van Horn, Indianapolis, IN.

We finally arrived!! My wonderful husband bought me a great present in March for my birthday. So I have been waiting since March for my Lighthouse adventure! And what an adventure it has been. ...My great grandfather was a lighthouse keeper for approx.. 2 years. ...DeTour is AWESOME!! Being able to go up to the top; seeing the works below; being able to swim (burr) in Lake Huron; watching the boats pass—the ships—the small crafts; watching the sunset; listening to the waves---Incredible!! Thanks for “saving the Light” for us all to enjoy. Bonnie VanHorn, Indianapolis, IN.

The storm gives us another night at the DeTour Lighthouse [ed. note: when lake conditions prohibit a safe departure from DeTour Reef Light, keepers get the next night without charge]. Kathy VanHorn

For light keeper duties, we swept the whole lighthouse, cleaned windows, vacuumed the [cob] webs from window sills and power washed the deck. We ate outside last night using the charcoal grill. Had the most amazing star show last night. Waw several shooting stars. Great first night. Oh, we saw many freighters and had one respond back to our fog horn salute. ...This has been a great stay, lot of fun. We were able to mark this off our bucket list. Looking forward to another stay on DeTour Reef. John & Amy Branch, Tom & Lori Anthony.

What an incredible blessing this place is! Thanks to all those involved in its preservation & restoration! ...Frontenac responded to our horn salute!Thank you to my husband for secretly booking this weekend to celebrate our 25th anniversary. We loved this unique experience and from the 4 previous pages you can tell he is a true boat nerd—especially all boat of our glorious Great Lakes. Wishing now we could stay just 2 more days to really decompress & get the keeper experience. Carol Vaughn & Dean Smith Henderson, MI.

Our first visit on tour to the amazing light house. Wonderful experience, great host & hostess tour guide. We can't wait to return. Dennis & Jeri Wysong..

Flew kites, relaxed in conversation, -- greeted passing boats & saluted the freighters. Windy at night, but the viewing of the meteor shower was perfect. ...Thank you DRL [Detour Reef Light] for giving each of a visit to remember for a lifetime. Tom Smoots, Brayden Leggett, Eric and Gavin Wachterhauser – Clinton Twp. MI.

What an incredible thrill & privilege to spend some time on DeTour Reef Light! I truly feel part of something greater than myself. The days flew by and I hardly know where the time went. We brought all sorts of books to read, but spent most of our days watch the freighter go by, logging them in our journals, simply appreciating the play of light on the water , observing cloud formations come & go. ...I am a classical composer (opera, symphonies) & I am sure my experiences here will work their way into a

composition soon. One cannot fail to feel inspired here. I feel as if a part of DeTour Reef Light will always stay with me, that in a way I'm also the owner of a little piece of it. Thanks to DRLPS for its wonderful work. I hope those who follow have wonderful, memorable stays! Evan Fein, New York City.

Such a wonderful experience. The DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society has made such an important contribution with its work ... There are such wonderful insights into the history, economy and environment not only of the DeTour community, but Michigan and the country as a whole. Aside from what I learned, the beauty of this place is just stunning, you cannot be bored since it is constantly changing. Finally, it was a pleasure to meet everyone – Dave & Joe and our fellow lighthouse keepers. They really contributed in so many ways to making this an unforgettable experience. Thanks again. Robin Ludwig, NY, NY.

What a beautiful day to be in one of my favorite places – the DeTour Reef Lighthouse. ... We sadly end another weekend on this wonderful light. As usual, the time went way too quickly. It seems like we just arrived a few moments ago. The four of us had a fantastic time. The weather, the comradery and the location were all awesome! ... We are very lucky to be able to spend time here and take the peaceful relaxing memories home with us. Respectfully submitted Karen Cote – 9th year as DeTour Reef Light Keeper.

We read, we put together puzzles, we had awesome meals & great conversation. Many ships came through and a couple of times. We were blessed to see two going through at once. While this was my fourth visit to DRL, she never ceases to amaze me. The DRLPS have done a fabulous job & I appreciate all you do. ... [They] do a fabulous job.... I came this time for rest & relaxation which is always received on DRL. ... As I sit and write and daydream out the window, I feel the draw & pull of DRL. Teresa Thomas, 4th time light housekeeper – Perry MI.

Today is our last day as lighthouse keepers. This has been a wonderful trip. Karen invited me and I had a lot of anxiety about it and originally said no. Karen and Yolanta promised me I'd have a great and relaxing time. They did not disappoint! ... We woke up this morning and as usual Karen cooked a wonderful breakfast. We relaxed afterward sitting at the table talking and drinking coffee. We slowly got ready and started packing. We then toasted with breakfast dessert (fizzy pink moscatos) and traveled to the top of the light. We relaxed up there and took silly pictures of each other. And of course, Karen sang us silly songs. ... The sound of the waves and the wind have an amazing calming effect. A huge thank you to my amazing neighbors Karen & Yolanta for encouraging me to this adventure. What a gem I'm glad I didn't miss out on. Also thank you to DRLPS for keeping this lighthouse alive. One thankful young lady. Natasha Mclean, Plainwell, MI

The sunsets and sunrises, passing freighters, friendly fishers and cruisers, visiting loons, fast-changing lake from glass-calm to white caps and back; so many stars, so much sky. The funnest for me has been living in these historic rooms just like the keepers din, working some of their chores, feeling a little of what they might have felt. Michelle Obama was right in her accolades to the DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society; Its members' hopes, hard work and perseverance have give the nation a beautiful piece of its history back. Thanks for this. Lawrence & Darryl Trump, Dayton, Ohio.

This was another great weekend. As each of my grandchildren (5) turn 10, they get to go to the "Lighthouse" with Papa. ...Every minute of the weekend was perfect. Time to relax, reconnect with family that no longer live home, great conversation, food, reading and games. Rudi Edel – Gaylord, MI

My first time here!! I loved it!! ...Sitting outside in the sun relaxing with a glass of wine was wonderful. I love explaining the lighthouse [to the tour guests] and learning about the history of it. It was a great experience and I can't wait to come back. Sandi Edel, Gaylord, MI.

What a wonderful culmination to a two week 50th Anniversary celebration at Drummond Island. ...Bob enjoyed looking at the "man stuff" – the working machines in the basement. Jan counted all the steps up to the light and used the beautiful spiral stairs as a "Jacob's Ladder" – praying a specific prayer on each step. This was a wonderful spiritual experience. ... Back on deck we counted 12 freighters going north up the St. Mary's to the Soo and 5 freighters southbound. ...We want to return again and bring our 9 year old grandson Jacob with us. He is just crazy about lighthouses! A big THANKS to the DRLPS for your dedication to the preservation and upkeep of DeTour Reef Light. Jan and Bob Lynn Richland, MI.

We have enjoyed God's wonderful creation. The sun rising and setting. The moons coming out reflecting it face as the sun on the beautiful lake. ... We give him praise, honor and thanks for the opportunity to be here at DeTour Reef... What a pleasurable experience. Norb and Ruth Ann Karmel, Toledo, Ohio.

Good memories were made here this weekend. ...I thoroughly enjoyed my stay at the DeTour Reef Light House. With much love, Dylan Bryant

This trip was more than I could have ever hoped for and I hope it's one I never forget. Good luck to you all – make the most of your days here --- it's well worth it. Raleigh Bryant.

This has been a great weekend. Great food, great people, great weather, great fun! Thanks. Carol Aaron. Royal Oak, MI.

Keepers for the weekend: Raymond W. Paris sr. – former [DeTour Reef] lighthouse keeper from 1966 – returning 50 years later ---, Angela R. Paris (daughter),

Ocean City, Md --- Saige P. Figgs (granddaughter) Ocean City, Md --- Delaney B. Williams Ocean City, Md.. We unpacked, then went out on deck and did a through clean up. 5 ships came by going up river and 2 down river. Angela and the girls then started dinner and I lit the charcoal grill, was a beautiful day & then dark clouds rolled in and we all experienced the sudden & violent storms of the lakes. We all ran for cover & closed up all the windows. After some time the storm passed & the charcoal grill was ready for cooking dinner. We had a great meal, cleaned up after & the two teenage girls & my daughter started to build a puzzle. [Next day] The charter boat captain stated that we should not eat all of our food as we may be here an extra day, due to the storm. ---- Ray Paris New Salem, PA.

Wonderful weather all weekend, Perfect actually. Fantastic experience – Thanks to the preservation team! Rita Carleski Mount Airy, GA.



Photo Caption: Keepers Barb McKessy, John Stoppels, Suzi and Larry Wyman, Julie and David Fairfield at the end of their three day stay on DeTour Reef Light.