



1931

PASSAGES



Today!

* PO Box 307 * Drummond Island MI 49726 * drlps@drlps.com * www.DRLPS.com * 906-493-6609 *

Issue 43

We'll Keep the Light on for You!

Spring 2021

FIRE DECIMATES HISTORIC DETOUR POINT LIGHT STATION PROPERTY

By Jeri Baron Feltner



Photo #1 - DeTour Point Light Station
1914

Photo Courtesy Jim Woodward

As a precursor to the offshore 1931 DeTour Reef Light Station, at the far eastern end of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan at the mouth of the St Marys River that connects Lake Huron to Lake Superior, the DeTour Point Light Station (*Photo 1*) was built on-shore at Point DeTour in 1847 to guide the immense commercial traffic of vessels traveling in and out of the strategic Marys River. The Keepers' residence was rebuilt in 1861, expanded and partitioned in 1913 to accommodate an additional Assistant Keeper, and modified in the 1950s making it suitable as a private residence (*Photo 2, 3, 4 on page 2*). Sadly, a fire destroyed this house on April 5, 2021.

As a result of the original 1847 lighthouse tower's disintegration and the need for a higher tower due to increased ship traffic, the Light Station was rebuilt in 1861 (similar to the station at Whitefish Point) near the same location and remodeled in 1905, 1913 and 1929. Due to the expanding ship traffic near the nearby submerged reef, the U.S. Lighthouse Service decided to build the DeTour Reef Light Station on the reef (*Photo 5*) one mile offshore from the DeTour Point Light Station. The 1861 tower was moved and incorporated into the 1931 offshore DeTour Reef Light Station. In 1933, the DeTour Point Light Station reservation (75 acres) and buildings were sold to a private individual.

The devastating fire (*Photos 6, 7 on page 3*) was reported to me by my friend, Mary Rogers, who lived at DeTour Point for many years and visited the property often. Her friend, Kathleen Shiplett, was one of the first to be at the scene of the fire. Kathleen said: "Picking up my carryout lunch at the DeTour Senior Center, fire trucks just returned to DeTour. I decided it was safe to go back there and could not get in too much trouble. It was very sad for me to experience. Ralph and I would love to have seen the home in all its glory days."

Jason Lehman, who is the current caretaker of the property, was contacted as soon as the fire was discovered to give the gate key of the grounds to the fire department. I texted him about his thoughts on the fire, and he stated: "My dad has been caretaking for the family who owns the property for as long as I can remember. Since moving back to DeTour ten years ago, I have started helping him with the caretaking duties. Maintaining the property, keeping the driveway trimmed out, cutting grass and general maintenance on the house and cabin. When I was younger, my brother, sister and I spent lots of time out there as kids with my dad while he was working. While he worked, we would be playing hide and seek inside the house and explore the property. It was pretty devastating to see a part of the town's history burn down, but also a place I have so many good memories growing up with my family and more recently the time I've spent with my dad working there.

(cont'd on page 2)

(cont'd from page 1)

Currently, the fire inspectors are trying to ascertain the cause of the fire. Some speculate that it may have been an electrical wire issue. Per Jason, "As far as I know, what caused the fire was not determined. As of right now, the family do plan on rebuilding a house out on the Point."

A considerable amount of Great Lakes lighthouse maritime history remains on the property with several original lighthouse service buildings nearby, although in need of extensive repair, still standing, including a two-seat outhouse (*Photo 8 on page 3*), and oil building. There is also a small cemetery there.

As members of the DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society, my husband, Chuck Feltner, and I visited the property on several occasions thanks to owner Nick Noyes and caretaker Tom Lehman. It was a fascinating experience to observe the enormous lighthouse history on this property. From 1998 to 2006, we conducted extensive historic survey work there, including lots of photos, with DRLPS former President Bob Jones, Vice-President Jim Charles, Lighthouse Consultant Jim Woodward, former Executive Director of the Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association Terry Pepper, and former Executive Director of Little Traverse Nature Conservancy Tom Bailey, Dave Bardsley of DRLPS, along with other DRLPS members. *(cont'd on page 3)*



Photo #2 - DeTour Point Light Station property 2004.
Photo by John Wagner



Photo #3 – Terry & Mary Pepper outside the DeTour Point Light Station private residence 2006.
Photo by Jeri Baron Feltner



Photo #4 - Inside the DeTour Point Light Station private residence 2000. Jeri Feltner, Jim Woodward, Chuck Feltner, Bob Jones
Photo by Tom Lehman



Photo #5 - DeTour Reef Light Station as seen from the onshore DeTour Point Light Station property 2011
Photo courtesy Little Traverse Nature Conservancy

(cont'd from page 2)

A large portion of the DeTour Point property (145 acres with 3 miles of shoreline) was donated in 2011 to the Little Traverse Nature Conservancy (Harbor Springs MI) for conservation of the property and to allow the public to enjoy the beautiful undisturbed state of the land and undeveloped shoreline which offers an outstanding natural area preserve providing wonderful opportunities for recreation and observing nature (*Photo 9*).

The author would like to thank the following for their assistance with this article: Katie Misic of the Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association for Terry Pepper's historical material, Jason Lehman, Mary Rogers, Debbie Davis, and Kathleen Shiplett, for information and photos of the property after the fire.



Photo #6 - Smoke seen from the fire at the Point
Photo by Debbie Davis



Photo #7 – DeTour Point Light Station property private residence burnt to the ground April 5, 2021.
Photo by Kathleen Shiplett



Photo #8 – DeTour Point Light Station Outhouse remnants 2000
Photo by Jeri Baron Feltner



Photo #9 - DeTour Peninsula Nature Preserve Map
Courtesy Little Traverse Nature Conservancy 2011

Message from DRLPS President Joe Henne:

I have selected a few varied Auction items for Evening Under the Stars that likely will draw interest! We will try to get the auction started several days before July 10 via phone or email. We do want you to come to the event and bid at the Silent Auction in person. If you cannot, give us a dollar limit and I will find a bidder to take you to your limit.... or if you want to open the bidding on an item, that will be wonderful too, as long as you make the initial bid high enough to prevent the second bid !!! We will work with you. We really have fun with this and do remember... the proceeds go to the needs of DeTOUR REEF LIGHT and heightening community involvement in and on the Light. As Jeri Feltner says, "We are working to keep The Light on for YOU!"



Donor Wm Wallace: STREAM FISHING WITH BILL WALLACE

In the spirit of Hemingway, fish near the TWO HEARTED RIVER/LAKE SUPERIOR side close to Seney, Michigan. Bill is known to test the catch immediately from the water and into pan method ... "The sooner they are cooked- - the tastier they are..."

Donor Ross Kaplan: DINNER FOR FOUR!

Chef Ross Kaplan from Island Dining Services will prepare a restaurant quality 4 course dinner for 4 guests in your home kitchen. (Auction winner provides food / Wine.) He will shop for you, prepare the culinary fixings, serve, and clear.

Donor Ann Bromley: 2022 ORANGES

Hale Fruit Company of Vero Beach, Florida will send a peck of tasty oranges to your front door.

Donor Esther Parris: AN INTERNSHIP WITH ESTHER at Esther's Authentic Mexican Restaurant

Learn some secrets of Mexican cuisine and cooking. Spend 10 hours as an intern with Esther. If you bid high enough, this is your chance to learn some of her recipes' secrets. Yes! You will learn to make a better burrito.

Donor Joe & Bonnie Fennell: Lovely Fennell PRINTS (They will fit any wall or hallway.)

Donor Joe Henne: A FLAT (or two) OF MARYELLEN'S HYBRID PERENNIAL PURPLE VIOLETS

They bloom from early spring to snowfall. Excellent for borders, beds or ground cover in difficult areas. Or would you prefer to have Joe plant some lilies for you?

Donor Ed Zeerip: A FISHING CHARTER WITH ED !!!! Learn the BASSOMATIC WAY WITH ED

ZEERIP (Ed very well may be the best basser in the region.) It is a privilege to be shown his technique and fish one of his secret fishing spots!! PLUS +++ learn some helpful hints on bass lures, presentation, and timing from a professional. (Minimum initial bid \$100 is requested.)

Donor Chris & Joe Henne: MONITORING DETOUR-DRUMMOND RIVER TRAFFIC FROM BLACKROCK POINT

(With accoutrements)

Donor Vince Klamerus: An AERIAL VIEW of the WONDERSIGHTS OF Drummond Island IN A FLOAT-PLANE.

A few ups & downs! An adventure to remember!

Donor Hugh & Julie Covert: A TWI LIGHT SAIL ON THE HURON JEWEL!!!

(Party of 2) The bidding winner will be given a chance to purchase the other four tickets for this tour! This is a wonderful opportunity.

Donor Conor Egan: UP & DOWN THE RIVER

Potagannissing River through First Lake and 2nd Lake - maybe Third Lake (not many people get that far) Could be birds involved - negotiate with Conor. Party of one or perhaps two - It will be memorable, guaranteed!

Mark Your Calendars 2021

Light Keeper Weekends (Maximum 6 people per weekend)

Friday thru Sunday

Weekends - June 18 thru Weekend of September 1

For more information contact:

Dave Bardsley 906-493-6609

Email: keepers@drlps.com

<http://drlps.com/stay-or-visit/stay-at-the-lighthouse/>

Light Keeper and Jewelry Workshop

Sunday, June 23- Tuesday, June 25

For more information contact:

Hallie Wilson 989-430-5266

Email: HWilson@drlps.com

<http://drlps.com/stay-or-visit/jewelry-workshop/>

Lighthouse Tours

(Maximum 6 people per tour)

Saturdays - June 15 thru August 31

For more information contact:

Ann Method Green 906-430-8169

Email: tours@drlps.com

<http://drlps.com/stay-or-visit/tour-the-lighthouse/>



Evening Under the Stars

Drummond Island Township Golf Course

Saturday, July 10, 5:30 PM

For more information contact:

Joe Henne 906-493-6639 or 906-630-5093

Email: StarsEvent@drlps.com

<http://drlps.com/news-events/evening-under-the-stars/>

Nordic Bocce

Drummond Island Township Golf Course

Sunday, August 4, 2 PM

For more information contact:

Joe Henne 906 630-5093

Email: DRLPS@drlps.com

<http://drlps.com/news-events/bocce/>

DRLPS Annual Meeting

Monday, June 14, 6 PM

For more information contact:

Joe Henne 906 630-5093

Email: DRLPS@drlps.com

Dark Sky Initiative

Thursday, August 29th, 9 PM

For more information contact:

Joe Henne 906 630-5093

Email: DRLPS@drlps.com

<http://drlps.com/news-events/dark-sky-initiative/>

Things To Do This Summer on DeTour Reef Light



1) Enjoy a Keeper Weekend with friends and family

2) Take a Tour of the Light with friends and family



DeTour Reef Light's Friendly Neighbor to the South - Spectacle Reef Light

By: Patrick McKinstry, Spectacle Reef Preservation Society

Spectacle by the Stats

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Start of Construction: | 1870 |
| Completed: | 1874 |
| First Lit: | June 1, 1874 |
| Focal Plane: | 86 feet |
| Overall Height: | 97 feet |
| Visible: | 12 miles current LED, 29 miles |
| Lens | 2nd Order Fresnel |



Located 17 miles Southwest of DeTour Reef Light, Spectacle Reef was “more dreaded by mariners than any other danger unmarked throughout the entire chain of lakes”. This limestone reef is comprised of two shoal areas connected by a small ridge—thus resembling a pair of eyeglasses from above, hence the name. The northern reef lies only four feet below the lake whereas the southern portion rises to within sixteen feet, and Spectacle Reef (and nearby Reynolds Reef) lay right in the middle of the shipping lanes of the era.

This menace was first marked with an iron pole drilled into the reef, then iron can buoys placed between the two shoals. These “improvements” still did not prevent wrecks, as over the course of 1867-1869 several wrecks occurred. Eventually, Congress would approve construction of a lighthouse on the reef, which would result in the most expensive lighthouse ever built on the Great Lakes, with a total tab of \$416,000 (about \$9,200,000 today).



The Light is constructed of massive limestone blocks that all interlock and pinned together with iron bolts three feet long. The interlocking design actually makes the tower stronger with external forces pressing against them, like the waves of Lake Huron. The lower 17 courses (34 feet) of the tower are solid stone, as seen to the left, and the upper sixty feet contain the living quarters. The central hole in the middle of the courses contained the original well for the station.

The lighthouse entered service on June 1, 1874 with its Second Order Fresnel Lens shining its light for 18 miles. The light would later be improved by using oil vapor, thus increasing its range to 29 miles. The light characteristic was an alternating red and white flash every thirty seconds. During inspection trips in 2020, some of the red panels were located in an attic—complete with Kerosene soot on them still!

As the years went by, many keepers came and left and various events, shipwrecks, etc. all occurred. In 1939 the United States Coast Guard absorbed the Lighthouse Service, and the USCG would automate the light station in 1972. The USCG also removed the second crane, razed the oil house and razed the boathouse. In 1982 the lens was removed and is now on display in Toledo, Ohio at the National Museum of the Great Lakes.

(cont'd on page 10)



Waugoshance Lighthouse – What lies ahead?

By David Bardsley



Photo by Marge Beaver

Eighteen miles west of the Mackinac bridge on a shallow reef stands a crumbling Lighthouse. Waugoshance Light was built in 1851, superseded and abandoned in 1912 with the construction of White Shoal Light 2 miles to the Northwest, and bombed for target practice by the US Navy during WWII.

More recently, the future for Waugoshance lighthouse looked better. The nonprofit [Waugoshance](#) Lighthouse Preservation Society (WLPS) was established in 2000 and it subsequently acquired the Waugoshance Light Station under terms of the Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act of 2000. This is the same way the Detour Reef Light Preservation Society (DRLPS) acquired DeTour Reef Light.

The challenge for WLPS could not be overstated. Recent record high lake levels and destructive ice flows further compromised the base of the 170-year-old structure. Overwhelmed by the task of preservation of the existing conditions and restoration, the WLPS abandoned its efforts and dissolved in late 2020.

What comes next? The website and social media outlets will be redesigned to tell the story of the lighthouse, including sharing images of her throughout the years. A new loosely organized group to be known as “Fans of

Waugoshance Lighthouse” will serve as a platform to share stories and images of the lighthouse.

Transfer of “surplus” lighthouses to non-profits is regulated under the terms of the Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act of 2000. The transfer includes a covenant which requires significant obligations by the non-profit --- preservation, restoration, public access. Failure to comply with the transfer terms is addressed in a reversion clause in the property deed. Some of the requirements in the DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society’s (DRLPS) deed include the following:

The Light Station must be made available to the public.

It must be maintained for use as an aid to navigation and in compliance with historic preservation covenants.

With 30 days’ notice the Light Station can revert to the USA if needed for national security purposes.

Interestingly, the deed states that reversion is “at the option of the” General Services Administration (GSA).

Assuming the WLPS has a similar reversion clause, there are many unknowns.

I sent an inquiry to the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) with these questions:

Will the US take back [Waugoshance](#)? What is the process?

What if the US options not to take back the light?

With the non-profit dissolved, who is liable for the abandoned light station?

The Waugoshance non-profit wanted to salvage and remove the “bird cage” lantern and other parts for display on shore but were refused. Why?

Is there the possibility of another steward for the light station?

(cont’d on page 8)

(cont'd from page 7)

My inquiry was timely. Bryan Lijewski of SHPO responded:

“We just had a conference call last week regarding Waugoshance. The meeting was with the General Services Administration (GSA), National Park Service (NPS), SHPO, Michigan Attorney General's office, and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). The same questions that you asked were also asked of the parties on the call. This appears to be an unprecedented situation with the abandonment and the bottomlands issue. Yes, the deed has a reversionary clause so that is being looked into. The GSA and Michigan SHPO need to consult with their legal counsels to determine who has ownership. I suspect this will take some time to sort out. ... The question about salvaging materials off the light did come up. Again, there is not an easy or readily apparent answer to the question about salvaging materials off the light. Until a determination is made about whether or not the light will be reverted and who the actual owner is, the structure will remain in its current state.”

Bottom Line: We don't yet know what lies ahead for Waugoshance. It's mostly “To be determined” (TBD).

The same could happen to DRLPS. Some believe that for DRLPS “the heavy lifting is behind them.” Major restoration was completed in 2004, ongoing restoration and maintenance continues as do lighthouse tours and overnight keeper programs. The Society is financially sound. DRLPS has been described as a model for lighthouse restoration and is the recipient of several awards, including designation as a “Preserve America Steward” by Michelle Obama in 2010. We all had a sigh of relief in 2004 when the major restoration was completed and we started the tours and keeper programs. Fund raising, ongoing maintenance, large restoration efforts every three or four years, public programs, membership support continue with a small group of dedicated members. It is nothing as heavy as the original restoration completed in 2004, but it does weigh on the few. Think of it like this – hold a 25-pound weight at arm's length for several minutes – it is difficult. Now hold out your arm with no weight for several hours – it is difficult as well. DRLPS officers and committee chairs have been holding our arms out for as many as 20 years. Please consider stepping into a leadership position at DRLPS. The jobs are not difficult, several can be done remotely, but they do require a commitment of at least a year. Think of it as holding your arm out (with no weight) for a few minutes. We would love to explore with you all the options for saving DeTour Reef Light. Email: DRLPS@DRLPS.com

Renew Your Annual Membership

And support the continuing preservation efforts at the DeTour Reef Light.

To renew your annual membership (Basic - \$30, Patron - \$50, or Keeper - \$100) by mail, please send your check or credit card information to DRLPS, PO Box 307, Drummond Island, MI 49726, or you can call our Membership Chairperson, Paula Bardsley, at 906-493-6609. Please include any changes in your address(es), phone number(s) or email address(es). Also, please consider upgrading to one of the lifetime memberships at this time (Lifetime - \$500, Grand Keeper - \$1000). In addition to helping with the cost of continuing preservation, your membership will give you discounted Keeper Weekends and Tours.

DRLPS Annual Meeting

Monday June 14 - 6 PM—Drummond Island Township Hall

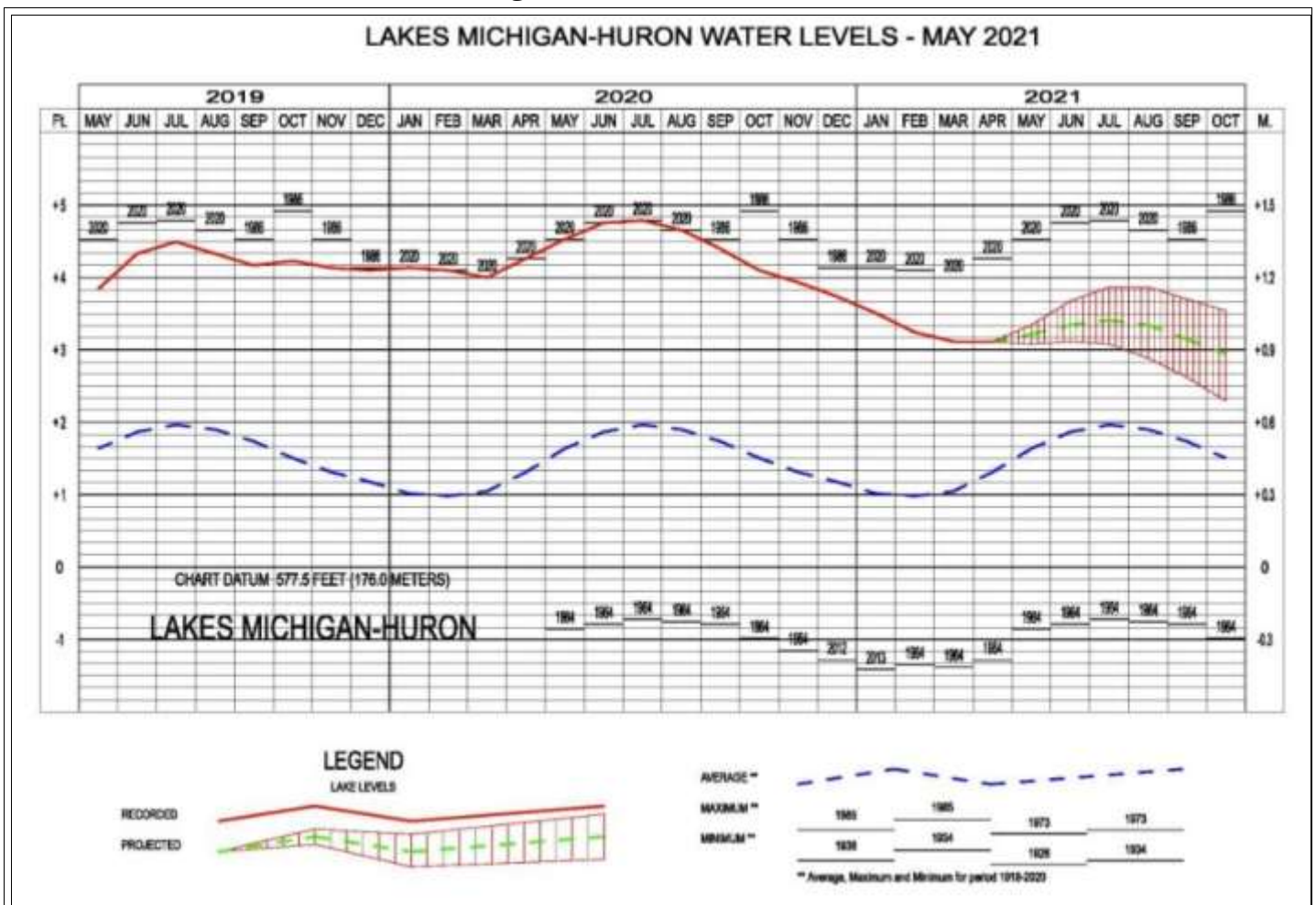
Come for the meeting ~ Stay for the refreshments.

GREAT LAKES WATER LEVELS CONTINUE TO DROP FROM RECORD LEVELS

BY MICHAEL HARDY — THUMBWIND.COM
([HTTPS://THUMBWIND.COM/GREAT-LAKES-WATER-LEVELS](https://thumbwind.com/great-lakes-water-levels))

The projected May 7th water levels indicate that all the lakes increased by 1 to 5 inches last month. Also, the forecasted May 7th levels for all lakes are below the water levels from this time last year. Lake Superior is 4 inches below last year, Lakes Michigan-Huron, St. Clair, and Erie are 15 inches below last year, and Lake Ontario is 26 inches below last year. **All the lakes remain above their long-term monthly average levels, except for Lake Ontario.** Projected water levels for June 7th show all the lakes in their seasonal rise and rising by 1 to 3 inches

Lakes Michigan-Huron Water Levels



On May 7th, the water level is forecasted at 580.58 feet. Lake Michigan-Huron had dropped 15 inches since May 2020, rising one inch over the past month. Levels were down 17 inches below the monthly high record set in 2020. Lake Huron remains at 48 inches above the record monthly low, set in 1964. The lakes are expected to rise by 2 inches in mid-May 2021. **Lake Michigan-Huron is expected to stay above its long-term monthly mean water level for the rest of 2021.** For reporting purposes, Lakes Michigan-Huron is the same body of water.

(cont'd from page 6)

In 2020 the Spectacle Reef Preservation Society formed to conduct structural assessments and feasibility of restoring the light. Ownership was transferred to the Society in December of 2020 and restoration begins in 2021 with the goal to restore to a 1935-1938 appearance.

About the Spectacle Reef Preservation Society (SRPS)

The Spectacle Reef Preservation Society formed in 2020 and conducted a series of assessments on the light station prior to accepting ownership later in the year. SRPS plans to restore the light to a 1935-1938 appearance and use the light for public education on offshore lights. Here, the community can learn about life at an isolated station, conduct research on marine life, weather and ecology with universities, host public events and resident keeper programs, and much more.

SRPS is an all volunteer organization with members in seven states and growing! If you want to learn more about the light and organization visit SRPS at www.spectaclereef.org, like and follow SRPS on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. We look forward to working together as neighbor lights, and be sure to wave at each other from the top of the towers



DeTour Reef Light 2 DVD Video Available

The best way to learn about DeTour Reef Light, short of visiting the light in person, is to view the "Gateway to Superior" video set. Conditions prior to restoration, the restoration effort, interviews with those who built the light in 1931 and operated it when it was manned by the Coast Guard, and the recent experiences of volunteer keepers of DeTour Reef Light are documented. It is a must see. The set is available from DRLPS for \$17.00 including tax and shipping. Mail your order to DRLPS Video, P.O. Box 307, Drummond Island, MI 49726 or Email DRLPS@DRLPS.com. Charge cards are accepted.



YOU ARE INVITED TO ENJOY

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21ST ANNUAL LIGHTHOUSE BENEFIT DINNER

*SPONSORED BY THE
DETOUR REEF LIGHT PRESERVATION SOCIETY*

***SATURDAY, JULY 10, 2021
5:30 PM***

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DRUMMOND ISLAND TOWNSHIP GOLF COURSE*

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SPECIALTY DRINKS
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\$75 per person

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Or contact Theila Bailey Gagliardi at Drummond Island Realty

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\$30 Basic, \$50 Patron, \$100 Keeper, \$500 Lifetime, \$1000 Grand Keeper.

All memberships include the family.

www.DRLPS.com * Membership@drpls.com * 906-493-6609
or write DRLPS, PO Box 307, Drummond Island MI 49726**DeTour Reef Lighthouse Preservation Society**

DRLPS is a volunteer nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization established in 1998 to restore and preserve the DeTour Reef Light. Donations are welcomed and are tax-deductible (EIN 38-3387252, MICS 27001).

The Light was automated in 1974. In 1997, the lighthouse was declared surplus property by the U. S. Coast Guard due to sophisticated navigational systems aboard ships, and the Coast Guard's not having the funding to care for the structure in accordance with historic preservation guidelines. In January 1998, local citizens joined together to save the Light.

The lighthouse was built in 1931, and proudly stands guard a mile offshore in northern Lake Huron at the far eastern end of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The structure rises 83 feet above the water and marks a dangerous reef to help guide ship traffic from and to Lake Huron and Lake Superior via the strategic St. Mary's River.

The DRLPS received the 2005 Governor's Award for excellence in historic preservation, and the Superior Award in 2006 from the Historical Society of Michigan. The DeTour Reef Light is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2010 the DRLPS was designated a Preserve America Steward by First Lady Michelle Obama.

PURPOSE: the purpose of DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society is to establish, support and promote efforts in the preservation and restoration of the DeTour Reef Light; to achieve the safe keeping of the building, artifacts and records; to educate and inform the public on lighthouse history; to enhance public awareness of the value this lighthouse and its keepers brought to our nation's development; to make the DeTour Reef Light a premier tourist attraction in Michigan's Upper Peninsula as the best example of a faithfully restored offshore lighthouse in the Nation; to provide the public safe access to the lighthouse; to raise awareness about the importance of volunteers in maintaining and preserving the DeTour Reef Light and the DRLPS for generations to come.

PASSAGES is the official publication of the DRLPS. Statements and opinions appearing herein are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of DRLPS, its officers or members. The editor reserves the right to edit all material for publication and to publish material which is felt to be in the best interest of the DRLPS. Permission is granted to reprint, providing credit will be given to the author, DRLPS, and provided that copyright is not involved, return copy of the article when published would be appreciated. To submit comments and/or articles to the Editor, email newsletter@drpls.com or send by mail to: DRLPS, PO Box 307, Drummond Island, MI 49726

Your input for the future issues of *Passages* would be appreciated. Thank you!