

DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society



1931

# PASSAGES

\* PO Box 307 \* Drummond Island MI 49726 \* [drlps@drlps.com](mailto:drlps@drlps.com) \* [www.DRLPS.com](http://www.DRLPS.com) \* 906-493-6609 \*



Today!

Issue 42

*We'll Keep the Light on for You!*

Fall 2020



## Independence Day at DeTour Reef Light

The lights are on in the dining room. The keepers, Mark and Angela Mooney and Ruth De Saint Leger, got an extra special fireworks show.

*To order a print, go to [www.YooperGifts.com](http://www.YooperGifts.com) and click on Lighthouses*

## CHARLES E. FELTNER ~ Director Emeritus DRLPS

By Jeri Feltner and Ann Method Green



Dr. Charles (Chuck) Edward Feltner, Jr., 83, of Plymouth MI, passed away peacefully of complications from COPD on February 21, 2020, on Isle of Palms SC, at his beloved winter rental home of 14 years, overlooking the ocean, with his wife, Jeri by his side.

Chuck helped to establish the DRLPS in 1998 and served on the Board of Directors as President (2001-2004), Treasurer (2005-2013) and Chief Historian (2000-2020). When he retired from the Board of Directors he received the title of Director-Emeritus in 2019.

He was responsible for managing and executing state and federal grant funds of over \$1.2 million for the major 2003-2004 restoration.

The restoration continues to be referenced as a successful case study by the lighthouse community.

As Chief Historian from 2000 to 2020 he spent hundreds of hours of work researching the lighthouse, obtaining original DeTour Reef Light engineering drawings, historic photographs, and **correspondence**. **He also obtained copies of all of the Keeper's Logs and researched, located, and interviewed former keepers for oral histories.**

Beyond the initial restoration, he helped to develop the original website for the DRLPS and helped develop the original 2005 plan to open the DeTour Reef Light for public access to visit **the lighthouse**. **He also made several presentations around the state on DRLPS's progress with restoration.** In addition, he developed and executed the DRLPS accounting system and did a detailed inventory spreadsheet of 156 original 1930 engineering drawings of the DRL. **These drawings contributed greatly to the Society's grant applications and educational projects.**

**His research resulted in the publication in 2005 of a set of DVDs entitled "DeTour Reef Light & DeTour Point Light: A Collection of Historical Material."**

In addition to his contributions to the establishment of the DRLPS and the restoration of the DeTour Reef Light, Chuck was an assiduous researcher of shipwreck and lighthouse history. He published many manuscripts related to Great Lakes maritime history. His landmark books, **"Great Lakes Maritime History: Bibliography and Sources of Information (1982), and "Shipwrecks of the Straits of Mackinac" (1991), coauthored with his wife Jeri, are still used today.**

Chuck was very proud of helping establish the "Straits of Mackinac Shipwreck Museum" in

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Mackinaw City, MI, in 2014. Through diligent research, Chuck and his team discovered five historic shipwrecks in the Straits of Mackinac and dove and documented the shipwrecks there in the late 70s and early 80s. He was admired and respected as a mentor to many fledgling Great Lakes maritime history researchers. He taught a course in the early 80s called "How to Research Great Lakes Shipwrecks" that was widely attended by many who went on to discover shipwrecks.

Chuck was a member and Director Emeritus of the DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society, Michigan Lighthouse Alliance, Wisconsin Marine Historical Society, and Association for Great Lakes Maritime History.

A Celebration of Chuck's Life will be held on Sunday, June 6, 2021, at 11:00 AM at The Inn at St. John's, 44045 Five Mile Rd., Plymouth MI 48170.

Donations in Chuck's memory may be made to the American Lung Association, 55 W. Wacker Dr., Suite 1150, Chicago IL 60601, DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society, PO Box 307, Drummond Island MI 49726, or the Humane Society of Huron Valley, 3100 Cherry Hill Rd., Ann Arbor MI 48105.

Chucks ashes will be spread on the beaches of Isle of Palms SC, the Straits of Mackinac and Drummond Island in MI, and he will be buried at St. Hedwig Cemetery in Dearborn Heights MI.

## Mark Your Calendars 2021

### Light Keeper Weekends (Maximum 6 people per weekend)

Friday thru Sunday

Weekends - Father's Day thru Labor Day Weekends

For more information contact:

Dave Bardsley 906-493-6609

Email: [keepers@drlps.com](mailto:keepers@drlps.com)

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

### Light Keeper and Jewelry Workshop

Sunday thru Tuesday—TBD

For more information contact:

Hallie Wilson 989-430-5266

Email: [HWilson@drlps.com](mailto:HWilson@drlps.com)

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

### Lighthouse Tours

(Maximum 6 people per tour)

Saturdays - Father's Day thru Labor Day Weekends

For more information contact:

Ann Method Green 906-430-8169

Email: [tours@drlps.com](mailto:tours@drlps.com)

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

### Evening Under the Stars

Drummond Island Township Golf Course

TBD

For more information contact:

Darlene Skinner 906-493-6812

Email: [StarsEvent@drlps.com](mailto:StarsEvent@drlps.com)

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

### Nordic Bocce

Drummond Island Township Golf Course

Sunday, August 8, 2 PM

For more information contact:

Joe Henne 906 630-5093

Email: [DRLPS@drlps.com](mailto:DRLPS@drlps.com)

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

### Dark Sky Initiative

TBD

For more information contact:

Joe Henne 906 630-5093

Email: [DRLPS@drlps.com](mailto:DRLPS@drlps.com)

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



## Keepers of DeTour Reef Light During COVID-19

by David Bardsley

COVID-19 presented challenges for the DeTour Reef Light summer programs. In order to minimize the exposure of our keepers to the virus, we cancelled the Saturday tours with one exception. This was a disappointment to the **keepers in some respects, but they did appreciate the consideration. Is there a better place to “socially distance”** than on an offshore lighthouse?! Apart from the weekend of June 26, the keepers were all members of the same family or close friends. We have no knowledge of anyone contracting COVID since being on the Light nor have the DRLPS volunteers and charter boat captain Ivan Gable. Fourteen reservations were cancelled by individuals concerned about the virus. Three weekends were without keepers. A review of the DeTour Reef Log Book reveals some **of the keepers’ experience.**



*Photo by Dean Wegener*  
from the American Century.

We have people with a wonderful history of experiences before being keepers of DeTour Reef **Light. Alan Dolwick’s grandparents were lighthouse keepers at South Fox Island, Grand Traverse Light, and Alpena.** As a child, Alan would help them with painting and various light station projects. His dad would be boarded in town during the winter months so he could attend school. Alan attended Northern Michigan Maritime Academy and spent 39 years on the lakes, retiring as Chief Engineer of the 1000-foot American Century. When the heating elements failed on the lighthouse hot water heater, I had no reservations about giving him two new heating elements and the proper wrenches. All was well. He says he enjoyed watching the boats from DeTour Reef Light, noting that the view was much better than

Barbara Brann is a self-described boat nerd and Lighthouse fan. She notes that when she learned about staying on this lighthouse, she had to make it happen. The DeTour Light Logbook has her meticulous record of over 20 lakera, their names, up bound or down bound, and their destinations. She says her group was very grateful that the opportunity to stay at the lighthouse wasn’t cancelled by COVID.

The weekend of June 26 was a mixed group. Brian Ames notes in the log “This was a wonderful experience, and I am glad COVID didn’t completely cancel it. Gretchen Baier writes “what an excellent visit! Really a lot of real social isolation after our months of ‘social isolation with zoom!’ ..... A real highlight was all of the fantastic meals David cooked!” Second time keeper, David Shastry, writes “...and it is just as peaceful, placid and relaxing as I remembered. ...Like last time we met two other great people and we all had a blast together. ...It saddens me to leave, I know I will be back again as there is just something about this place that’s unmatched. ...Can’t wait to be back at DeTour soon and look forward to even more great cooking and company.”

Ruth DeSaint Leger writes: “We especially enjoyed watching the freighters and recreational boaters pass by as we relaxed on the deck to watch the sunset. The moon was bright and cast a beautiful reflection upon the dark Huron waters.” Mark Mooney says: “We were all highly honored to experience three days sleeping on a remote reef lighthouse and we’re all sad that we’re leaving. We made great memories. Thank you DRLPS!!!” The Moseler family (parents and 18 year old daughter and 17 year old son) records: “We’re going to miss the lighthouse, it was a true bonding experience.”

Mike and June Davis celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the Light with the company of their children and grandchildren (ages 9, 14 and 19). June notes: “Our son and his family came with us on Friday, then our daughter and her family on Saturday and changed places. Many thanks to them for this wonderful experience. ...The weather was beautiful, the spiders large and the [fog] horn loud.”

The Brzuchalski family, Amy, Andy and children Ava, Oliver and Syllas. Syllas notes the [Lake Huron] water was cold; Oliver says “Thank you for having ‘Escanaba in the Moonlight’ (the Light has DVD player and a large stock of keeper donated DVDs), that they saw many freighters and the Mac [bridge lights at night]. We hope to return soon.”

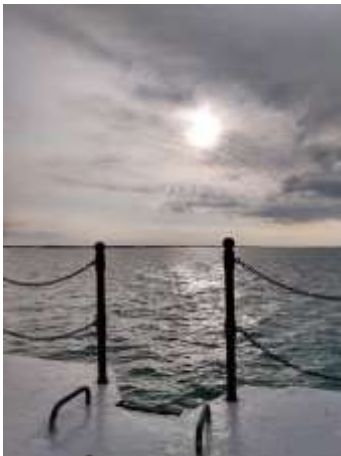
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Repeat keeper Dean Wegener and Richard call it “A simple weekend for a few simple guys. ...Great afternoon and evening, Great stars with the Milky Way ...It was an outstanding stay – will return.” A group from Chicago (Jackie Frole, Cyrus Leddy, Colin Stanley and Karl Bradley) record their experience: “The power washer was fun to use. ...The rest of [Friday] afternoon was spent hanging in the sunshine, drinking beer, and marveling at the view. ...[Saturday] afternoon a small storm came rolling in. It was really cool to see the winds and waves wash up over the deck and batter the windows. ...We had an incredible time at the lighthouse—it was such a unique experience – we loved every second.”

DRLPS would be remiss to only report on the relaxing nature of a weekend on DeTour Reef Light. There are housekeeping chores including scrubbing and power washing the deck. Virginia Stevens notes: “The lighthouse is amazing minus the spiders and seagull droppings.” She and husband Tim had uninvited guests – “We heard voices on the East side and found a boat with a guy jumping off the wall into the lake. ...Then at dusk we heard a woman shouting ...again another jumper. She had removed some of her clothes and prepared to jump. We said ‘hello’ thru the window, she apologized and left immediately.”

To become a Keeper at DeTour Reef Light Station go to [DRLPS.com](http://DRLPS.com) and click on “Stay or Visit”.



Virginia and Tim Stevens—memories of their weekend on the DeTour Reef Light July 2020

## 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 a 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 \$8 plus \$0.64 tax. Shipping is available (priority mail) for \$7.20. Mail your order to DRLPS Video, P.O. Box 307, Drummond Island, MI 49726 or Email [DRLPS@DRLPS.com](mailto:DRLPS@DRLPS.com). Charge cards are accepted.



## Willoughby Island's Lucky Charms Winners of the 4th Annual Bocce Tournament

After a hard fought final round the Lucky Charms brought home the DRLPS Bocce trophies. Team Captain, Jeff Cooksey advises us that they are already looking forward to defending their title Sunday August 8, 2021. Opening match at 3PM sharp! Thank you for your support Willoughby Island.



Left to Right: Jeff Cooksey, Amy Bernhardt, Karen Schwalm, and niece Mattie Woods

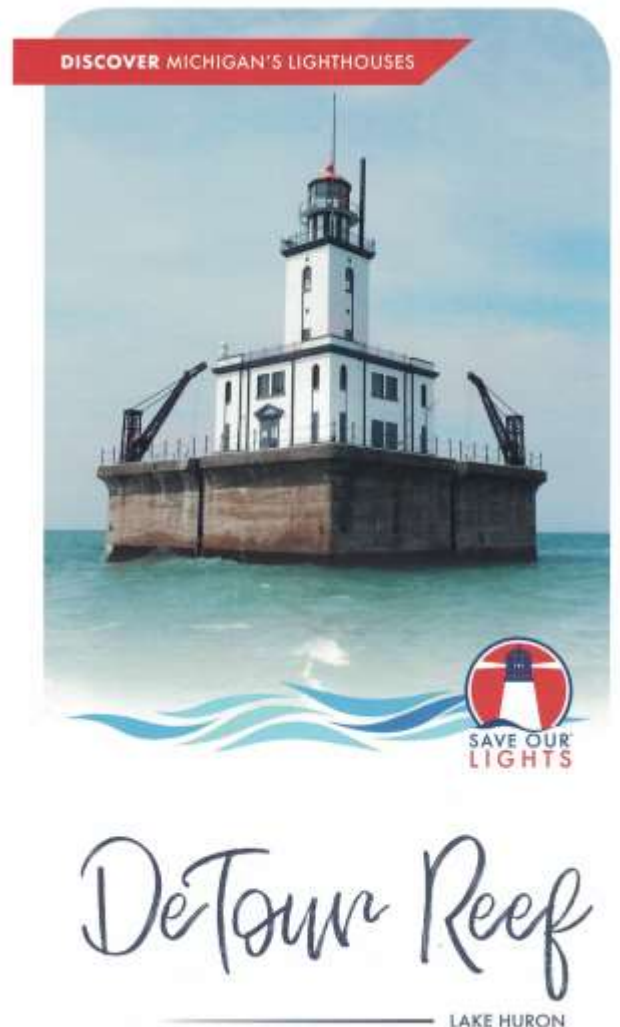
## Something Special for 2021 DRLPS Members

By Paula Bardsley

A special gift awaits all DRLPS members for the 2021 membership year. **Most of you are aware that DRLPS's** initial restoration of the DeTour Reef Light and some subsequent renovations were accomplished with the help of grants. Much of this grant money was awarded by the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) through its Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program. Grant funds are made available from the revenue generated by the sales of the Save our Lights fundraising license plates. Twenty-five dollars from the sale and \$10 of the renewal of each of these red, white and blue license plates with a picture of a lighthouse on them goes into this fund. All work done on a lighthouse with the use of this grant money is carefully monitored and approved by SHPO.

This year DeTour Reef Light is one of the four lights featured in SHPO's promotional materials, which include 6"x9" postcards of each of the lights and a picture of DeTour Reef Light on the map of Michigan Lighthouses. Since they did not distribute them to the Michigan Welcome Centers this year, they did not print as many as usual, and they have made some of the DeTour Reef Light post cards available to DRLPS. We have decided to send one to each of our current members in 2021. If you are a Grand Keeper or Lifetime level member, or if you joined or renewed late in the 2020 membership year and your

(Cont'd on pg 7)



## PRESIDENTIAL MUSINGS

### Joe Henne, President, DRLPS



DREAMS, & nightmares.... Has it been three or four years since I accepted the presidency? Time does fly !!! I remember when I agreed to join the board I thought some 'new ideas' could be helpful in promulgating DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society (DRLPS). An increase in membership could be the proverbial 'shot in the arm' that DRLPS needs. The lighthouse out on DeTour Reef 'belongs' to everyone..... There has been a significant shake up the DINNER UNDER THE STARS... changing the 2018 venue, charging less, introducing local spirits, changing the 2019 venue again, different entertainment..... 2020 pandemic - - - not so easy. But in July, next summer, we will shake it up again, and ask more people to join us.....

**HEY!!! Nordic BOCCE ! Now there's a good one... Picnic environment, Sunday afternoon, BYOB, bring a dish to share, cash prizes, mixed gender teams, team mates, bratwurst, sunshine, TROPHIES..... an influx of new young adults meeting oldsters and lowering the mean age of the members of DRLPS? The outdoor venue allowed the participants to play through in spite of the pandemic. Pandemic or not it was still FUN.. And we will do it again next year (second Sunday in August 2021).**

**Here's another idea: Let's get together and watch the early summer sky. Maybe introduce some outsider who can teach us a thing or three about watching the sky and using telescopes, etc... somebody who hasn't studied Drummond skies and thinks that their southern skies are better than ours.... that'll turn-out some new folk.**

Where are some of those new members with new ideas? With NEW energy (along with vim and vigor). You are needed to fill the ranks, fill the committees, and move up the DRLPS ladder, because without new ideas, new energy, new people we cannot grow and prosper. - - - Call me with something radical like: maybe everyone in DeTour and Drummond Townships should be members and include all our students beginning at fifth grade. Now that'll be easy. What do you think ? Write or call me!!!

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membership carries over through 2021, you will automatically receive one of these cards. All new and renewing members in 2021 will receive one when they send in their membership dues for the year. So that I send your letter to the correct address, if you have moved recently or have seasonal homes, please send me an email at [membership@drlps.com](mailto:membership@drlps.com) and let me know which address to use. I anticipate starting to send the letters toward the end of October. If you are not a current member and would like to be, you can download a membership application at <http://drlps.com/get-involved/become-a-member/>, fill it out and send it in with your membership payment.

We are very appreciative of the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office for their financial support as well as their consultation on historical accuracy in the work that we've done on the Light. We hope that you will consider spending a little extra the next time you purchase a license plate in order to continue their ability to help fund lighthouse preservation throughout the state. You can learn more about this program at [www.miplace.org/historic-preservation/programs-and-services/save-our-lights/](http://www.miplace.org/historic-preservation/programs-and-services/save-our-lights/).

*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).*

## Guys on the Light

During the weekend of September 26-27, five men did maintenance on DeTour Reef Light Station and secured the Light for winter. Dan Vaught, Jason Lehman, Terry Breiler, John Orr, Brian Nettleton and Dave Bardsley participated in the annual fall shut down, "Guys on Light." (In the spring, the Light is given a thorough cleaning by a group of women affectionately known as "Ladies of the Light"). The men met Captain Ivan Gable of Sturgeon Bay Charters at noon on Saturday for transfer to the Light. Plans were for a pickup at noon on Sunday.

The closing work list included 14 tasks to perform outside the lighthouse and twenty items to complete inside. The large cranes on the SE and NW corners of the light were greased, SE crane motor removed, power washer winterized, downspouts repaired, locks treated with WD-40, etc. Inside tasks included a lot of packing (e.g. memorabilia, books, bedding, first aid kits, cleaning supplies, etc.) and winterizing the fog signal, fresh water, grey water and sanitation systems. Except for winterizing the water systems, work went very fast on Saturday and the guys had time to enjoy some beer and relax for about an hour on the North deck before a lasagna dinner with salad, garlic bread, and dessert.

A big breakfast was planned for Sunday. But plans change. Captain Gable called early and said he had to pick us up as soon as feasible due to the forecast winds. Breakfast was scrubbed and water systems were drained, traps filled with potable antifreeze, and a huge amount of items to take to winter storage hauled out on deck to be taken ashore for winter storage. Six insect "bombs" were set strategically about the interior and discharged as the last person exited the building. DRLPS hopes that these will reduce the spider population that occupied the Light for twenty plus years. This action was in addition to occasional professional extermination. Forty-five minutes after Captain Gable's call the team was loading his boat in rough water, with large swells wrapping around the crib. By nine thirty we were back at Fort Drummond Marine and loading the trucks with the items for winter storage.

A large shout out to Captain Gable and the "Guys on Light" for another job well done.



*Terry Breiler applying grease to the cables on top of the crane*

## New Editor Needed for Passages

After eight years serving as Editor of Passages, Joan Meyer has stepped down. DRLPS appreciates all her efforts to produce our interesting and informative newsletter.

In the interim, Ann Method Green and Paula Bardsley have stepped up to put together this issue.

The DRLPS is looking for a volunteer to take over the Editor position. It can be done from anywhere there is a computer and an access to the internet. Knowledge of a publishing program would be useful. Members contribute the articles and photos. If you would be interested or need more information, please contact Ann Method Green at Newsletter@DRLPS.com or call 906-493-6303.

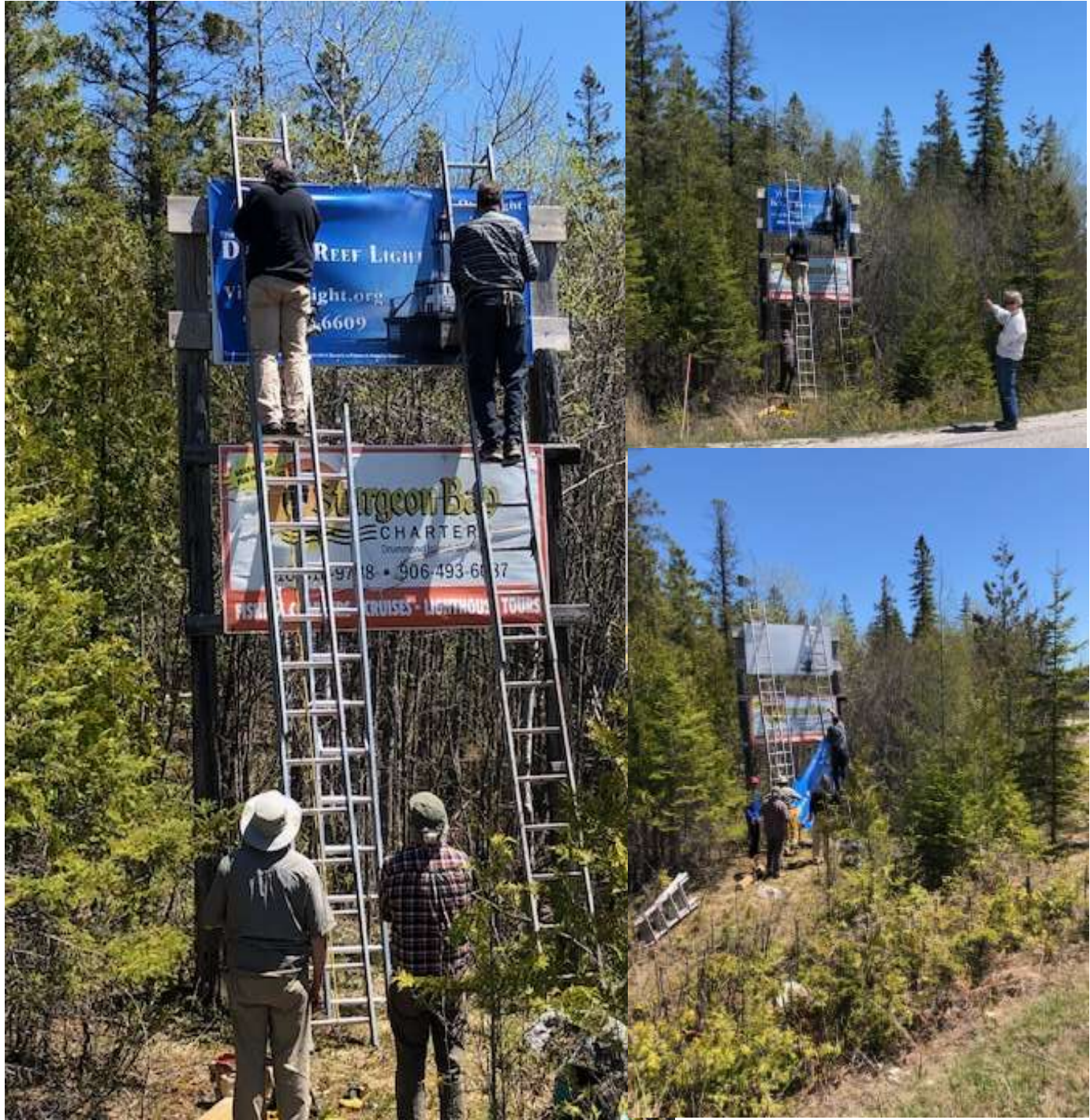
Thank you, Joan for 15 great issues of Passages!





## DeTour Reef Light's New and Improved Sign

Thanks to Dave Bardsley, Mike Horton, John Orr, Joe Henne, Connor Method and Hallie Wilson for getting the new billboard up on M134 and Sturgeon Bay Road on Drummond Island. Thanks also to Jack Miles of Bear Graphics for printing and redesigning the sign. It's beautiful!



### Call for Articles

If you have pictures and/or articles of your adventures on or around the DeTour Reef Light that you would like to share in future Passages, please send them to: [Newsletter@DRLPS.com](mailto:Newsletter@DRLPS.com).

*Having the Biennial Report accepted is a huge weight off our shoulders. Below is the cover letter attached to the detailed report. This report is a requirement of the Department of Interior - National Park Service (NPS). A special nod to Ann Method Green for her high performance in finishing it with class. Dena Sanford of the NPS has used the word exemplary referring to our lighthouse. I think exemplary can be used both as an adverb and an adjective referring both to the noun and our actions collectively. JFH*

*2018-2019 Biennial Report to the National Park Service  
DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society (DRLPS)  
Submitted by Joseph F. Henne,  
September 2020*



**Located in northern Lake Huron at the mouth of the St Mary's River, the DeTour Reef Light stands as a historic monument, but at the same time an active aid to maritime navigation in one of the busiest junctions for commercial and recreational traffic. Major restoration was completed in 2004 with funding from federal, state, private grants, and interested individuals/family donations. DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society (DRLPS) was established in 1998 as a 501c3 volunteer association to restore, preserve, and maintain this magnificent Michigan treasure (it has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places). DeTour Reef Light is one mile offshore at the far end of Michigan's Upper Peninsula (between DeTour Village and Drummond Island) and offers the first offshore 'working' lighthouse on the Great Lakes to offer overnight/weekend keeper programs to its membership/public.**

The maintenance of a significant historic structure in an area above the 45th latitude is not an easy matter. In 2017-18 it was brought to the maintenance committee that there was some degradation in areas around the skylights on the platform (level 2) and the skylights themselves needed attention as several were leaking during inclement weather. The winter season can, and is, sometimes described as **'inclement' in this region. A total of approximately \$100,000 of funding was secured from the State of Michigan and matching funds from our treasury.** This project was initiated in 2018 and completed in 2019 with a downstate private contractor completing this refurbishment of the platform and skylights. A few of the closing mechanisms of some troubled windows were also redesigned by a local architect and were replaced at this time.

Our membership fluctuates around 300 people. Volunteers are an endangered species. DRLPS (in this **president's opinion) is in dangerous waters if we are not able to secure more volunteers and double our membership numbers.** Ideas on increasing volunteerism and membership would be welcomed by the executive board.

**Our treasury numbers appear to be 'healthy' at this time. Having said that past experiences tell us that repair costs are astronomical, finding grants difficult, and fundraising during a pandemic is difficult and almost impossible.**

The minutes from the DRLPS annual or monthly meetings are available and will be shared upon request.

Thank you in advance in working with us.

Cordially

Joe Henne, President  
President, DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society

*Note: DRLPS had to provide the \$100,000 upfront. \$60,000 grant money was gratefully received five months after completion.*

**DETOUR REEF LIGHT PRESERVATION SOCIETY**

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

All memberships include the family.

www.DRLPS.com \* [Membership@drlps.com](mailto:Membership@drlps.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.

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