

DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society



1931

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



Today!

PASSAGES

Issue 46

Keeping the Light On Since 1998!

Fall 2023



Northern Lights Over DeTour Reef Light

2023

Artist: Nancy Bailey

From DRLPS President, Russ Norris



As the leaves and temperatures continue to fall and the arrival of winter rapidly approaches, it is a good time to recount what has turned out to be an extremely successful and consequential year for the DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society and contemplate what lies ahead. Since 1998 DRLPS has been committed to preserving the Light and making it available to the public to visit. While this may seem relatively simple and straight forward, anyone who has had the opportunity to set foot on the light realizes it is a far more complex and difficult challenge than it may sound. This has never been more apparent than over the course of the last two seasons when the challenges of a pandemic and the loss of shore power coincided to create a situation no one anticipated. Due to the hard work and dedication of the DRLPS Board of Directors and with the support of new volunteers and supporters, we have been able to weather the storm and can now see a viable path to the continued sustainability of our organization.

The most important part of the year occurred in early spring when Director Brad McGann and his wife Barbara were joined by Brent Tompkins from White Shoal Lighthouse to set up a new battery-based power grid and revamp our hot water system. Without going into excessive detail, let me just say that it was a momentous undertaking. Just providing transportation to and from **the light and securing Brent's zodiac from the crane proved to be arduous tasks. Incredibly, the systems were up and running just in time for the arrival of the Ladies of the Light for the annual spring cleaning that launches our season and sets an amazing standard for the appearance and condition of the light when our first visitors arrive.**

With the assistance of director Mary Chamberlain and former keeper Marc VanderMeulen, **groups of keepers began staying on the light Father's Day weekend in June and continued to do so through Labor Day weekend in September.** Although there were many challenges along the way, every group raved without exception about the quality of their experience and how much they enjoyed staying on the light. While transportation to the light was initially provided by a variety of charter captains, Greg Lipple of Island Charters has become our primary captain and we look forward to continuing to work with him next year in what is clearly one of the most important aspects of our operation.

I am very indebted to all of the hard work of our directors and supporters in this, our 25th year of operation. Many of them worked through trying and difficult personal circumstances to make sure this year was a success. Because of their hard work our discussions have turned from how to remain viable to how we can enhance and expand our programs. There is always room for more involvement for those who are so inclined so please reach out if the opportunity presents itself and you are available. It can be a remarkable experience.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season.



Mark your calendar! A book on the DeTour Reef Light and the DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society (1998-2023 - Celebrating 25 years) has an estimated publication date of May 2024. Price will be \$19.95

DETOUR REEF LIGHT STATION: History, Restoration, Preservation, and Public Access of an Offshore Michigan Lighthouse, by Jeri Baron Feltner and the DRLPS Team

Tis the Season—DeTour Reef Light Gift Ideas



Blue shirts \$20 sizes S-XXL

Sweatshirts S-XL \$40

Sweatshirts XXI \$45

Tumblers

20oz \$20

30oz \$25

White t-shirts size S-XXL \$25

To place your order, contact:

Mary Chamberlin

231-597-6844

Or MChamberlin01@gmail.com

Shipping \$7.50

Mark Your Calendars

Light Keeper Weekends

(Maximum 6 people per weekend)

Friday afternoon thru Sunday afternoon with a Full or partial week option

Father's Day thru Labor Day Weekend

For more information contact:

Mary Chamberlin 231-597-6844

Email: KeepersandTours@drlps.com

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

Evening Under the Stars

Big Dock Hangar, Drummond Island Yacht Haven

Saturday, July 13 at 5:30 PM

For more information contact:

Mary Chamberlin 231-597-6844

Email: StarsEvent@drlps.com

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

Nordic Bocce

Drummond Island Township Golf Course

Sunday, August 4 at 3 PM

For more information contact:

Joe Henne 906 630-5093

Email: DRLPS@drlps.com

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

Annual Meeting

Drummond Island Township Hall

TBD

For more information contact:

Russ Norris 906-440-4574

Email: DRLPS@drlps.com

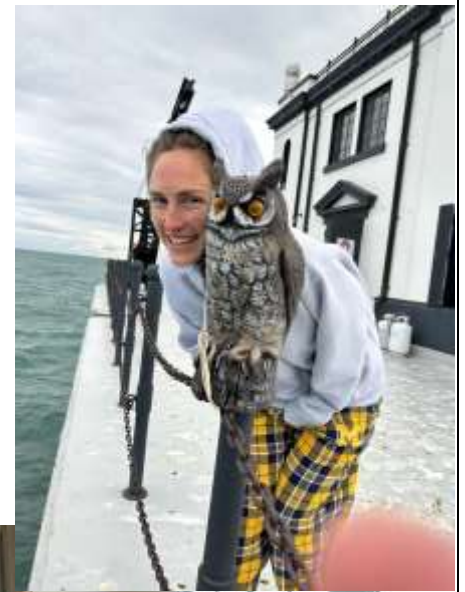


Keeper Adventure

By Kristine Ismail



After years of researching “**Lighthouse Keeper**” programs throughout Michigan, I thought my dream was going to pass me by due to the length of time commitment. After talking it up, and perhaps my pure enthusiasm spilling over onto my co-workers, I recruited a friend, -thank you Cathy, who said she’d



give it a go with me. We headed to De Tour Village on Thursday, checked out the Historical Museum to catch a **glimpse of the 1930’s Fresnel Lens**, read up on some history and purchase some cool t-shirts. After delicious burgers and beers at the De Tour Village Inn, we settled in for a great nights sleep, dreaming about what awaited us a mile off shore.

We were anxiously waiting at the State Harbor before noon on Friday, and ready to start the next part of our adventure. We soon met Brad and Barbara, our weekend lighthouse companions (and past lighthouse keepers (Yay!)) and headed out to De Tour Reef Light. What a thrill it was when it came into our



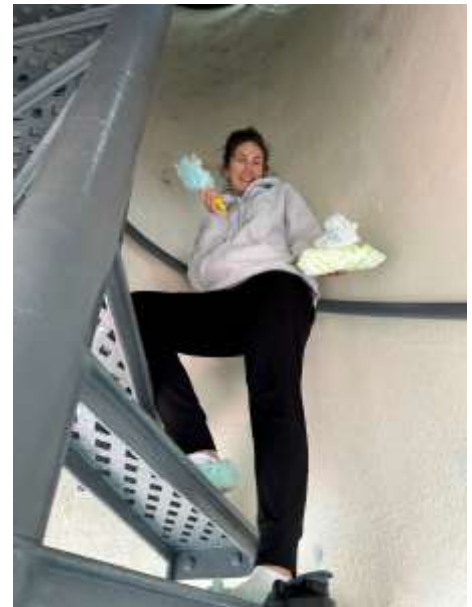
sight as we sped across the lake towards this beautiful piece of history! We quickly scaled the **crib’s 20’ vertical ladder**, used ropes to bring up all of our belongings, and waved goodbye to our captain. We got to work, setting up the generator, putting food away in the great little kitchen, setting up our bunk beds, vacuuming the spiders out of the windows, exploring all of the places we could get to (we got to see the light turn on!) and enjoying our first dinner in the dining room with the most beautiful views of Lake Huron! We set up the marine traffic app on our phones and quickly became hooked on checking for traffic headed our way. Although we never got a colorful sunset due to constant cloud coverage, we did enjoy a beer on the deck, trading stories and having some laughs.



Saturday morning’s coffee on the deck (thank you for sharing, Barbara!) provided us with spectacular views all around, and we loved the US Light House Service mugs from the kitchen. We decided that the owls do not intimidate the seagulls, although they are cute additions to the crib. We spent some time with housekeeping, including tackling the bird dirt with a hose and a couple of brushes. It was quite windy on deck, but we were able to do a fairly *(contd next page)*

thorough job without getting completely soaked by the water. Not to worry though, as we had nice hot showers waiting for us when we were done with the deck! We noticed a little bat friend clinging to our bedroom window to get a reprieve from the wind at some point in the morning hours, and he stayed hooked onto our screen until past our bed time - extra magnets in the corner he occupied gave us piece of mind, for fear he would end up in my bed while I slept! Again, **no sunset to speak of so we crossed our fingers for a Sunday sunrise to top all sunsets...** We did get a bit of color on our last morning, enjoyed writing in the log in the office, taking lots of beautiful photos, watching ships go by, and even taking a jump (or two) into the lake before the opportunity passed us by. Brad got his drone out and got some great footage of the excitement, and the lighthouse from a view we could not have seen otherwise - **thanks Brad! Cathy and I didn't** have to close up shop when we left on Sunday afternoon since Brad & Barbara were staying on for the coming week - we got off easy as we climbed down the ladder, they lowered our bags into the boat for us, and we waved goodbye to our new friends until they were out of sight.

Overall, we thoroughly enjoyed our unique and brief time at De Tour Light, and knowing that **we are now part of the history and preservation of this little gem at the mouth of St. Mary's River!** We could not have asked for better weekend companions than Brad and Barbara who taught us the ropes, shared stories and lots of laughs, and even shared some Moose Drool Ale from Montana - Cheers to all of the people who have stepped up to preserve this lighthouse, and "Keep the Light On!" We hope to come back again soon...



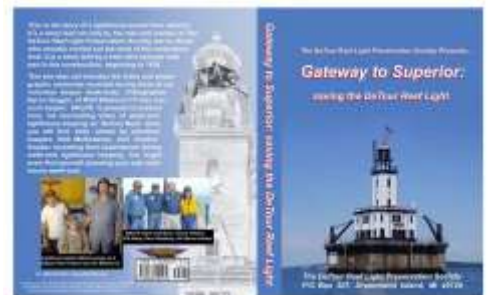
DeTour Reef Light 2 DVD Video Available

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 \$11. Mail your order to:

DRLPS Video

P.O. Box 307, Drummond Island, MI 49726

or Email DRLPS@DRLPS.com. Charge cards are accepted.



2023 New Old Power System, Part 2

By Brad McGann



Brad sees the light!

When we last left our heroes, an RV style power system on a somewhat larger scale had been designed and the components purchased for installation at the DeTour Reef Light for Summer 2023. This was to replace commercial power that had been lost during the winter of 2022 when the submarine power cable failed, and the goal was to allow life to resume at the light so keepers could once again stay there.

The keeper season was scheduled to begin Father's Day weekend in mid-June, so two weeks ahead of this a small team consisting of DRLPS director Brad McGann (me), my wife Barbara Moyce, and volunteer Brent Tompkins of White Shoal Lighthouse in Lake Michigan, traveled out to a dark and cold DeTour Reef Light with multiple boatloads of equipment and supplies. The larger and heavier items had been taken out already by a group of DRLPS folks, so the new gas water heater, power inverter, generator, and 600 pounds of lead-acid batteries were already on site.

We were not prepared for early June on Lake Huron. It was cold, it rained, and of course we had no heat, no lights, and no water. To flush the toilet, we hauled water up out of the lake in 5-gallon buckets and carried it upstairs to the bathroom. Really makes you think twice before pushing down that handle! We were so chilly that DRLPS director Dave Bardsley mounted a one-man supply mission, traveling out in his boat in the cold rain to deliver a large sea bag containing fleece parkas, wool blankets, extra potable water, and a bottle of wine—what a lifesaver!

The first order of business was to connect up the large batteries that would be the heart of the system. The batteries were cabled to the inverter mounted on a new wall mounted board that would also house various fuses, monitors, and control boxes. Next, we wired the inverter to the existing power breaker panels, making a few necessary changes (like disabling the antique foghorn system). *(cont'd next page)*



Able Tech Barbara labors on electrical connectors.



Brent working on a leaking well pump.



First keeper of the season, Kevin Christensen repairing the screen door.

Then, moment of truth as Brad throws a few switches, the ceiling lights come on, the water pump starts running, and the lighthouse that has been dark for over a year came back to life! Meanwhile, Brent was hard at work installing and plumbing the new propane water heater. The water heater uses a pair of RV-style propane tanks installed on the outside deck, and very soon we not only had running water, but also HOT water!

Finally, it's on to the generator, which was to live also on the outside deck when keepers were in residence. Brent and I ran cabling all the way down into the well room to carry the power and control signals, while co-keeper and able technician Barbara works on assembling the special connectors needed for the control cable. Two days later we were able to remotely start the generator to charge the somewhat exhausted batteries. Celebration time!

But the story doesn't end there! The water pump would not stop running, and finally we decided there was a problem. So off goes the power again and Brent, who is a licensed plumber in his day job, pulls the pump up out of the well and discovers a fitting which has corroded and broken open. So, even though we had lights, it was back to hauling up lake water to flush toilets until a replacement fitting could be brought out from Drummond Island.

Nevertheless, by the time the Ladies of The Light showed up three days before opening weekend we had everything repaired and operational, and we spent a day sitting back while these amazing folks went through the lighthouse like small whirlwinds cleaning everything in sight. Friday June 16th our first keepers in almost two years came out and the Ladies went ashore. Barbara and I stayed another few days to make sure things were running well. But for the next three months it was business as usual at DeTour Reef Light as a steady stream of keepers came out every week to stay at this incredible, and repowered, treasure.



Existing circuit breaker panels



Remedy for a cold rainy day

Hot showers ahead!



Batteries, inverter, generator control box

Renew Your Annual Membership

And support the continuing preservation effort of 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 includes discounted Keeper Weekends and Tours.



Ladies
of the
Light
2023

Thanks! We wouldn't be ready for the keepers without you.

Candis Collick, Marlene Collick,
Tamea Helland and Missy Phillips



The *Huron Jewel* sailing by the DeTour Reef Light.

The Ladies were there getting ready for Summer 2023 when she passed by on her way to her home port on Drummond Island. A special treat for the hard working ladies!



Wanted:

The DRLPS is looking to fill two positions: Passages Editor and Data Base Administrator/Membership. All of our meetings are held via Zoom so no matter where you live you can support the DRLPS. Besides the members that live in the DeTour/Drummond area, we currently have members from Lower Michigan and one from Montana. If you love the DeTour Reef Light and want to help with these **opportunities or have some other specialty you'd like to share with the Society**, please join us.

We've been "Keeping the Light On Since 1998". Joining us could be one of the best times of your life.

Contact us at DRLPS@DRLPS.com.

23rd Evening Under the Stars Celebrates 25 Years of the DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society

On July 8, the DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society held our annual Evening Under the Stars fundraising event. We welcomed 102 people at the Yacht Haven Big Dock Hangar that came to support our cause. We are thrilled to announce that with our attendance, additional donations and auction, we were able to raise over \$5000 for the DeTour Reef Light.

It has been a year to celebrate as we have Keepers back on the Light with our new power system and it is also our 25th anniversary of the DRLPS. The evening was full of good food and drinks, conversation, and great auction items.

This year DRLPS was excited to partner with Les Cheneaux Distillers to provide the bar for this event. The beer, wine and cocktails were wonderful and enjoyed by all.

We are always blessed to receive donations of beautiful and unique auction items and this year certainly carried on the tradition. We would like to thank the following people/businesses for sharing their art, talents, and/or gifts to make the auction a huge success:

- Doug Almoney
- Austin's Cigar Lounge
- Lois Bryant
- Lynne Coulter, Art On The Boulevard
- Carmeuse
- Jeanne Dial
- Marge Ellenberger, Michigan Lighthouse Guide
- Charles and Jeri Feltner
- C. Forslund Family
- Dixon and Betty Gerber
- Ann Method Green
- Christy Coulter Henne
- Joe Henne
- Merry Hoffmeyer
- Hugh and Julie Covert, The Huron Jewel
- Islander Shoppe, Emily Ogden
- Sherry Kovach
- Carol Martin
- Pat Seanor
- Seward's Wood-n-Crafts
- Bob and Tess Wellstead



Thank you for all the wonderful support for this event. The planning for the 2024 Evening Under the Stars has already begun. Please mark your calendars for July 13, 2024.





Thank you to everyone that came out to support the DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society and the continuing efforts' to maintain and share the Light with the public.



Annual Nordic Bocce Tournament

By Joe Henne

The DRLPS Nordic Bocce event was held as always at the Drummond Island Township Golf Course on the first Sunday in August. The teams participating were: Sisters of the Hooch, Hogans Heroes, Un-identifiables, Late Comers, Steve Tonys, Skeptiks, Crusaders, and the Lucky Charms and fun was had by all.

It was an adult gathering and those who attended enjoyed the day, refreshments, conversed with friends, neighbors old and new! New skills were tested, stories told, and community and communication were enjoyed. At the end of the day a dish to pass was shared along with the bratwursts that were supplied by DRLPS. The Fifth Annual Nordic Bocci Champions were crowned (Steve Tonys) and the next annual event scheduled for Sunday August 4th, 2024..... **Put it on your calendar.**

Right to left: Steve, Michael, Betsy, and Tony and they ARE coming back to defend their title the 1st Sunday of August 2024.

For Sale Classic Yacht



A fully restored twenty-seven-foot Sea Ray Sundancer 268 cabin cruiser has been donated to DRLPS. The donors purchased the boat new in 1986 and have meticulously maintained it and have had memorable family vacations cruising the North Channel of Lake Huron.

The boat was recently fully restored: All upholstery, carpeting, curtains, mosquito screens, etc. have been replaced. All the teak, was removed and refinished. All thru hull fittings have been replaced. It is equipped with modern marine electronics: GPS, marine radio, marine automatic tracking system (AIS) transponder, a blue-tooth radio/disc player with remote, etc. It even has a powered anchor windless. A hot water system serves the galley and head. The generous cabin can sleep six. The galley includes a sink, a two burner alcohol cooktop, ice box and a fridge. Also included is a EZ Loader 8MT 7400 tandem axle trailer.

The boat and equipment was recently appraised at \$26,000. It has been and is now in inside storage at the Drummond Island Yacht Haven where it can be inspected. This vessel really needs to be seen to be appreciated. DRLPS would like to sell the boat as soon as possible to support the maintenance of DeTour Reef Light and the public lighthouse keeper program and tours. All offers will be considered.

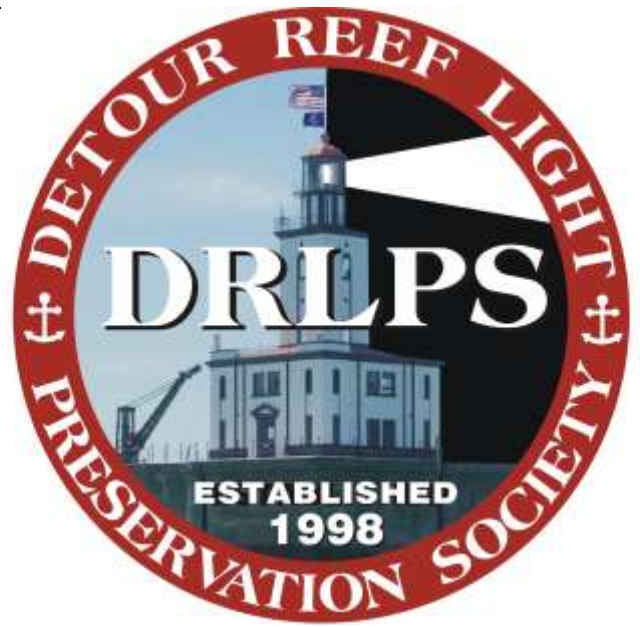
DETOUR REEF LIGHT PRESERVATION SOCIETY

PO Box 307

Drummond Island MI 49726

www.DRLPS.com

Email: DRLPS@drlps.com

President: Russ Norris**Vice President:** Joe Henne**Treasurer:** David Bardsley**Secretary:** Hallie Wilson**Directors:** Mary Chamberlin, Ann Method Green, Brad McGann,
Brian Nettleton,**Founding Director Emerita:** Jeri Baron Feltner**Director Emeritus:** Clifton Haley**Honorary Director:** James S. Woodward**Public Relations:** Joe Henne, Ann Method Green**Keeper/Tours Chair:** Mary Chamberlin, *KeepersandTours@drlps.com***Membership:** Paula P. Bardsley**Stars Event:** Mary Chamberlin, *StarsEvent@drlps.com***Passages Editor:** Ann Method Green**Preservation:** Brian Nettleton**Special Projects:** John Orr, Brad McGann, Candis Collick**Historian:** Open**Sponsor A Step:** Jeri Baron Feltner**Webmasters:** Matt Sawyer and Ann Method Green**Boat Captain:** Greg Lippelle of Island Charters**Legal Matters:** Clifton Hailey**Accounting:** Jeanette Alguiree**DRLPS MEMBERSHIP:**

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

All memberships include the family

DRLPS@drlps.com Subject Membership * 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: DRLPS@drlps.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!