



SPLKA Annual Meeting Minutes

September 17, 2016, 6:55 PM

“The mission of SPLKA is to preserve, promote, educate the public, and to make our lighthouses accessible to all.”

Call to Order/Establish a Quorum:

A business meeting of the Sable Point Lighthouse Keepers' Association was held September 17, 2016 at 6:55 p.m. at the Double JJ Resort, 5900 Water Road, Rothbury, Michigan. The business meeting was preceded by a dinner. The theme of this year's dinner was "Saddles and Sand." The President, Sue Ann Schnitker, called the 29th Annual Membership Meeting to order. The following Board members were present: Sue Ann Schnitker, Kirk Lindquist, Sheila Meeusen, Roger Pashby, Kim McDaniel, John Truxell, and Lenore Janman.

Sue Ann welcomed all members in attendance.

Approval of Minutes of Annual Meeting of September 11, 2015:

Sheila Meeusen read the Annual Meeting Minutes from September 11, 2015. Roger Pashby moved to accept the minutes as read; Kim McDaniel seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Financial Update:

Sue Ann then introduced Executive Director Peter Manting who gave our financial update.

- SPLKA had a very good year. Peter pointed out that copies of our 990 for 2015 are available at our meeting and on our website. According to our 990, revenue for 2015 increased by \$33,471.
- Net assets have increased to \$567,060 for 2015.
- As of August 31, 2016, our Big Sable Fund is showing a balance of \$119,000. Our Capital Campaign Fund has a balance of \$76,000.
- Funds in our Capital Campaign Fund will be used in the future for a new roof for the Big Sable keeper's quarters and some repair on the tower.
- Trex board sales are now at 327 boards and will continue to be a fundraiser in 2017.

- Giving Tuesday is November 29 this year. Envelopes for giving donations were available on the tables tonight. Peter encouraged monthly, year-end, and end-of-life giving as ways or opportunities to give to our Association.

Director's Report:

Peter then introduced our SPLKA staff members. Staff members are Rachel Bendele, Operations Manager; Cherie Hockenberger, Office Manager; Jim Hardie, Restoration and Maintenance Supervisor, Pricilla McBeth, Gift Shop Manager, Debbie Dyer, and Carol Cooper, our new bookkeeper. Peter congratulated his staff by saying that they are the best staff he has ever worked with and emphasized his appreciation for their hard work this past year.

Peter then reported to our membership on our past year activities as follows:

- New exhibits have been installed at the WRLS thanks to the hard work of Curator Matt Varnum and Maintenance Supervisor Jim Hardie.
- Thanks goes to Debbie Hardie who has helped Jim with the grounds at WRLS by planting new flowers and other vegetation.
- SPLKA is working with the Friends of White River to remodel the workshop/storage building located behind the light station. This space will be used for displaying larger exhibits and as a classroom learning center.
- New gift shop at LSPL in the form of a retro style trailer. Visitor comments have been very positive since they are now able to purchase Little Sable merchandise at the light.
- Our "Summer at the Lights" concert and event series took place at our four lights. The five Wednesday nights at LSP were attended from 75 to 150 people each night. Several of the artists who performed at LSP were also featured at White River and Big Sable on bus days.
- Events at WRLS included three sessions of yoga on the lawn, our third annual Saturday afternoon dulcimer jam session, and a Friday and Saturday evening concert as part of the Muskegon County Lighthouse Festival.
- Grants to fund these events came from Oceana Community Foundation, the Great Lakes People's fund, West Shore Bank, Sanders and Czapkski, and the Whippy Dip of Silver Lake.
- At Ludington's Friday night live events in July and August, our lighthouse beanbag toss game continues to be popular and gives us a chance to speak with parents, make a few trex board sales, and accept donations.
- SPLKA activity booklets have been reprinted four times now with a total of 35,000 copies printed since our first printing in September, 2014. Donors include the Mason County Community Foundation, Oxy Chemical, the Seekers Group, the Friends of White River, and DETE Energy Foundation.

- The Thomas Tag booklets for both BSP and LSP were updated and republished along with our SPLKA Keepers Handbook.
- A speaker series running from January through March, 2016 was initiated by SPLKA and the new Ludington Maritime Museum. Historical speakers were brought in to speak to the local community.
- Thanks goes to Lenore Janman and Sheila Meeusen who recruited and trained a group of volunteer speakers who will be visiting classrooms in Michigan to let students know more about our lights.
- Sales of trex boards have added \$20,000 to our Capital Campaign Fund.
- A new flat roof has been installed on the LNB tower to prevent further leaks in the gift shop.
- New mattresses have been installed on the beds at BSP. Dave Depue has also delivered and installed 4 new screen/storm window combinations and will be installing more before winter.
- The biyearly Michigan Lighthouse Festival will be in Ludington on August 25, 26, and 27, 2017. Marge Ellenberger, one of SPLKA's new members, was introduced and brought the 2017 festival banner which will be placed in Michigan Rest Stop display cases for promotion of this event.
- This festival celebration also coincides with the 150th birthday of Big Sable Point in 2017. Marge is partnering with SPLKA, the Ludington Chamber of Commerce, and others to bring this festival to Ludington. Featured events include maritime vendors, sail away rides on a Tall ship, a Friday night dinner at the Sterns Motel with Speaker Patricia Majors who wrote Women of the Lights, a bus day at Big Sable, and entertainment at all of our lights that weekend. Rick Mixter and Dan Hall will have a Saturday evening multimedia presentation; on Sunday morning there will be coffee/rolls reception for SPLKA members and others at the Maritime Museum.
- As part of the 150th birthday celebration, SPLKA will be planning one event each month during the months of May through October.
- Peter thanked his staff and volunteers for their continued support in making "our guest experience to our four lighthouses informative, enjoyable and unforgettable."

Thank You to Board Members:

Sue Ann and Peter presented retiring Board Members Sheila Meeusen and John Truxell with a picture of all four lighthouses and thanked them for their contributions to SPLKA.

Nominations for Two New Board Members:

Peter Manting then introduced new Board Member Jeff duPuis and welcomed him along with Ted Robinson as nominees to fill our two vacancies. Peter read some background information on both candidates. Jeff has been a volunteer at White River Light Station

and Little Sable and has been an employee of Bank of America for over 40 years. Ted is involved with the Friends of White River and is the great grandson of Captain William Robinson, the first keeper at WRLS. Ted has a background of business and accounting.

Dick Voetberg made a motion to accept these two nominees; John Truxell seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Shining Light Award:

Peter explained the purpose of our Shining Light Award. This award is given by the SPLKA Board of Directors to someone who has gone above and beyond to help SPLKA accomplish its mission to preserve, promote, and educate the public and make our lighthouses accessible to all. This year's recipient is Robert Paul Sperling. Peter read a synopsis of Bob's service to our lights along with many complimentary remarks from volunteer keepers who worked with Bob over the years. Bob worked on many restoration projects and had an impressive knowledge of lighthouses and maritime history which he shared it with our volunteers as well as many visitors to our lights. Bob also served on the Board and helped open our Little Sable and Ludington North Breakwater Lights as well as Big Sable in the 1980s. Bob retired from his position of Historic Maintenance and Supervision in June, 2012. Unfortunately, in the summer of 2015, he was again diagnosed with cancer and passed away in July, 2016. His name will be engraved on the plaque that hangs in the hallway at Big Sable. Two new trex boards have also been installed in memory of Bob and the brass plaque on the bench that honors Bob has been redone as well. SPLKA will never forget Bob's contributions to our Association.

Lighthouse Math:

Sue Ann and staff member Cherie Hockenberger presented the "Add It Up!" game on lighthouses. People at each table were asked to answer five questions. Examples of questions related to how many states have lighthouses, how many attendees have seen lighthouses from the water, how many attendees have seen BSP's Fresnel Lens at White Pine Village, how many attendees have been in Lake Michigan this year, and how many attendees at the table know someone who is in the Maritime Industry. Prizes were given at the end of the game to the attendees at the table with the highest score.

Michigan Lighthouse Festival:

Marge Ellenberger spoke briefly about the upcoming lighthouse festival in Ludington in 2017 and presented materials that will be available for next year's event.

Presentation of Volunteer Award:

Sue Ann then asked all attendees to stand and to remain standing to commemorate their years of service to SPLKA. Pat and Marlene Perry were given a SPLKA sweatshirt for being attendees at the annual meeting with the longest history of serving as volunteers at our lights. They have been volunteering for 16 years.

Program:

David Dietrich, along with his wife Mary Jo, presented a program about the life of a keeper and his family. They were both dressed in period costumes, David in a keeper's uniform, and Mary Jo in attire befitting the keeper's wife. They took turns reminiscing about daily life for a keeper and his family, about preparation for inspection time, and about the education of the keeper's children. David explained that the first keeper's uniforms were made in 1885 and that the keepers had to purchase their uniforms. David wore a black hat and explained that in 1939, white hats were introduced to signify that the keepers were members of the Coast Guard. David is the great, great grandson of James Davenport, who was the first keeper at Little Sable Point. Davis told us that James had 10 children in all with 4 serving at LSP with their father. David and Mary Jo, who serve as daykeepers at LSP, also gave some of the history of LSP and how and why Little Sable was actually built in 1873-1874. David and Mary Jo presented a very interesting and informative program.

Adjourn:

Motion to adjourn was made by Dick Voetberg and seconded by Lenore Janman. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Meeusen, Secretary