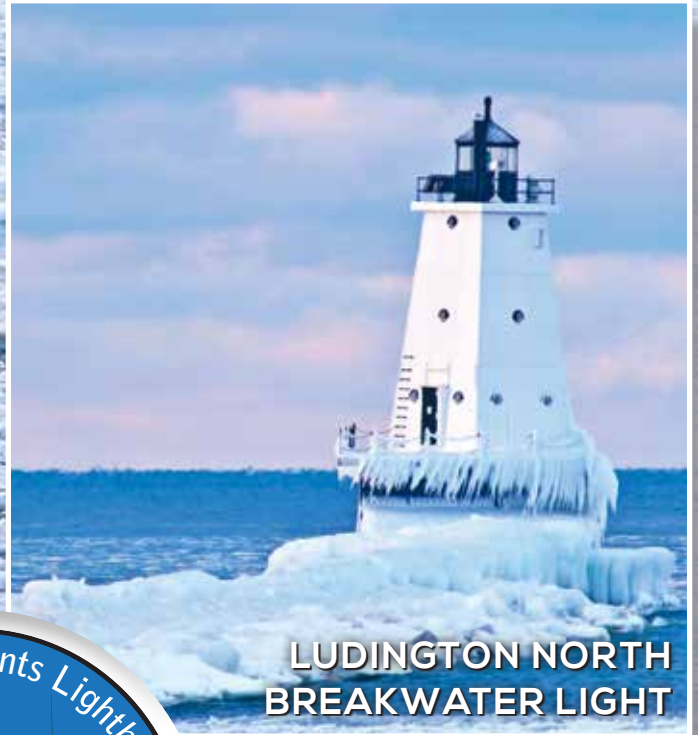


Sable Points BEACON

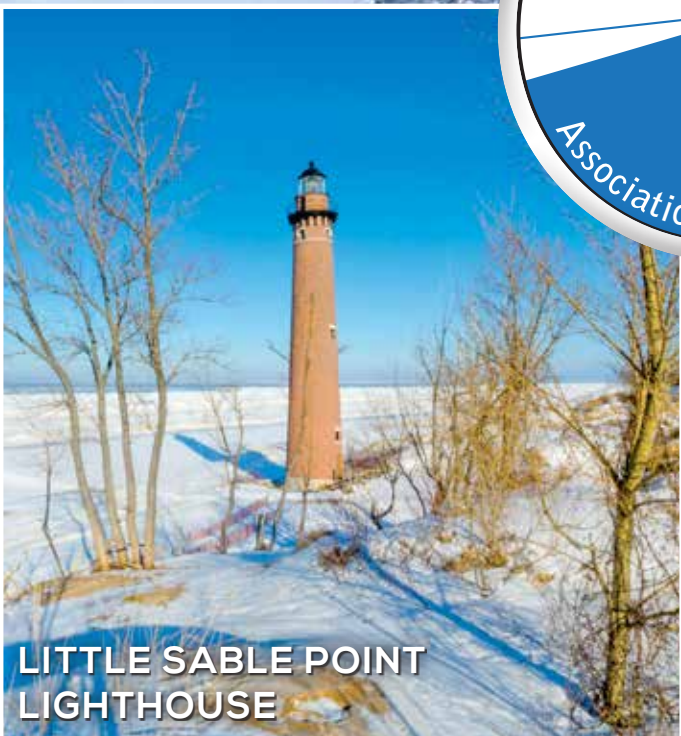
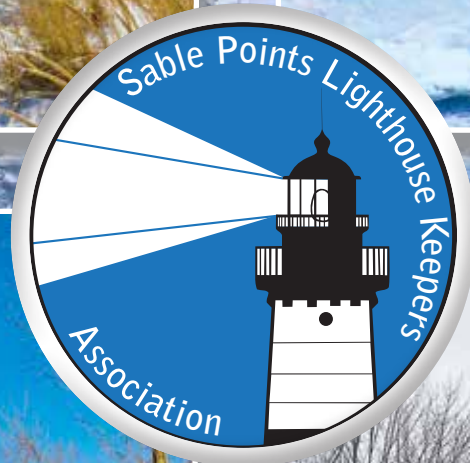
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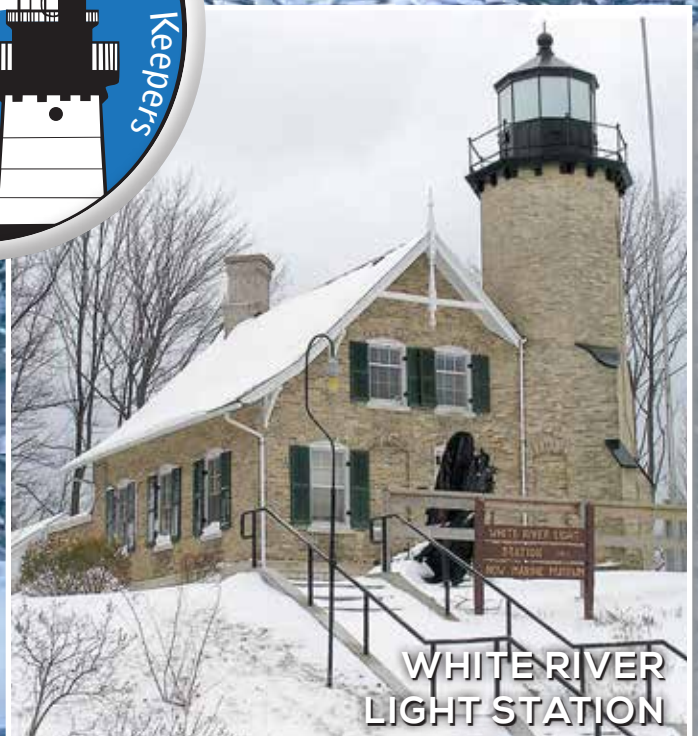
BIG SABLE POINT
LIGHTHOUSE



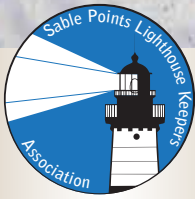
LUDINGTON NORTH
BREAKWATER LIGHT



LITTLE SABLE POINT
LIGHTHOUSE



WHITE RIVER
LIGHT STATION



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MAINTENANCE
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ASSISTANT TO THE
DIRECTOR

Debbie Dyer
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Letter from the President

Dear SPLKA Members and Friends,

Throughout SPLKA's history, the mission has remained the same, preserving, promoting, and educating the public, and making our lighthouses accessible to all.

As your board president, I am preceded by many outstanding leaders who have paved the way for an ongoing tradition of excellence that I have tried to continue. I am committed to continue our progress in achieving our goals and objectives. I would be amiss to not mention the board of director members and their many hours of service to SPLKA. I am thankful for the privilege to serve as president of the board of directors.

I am thankful for our executive director, Peter Manting and his staff that have passion for our lights and provide leadership which will assist us all in accomplishing our vision for SPLKA's future. SPLKA would not exist without the more than 450 volunteers. The time that is spent sharing the history of the lights each year is how we accomplish our mission of promoting, and educating the public.

I believe our membership understands how to be good stewards of our lights with the giving of time and monetary donations. Our sources of revenue include grants, tower tours, and sales of merchandise. My goal for 2016 was to increase the giving from members. I am happy to say this has happened. A recent example was the gifts given from the members who were not able to attend the annual dinner/meeting with the donations of almost \$1500.

As we come to the end of our 2016 season, planning for 2017 is already in full swing. Big Sable will be 150 years old next year, and there will be many events to celebrate the years of service she has provided for the thousands of water vessels. Again, thank you for your commitment to our lights and I hope you will be as excited as I am for our 2017 season and please keep "shining" our lights.

Sue Ann Schnitker
President





NEW BOARD MEMBERS

In 2016 we welcomed two new members to our board. They will both be filling three year terms on the SPLKA board of directors. They are:

KIRK LINDQUIST:

The privilege of serving on the Board of Directors comes after an extended time dedicated to lighthouse protection and preservation. I first became involved with the Big Sable Point Lighthouse Keepers Association during the mid-1990's and served on the Board for two terms. In 2002, I founded and served as

President of the Michigan Lighthouse Fund and participated as a member of the Michigan Lighthouse Project (a multi-agency work group managing the transfer of lighthouse properties from Federal to local government and nonprofit custody). I continue to be committed to efforts to protect, preserve

and restore historic lighthouses and light stations. In particular, I will dedicate my efforts to participate with SPLKA as we maintain and protect the 4 lighthouses under our care.



KIRK LINDQUIST
Vice President

KIM MCDANIEL:

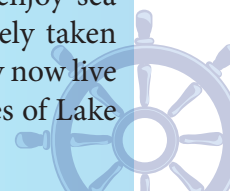
"Sail on...ye stately ships!" I can stand on the catwalks and hear Longfellow's words in the warnings of Little and Big Sable, *'There is danger here, sail on!'*, or Ludington Pier's, *'Welcome, there is safe harbor here!'*, or White River's benediction to departing sailors, *'Fair winds and following seas, sail on!'"* says Kim McDaniel in reference to her love of our SPLKA lights.



KIM MCDANIEL
Director

Kim was born near a tidal estuary in Maine and spent a good 30 years of her life getting back to the water. She's lived in Iowa and Colorado but felt the pull of the Great Lakes and moved to Michigan in '91. Her BFA with honors is in Music Theater and she has worked professionally as an actor, singer, dancer, and musician as well as working as a spokesperson for industrials and commercials and has appeared in various films. She can claim she appeared in a movie with Art Carney, in the same frame! But, alas, she will quickly add she was a lowly extra.

Kim has also worked as a music teacher and spent five years as an Artist in the Schools. She met her husband of 39 years in music school and she and Robert Robuck have always been active in their community, donating vast amounts of time with students. They enjoy sea kayaking with island camping and have lately taken up sailing and crew out on racing boats. They now live in Muskegon, close enough to hear the waves of Lake Michigan singing them to sleep at night.



Help further our mission with the

IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER



Congress has now extended the IRA charitable rollover, and made it permanent. This could be an easy way for you to support the Sable Points Lighthouse Keepers Association. The charitable IRA rollover, or qualified charitable distribution (QCD), is a special provision allowing taxpayers aged 70 1/2 or older to transfer up to \$100,000 annually from their IRA accounts directly to a non-profit organization, including the Sable Points Lighthouse Keepers Association, without having to recognize the distribution as income.

Season's Greetings

News from your Director, **PETER MANTING**



by **Peter Manting**
SPLKA Executive Director



Our Mission is to preserve, promote and educate the public and make our lighthouses accessible to all.

We are coming to the end of another successful summer season. Our staff for 2016 remained mostly intact from 2015 which was a blessing. This has been Matt Varnum second year as the SPLKA curator living at the White River Light Station. Our volunteers continue to enjoy working with Rachel Bendele, our operations manager, Rachel is finishing her second year with us and is doing an exceptional job. Pricilla Mc Beth who continues to run our gift shops as our gift shop manager. Jim Hardie is just finishing his second season as our restoration and maintenance manager. Debbie Dryer continues to work in our office and was even able to help out the keepers, one and a half days a week, at the Ludington North Breakwater light this summer season. Cheri Hockenberger continues to answer the phone, interpretive our volunteer day sheets as she inputs the daily sales information into our systems, keep our Facebook page up to date and make sure that monthly e blast gets out to all the members each month. Our new addition to the Staff this year was Carol Copper who joined the staff as our new bookkeeper replacing Shirley Mitchel who retired from the staff last year. Carol

splits her time between SPLKA and teaching math and accounting at West Shore Community college. She has fit right in as she enjoys laughing as much as the rest of the staff.

New this year, thanks to Matt's and Jim's hard work are the new exhibits at the White River Light Station. With Matt's vision and expertise and Jim's unique handyman ability the exhibit space have become a wonderful addition to the light station for our guests.

SPLKA owes a big thank you to Debbie Hardie as well for the wonderful way she has helped Jim with the grounds around the White River Light Station. The flowers and new plants are a wonderful touch. Now Matt just has to keep the plants watered and the deer from feasting on them.

SPLKA is also working with the Friends of the White River Light Station to remodel the workshop/storage building located behind the light station into new exhibit space for the larger artifacts and some classroom learning area. This will add to the visitor experience and hopefully encourage more school groups to make the trip out to the lighthouse.

Also new this year is the new gift shop at Little Sable. Thanks again to Jim for finding a retro style



trailer that we have turned into a wonderful addition to the Little Sable lighthouse property. Pricilla

made sure that it was stocked full of wonderful and saleable merchandise. We have received several comments from our guests who are enjoying the opportunity of having items to purchase after they have visited our busiest light.

This was our second season of our concert and event series "Summer at the Lights." These are a series of concerts and events that took place at our four majestic lighthouses. Not only does the talent get to show off but we show off the lighthouses as



well. The five Wednesday nights of concerts on the beach at Little Sable were again very well attended this year. Crowds of 75 to 150 people enjoyed Sweet Wednesday, Neptune's Car, Wyatt and Sherri Knapp, Ruthie Eilers and Ruth and Max Bloomquist. Several of these artists were also featured at White River and on Bus days out at Big Sable. Also included under in our "Summer at the Lights" programing was our third annual

Season's Greetings

News from your Director, CONT.

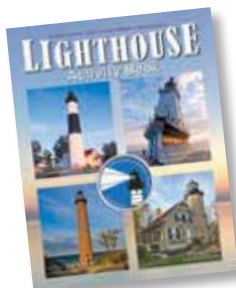


Saturday afternoon drop-in dulcimer jam session at White River, three different times to enjoy Yoga on the White River Lawn and a Friday



and Saturday evening concert at White River as part of the Muskegon County Lighthouse festival. Grants which helped to fund Summer at the Lights were received from the Oceania Community Foundation the Great Lakes People's Fund, West Shore Bank and Sanders and Czapski Architects and the Whippy Dip of Silver Lake.

SPLKA continues to be involved in our surrounding areas community events and activities. Our lighthouse beanbag toss game at Ludington's Friday night live events in July and August has gotten a lot of attention as we draw large crowds to our booth. It does give us a chance to speak with parents and make a few Trexs board sales and it gives people a chance to donate to our cause. We remain involved in Ludington, Silver Lake Whitehall and Muskegon Chamber of Commerce events as well.



We have had the SPLKA Activity booklet reprinted for the fourth time now. This makes 35,000 copies total that have been printed since we received our first printing in September of

2014. What a great gift to students and children who visit our lights each year. I thank all of the donors that help us supply these to our young visitors for free. This year we had the Mason County Community Foundation, Oxy Chemical, the Seekers Group, the Friends of White River and DTE Energy Foundation partner with us in providing these to our young visitors.

We have also republished the Tom Tag booklets for both Big Sable and Little Sable this year and republished and updated our SPLKA Keepers handbook as well.

SPLKA partnered with the new Maritime Museum and sponsored a speaker series in January, February and March of



this year. We brought in historical speakers to speak to the community at the LACA center. We averaged around 60 people at each of these events. It gave us a chance to let the community know what would be going on this summer at our lights and to keep the enthusiasm up for both the lighthouses and the maritime museum.

Thanks to board members Shelia Meeusen and Lenore Janman we now have a group of volunteers speakers trained and provided with a program that features each of our lights. We are hoping to get more of a chance to visit school class rooms to let students and others know more about our lighthouses.

Our Trexs board sales continue to sell well. We have sold 351 boards to date. This has added over \$22,000 to

our Capital Campaign fund.

A new flat roof has been installed on the Ludington North Breakwater tower so that we will not be experiencing any more leaks in the gift shop and the base will be given another fresh coat of paint in early May.

It seems the word is out that new mattress have been installed on the

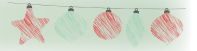


beds at Big Sable. Keepers are calling in to make sure they don't miss the sign up dates as they cannot wait to get a good night sleep out at the light. Dave Depee has also delivered 4 new screen/storm window combinations and installed them at Big Sable. He hopes to have these installed on all of the windows at Big Sable by the end of next summer.

We are very excited to announce that the Michigan Lighthouse Festival will be in Ludington next year. Please keep the dates August 24th, 25th and 26th open on your next year's calendar so that you can attend this bi-yearly festival. Marge Ellenberger, one of SPLKA's new members is the driving force behind this festival. Marge has chosen Ludington as its host city for 2017 as Ludington as we will be celebrating Big Sable's 150 birthdays. She is partnering with SPLKA and the Ludington Chamber of Commerce and other sponsors to bring this great event to Ludington.

Season's Greetings

News from your Director, CONT.



It will feature maritime vendors and lighthouse organizations from around the state that will be there to promote their products and organizations. It will feature sail away rides on a Tall ship that will be in port that weekend. There will be a Friday night dinner at the Sterns Motel with speaker Patricia Majors who wrote *Women of the Lights*. We will have a bus day to Big Sable with entertainment and events at our all of lights that weekend. Rick Mixer and Dan Hall will have a Saturday evening multimedia presentation and there will be coffee/rolls reception for SPLKA members and representatives of other lighthouses organizations and vendors on

Sunday morning at the Maritime Museum from 9 to 12. SPLKA is very excited to be partnering in this endeavor with Marge and the Ludington Chamber of Commerce.

As Big Sable will be celebrating its 150 year birthday next year SPLKA is planning on at least one event each month in the months of May through October in celebration. These will be special events at our lights, community events or fund raising events for SPLKA. Information will be featured in our e blast and emails, Facebook page and correspondence that go out to the membership.

It has been a great year for SPLKA. We have great staff to work with and I cannot thank them enough for all of the effort that they put into making our lighthouses the best they can be. I also want to thank the over 400 volunteers that come in from around the county to volunteer their time and effort to make our guest experience to our four lighthouses informative, enjoyable and unforgettable.

It is my pleasure to serve as your executive director and I look forward to being able to serve in this capacity for many more years.

A Very Happy Holiday Season!

~ Peter



150th
ANNIVERSARY
Big Sable Point Lighthouse
LUDINGTON, MI

**2ND TRAVELING MICHIGAN
LIGHTHOUSE FESTIVAL**
AUG. 25TH, 26TH, AND 27TH, 2017

SPONSORED BY:
MICHIGAN LIGHTHOUSE GUIDE—PURE LUDINGTON—RADIO EAGLE
MICHIGAN LIGHTHOUSE ALLIANCE—NYE'S WEB DESIGN
SABLE POINTS LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS ASSOCIATION

SPLKA 2016 ANNUAL MEETING

The annual membership dinner and business meeting of the Sable Points Lighthouse Keepers Association was held September 17, 2016 at the Double JJ Resort. The theme of this year's dinner was "Saddles and Sand".

After dinner, President Sue Ann Schnitker called the business meeting to order. Minutes from last year's 2015 annual meeting were read and approved by the membership.

An updated financial picture was given by our executive director.

- SPLKA had a very good year. Peter pointed out that copies of our 990 for 2015 were available at the meeting and also 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. Watch the SPLKA e-blast to find out how you can get involved. New donation envelopes were also introduced and were available at the meeting and will be sent out to the membership toward the end of the year. Peter encouraged members to consider monthly, year-end, and end-of-life giving as ways or opportunities to give to our Association.

Executive Director Peter Manting then introduced the staff gave a 2106 season update. He thanked the over 400 members who volunteered this year to keep our lights open. Peter also announced that the Board of Directors was awarding Bob Sperling the Shining Light Award for 2016.

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.



Retiring board members John Truxell, and Sheila Meeusen admire the framed photos of all four lights, presented to them for their contributions to SPLKA by Peter Manting and Sue Ann Schnitker at the September 2016 Annual Meeting.

Two new Board Members were elected to fill the vacant slots which open. Jeff duPuis, resides in Chicago, has been a volunteer at White River Light Station and Little Sable is currently employed by Bank of America. Jeff has been in the banking industry for over 40 years. Ted Robinson is retired and lives in Montague, 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.

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.



David and Mary Jo Dietrich, day keepers at Little Sable Point, talk about daily life as a keeper and the history of LPS at the September 2016 Annual Meeting.

Our guest speakers were David Dietrich, along with his wife Mary Jo, who presented a program about the life of a keeper and his family. David and Mary Jo, who serve as day keepers at LSP, also gave some of the history of LSP and how and why Little Sable was actually built in 1873-1874. 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.



SPLKA 2016 SHINING LIGHTS AWARD WINNER

The *Shining Lights 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.

The award this year goes to honor **Robert Paul Sperling** and the legacy he has left behind. Bob was schooled as a tool and die maker for General Motors. He worked in that position for over 35 years. He had a love for sailing and that love grew into a love for anything maritime. In 1986 he was exploring a northern Michigan lighthouse and he ran into Dick Smith from Ludington. Dick told him about the local group from Ludington that was trying to save Big Sable Lighthouse from Lake Michigan and that they could use a hand if he was interested. The next weekend Bob was in Ludington to see what the group was doing and to lend a hand. Dick recalls Bob was the “get it done guy.” If it had to be done, he got it done. Bob’s loves for Big Sable, then Little Sable and then the Ludington North Breakwater lighthouse are evident as they have been restored, opened and to this day are enjoyed by thousands of visitors each year to the lights.

Keeper Kathy Bloomfield remembers Bob in this way. “I met Bob in 2007 when I was assigned to my first tour of duty at BSP. He not only fixed everything, replaced everything, but also had time to listen to our complaints and concerns, to share a story to illuminate his answers and to just defuse the situation with his humor and calm demeanor. He was always there for us 24/7. His knowledge of lighthouses and maritime history was so impressive. It made me want to know more to share it with our visitors.”

Susan Griffin remembers Bob “as passionate about so many things and everything he did he was determined to do 150% or more. I don’t believe I will ever forget his smile and stories that he told about the lighthouses.”

Jack Buege first met Bob in 2002 when he and Elaine became volunteer keepers at Big Sable. They struck up a wonderful friendship. Jack says “Bob appointed me to



BOB SPERLING
2016 Shining Lights Award

Bob continues to be in the hearts and minds of all who knew him.

Bob’s handy work is all around us and for that SPLKA is eternally grateful.

the SPLKA board and we worked together for 7 years on the board. I remember the time he offered to let us climb Little Sable after we closed up Big Sable for the evening our first year. That was before SPLKA had control of Little Sable and before it was opened to the public. He told us to wear our oldest clothes and not to breathe on the way up. I thought Little Sable was in very poor condition, but Bob said Big Sable was in much worse condition when we started than that, and after seeing the pictures of Big Sable I would have to agree. If there is a single person responsible for making Big Sable, Little Sable and the Ludington North Breakwater Light what they are today it is Bob.”

Jack and Gerry Thornton met Bob in 2001 when they first became keepers at Big Sable Point. Jack and Bob worked together on many restoration projects and Bob helped Gerry learn the history of Big Sable as she became one of the SPLKA historians.

Gerry says, “We never grew tired of listening to Robert’s bountiful knowledge of the past history”.

Bob served SPLKA as a volunteer, for a time as board president and as supervisor of historic maintenance and restoration. He retired from the position of historic maintenance and supervision in June of 2012.

Unfortunately in the summer of 2015 he was diagnosed with cancer. He passed away in July of this year after what his caregiver termed a courageous struggle with cancer.

It is because of Bob’s love and dedication to SPLKA that the SPLKA board of Directors has awarded Robert Sperling the *Shining Lights Award for 2016*. His name will be engraved in the plaque that hangs in the hallway at Big Sable. The Board of Directors has also dedicated two new Trex® boards in memory of Bob and the staff has redone the brass plaque on the bench that honors Bob and sits outside of Big Sable. Bob continues to be in the hearts and minds of all who knew him. Bob’s handy work is all around us and for that SPLKA is eternally grateful.

ENGINEERED TO ENDURE

The Great Lakes Lighthouses of Orlando Poe

By Paul Taylor

The Civil War dealt a serious blow to the United States' lighthouse system. Though the government had created a lighthouse board in 1852, for the purpose of improving the ways that aids to navigation were created and maintained, the 1861-65 conflict required that all work be suspended. And valuable financial resources that had been assigned to light stations were directed elsewhere.

When Johnny finally came marching home, there was much work to be done at these stations and many new ones to be built—particularly in the Great Lakes region. Orlando Poe was just the man to do it.

Born in Navarre, Ohio in 1832, Orlando Metcalfe Poe graduated sixth in his West Point class of 1856 with an engineering background. As one of the top seven graduates, he could select which military branch he would serve in. Poe chose the respected topographical engineers,

who, in wartime, were responsible for surveying and mapping enemy positions and movements. In peacetime, however, they were more like modern civil engineers, engaged in such functions as bridge building or charting rivers, lakes, and harbors.

Poe was sent to Detroit shortly after graduation, where he was assigned to the ongoing Great Lakes Survey. That study was begun in 1841, with the intent of developing navigational charts for mariners and improving those areas that would enhance lake commerce. It was during his 1856-1860 service that Poe met his future wife, setting the stage for Detroit to become their adopted hometown for the remainder of their lives.

Poe served the Union cause from day one during the Civil War years. Initially a staff officer for General George McClellan in Ohio, Poe was soon offered the colonelcy of the Second Michigan Infantry in September 1861. He led that unit into the 1862 Peninsula Campaign in Virginia, until illness forced him home in June of that year. He returned to the Second Michigan in time for the Second Bull Run campaign, where he was also given field command of his regiment's brigade. After his presidential appointment to brigadier general was rejected by Congress in March 1863, Poe was sent west to become chief engineer for General Ambrose Burnside.

Once in the region, Poe's engineering talents came to the fore. His design of Fort Sanders at Knoxville, Tennessee enabled the outgunned Union defenders of that bastion to decisively repel a Confederate force of superior numbers in November 1863. This accomplishment culminated in Poe earning considerable praise from both Burnside and the press.



Due to Poe's heroics in Tennessee and a shortage of qualified engineers, General William T. Sherman selected Poe to be his chief engineer for what became the 1864 Atlanta campaign. It was Poe who, acting under Sherman's orders, oversaw the burning of Atlanta and then the building of immense numbers of bridges and corduroy roads during the western theater's final 1864-65 campaigns in Georgia and the Carolinas.

Immediately following the war's conclusion, Poe was granted the position of engineer secretary for the Lighthouse Board. This position required him and his family to live in Washington, D.C., with the occasional field inspection trip. His responsibilities included preparation or oversight of the plans, specifications, and cost estimates for various lighting equipment. In addition, he oversaw the construction and repair of all towers and buildings connected with



Poe's military career spanned nearly 40 years.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

ENGINEERED TO ENDURE

The Great Lakes Lighthouses of Orlando Poe

cont.



the lighthouse establishment.

By spring 1870, Poe's service as engineer secretary was coming to an end. Earlier that year, he had been offered a coveted position on the staff of his mentor, Sherman, now General of the Army. Poe declined, however, as he and his wife were more than ready to leave Washington politics and return to family and friends in Detroit. Instead, he accepted a promotion to chief army engineer of the Upper Lakes Lighthouse District. It was a territory that included parts of the Detroit River, along with lakes Saint Clair, Huron, Michigan, and Superior.

Poe's district was immense, and featured 82 active lighthouses and lighted beacons. In this new position, he was responsible for maintenance to existing lights and towers, **new** construction, and oversight of the various harbor and river projects in eastern Michigan, as well as on the St. Marys River in the Upper Peninsula. Additionally, he was required to issue an annual report with recommendations for locations of new lighthouses.

Spectacle Reef

Poe's most intimidating mission was building a new light in Lake Huron, at a deadly point known as Spectacle Reef. The reef was more than 10 miles from the nearest island—Bois Blanc—and 17 miles from the mainland. Its distinguishing feature was two rocky projections that rose to just seven feet below the surface. Looked at from above, the deadly reef gave the appearance of a giant pair of eyeglasses, thus earning its identifying name.

The reef was a sailor's nightmare, as it was easily capable of slicing through the hull of any ship that sailed too near. One disaster after another convinced



Offshore construction challenges expanded the building period of Spectacle Reef to four years.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

the Lighthouse Board that an offshore tower was required. Asserting that the reef was “probably more dreaded by navigators than any other danger now unmarked throughout the entire chain of lakes,” Congress agreed in 1869 to the board's request for the then-princely sum of \$300,000 for construction costs.

The work began in 1870, with Poe overseeing the design and construction team. Offshore lights had been built before, but never in an area where weather would be such an issue. Lake Huron's ice floes often grew to two feet thick and covered thousands of acres. Strong winds generated waves that could easily move those floes

and pound any man-made creation into rubble within a few seasons. To combat that enemy, Poe and his team designed a protective pier and inner base that consisted of interlocking blocks of stone measuring two feet thick. The base and the bottom 30 feet of the tower were built in such a manner as to become one solid mass of stone.

As work progressed, nature continued to be Poe's biggest enemy. Winter and its attendant ice naturally halted all work, while damage from gales during the shipping season was also a threat. When the Spectacle Reef light was finally illuminated on June 1, 1874, the finished tower stood 93 feet tall and its base measured 32 feet in diameter. At a final cost of \$400,000, it was one of the most expensive lighthouses ever built in the United States.

New Presque Isle

While Poe was supervising the work at Spectacle Reef, he began plans for a new light at Presque Isle, a T-shaped strip of land on the Lake Huron coastline between Rogers City and Alpena.

Prior to 1870, most light stations consisted of a keeper's cottage with a short tower jutting up out of the roof or side of the cottage. But Poe's 109-foot-tall design for Presque Isle—almost 20 feet in diameter at the base, gently sloping inward to about 12 feet at the top—broke that mold. The gallery was supported by corbels (structural brackets), and each of the four windows featured a rounded arch. These elegant, Italianate elements distinguished what would later be called the “Poe style” of lighthouses.

A relatively small residence, one-and-a-half stories high and just 31 feet square, was attached to the tower by a

ENGINEERED TO ENDURE

The Great Lakes Lighthouses of Orlando Poe

cont.



covered passageway.

South Manitou Island

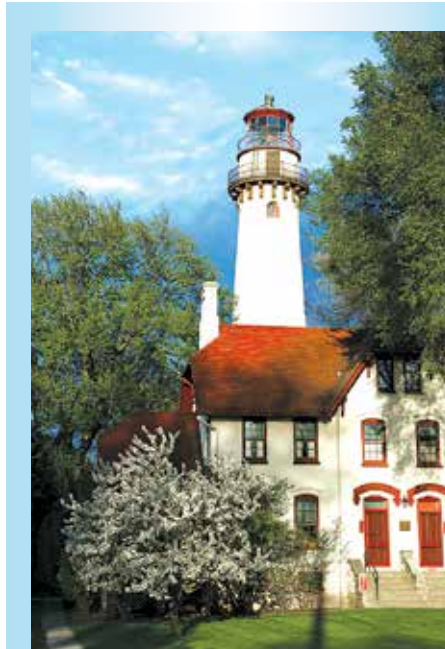
Not for any grand artistic vision, but rather to save money, Poe reused the tower design from Presque Isle at South Manitou Island, part of the Beaver Archipelago off Lake Michigan's northeastern coast.

South Manitou already had a tower, built in 1858 atop a brick keeper's cottage. But its light was considered too dim and insufficient to guide the lake traffic passing by its beam. The district's previous engineer called for a replacement from the Lighthouse Board, but Poe went further in his recommendation: "The importance of his station demands even a better light than proposed...with a lens of the Third Order." Poe's comments prompted an appeal for additional funds, which Congress granted in March 1871. Construction began at South Manitou a few months later.

A 65-foot tapered tower was erected on the site. In a cost-saving move, the keeper's cottage was reused.

Grosse Point

Poe's next design project was the Grosse Point Lighthouse, located about 13 miles north of Chicago on Lake Michigan's southwestern coast. The point was a key landmark for lumber ships heading south to rebuild Chicago, which had been mostly destroyed by its great fire of 1871. Work on the light commenced in September 1872, but various delays prompted a stoppage in November. Construction ramped up the following April and was finished on March 1, 1874. At 113 feet, this tower was the tallest to carry Poe's imprint, and only the second (after Spectacle Reef) to feature a second order Fresnel lens. The adjacent keeper's house was also



The Grosse Pointe light station includes Poe's largest keeper's quarters.

Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

his biggest, designed as a duplex with matching wings.

Outer Island and Au Sable

Two more Poe lighthouses were

built in 1874; these were situated at opposite ends of Lake Superior. The first—at Outer Island—was constructed on a high bluff at the most remote point of Wisconsin's Apostle Islands chain, to guide ships past the archipelago to the rapidly growing ports of Duluth and Superior. A two-and-a-half-story brick house with clipped gables provided a substantial shelter to keepers and assistants who staffed the station.

The second light was erected at Big Sable Point, later known as Au Sable, near Grand Marais, Michigan. For years, no light existed along the 80-mile stretch of Lake Superior shoreline between Grand Island and Whitefish Point. Considered one of the most picturesque areas along the Great Lakes, it was also known as "the shipwreck coast" to 19th-century mariners. "In all navigation of Lake Superior, there is none more dreaded by the mariner," wrote a reporter for the Marquette Mining Journal.

At Poe's direction, the Au Sable light station followed the same general plan as that of Outer Island; the two towers were only a foot different in height and the keeper's residences were identical.



Wisconsin's Outer Island tower is Poe's most northern and western lighthouse.

Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

ENGINEERED TO ENDURE

The Great Lakes Lighthouses of Orlando Poe

cont.



Little Sable Point

The last of Poe's 1874 lighthouses was erected at Petite Pointe Au Sable on Lake Michigan's eastern coast. Merchants serving the lumber trade had lobbied for one at that location for years, and when Poe visited the area in 1872, he fully concurred. However, building what would become known as the Little Sable Point lighthouse would prove to be a daunting task, since the location of the tower was a world away from the nearest supply base, with no roads leading to the site. Virtually all men and material had to be brought in via Lake Michigan.

107 feet tall and boasted a third order lens installed on a rotatable raceway. The corresponding keeper's quarters mirrored those at Outer Island and Au Sable.

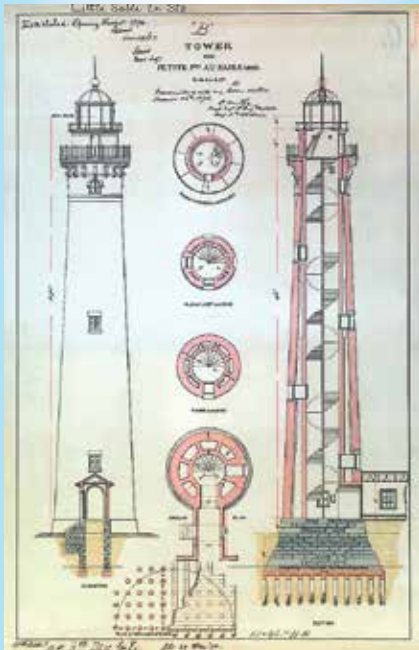
Poe had shown himself to be a very busy man in the post-Civil War period. In addition to personally designing and overseeing the construction of seven lighthouses, his duties had extended far beyond those particular lights. During his few years in Michigan, Poe had been responsible for the oversight of more than 100 working lighthouses, another 15 that were in the appropriations or construction process, seven lightships, three tenders (including one named for him), and close to 100 buoys. Now it was time for another change.

In late 1872, Poe's old superior again came calling with an offer to join him in Washington. Sherman was still the Army's highest-ranking officer, and a position on his staff brought with it enhanced pay and the public recognition that Poe desired. Poe accepted the offer, but asked Sherman if he might stay in the field a bit longer



Little Sable Light Station

to finish up the ongoing work at Spectacle Reef and planning for a new lock along the St. Marys River Canal. "It would be very hard for me to turn my back upon some of my works here which are now almost like children to me," he admitted. Sherman readily



Little Sable Light Station
Plan Drawing.

Initial construction began in April 1873, with Poe's plans calling for 109 one-foot diameter pilings to be driven to a depth of nine feet below ground in order to form a solid base within the sandy soil. When the slender red brick tower was finished in time for the 1874 shipping season, it stood



ENGINEERED TO ENDURE

The Great Lakes Lighthouses of Orlando Poe

cont.



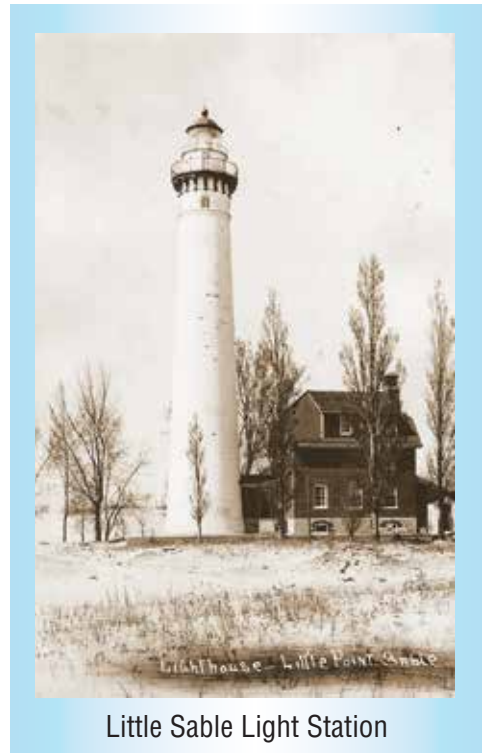
agreed, with the understanding that Poe would report for his new duty by May 1, 1873.

Despite his elevation to Sherman's staff, Poe retained his relationship with the Lighthouse Board. He oversaw the completion of the towers he had designed while chief engineer and served as a member of the governing body for the next 10 years. Among his accomplishments during this period was the 1880 construction of the 108-foot-tall Wind Point light at Racine, Wisconsin on Lake Michigan's western shore.

Following Sherman's retirement in 1884, Poe returned to Michigan as superintendent of iron and harbor works for the Great Lakes region. His overarching mission was to ensure that waterways were wide and deep enough to handle the ever-increasing freight. It was a duty that included design and construction oversight of the then-largest shipping lock in the world, at Sault Ste. Marie. This engineering achievement would be named "Poe Lock" in honor of its creator.

Though Poe had not been actively engaged in lighthouse design for more than two decades, he was called upon in 1892 to revive a foundering lighthouse project at Seul Choix Pointe, near Gulliver on Lake Michigan's northern coast. His review of the project revealed poor planning and questionable accounting practices. Additionally, what construction had begun was compromised by shoddy materials. Poe was forced to scrap the entire project and start over, all the while requesting an additional \$11,000 to see the project through. When the appropriation request stalled in Congress, the engineer identified funds that had been set aside but not yet used by the lighthouse district. These monies were enough to get Seul Choix restarted and completed in the fall of 1895.

Weeks later, Orlando M. Poe passed away at his Detroit home at the age of 63, succumbing to an infection contracted during his work at the Sault. For his service to the country, in wartime and peace, he was buried with full military honors at Arlington



Little Sable Light Station

National Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

Though 140-plus years have passed since Poe began his lighthouse design career, all of the beacons he created are still standing tall as symbols of safety for mariners and working monuments to a man of rare vision.

Paul Taylor is the author of six books pertaining to the Civil War era, including "*Orlando M. Poe: Civil War General and Great Lakes Engineer*" and "*'Old Slow Town': Detroit during the Civil War.*"

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Thanks to Gary Grinwis for the header and contributed photos of Little Sable Point.

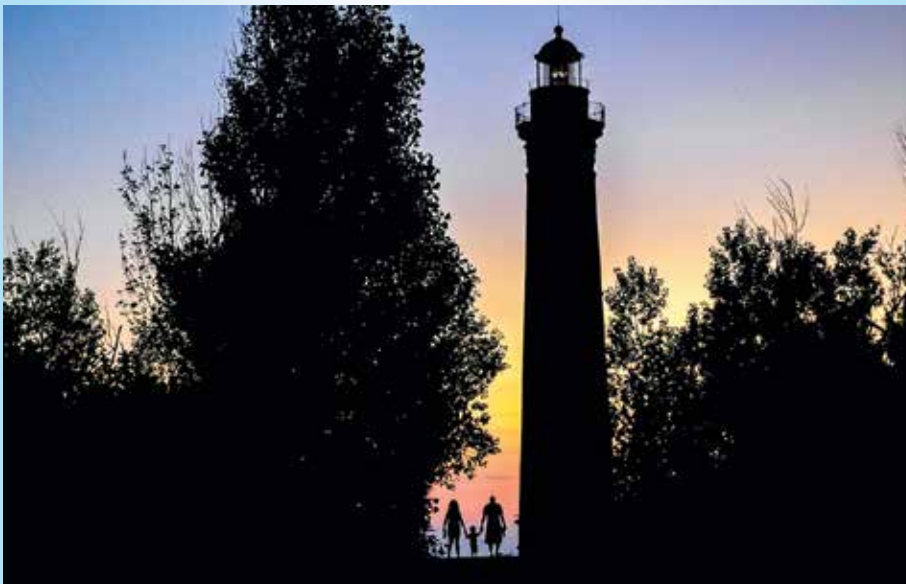


Photo courtesy of Gary Grinwis



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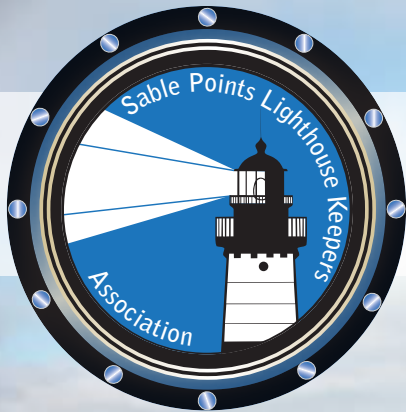
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Sable Points Lighthouse Keepers Association

Need reminders of our Bus Days or other special events?

Keep up to date with all the SPLKA happenings by visiting our Facebook page.



Check us out on Facebook!

Search "Sable Points Lighthouse Keepers Association" and LIKE us! Or, scan the QR code with your smartphone!



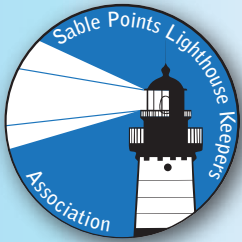
Leave a Print in the Sand

Help us preserve Big Sable Point Lighthouse and Tower by purchasing a Trex® board. These boards will become the new walkway around Big Sable Point.

SPLKA announces the expansion of our “Leave a Print in the Sand” fundraising initiative. Started in July 2014 this ongoing effort by the Sable Points Lighthouse Keepers Association (SPLKA) has risen over \$22,000 which has been added to our Capital Campaign fund for the ongoing repairs that need to be done at our four iconic Lake Michigan lighthouses. SPLKA’s mission is to “preserve, promote, educate the public and to make our lighthouses accessible to all.

Help us preserve our lighthouses by purchasing a personalized engraved Trex board. These boards are becoming the new walkway around Big Sable Point Lighthouse and now the new walkway between the Little Sable Merchandise trailer and the cement walkway. The cost of the engraved boards is \$100.00 each. Each Trex board can be engraved with up to 25 characters on one line, including commas and spaces with a two line maximum.

Most of you have fond memories of being keepers or visitors at the Big Sable Light, the Little Sable Light or both and climbing up each towers 130 stairs to one of the most spectacular views in the area. What better way to remember your time spent there than to donate a board or two. These also make great Christmas, birthday or to recognize a special event gifts. Please share this with those in your circle of friends who love lighthouses so that they can take advantage of this as well. Brochures are available for downloading and printing on our web site. (www.splka.org). You now have the opportunity to specify, on your form, where your board or boards are to be placed.



LIFETIME MEMBERS



Listed below are the members who have made a lifetime membership commitment to the Sable Point Lighthouse Keepers Association. We want to thank you for your past and current support of SPLKA and the four lighthouses that we are care takers of. With changes over the years in staff we might have missed one or two you. If you feel that you have been left off this list for some reason please let the SPLKA office know.

John & Mary Anderson
Tom & Sheryl Anderson
Mike & Julie Babcock
Judy Bach
Bill & Megan Baker
Bob & Becki Baltzer
Thomas Beck
Heinz & Judy Bertram
Jerry & Pat Biggs
Raymond & Kristen Biggs
David Bromer
Joy Bruce
Jack & Elaine Buege
Doug & Carol Buikema
Leslie Campbell
Mary Chandler
Herbert & Arlene Chinworth
Gary & Carolyn Chisholm
Bob & June Markus Clearwater
John Cooney
Gary Dancz
Edna De Lair
Jean Deal
Donald Dunlop
Jeff duPuis
Cynthia Enbody
Ruby Endres
Carl Essex
Anne Essien
Caryl Ferguson
Debra Delp & Sue Foster
Sandra Frank
Leona Frederick
Susan Griffin
Sergio & Nancy Grijalva/Houts
Jennifer Hallenbeck
Mark & Nancy Hallenbeck
Edward Hallin
Donna Hallin
Ray Mamel
Pat & Bob Hames

M. Kay Hannah
Al Hardman
Diane Hazen
Ronald Heidrich
Richard & Cecilia Heller
Randy & Barb Hemstad
Mary Hokanson
L.W. Holmes
Garth & Corlene Holmquist
Gary & Grace Hughes
Ronald & Grace Hutchinson
Jim & Robyn Jadrich
Mary James
Lenore Janman
Nancy & Thom Jones
Mike & Donna June
Everett Keller
David & Paula Kelley
Eugene Ketchum
Penny & DJ King
Keith & Colleen Klobucar
Max & Lorraine Knuth
Thad & Judy Larsen
David Layton
Craig & Susan Leatrea
Peter & Marian Lemere
Barbara & Kirk Lindquist
Howard & Florence Loomis
Nancy Lubeski
Mark Ludington
Carl Luther
Barbara Maclean
Bruce & Marcia Martin
Rick Land & Deanna Martinez
Dale Mattis
Doug & Beth McBride
Earl & Susan McCullough
Leslie & Arlene Meverden
Virginia Miller
Ed Missiaen
Bill & Shirley Mitchell

Jonnie Mladonicky
Richard & Margaret Moehl
Michael Montgomery
Daniel Moons
John R. & Carol Morava
Dan & Christine Nelson
Jane Pashby
Richard & Annetta Pawlak
Alvin & Marge Ramthum
Phillip & Connie Reece
Dorothy Reed
Budde & Sheryl Reed
Paul Rehfuss
Andre & Maryanne Renier
Dave & Carol Rodwell
Sue Ann & Gary Schniker
Sandra Silver
Janet Sliwoski
Richard Smith
Dick & Ruth Smith
Tom & Sharon Synder
Ciro & Rita Sotelo
Anette Steenwyk
Allan & Roberta Thiele
Jack & Gerry Thornton
Shirley Torrance
Ron & Maedean Tower
Stephen & Grace Truman
John Truxell
Robert & Gayle Turnwald
Ken & Barbara Valliey
Bruce & Sandy Van Wingen
Linda Wagner
Dick & Marcia Walsworth
Jeff Westbrook
Bruce Wilbur
Bonnie Wilkinson
Cynthia Lynn Wilson
Deborah Wittkowski
John A. Young



Lighthouse Maintenance News:

If you've been out to any of our lights this year you will see that a lot of work has been happening to get all of the structures in top shape. Sable Points Lighthouse Keepers Association (SPLKA) is very thankful to all of our dedicated and hardworking volunteers who help maintain our lights and residences. Here's a rundown of some of the highlights at each of our lights:

The second floor museum at White River Light Station was reconfigured and expanded before opening this year and the response has been tremendous. There is a better flow of traffic and more space for displaying artifacts for all to see.



Work is set to begin shortly on renovating the original workshop used by Captain Robinson into more museum display space and a media center for showing instructional videos.

Little Sable Point Lighthouse has had a new and improved light mounting bracket installed at the

top of the tower with the brass tubes holding the light now being brightly polished.

A thank you to Pat Perry for his assistance in this project. Little Sable also saw the installation of a new gift shop this year. For years guests have asked for someplace to buy merchandise and souvenirs. We have never been able to accommodate the requests. This year we were able to give it a go with our new, 1965 Avion trailer that was converted to do duty as a gift shop. The response has been superb and now visitors can get their t-shirts and merchandise right here to commemorate their visit.

Big Sable Point Lighthouse has a new coat of paint on most of the outside and numerous new storm windows. The remaining storm windows and the last of the exterior painting should be completed in the spring. Just in time for the 150th anniversary of the opening of Big Sable Point Lighthouse and the Lighthouse Festival which is being held in Ludington next year. A very special thanks to Ken Reeves, Bob Baltzer and Bob Everett for their selfless and dedicated labor to help make the grand lady look presentable.

We are planning on having a new roof installed on Big Sable in the spring as the current roof has served us well but is in desperate need of replacement. Stay tuned for more news on that front.

Ludington North Breakwater Light didn't get forgotten. The lighthouse has a new roof to keep Lake Michigan where it belongs, on the outside. It also has interior lights for the first time in many years on the first floor gift shop. Unobtrusive solar panels have been installed and enough electricity is being generated to keep the lights shining on the first floor. The navigational light at the top has been powered for years by a solar panel that was supplied and maintained by the Coast Guard. The new solar panels for the first floor lights were supplied and installed by SPLKA.

This is just a small example of the work that is done by our staff and volunteers. Don't worry though. If you didn't get a chance to help on any of these projects there is no shortage of opportunities. Just give our Supervisor of Restoration and Maintenance a heads up at splkarestoration@gmail.com and we'll get you scheduled for a workgroup.



STRANGE GOINGS ON AT BIG SABLE



Lighthouses decorate our seashores and quietly have existed for centuries. Many haunted lighthouses have seen multiple lifetimes of seafaring history. Much of that history is good, such as saving the lives of sailor's through aid of the lighthouses' beacons. Other lighthouse history is tragic, such as

when ships were not able to find the life-saving lamps only to be found broken up on the rocks, unaware of their impending doom.

Some lighthouses are haunted due to the tragedies of ships, horrible pirate attacks from both land and sea, and other hardships keepers and families endured. Many people believe that lighthouses are haunted by former a keeper which is the case at the Big Sable light. I thought in this article I will share a few tales from the keepers.

Henry Vavrina was one of the last head keepers at Big Sable. His tour was from 1955 to 1965 at the Big Sable light. We display Henry's uniform, which is on a mannequin, in the display case located in the gift shop at Big Sable. The keepers claim Henry is still around. He likes to play tricks on the resident keepers so they know he is there. At times in the night he will turn his showcase light on after everyone has turned in. A keeper reported to waking up in the night with all the lights in her room on. She then saw a man in a red and white striped shirt walk across her room. Others have reported hearing footsteps or other sounds coming from upstairs when staying in the downstairs apartment. Going upstairs to investigate they found all the doors unlocked so they locked all the doors only to go back downstairs and hearing the noises again. Upon going back upstairs they found all the doors unlocked and doors to rooms they had closed opened. Keepers have reported smelling cigar smoke during the evening several times. Smoking is not allowed in the lighthouse any more, but Henry always liked a good cigar.

It was getting close to football season, during the day the keeper's conversation turned towards college

football. A new couple from Ohio and naturally big Ohio State fans began bragging their team up to the veteran keepers with whom they were serving. In the middle the night the first women keeper awoke to find the downstairs lights on. She went down, turned them off and went back to join her husband in bed. Shortly after getting in bed they both were startled as the downstairs smoke alarm went off. As soon as they went downstairs they smelled lingering cigar smoke and as suddenly as the alarm went on, it went off. In the morning as they were recalling these events to the other keepers, who had not heard the smoke detector, the veteran keepers laughed and said that Henry was just checking out these new keepers from Ohio. They believed Henry was a Michigan man and had probably set the alarm off with his cigar. Occasionally, the smell of bread baking in the oven, or coffee brewing when nothing is being prepared in the kitchen are other signs that Henry is around.

In the south bedroom a keeper claimed to be awakened by a small young boy who was upset and crying because his father had just spanked him. Other unusual sightings have occurred in that bedroom as well. On a stormy November evening when the thunder was crashing and the lightning flashing, a frightened young teenage girl appeared and asked to climb in bed with the resident keeper couple because she was scared of the storm.

Other events that have been reported have been of a book levitating in the gift shop in front of two keepers and a customer, attic covers in the East bedroom and in the small living room pulsating, moving and spinning, scratching noises coming from the closet in the East living room, lights in the basement being turned on after hours, keys to the Coast Guard door appearing in the morning and the door being locked after the keeper had misplaced the keys and were unable to lock the door at closing.

A Keeper insisted that she felt pressure on her feet and legs several times during her two week stay. It felt like someone was sitting at the foot of the bed during the night. She also claimed to see "spirits" of a man and a woman walking around upstairs during the night. She said this type of thing happened to her all her life and she was sensitive to the spirit world! She said our spirits are not upset or angry...just making sure the lighthouse is being taken care of. They were pleased with how things were.

As our season comes to a close this year I want to remind you that we have two week volunteer keeper opportunities available where you stay in the old keeper's quarters at the light. Are you brave enough to volunteer?

Renew Your 2017 SPLKA Membership Today!

Your support of the Sable Point Lighthouse Keepers Association means a great deal to S.P.L.K.A. and to the lakeshore communities. We would like to remind you that now is a great time to renew your membership for the 2017 season.

Your membership, along with hundreds of others, makes it possible for us to fulfill our important mission to preserve, promote, educate and make accessible Michigan's Maritime History to all through our lighthouses.

Advantages of being a member include being eligible to be a day keeper,(associate membership) or resident keepers,(all other membership level categories) at

three of our lights, voting privileges at the annual membership dinner meeting, membership card, window decal, semiannual newsletters, unlimited

free admission to all four lighthouses for one year and for memberships head keeper level and above, merchandise discount at all of SPLKA gift shops.

Your partnership is sincerely appreciated and we couldn't do this without you. If you have already renewed your 2017 membership please consider giving the gift of membership to a friend or relative who would be interested in joining our cause.

Sable Points Lighthouse Keepers Association

MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 2017

associate membership.	\$30
individual membership.	\$60
couple/family membership.	\$100
head keeper.	\$175
business/corporate sponsor.	\$250
lifetime individual membership. . .	\$750
couple/family lifetime membership . .	\$1,000

Thank you for your continued commitment to our historic structures and our communities' Maritime History.

Meet SPLKA Bookkeeper, Carol Cooper



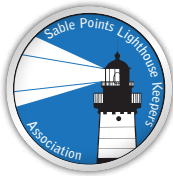
Hi, my name is Carol Cooper and I am excited to be the new bookkeeper for SPLKA! I am taking over the position from Shirley Mitchell who was the bookkeeper for many dedicated years. Shirley has been invaluable to me in training and making sure there is a smooth transition of duties.

My background includes experience performing similar bookkeeping work for other organizations, including a golf course, doctor's office, and non-profit camp. It is exciting for me to serve in this capacity for SPLKA also and to be part of an organization dedicated to preserving and protecting our natural history and beauty.

In addition, I am an adjunct business faculty at West Shore Community College and have taught a wide range of business courses, including accounting and computerized accounting. Prior to that, I also taught at Ferris State University and Lansing Community College. My educational background includes an associate's degree in Court and Conference Reporting and a bachelor's degree in Business Education from Ferris State University and a master's degree in Business & Distributive Education from Michigan State University.

My favorite activity is spending time with my family and enjoying special activities with them. And, of course, I also enjoy learning more about and visiting the SPLKA lighthouses.

I have been welcomed at SPLKA and enjoy working with the staff, board, members, and volunteers and appreciate the opportunity to be part of this great organization.



Sable Points Lighthouse Keepers Association

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