

# Southfield couple preserve history of lighthouses

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Many remain in use as automated light beacons while others have been turned into museums or homes or torn down, he said.

"Darla and Mike were not always devoted to lighthouses. Several years ago, both knew little about this portion of Great Lakes history.

The couple met in 1978 at Troy Athens High School where Darla worked as a teacher and Mike was in-

involved in an electrical project in the building.

After seeing each other many times during work, Darla mentioned her wish to go photograph lighthouses in Michigan.

"It was just a whim, something I wanted to do on my own," Darla said. "He said 'I have a camera.'"

The romance blossomed. Mike proposed marriage at the Old Mission Lighthouse near Traverse City. A lighthouse-shaped candle illuminated the wedding, and the pair became more involved in lighthouse research.

"We just decided somebody should write about the lighthouses of the Great Lakes," she said.

"We were three years into our research before we heard about the association," Mike said about the couple's introduction to what was to become the GLLKA. "We read a magazine notice

by someone who wanted to put together a meeting of people interested in lighthouses in the Great Lakes area."

The interest generated there led to the creation of the GLLKA in 1983.

While the association work generally is fun, it does become a bit tiring, especially since the couple is so active in group activities, Mike said.

"I would caution anyone who enjoys something not to get too involved," he said. There is so much work that it almost becomes a second occupation.

"You have a lot more duties, and more people are interested in what you are doing. When it's a hobby, you can put it down when you are tired of it."

Four chapters have been formed for Lakes Michigan, Huron, Superior and Erie. Ultimately, a fifth chapter for Lake Ontario will be formed, Mike said.

Members receive the quarterly pub-

lication and special mailings informing them of activities, along with the chance to become involved in work days repairing and restoring lighthouses, Mike said.

Members also are invited to annual conferences which are normally held

near different lighthouses. Through the group, participants are allowed to tour facilities not usually open to the public, he said.

The next Lake Huron Conference is Sept. 28 at Port Austin. The cost for the conference is \$20 per person, and res-

ervations must be made by Sept. 1.

Membership in the GLLKA costs \$10 per year for an individual and \$15 for a family. For more information about the group, write to the Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association, P.O. Box 2907, Southfield 48037.

## YMCA highlights

**FARMINGTON YMCA MAINTENANCE TIME** — The physical facilities of the Farmington Area YMCA will be closed Aug. 19-24 for annual maintenance. Full year memberships are valid at the other branches of the Detroit Metropolitan YMCA. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, but this shutdown is necessary to enable to continue the services you have grown to expect from the Farmington Area YMCA.

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