



PHOTO BY PETE MCINTOSH

It's a family reunion for some of the many visitors to Point Porphyry Island Lighthouse.

Visitor stories add to lighthouse legacy

BY PAUL MORRALEE

IT'S mid-afternoon and I find myself in a bit of a dreamy state after only my second day. I ask myself what am I doing here?

The fog is rolling in on Lake Superior and can also be seen playing some distance away with the Sleeping Giant. There is a misty atmosphere surrounding this Lake Superior Island while a gentle rain is falling upon the boreal forest. Maybe this is what is creating the dreamy atmosphere?

This island will be my home base for the next five weeks, and I am already in awe of the ever-changing beauty of Superior and the surrounding islands.

Joining me at the Point Porphyry Island Light Station is Pete McIntosh, a fourth-year student at Lakehead University's school of tourism and outdoor recreation. He is here working under a Canada Summer Jobs program to help with a long list of lighthouse chores. I wonder, did lighthouse keepers have as many lists as we do?

LIGHTHOUSE DISPATCHES

My job is to continue the work undertaken by local lighthouse volunteers by guiding the restoration based on the goals of the group and the needs of our visitors.

Pete tends to a bonfire, burning some brush cleared last year, and will also be surveying visitors to learn more about their experience.

I'll try and stay out of the smoke and the fog and greet our visitors.

As I reminisce about the life a lighthouse keeper would have had at this location 132 years ago, I am constantly bombarded by just how many things need to be tended to — from cutting grass to getting water to powering up the lights. I can only imagine what the hardships would have been back then.

Our summer plans are to provide visitors and guests with a comfortable, informative and enjoyable visit. On our first day alone we had 30 visitors. With cameras and cellphones snapping up the freshly painted images, I can see how people are enjoying the opportunity to share this beautiful spot

on Superior.

As visitors gain a stronger foothold into the knowledge of our nautical history it's going to be our challenge to build up a repertoire of stories to share.

Many visitors who came out for the day were visiting from Silver Islet. It was a family reunion of sorts and they had their own history and stories to share about visiting the place 50 and 60 years ago.

Together, we can all be part of the lighthouse legacy and provide guests, visitors, and tourists with an experience of a lifetime.

That's I guess how I feel right now, living an experience of a lifetime. Now I am waiting for the Giant to reappear and awake.

Next week I'll share the adventures of the Sunora group of 15 vessels from the Thunder Bay Yacht Club and their visit.

Paul Morralee is the secretary of the Canadian Lighthouses of Lake Superior. He'll be sharing stories from Point Porphyry Island Light Station throughout the summer.