



PETE MCINTOSH

Two old cars parked at the Porphyry Lighthouse always get a second look by visitors.

Surprising discoveries

BY PAUL MORRALEE

THE flag fluttered ever so slightly as guests arrived at the Porphyry Boathouses. This was not a foreshadowing of what was to come.

As the fire pit was readied for the evening festivities and the table and chairs around the harbour yard were set, the calm tranquil moments of island life passed us by, lulled by the serenity.

People were arriving from the big city for a resurrection of sorts, a boaters' rendezvous.

One family came and shared their lake experiences, as many sat on the picnic tables, ready for dinner. Others spoke of a previous rendezvous held by the Thunder Bay Yacht Club, while some shared their views on the increased boaters' traffic, a resurgence of sorts, from years past.

Hot chicken curry over rice, salad, smokies and s'mores were followed up with a wonderful sunset, catching the final moments of the day.

Next came the weather overnight, with wind followed by wave action, holding boats tethered to the dock. But not to worry, there are many things for people to investigate on the island as work progresses to preserve the light station.

Around the fire pits, for example, course black beach sand complimented the circumference, which accompanied a bench made of driftwood.

The grass had been trimmed too, back to the old days of a keeper's duty. Gordon Graham had been the last keeper of the light for a 10-year stretch ending in 1988.

Guests who have been coming out for years are surprised by many small discoveries made on site as brush is cleared. Famously the two old cars parked at the lighthouse always get a second look and some people are reminded of the cars in Havana, Cuba.

Magda and Peter, our first canoeists, visiting from Toronto wrote in the guest book, "It's an inspiration (Porphyry Lighthouse) for other

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historical landmarks, especially lighthouses, which remain beacons of insight into history and the geography of the place."

Wayne, Lee, Dean and Jan write, "Nice surprise to find all the great volunteer work going into fix up this historic site," while they were on course kayaking towards Battle Island Lighthouse.

Visitors will be interested to find that the site also has been designated as a Lake Superior Water Trail location. New temporary signage has been added to promote one of 17 locations around Superior. The water trail, financed in part by the TransCanada Trail organization, will be launching in 2017 nationally.

Three more volunteers also came to work on final touch-up on the houses this week. Paul Capon, the chair of Canadian Lighthouses of Lake Superior, and two friends — Will and Bill — happily stayed an extra day exploring the island due to the windy conditions.

Finally, the wind came down in the morning and our guests and volunteers left pushing wheelbarrows of luggage to the lighthouse harbour. Others had also departed back home towards the west.

Pete the summer student and I made up another list over a cup of tea, dreaming unrealistically that we will ever be done, but happy that the work brings people saying "thank you" and smiling.

Next week's Lighthouse Dispatches will focus on a weekend odyssey with some radio contest winners, who will sail Superior to the Porphyry Lighthouse, go on a fishing charter, tour the lighthouse grounds, and fly away home, by float plane.

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.