

Lake Ontario  
lighthouses  
live on

# on the LAKE

## JINELLE SHENGULETTE

It has been said that lighthouse keepers were the loneliest men in the world — working long, tedious hours and viewing the world from a tower that could be 100 feet tall.

So why the public interest in lighthouses and the men who used to service them? Perhaps it's the freedom associated with being your own boss, or maybe it's the idea of guarding over a vast body of water, responsible for the safety of seafaring men.

Whatever the reason, the public continues to be amazed by these structures, many of which have been out of use for generations. Lake Ontario is home to nearly 20 lighthouses. Here we take a look at one in Braddock Bay, Sodus Bay and Salmon River.

### Sodus Bay Lighthouse Museum

While visitors to the Sodus Bay Lighthouse and Museum in Wayne County are always excited to climb the staircase to the top of the 50-foot tower, Bradley McCreary, museum director, says they also enjoy learning about all 18 of the lighthouse's previous keepers.

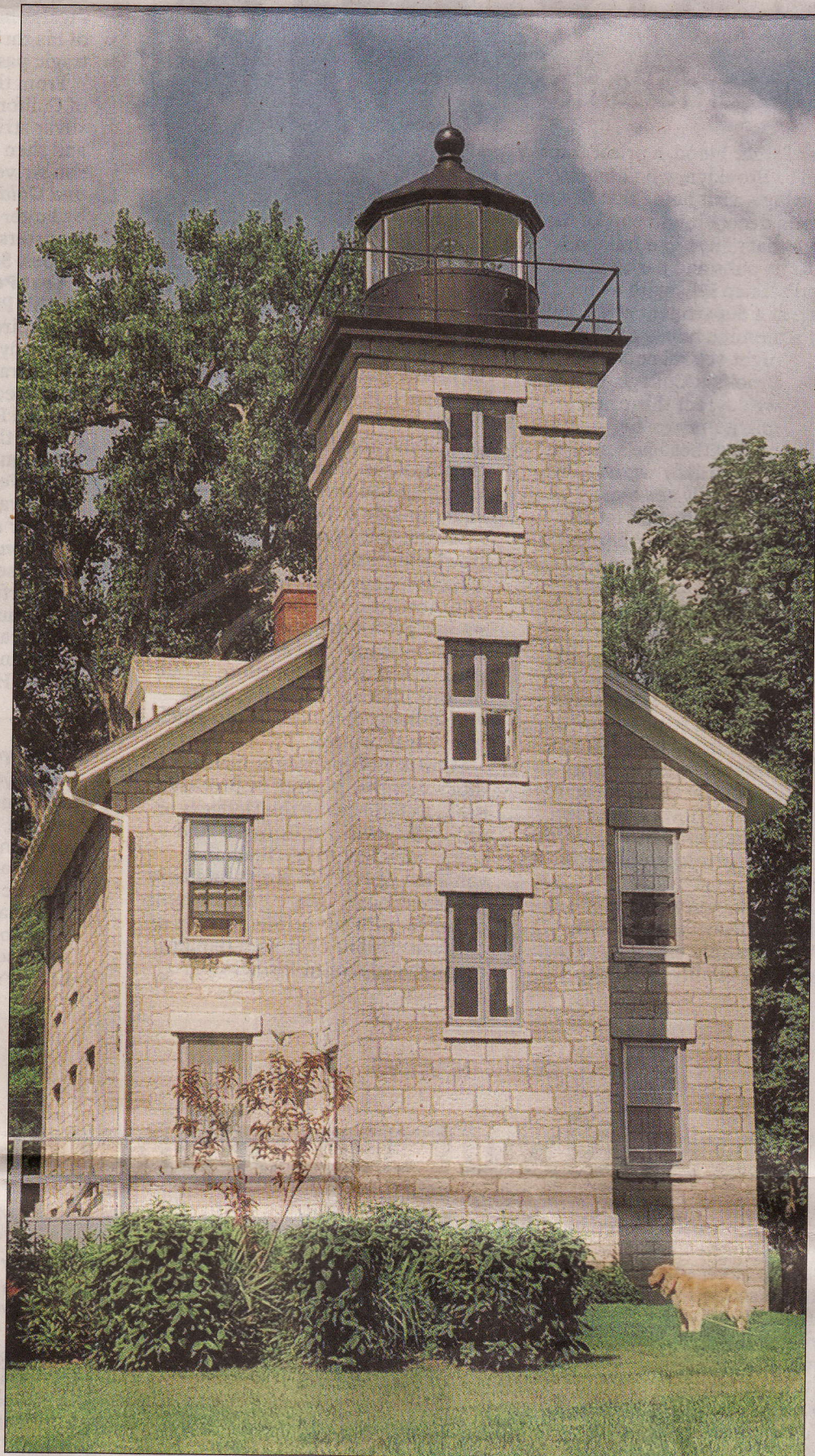
"People have very romantic notions (about the keepers), and we don't like to burst that bubble, but it was hard work and long hours," explains the director.

The first floor of the building serves as a maritime museum, housing a costume collection, nautical artifacts, historic photographs of the area and more. On the second floor is a reference library available to museum members and researchers.

The lighthouse museum puts on several cultural events throughout the year, namely a free summer concert series.

### Selkirk Lighthouse

Since this lighthouse at Salmon River Lighthouse Marina in Oswego County was deactivated in 1859, it is one of only three in the U.S. with an original birdcage lantern, a



A museum and reference library, along with a summer series of concerts, add to the charm of the Sodus Point Lighthouse Museum.

File photo



# Lighthouses

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hexagonal dome of glass and iron on top of the house, as opposed to being a separate tower.

The lighthouse, which was reactivated in 1989 and is in use today, is available to rent for overnight stays. Prices range from \$155 to \$195 for two guests, and \$55 for each additional guest, up to a total of seven. But overnight visitors may be interested to know that local legend claims the lighthouse is haunted.

Ten of Lake Ontario's charter captains are docked at the marina; and with a New York state fishing license, the captains will take groups of six out for four hours of fishing for \$320.

## Braddock Point Lighthouse

Although this privately owned structure in Hilton is currently not open

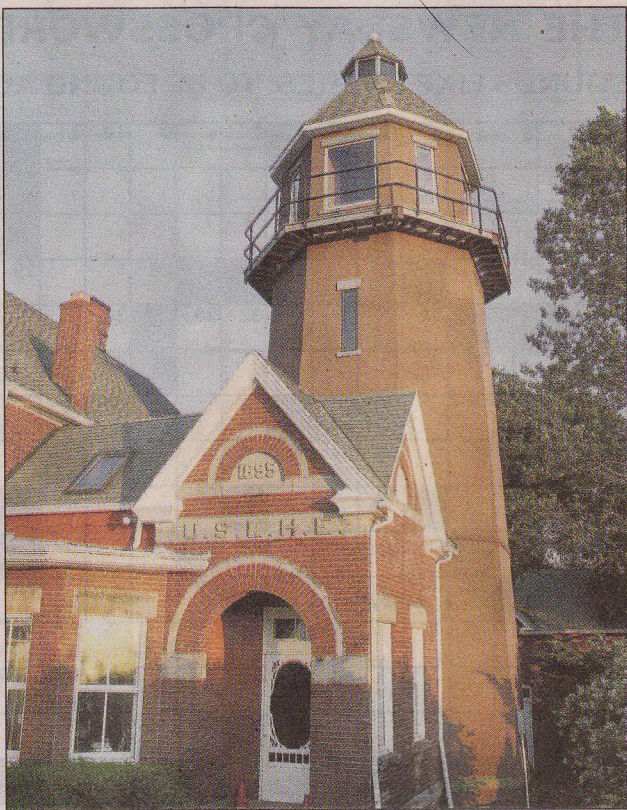
## Close to home

In our own backyard is the Charlotte-Genesee Lighthouse at 70 Lighthouse St., built in 1822 for the Port of Rochester. It's open 1 to 5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays through Nov. 1. Free admission. For information, call (585) 621-6179.

to the public, owners Don and Nancy Town hope to open it as a bed and breakfast by next summer.

The Towns purchased the property last year after finding it listed online on their wedding anniversary, and they've been busy with renovations ever since.

The lighthouse, which was once the brightest light on Lake Ontario, stands 65 feet tall and was in disrepair for many years until previous owners rebuilt and relit it



Provided by Don and Nancy Town

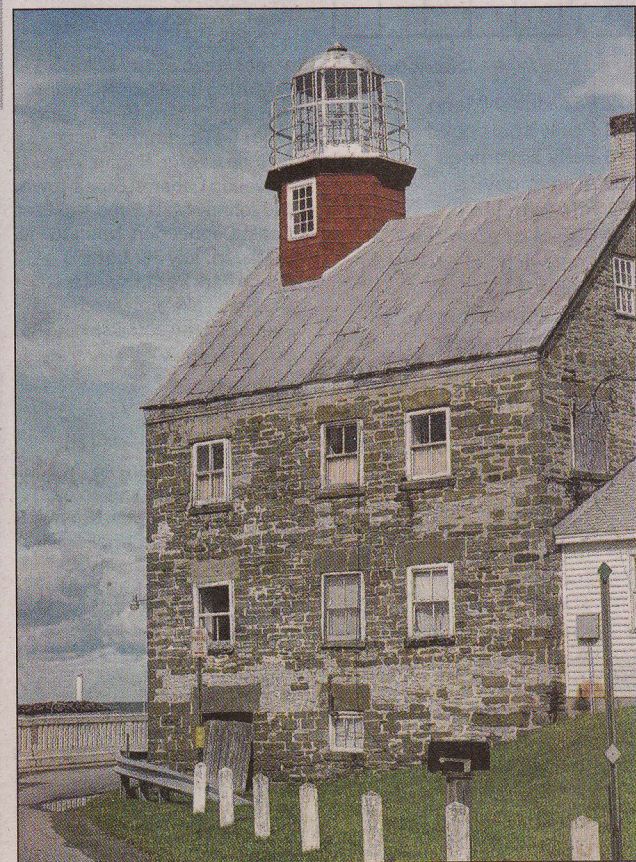
**The Braddock Point Lighthouse in Hilton is one of the few privately owned, working lighthouses. It's open for by-invitation-only tours.**

with the Coast Guard's approval in 1996. During remodeling, a beautiful glass octagon-shaped room was added, providing a 180-degree view of Lake Ontario.

The Towns are offering invitation-only tours of the lighthouse this sum-

mer. "It is a unique, beautiful property. It is one of the very few working lighthouses in existence that's privately owned," Don Town says. □

*Jinelle Shengulette is a Rochester freelance writer.*



File photo

**The Selkirk Lighthouse is notable because its light is part of the house instead of being in a separate**

## If you go:

### Sodus Bay Lighthouse Museum

7606 N. Ontario St.,  
Sodus Point, NY 14555  
(315) 483-4936  
www.sodusbaylighthouse.org.

Open through Oct. 31.  
10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. Closed Mondays except holidays.  
\$3 for ages 18 and older, \$1 for ages 11

to 17.

**Selkirk Lighthouse**  
6 Lake Extension Road,  
Pulaski, NY 13142  
(315) 298-6688  
www.salmonriverlighthousemarina.com

### Braddock Point Lighthouse

Clearview Avenue,  
Hilton, NY 14468  
www.lighthousefriends.com/  
light.asp?ID=303

## New museum

Groundbreaking for Oak Orchard Lighthouse Museum in Orleans County is set for Aug. 14, says Diana Jeffords, the museum vice president. The museum organization raised \$90,000 and received an \$85,000 matching grant in May. The original lighthouse was washed away in 1915. When the \$170,000 project is completed, it will include a