

## Fairport Harbor Breakwater Light Open House

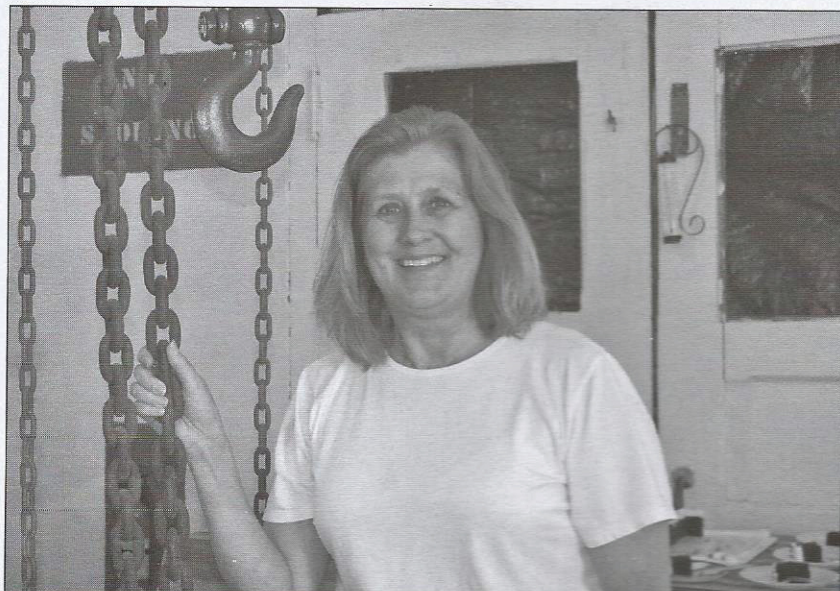
By Jackie M. Coleman

On Saturday, June 7th, the Fairport Harbor Breakwater Light was open for its 89th birthday. I finally accomplished my goal of climbing to the top. I set that goal when I first saw the breakwater light in 2000. The view from the top was worth climbing up onto the breakwater and making my way out to the breakwater light.

I asked the owner of the light, Sheila Consaul, a few questions about her plans for the Fairport Harbor Breakwater Light.

### *When did you purchase the light?*

Sheila: My first attempt to purchase the lighthouse was in 2009, when I lost to a local business owner, but he defaulted causing the lighthouse to go back on the auction block. In 2010, someone else from Texas bought it. He also defaulted. Then in 2011, I received an email from the General Services Administration (GSA) saying the lighthouse was going to auction again. I bid again in 2011, but was again outbid. However, when the winner that year defaulted, the GSA had made changes to the auction procedure to now give the second bidder the first right of refusal. I was the second highest bidder in that case,



Jackie M. Coleman

*Sheila Consaul successfully purchased the lighthouse in 2011 on her third attempt*

and was awarded the lighthouse in August 2011. I closed on it effective 11-1-11.

### *What made you think about buying a lighthouse?*

Sheila: I have renovated historic properties before and was looking for something unique for a summer home away from Washington, DC (where I live full time). I heard that govern-

ment-owned lighthouses were coming up for auction, so I started researching them and decided one would make a great summer home.

### *What are your long term plans for the light?*

Sheila: My long term plan for the lighthouse is to finish all the renovations and live in it periodically as a summer home. When I'm not there, I



Jackie M. Coleman

*While less than a quarter mile from shore, without a dock, everything has to be carried to the lighthouse across the rough stone breakwater.*





*Despite the current lack of running water, waste disposal and electricity, Sheila had just installed all the conveniences of a modern kitchen in the lighthouse.*

would like to rent it out via an online rental website.

***What improvements have you made since buying the light?***

Sheila: All of the improvements thus far have been on the inside. That includes repairing the cracking plaster walls, stripping, refinishing and repairing to full function all the original windows (eight) on the first floor. I

have also painted most of the interior walls and replaced eight of the nine windows on the second floor. Only one of the original windows on the second floor was intact enough to save. The others had to be replaced with historically accurate wooden, double-pane windows.

I have also installed a new kitchen complete with cabinets, granite island

counter top and standard appliances (which are not running due to the lack of running water and a permanent source of electricity). Much of the furniture has been moved in as well.

It's been quite the journey since I purchased the lighthouse and other than some small cash donations, the purchase and renovations have been entirely self-funded.

However, donations are always welcomed and people can donate by going to the [www.fairport-harbor-west-lighthouse.com](http://www.fairport-harbor-west-lighthouse.com) website. I've had great support from so many people in the community but particularly Dan Maxson from the Fairport Harbor Historical Society, Elaine Crane from Rider's Inn and the Mentor Home Depot.

***What is your plan for improvements this year and next year?***

Sheila: The remainder of this year (always dependent on the weather), I plan to finish painting as much of the inside as possible, move in additional furniture, have the second floor hardwood floors refinished and rewire the electrical panel in order to install outlets for the appliances.

***Are there volunteer opportunities?***

Sheila: Yes, there are several volunteer opportunities throughout the summer. I always need people who want to paint. They can contact me via email at [keeper@fairport-harbor-west-lighthouse.com](mailto:keeper@fairport-harbor-west-lighthouse.com) to see when the next time they can volunteer.

***Are there any planned events at the light for this year or next?***

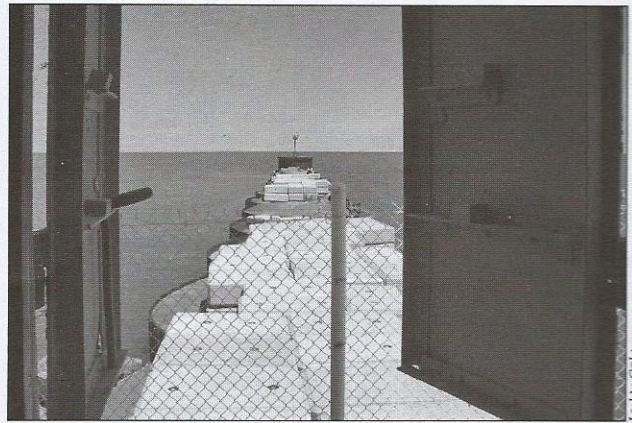
Sheila: I hold an annual Birthday Open House on/around the lighthouse's birthday on June 9. The light was first lit on June 9, 1925, so we celebrate that with cake and a birthday party. Otherwise, since the renovations are still ongoing, the only time people can come by is if they want to volunteer.





*Cast iron stairway leading to the second floor bedrooms*

Jackie Coleman



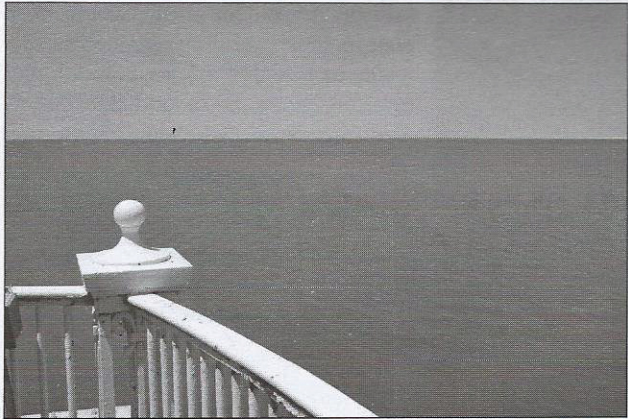
*View from the main floor out the breakwater to the north*

Jackie Coleman



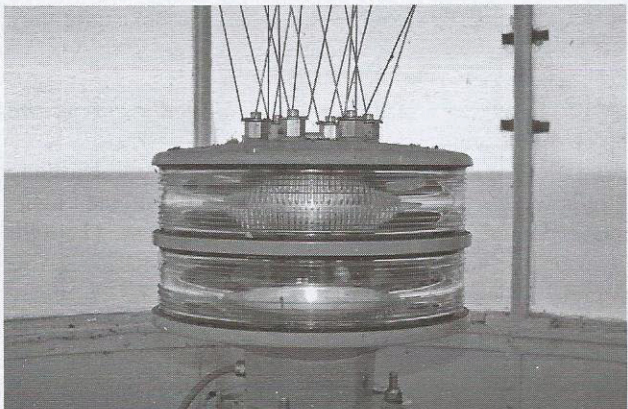
*Sheila has already begun restoration of the bedrooms*

Jackie Coleman



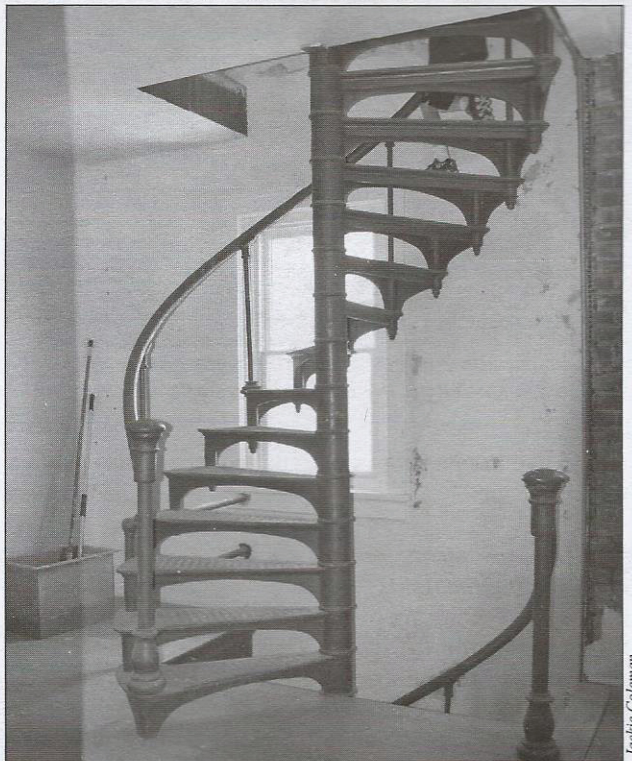
*Northerly view from the gallery out into Lake Erie*

Jackie Coleman



*Ubiquitous and efficient, the Sabik LED350 optic*

Jackie Coleman



*Stairs from the second floor up to the watch room*

Jackie Coleman

Jackie Coleman