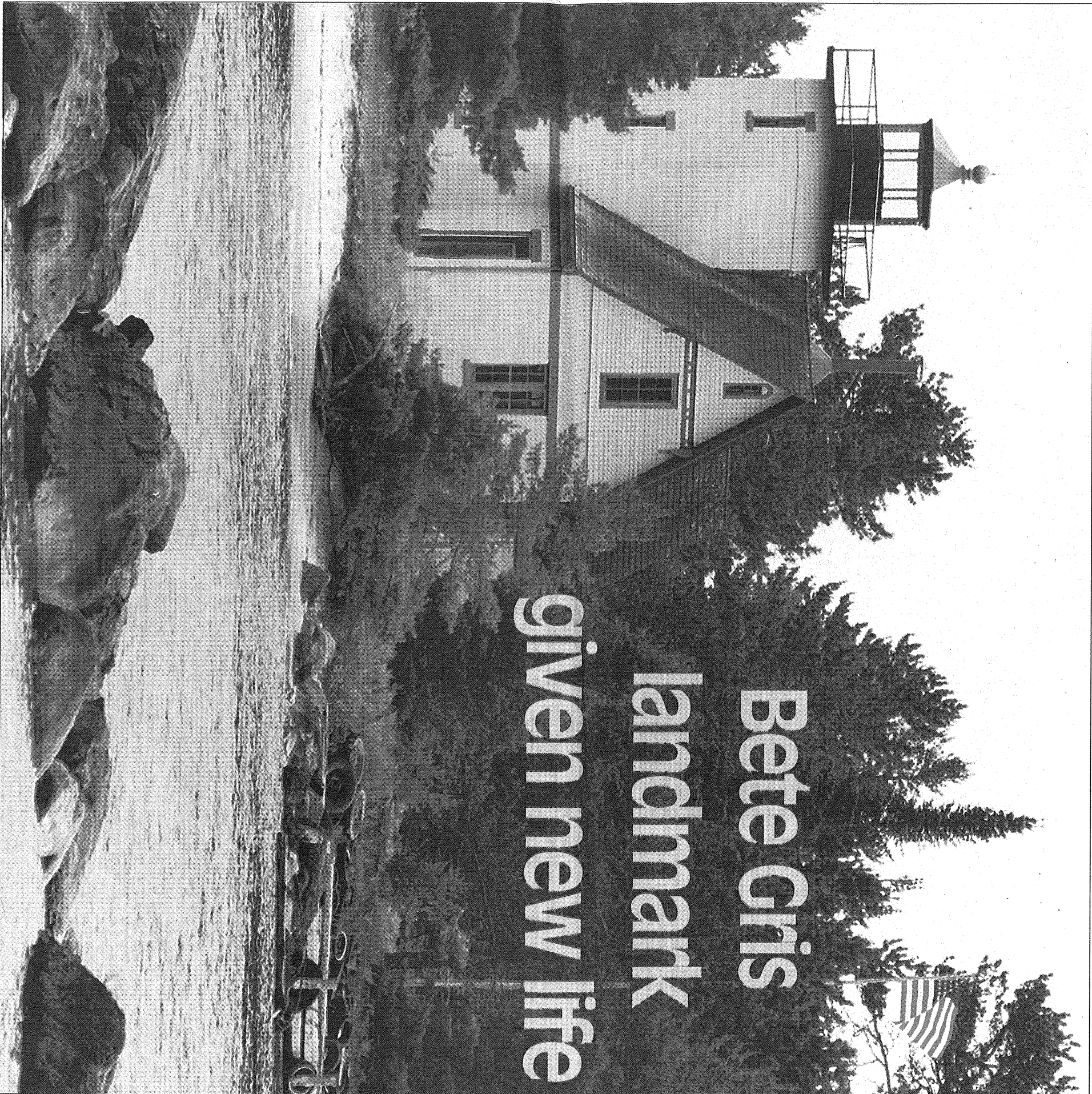


# Lighting the way



**Bete Gris  
landmark  
given new life**

■ **The Mendota comes  
back to life this weekend**  
Page 2

■ **Conservancy could  
preserve the Keweenaw**  
Page 3

■ **Old light comes home  
to shine at Mendota**  
Page 4

# Mendota re-lights the north shore

By PAULA PINTAR

Gazette Writer

**BETE GRIS** — Some 38 years after being decommissioned by the U.S. Coast Guard, the Mendota Lighthouse in Bete Gris is coming back to life.

"We really want to do this right," said Gary Kohs, a Birmingham business owner who bought the lighthouse last year and intends to establish a non-profit local land conservancy in its name. "It's all falling together like I never thought it could."

What's falling together is Kohs' plan to create one spectacular Mendota re-lighting event over the July 4 weekend, culminating in an open house and re-lighting ceremony Sunday, July 5.

Area residents, visitors and guests are invited to tour the refurbished lighthouse from 9 a.m. until Kohs flips the switch to re-light the Mendota right after dusk. Boats will be set up at the end of the Bete Gris road to ferry folks across the canal.

Kohs is restoring the lighthouse to its original state, when it shined its Fresnel Lens nearly 14 miles into Lake Superior beginning in 1895.

The picturesque lighthouse stands 44 feet high. Its fourth-order Fresnel lens — a medium-strength lighthouse lens popular during the 19th and early 20th centuries — will shine once again beginning this weekend.

Kohs had to hunt for the original Fresnel since it had been removed from the Mendota some years ago. He did locate it though and is having its prisms repaired before the re-lighting Sunday.

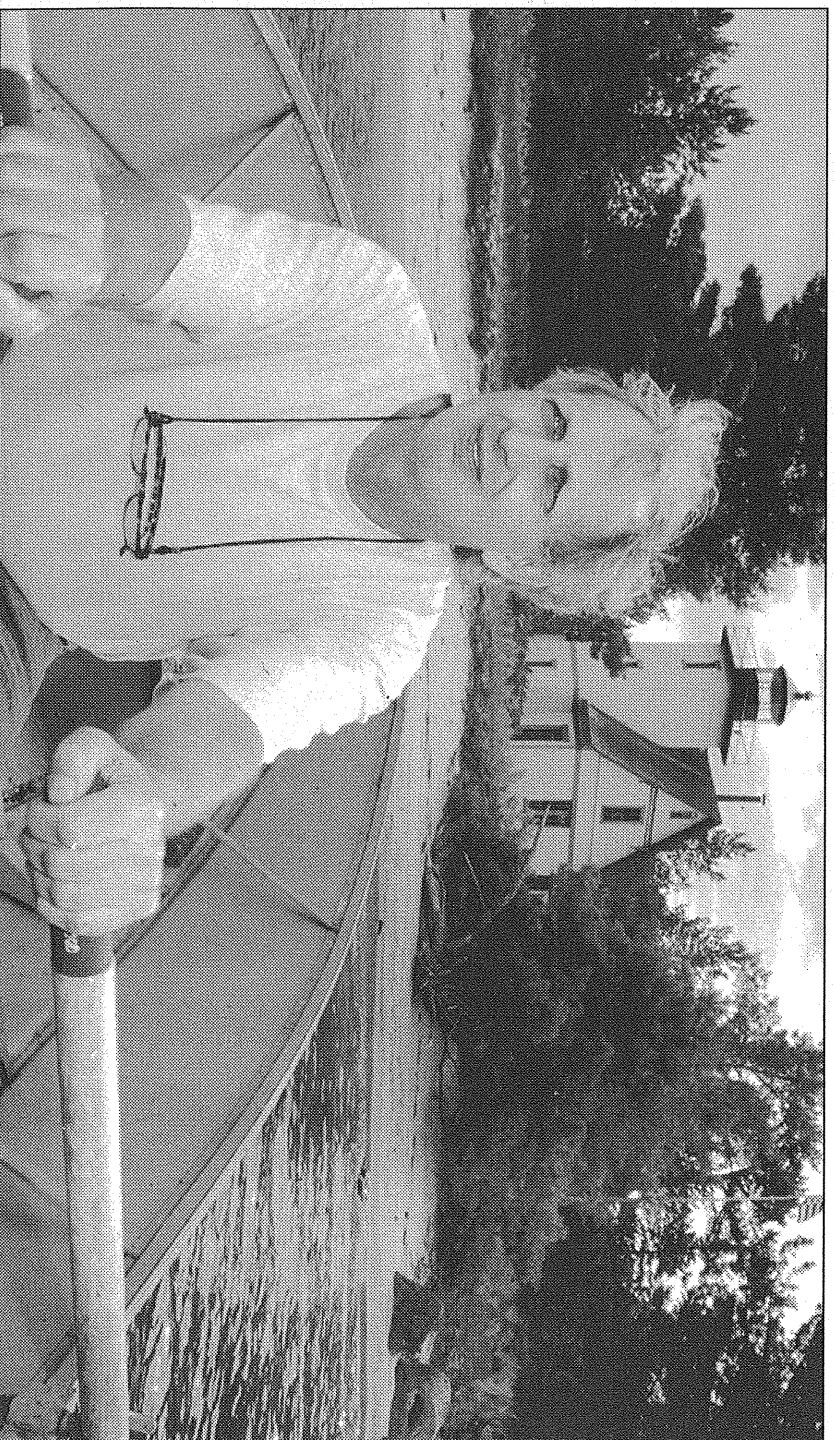
The Pittsburgh company making the repairs is using turn-of-the-century tools to restore the multi-prism lens.

"If I can make someone happy with our ability that's great," said Kim Zielinski, co-owner of Emerald Art Glass. "I'm just amazed at the ability my husband has to make things happen."

Other old-time touches to the lighthouse property include a wooden flagpole. The light's original flagpole was wooden, so Kohs went to mother nature for a new one.

"I was debarking balsam for the flag pole," Kohs said. "I had sap in my ears and in my eyes, and we have a 44-star flag for it."

Kohs hopes many locals will come to see the lighthouse, and he has a number of out-of-area visitors planning to attend the re-lighting, too. Kohs has invited visitors



George A. Leinonen/Daily Mining Gazette  
Gary Kohs rows across the canal to the lighthouse from Bete Gris. The short boat trip is the only way to get to the lighthouse.

from all over Europe to attend the ceremony.

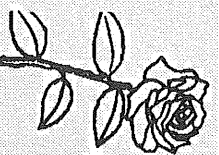
"We've got two from Switzerland, two from Germany, two from the United Kingdom and two from Italy," Kohs said. "...They're all people I know through business."

Kohs' Royal Oak business builds detailed models of such historic objects as the Edmund Fitzgerald. Many sell for more than \$10,000.

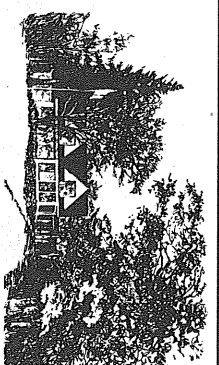
Kohs is enthusiastic about his lighthouse and other buildings on his property, such as a five-seater outhouse, including two lower seats for children, and an old barn that contains clues to the lighthouse's previous owners.

There's an old bathtub in the barn loft similar to the clawfoots seen in many older restored homes today. But the one Kohs has is wooden. So far, it has not been dated.

Kohs also has copies of the lighthouse logs with brief descriptions of life at the lighthouse 100 years ago.



*The  
Summer  
Place*



*Overlooking beautiful Portage Lake*  
Serving Monday - Saturday from 5:00 p.m.

**Famous For Great Steaks**  
**Seafood, Italian and Ribs**

*Casual or elegant...Come as you are!*  
U.S. 41...just 5 minutes south of Houghton  
Reservations appreciated but not necessary • 523-4848

Page 2, The Daily Mining Gazette

But re-lighting the lighthouse is not where Kohs' ambitions stop.

While restoring the lighthouse and attempting to keep the nearby lots from development, Kohs is attempting to establish a non-profit Mendota Conservancy that would sell products assembled in Keweenaw. Funds would be used to purchase additional land for the conservancy. The goal is to keep the land in its pristine state.

## Ojibwa Casino Motel



**\$40\***



**Room Rate**

**Sunday through Thursday only**

Room includes \$20 casino package

(Up to 2 packages per room. \*Deluxe & king rooms excluded. Some restrictions apply.)

**Non-Stop Steak Week**

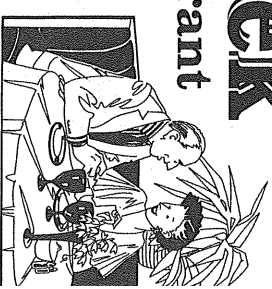
**in the Bears' Den Restaurant**

**Our Steak Week Dinner**

**promotion has been extended!**

Every steak dinner purchased receives a free casino package. (1 package per customer)

Bears' Den Hours: Sunday-Thursday 7:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.; Friday & Saturday 7:00 a.m.-Midnight  
Check Out Our Daily Specials & All You Can Eat Lunch & Dinner Buffets!



**OJIBWA**  
CASINO • RESORT  
BARAGA, MICHIGAN  
1-800-323-8045

Casino, Restaurant, Motel, Bowling, Bar, Music  
M-38 one mile west of US-41 • Call for information and reservations • Bus tours welcome  
(906) 353-7611 • 1-800-323-8045

Lighting the way

## Lighting the way

# Proposed conservancy would preserve Keweenaw

By KURT HAUGLIE

Gazette Writer

BETE GRIS — Gary Kohs thinks much of the beautiful land in Keweenaw County is in danger of being sold off for development within the next five years, leading to condominiums and off-limits signs.

"That's going to change the entire face of the Keweenaw for the worst," Kohs said. In order to keep at least a small part of the county from such development, Kohs, a downstate Birmingham entrepreneur, is proposing that a conservancy be established in conjunction with the Mendota Lighthouse he owns at Bete Gris.

The purpose of the non-profit conservancy would be to acquire land which would be preserved in its natural state or developed "intelligently," he said. Any development would not destroy the beauty of the area.

"The choice land up there deserves to be saved and not sold to the highest bidder," Kohs said. "The conservancy could steer this in the right direction."

Kohs said in order to keep the conservancy sensitive to the needs of the area, it would have a board of directors made up of area residents and business people, not government officials. The board would be responsible for deciding which pieces of land the conservancy should try to buy.

Most of the land in Keweenaw County is owned by Lake Superior Land Company of Calumet, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Champion International. Kohs

said he has been talking with Champion about being a part of the conservancy and he feels good about what they are saying.

"If you can get Champion to come to the party, that much better," he said.

Lake Superior Land Company President Don Schwandt, said Champion has yet to commit to the idea.

"At this point, it's just an idea," Schwandt said.

Although Kohs won't comment on his conversations with Champion, he said the company could benefit from being part of a conservancy.

"We have something significant to offer Champion," he said. "What we have to offer in the form of public relations is worth something."

Kohs said he thinks the giant paper company could benefit from an affiliation with an organization that is saving land, trees and ecosystems.

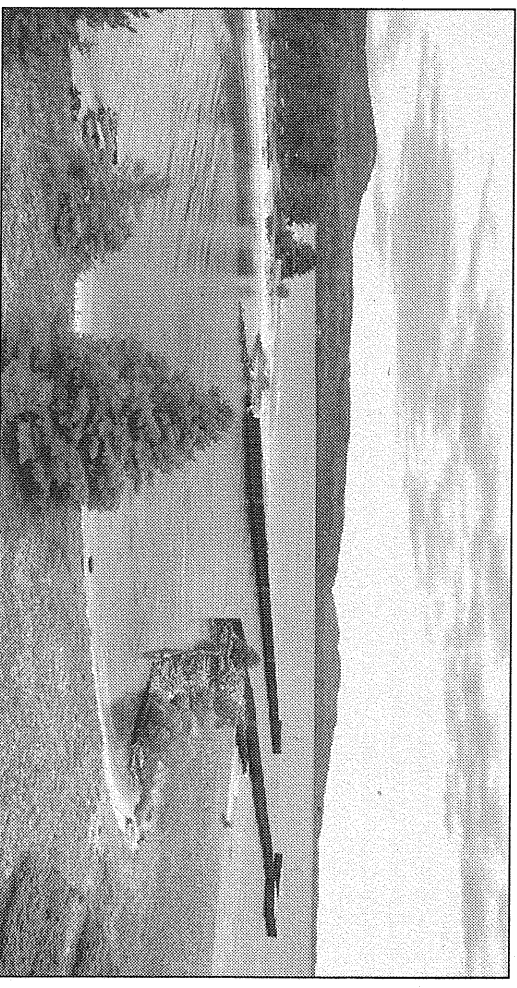
The land for the conservancy would have to be purchased from Lake Superior Land and Champion, Kohs said. He knows corporations don't donate land very often anymore.

"Those days are over," he said.

Kohs said the amount of land protected by a conservancy is yet to be determined.

"It's as much land as can possibly be saved ...," he said. "I'm hopeful of getting the community involved and then the board would decide."

To fund the conservancy, Kohs wants to develop a company that would produce



George A. Leinonen/Daily Mining Gazette

This is the view from the lens room at the Mendota Lighthouse. Lightkeepers for years watched out on the big lake, calmed in the Bete Gris bay to the left, but often angry and unforgiving as it spreads out to the horizon on the right. The land on the far side of the channel is owned by Champion International through its wholly-owned subsidiary Lake Superior Land Co., and is land Kohs envisions held in trust through a conservancy.

high-quality items, such as models of the lighthouse and other things representative of the area, like children's sleighs and wagons and canoe chairs.

The items would either be made entirely in the Keweenaw by local residents or assembled there from components made elsewhere. The items would be listed in a catalog which would be sent all over the world.

Kohs is familiar with this type of business. He owns a fine art model company that does business around the world.

He said the Mendota conservancy is so unique that people have contacted him asking for a written outline to use for conservancies they have in mind.

"I think this could be a model," he said. "Somebody should make a run at it to save the land."

BEFORE OR AFTER YOU VISIT THE

## MENDOTA LIGHTHOUSE

Be Sure To Stop In At

# The Landing

At Lac La Belle

And Check Out Our Great Food & Beautiful View!

Full Service Menu - Open 8 A.M. - 10 P.M.

★ Breakfast 8 A.M. - 11:45 A.M.

★ Lunch-Appetizers & Homemade Pizzas

Starting At Noon To 10 P.M. ★ Dinner 4 P.M. - 10 P.M.

- Convenience Store - Gas - Beer - Munchies -

289-4293

## Lighting the way

# Journal entries tell tale of hardship, loneliness at Mendota outpost

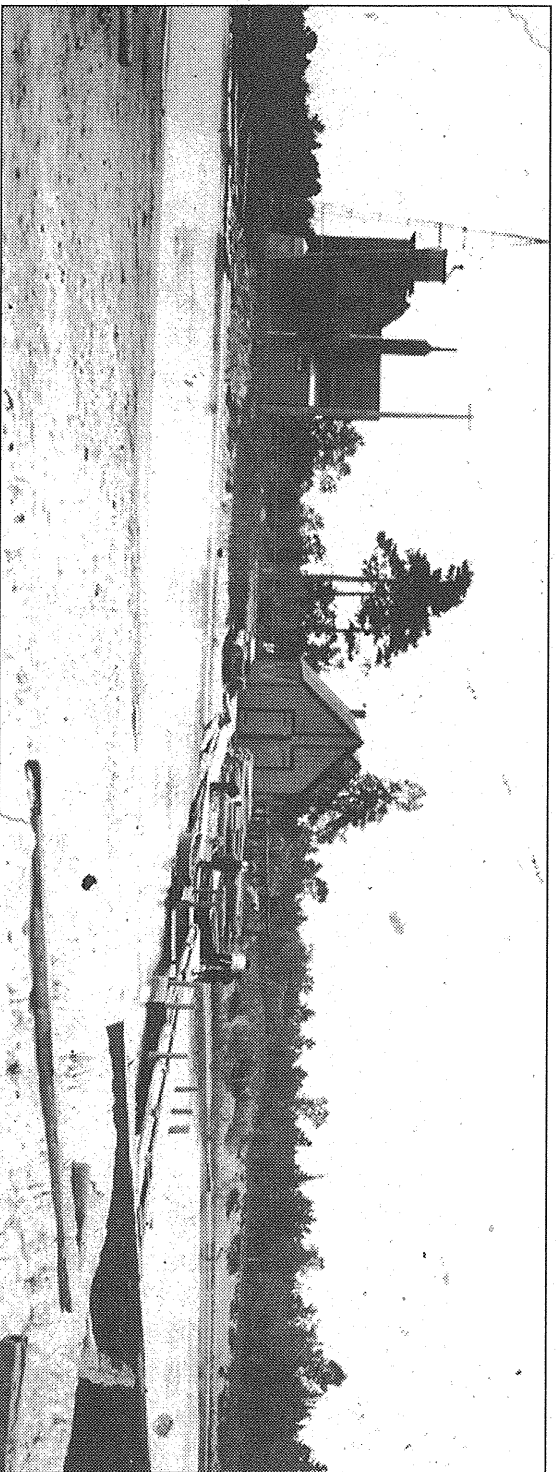


Photo Courtesy Waino Anderson  
The Mendota lighthouse in a picture taken about 1930. Visitors to the northern light were able to cross the canal on a long dock.

Journal of light-house station at Mendota, Michigan, William G. Jilbert, keeper in charge

Nov. 20, 1895 — I arrived at the Station 11 a.m. Wind, NW light Snow squalls. Mr. Todd finished setting lens and revolving apparatus in the Tower.

Nov. 24, 1895 — Mr. Smith and niece left this morning 9 a.m. for Marquette. Could do no more on account of cold weather.

Nov. 25, 1895 — Started Light in the Tower for the first time. Apparatus worked good but had to wind clock every hour through the night. A lump left in the flue, could not wind more than 6 to 8 ft. Very lonesome here all alone.

Nov. 28, 1895 — Thanksgiving, very lonesome. Had dinner over at William Bergs, rabbit stew and soup. Very nice.

Nov. 30, 1895 — Went over to Lac La Bell for mail. Tramped through about 10 inches of snow all the way through the woods. Got two letters from home, one from the Inspector with table length of night. Revolving apparatus works. Have removed the hindrance from hoisting it up higher. Will run for 5 hours now.

Dec. 1, 1895 — Closed the Station for the season. Laid up lens and left for Marquette 11 a.m. Snow storm.

March 26, 1896 — Arrived at Station to prepare for opening of navigation.

April 21, 1896 — Started light for season. Have seen no boat yet. Navigation all open here a.m.; N.W. snow p.m..

April 23, 1896 — A heavy east wind all day. Rain in evening. Had first fresh fish of season caught by Willie Berg.

April 25, 1896 — I saw the Stannard Rock Light last night, the 24th. Very plain. Have not seen any boats as yet pass.

April 27, 1896 — Set nets in the lake, the first fisherman for the spring 7 a.m.

April 29, 1896 — Lac La Bell all clear of ice. Will Berg went through to the head of the lake this morning. Very stormy weather. East wind. Blowing a gale off the lake.

April 30, 1896 — Very stormy and cold East gale. Blowing off the lake for 3 days. During past month I have oiled all equipment. Finished work in rooms downstairs and up. Have cleaned lens, clockwork. Painted tower inside. Painted floor in one room upstairs. Cleaned stove. Cleaned windows inside house. Oiled sash. Shoveled out sand and made cellar under kitchen. Put floor and shelves and stairs in cellar. Have cut wood to keep two stoves going to dry out dwelling after winter months. Cleaned and raked up grounds

about house, etc.

May 18, 1914 — Painting clothes closet. Cleaning up about reserve.

May 19, 1914 — Painting and scraping dining room.

May 20, 1914 — Went to Delaware and Mandan taking school census. Heard Eagle Harbor fog signal.

May 21, 1914 — Painting dining room walls and ceiling.

May 22, 1914 — Painting and oiling dining room.

May 23, 1914 — Station in good condition. Oiled furniture.

May 24, 1914 — Launch Rambler went into Lac La Bell for sawdust.

May 25, 1914 — Baby drowned in river this 5 p.m. (Eunice, at 18 months, the the youngest daughter of William Jilbert and his wife)

May 26, 1914 — Found baby in river near school house this 4:30 a.m.

May 27, 1914 — Mr. Clary, Miss Tucker and Mr. Gelder stayed at station. Miss Lynch and Bessie came down from Calumet this p.m.

May 28, 1914 — Went to Eagle Harbor this a.m. to bury our child Eunice. Returned this 5 p.m.

May 29, 1914 — Planted six beds of berries this p.m. Sawing stove wood.

May 30, 1914 — Decoration day. Station in good condition.

May 31, 1914 — Bessie and Mrs. Lynch left for Calumet this 2 p.m.

August 14, 1919 — Mrs. Jilbert left for Calumet, dumped can of oil.

August 15, 1919 — Cleaning brass, etc.

August 16, 1919 — Station in good condition. About 6 p.m. Jessie Sullivan, 12 years old, was accidentally drowned near the Station. Recovered the body and sent to Hancock this 11 p.m. by Dr. Allen. Coroner Bowden of Eagle River come over to hold inquest.

August 17, 1919 — Harry and Gertrude left for Hancock to attend funeral of Jessie Sullivan.

August 18, 1919 — Telephone working again today.

August 19, 1919 — Cleaning tower windows, fixing tower door hinges. Miss Jilbert and Harry returned from Calumet this p.m.

August 20, 1919 — Splitting stove wood.

August 21, 1919 — Cleaning lamps.

August 22, 1919 — Splitting wood, cleaning boathouse, etc.

August 23, 1919 — Station in good condition. Moved from summer kitchen to dwelling.

August 24, 1919 — Mr. McAuley of Hancock and party visited station.

August 25, 1919 — Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Mitchell of Hoton visited station.

August 26, 1919 — Miss Healy and Kennedy of Detroit visited station.

August 10, 1927 — Mrs. Gus Phillips of Calumet, Mrs. McAuley of Calumet and party from Detroit visited Station. Mrs. Adams of New York called at station.

August 11, 1927 — Picking berries.

August 12, 1927 — Picking berries.

August 13, 1927 — Station in good condition. Picking berries. Mr. and Mrs. Woodward, Mr. Tessie and Gertrude came down to spend the weekend.

August 14, 1927 — Miss Emma Vaden, St. Thomas, Ontario; Miss Ellen Ford, Calumet; Miss Mary Swift, Houghton; Miss Charlotte Adams, New York; Mrs. Annie Rowe, Laurium; Mrs. Griffin, Houghton visited station; Mrs. Shea, Houghton visited station; Mr. and Mrs. Woodward, Mr. Tilden, Gertrude and Philip left for Hoton this 9:30 p.m.

August 15, 1927 — Miss Tyna Meyers, Laurium; John Meyers; Laurium; Harry Mitchell, Laurium; Robert Robinson, Laurium; Wallace Teddy; Laurium; visited station. Helped Bradshaw left nets this a.m.

September 23, 1933 — Bar 28.98 LBV Nothing of importance.

September 24, 1933 — Bar 29.20 LBV Regular duties.

September 25, 1933 — Bar 28.80 LBSE Heavy storm of rain last night. A deer crossed the reserve and swam across the canal.

September 26, 1933 — Bar 29.20 MVW Crew from Arawanthe here for furniture and Gov. stuff. Tearing down weather tower. Supt L. P. Dillon here all day. This is the last entry for this station — May Be Forever.



## FRESH & SMOKED FISH

Trout • Whitefish • Smoked Fish Spread  
Chubs • Herring • Shrimp

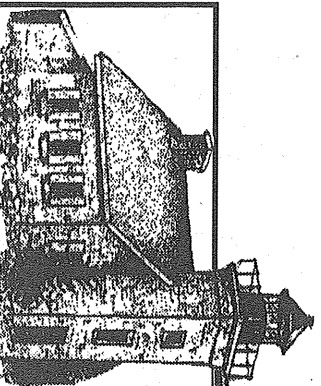
**FRESH FISH DAILY**  
Direct From Lake Superior

### Peterson's Fish Market

Hwy 41, Quincy Hill - Across from Quincy Mine Shaft

482-2343

Monday-Saturday: 10:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.



## Copper Harbor Lighthouse

A tour of the Copper Harbor Lighthouse is one of those don't miss attractions of Michigan. This year celebrating its 150th anniversary, is the opening of a new maritime museum at the lighthouse. The tour includes a fully restored lighthouse, boat rides, maritime museum, walking trails, spectacular views, even agate hunting, if you like.

Leaving hourly from the  
Copper Harbor Marina

10 am to 5 pm 7 days a week  
Adults \$11.00 12 and under \$6.00

Sunset Cruises  
Check for times

### Lighthouse Gift Store

Located at Copper Harbor Marina

For more information call  
289-4966 or 289-4215

# Old light brings new delight at Mendota



Photo Courtesy Gary Kohs

Gary Kohs, center, and his finished Fresnel lens with Emerald Art Glass employees. The light is the centerpiece of Kohs' Mendota Lighthouse, and will shine again in its former home beginning Sunday.

By PAULA PINTAR

Gazette Writer

**BETTE GRIS** — A Bette Gris treasure is coming back to the Copper Country.

Mendota Lighthouse owner Gary Kohs set out on a one-man mission to find the original Fresnel (pronounced fray-nel) lens that flashed the light of the Mendota toward the end of the 19th century.

"I say it isn't a lighthouse without a Fresnel lens," Kohs said.

Kohs, of downstate Birmingham, plans to re-light the lighthouse during a week-end-long open house July 4, 5 and 6.

With help from the staff at the Whitefish Point museum in Paradise, Kohs located the lens in the basement of a house owned by a Sault Ste. Marie man.

"I was blown away," Kohs said. "It's like a giant bauble."

He traded a highly detailed model of the Edmund Fitzgerald for the lens from his company, Fine Art Models of Royal Oak. Once Kohs had the lens in hand, he had to repair it. Some 75 percent of it was damaged, and, with the Fresnel no longer used, it seemed there was no one who could fix it.

Then Kohs came across Robert and Kim Zielinski of Emerald Art Glass in Pittsburg.

"We thrive on challenge," Kim said. "This is the first lens to be repaired in-house to this extent, but it is similar to

other customized specialty work we have performed in the past."

The Zielinskis found that to restore the lens, old technology was better than new.

"We have turn-of-the-century equipment such as steel wheels and grinding stones that are an integral part of the reproduction process," Robert said.

Repairs on the lens are expected to be complete by July 4.

"For me, it's the history thing," Kohs said. "The lens was built 100 years ago, and now we have a way to make it perfect and put it into service."

The Fresnel was invented by the French physicist Augustin Fresnel early in the 19th century with the first one mounted in a French lighthouse in 1822.

The lenses came in seven orders. The higher orders were the weakest and were used in bay and river lighthouses. The first order was the strongest with more than 1,000 prisms, standing 10 to 12 feet tall and used in major lighthouse towers.

The Mendota's fourth-order Fresnel, designed for use in coastal and harbor lighthouses, will once again shine its light nearly 14 miles into Lake Superior.

While a steady light shines through the revolving Fresnel lens, it is perceived as a flashing light.

Visitors to the open house will have a chance to take a close-up look at the lens.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE  
MENDOTA LIGHTHOUSE**

★ **ANTIQUES** ★  
★ **DEPRESSION GLASS** ★  
★ **EXCELLENT WORK BY LOCAL ARTISTS** ★  
★ **NICE SELECTION OF MINING MEMORABILIA** ★

2 blocks off U.S. 41  
across from Village Park  
Ahmeek, MI  
(906) 337-1961

**HOURS:**  
Mon.-Sat. 10 am-7 pm  
Sun. 10 am-5 pm

True  
North  
Gallery

TRUE NORTH  
GALLERY

**NORTH WIND  
BOOKS**

*Specializing in the history and literature of the upper midwest.  
Lighthouse Books*

Saturday, July 4 - Fly-tying and fly-casting demonstration, 1-4 p.m.  
Sunday, July 5 - Video & author signing on  
"Snorkeling Michigan's Inland Lakes", 1-4 p.m.

**Shop open every day 10-5 during July & August.**  
**Marina Road, Eagle Harbor**  
906-289-4911

**It's not just finding a house. It's fulfilling a dream.**

**EXQUISITE HOME-OVER 200 FT. ON PORTAGE LAKE!** So many great features: 4 BR, cathedral ceilings, decking, fireplace, central air, sunny kitchen & 2 1/2 car att. garage. Also, a 48 ft. dock & shore station. Privacy & beauty on almost 3 acres! It's a **Must See!** Dollar Bay. \$325,000. #80030

**Century 21 North Country Agency**  
www.c21-nca.com E-mail: c21nca@up.net

1100 Century Way, Suite C  
Houghton, MI 49931  
(906) 462-0001

1175 Calumet Avenue, Suite A  
Calumet, MI 49913  
(906) 337-0021

731 E. Broad Street  
Lansing, MI 48946  
(906) 524-2121

**Century 21**

©1998 Century 21 Real Estate Corporation® and ™ trademark and servicemark of Century 21 Real Estate Corporation. Each office is independently owned and operated. Equal Housing Opportunity.

## Lighting the way

# Into the dark

By BETH KAMPSCHROB

Gazette Writer

**BETTE GRIS** — After a lighthouse is decommissioned it doesn't have to become still and dark forever. It can have a new life as a residence, without all the worry about the light.

"My father bought the lighthouse in 1956," said Gordon Jaaskelainen, 67.

"We would spend the summers there," Gordon's parents, Helmo (Paddy) and Margaret Jaaskelainen, owned the Mendota Lighthouse for 40 years.

"My father worked hard to maintain the lighthouse at a time when most lighthouses were left to ruin," said Paddy's daughter, Jacqueline Jaaskelainen.

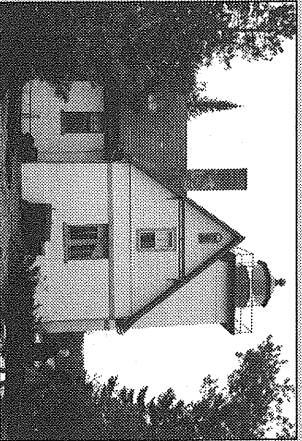
The Keweenaw man was a fixture at the lighthouse.

"He not only was the caretaker of the lighthouse, he was the caretaker of lives," Jacque said. "Paddy rescued many a stranded boater and saved two men from drowning. If he saw a boater going out over-loaded with children he would insist that the children all have life jackets."

The reason the lighthouse was decommissioned in the first place had to do with the Army Corps of Engineers.

The Corps got permission from Congress to build a harbor of refuge at Bete Gris. After a breakwall was built, the Corps decided that Mendota wasn't adequate, according to Dave Riser, 1st class quartermaster U.S. Coast Guard at Office of Aids to Navigation at the 9th Coast Guard District in Cleveland, Ohio.

"It was too far away from the actual breakwall," said Riser. The light from Mendota couldn't illuminate the breakwall, so the Corps decommissioned it.



The Mendota today.

# ...And back to the light again

By KURT HAUGLIE

Gazette Writer

**BETTE GRIS** — Something unusual is happening to the long unused Mendota Lighthouse at Bete Gris - it's being re-lit.

Built in 1895 to guide ships into the Lac La Belle canal, it was decommissioned in 1960. It sat idle and decaying until 1997 when it was purchased by Detroit-area businessman Gary Kohs who wants to bring it back to its former glory.

"My intentions were to restore the lighthouse and buildings to their original 1895 condition and preserve them for at least the next three generations," Kohs said. "The restoration is under way and a plan for the preservation is in place."

The re-lighting ceremony is scheduled for July 5.

Although the U.S. Coast Guard will have nothing to do with the operation of the lighthouse, there is no problem with it being put back into use, said Lt. Commander Bob Desh of the 9th Coast Guard District in Cleveland. He oversees all aids to navigation in the Great Lakes.

"We wholeheartedly support the re-lighting of this lighthouse," Desh said.

Desh said there are still more than 100 major lighthouses on the Great Lakes. The Coast Guard reviews all aids to navigation every five years - from buoys to lighthouses - to determine which ones should be kept and which should be decommissioned.

Lighthouses are being re-lit for their history and nostalgia, which is fine with the Coast Guard since they don't have the money to do it.

"We enjoy seeing them re-lit," Desh said. "We're not funded to be historical preservationists."

Kohs said that he is so sincere about the lighthouse project that he is spending a lot of money to get it going again.

"We've invested in a very high-tech lighting source for it, he said."

That lighting system is solid-state electronics within the original Fresnel lens, Kohs said. It will flash its four 1000-hour light bulbs every 20 seconds. The system is self-monitoring.

"If one bulb burns out, the next one ratchets up automatically and calls you up and tells you," he said. "It does the same if the electricity goes out."

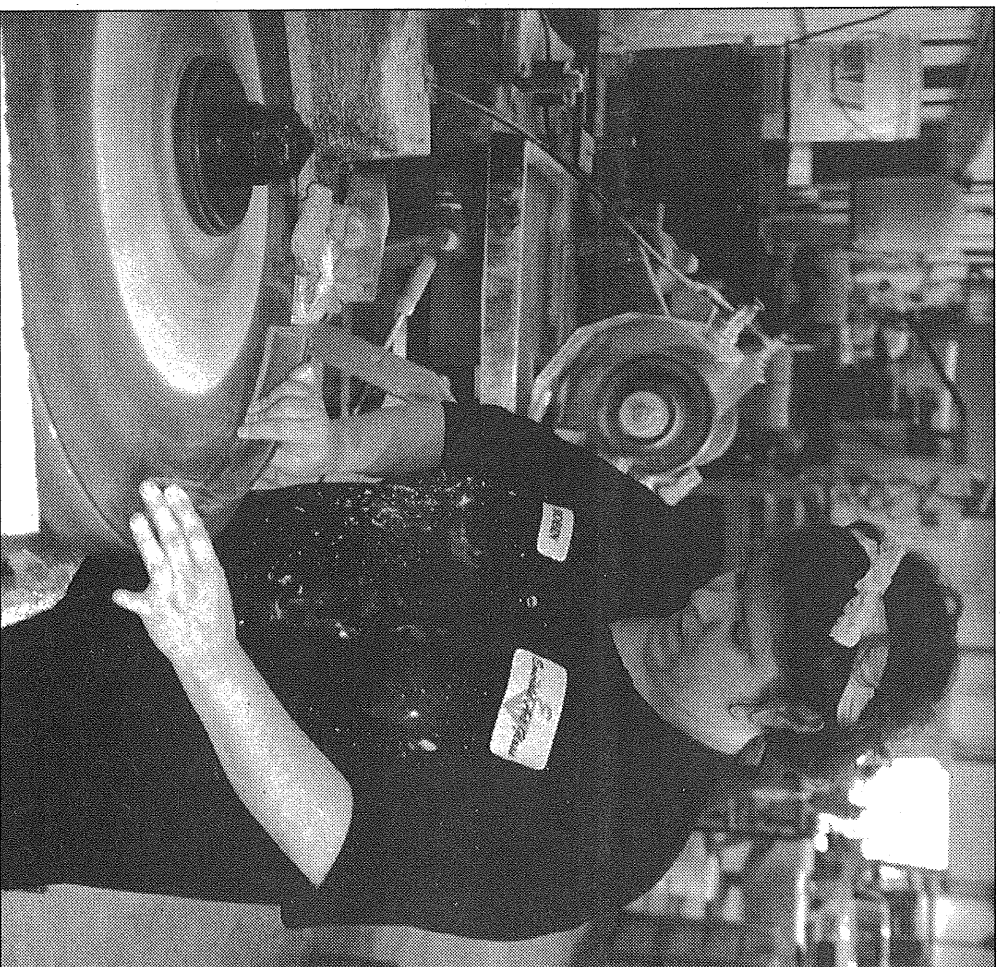
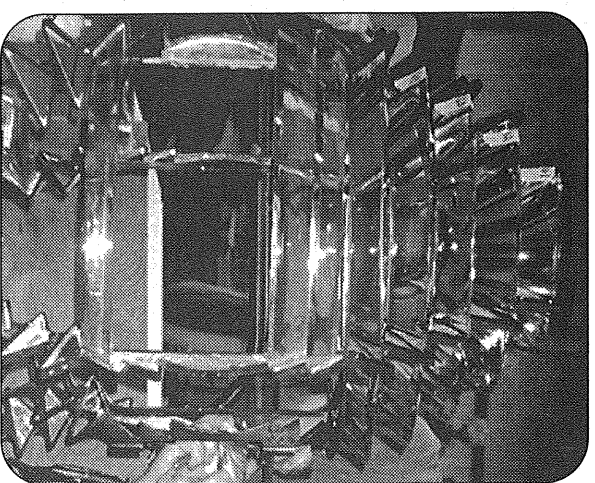
Kohs said he intends to make a long-term commitment to the lighthouse and

won't abandon it soon after it's turned on again.

"We intend to keep it lit 12 months a year," he said. "I plan to keep it on the rest of my life."

Photos courtesy Gary Kohs

Right, the Fresnel lens is ready to be repositioned at the Mendota Lighthouse after renovations by the Emerald Art Glass crew. Below, Robin From Emerald Art Glass polishes a lens element in preparation for the re-lighting.



## Keweenaw Peninsula Lighthouse

### Second Edition Afghan

This beautiful custom Afghan is a warm gift idea that is sure to become a treasured heirloom.

The Keweenaw Peninsula Lighthouse Afghan is offered exclusively by:

**LEO'S STORE**

M-26, 65 Third Street  
Laurium, Michigan 49913

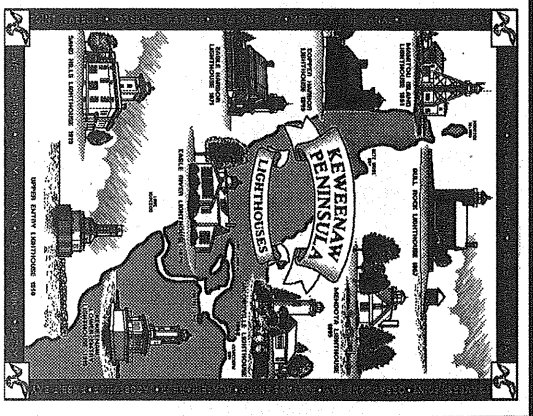
(906) 337-4403

and

**LAKES PHARMACY**

220 Calumet Street  
Lake Linden, Michigan 49945

(906) 296-6341

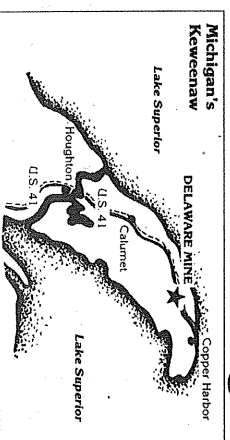


## DELAWARE COPPER MINE

In the Historic ghost town of  
**Delaware, Michigan.**  
Located 12 miles south of Copper Harbor  
and 38 miles north of Houghton on U.S. 41.

## CONGRATULATIONS

### On The Re-commissioning Of Mendota



Lighthouse

# Lighthouse shines on the Web

By **BETH KAMPFSCHORR**  
Gazette Writer

**BETE GRIS** — Thanks to the Internet, people can visit the Mendota Lighthouse whether they live in Copper Harbor or Cairo.

Owner Gary Kohs is planning a website that will be ready July 4 at mendotalighthouse.com. This site will be unique in that it uses something called "videostreaming," which is basically a live broadcast of what's happening at the lighthouse. Kohs is installing two weatherproof cameras underneath the lighthouse platform, which is 44 feet off the ground.

"You're right there at that moment," he said.

Len Bergenstein, Jr., president of North Stream Communications, is working out the problems with the cameras.

"That's the biggest challenge — cameras that work under these conditions," he said. "It needs to be safe from moisture, heat and cold."

The rewards will be great once everything works, he said.

"For educational purposes, to have the ability to see meteorological data and seeing the different areas up there at different seasons, day or night (will be unique)," Bergenstein said.

One camera will point at Lake Superior. Another camera will be focused on Mendota Canal, which the light once identified for Lake Superior shipping traffic.

"There's a method to our madness, isn't there?" Kohs said, laughing. The Detroit-area businessman is in the process of establishing a non-profit conservancy that would protect land surrounding the light.

"What we're trying to do is turn this (website) into a conservancy tool because before people know it, their land is all going to be gone and they'll say 'what happened?'" Kohs said. "I'm not against development, but you can't sell off your left arm for a tax base."

The lighthouse, the conservancy and the website will be used to promote the Keweenaw, Kohs said. The website will have links to things to do and see and places to stay while visiting the peninsula.

"If an establishment is supporting the conservancy, then they should benefit if people come up to enjoy what's being saved," Kohs said. "I think it could be huge for the Keweenaw, and all good."

One local who is involved in the website is Kirk Yarina, who is in charge of web con-

nections at Baraga Telephone Company.

"(Kohs) is a real interesting guy," Yarina said. "I regularly run into people who have big plans, but he has the wherewithal to actually accomplish the things he wants to do. He's got the kind of personality to get things done. I'm impressed with the guy."

Present-day Copper Country will not be the only thing the website covers. The past will be represented too, in the form of the lighthouse's old logs.

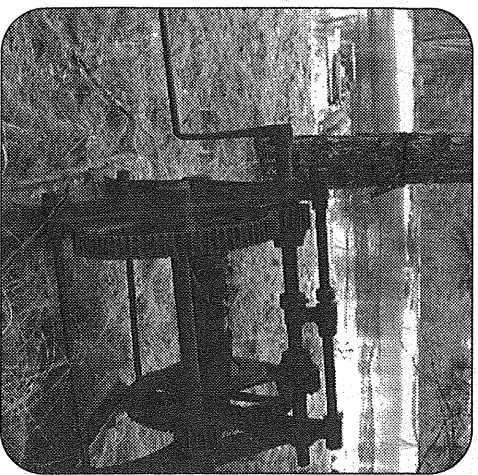
Kohs has all the logs, from 1895 to 1933. A visitor entering the site can read today's log and then click on an icon to read the entry from 100 years ago, he said.

"Some of the entries are very poignant," said Kohs, citing one example from the 19th century that read, "Very lonely here."

The site also will have a weather station. Dial in and you'll see the temperature, the wind chill ("Something good to know up there," said Kohs), barometric pressure, rainfall, snowfall, wind speed, degrees Fahrenheit and Celsius, dewpoint temperature, and the heat index temperature.

"Each one of these will have a graph showing what's happened in the last 24 hours," Kohs said. Visitors also will see information from the previous month or year.

"This is all non-profit, have-some-fun, do-something-good type of thing," Kohs said.



Marshall Anderson/Daily Mining Gazette  
This is one of several old winches that was used to pull boats across the canal at Bete Gris. The winch is one of many implements that dot the grounds at the Mendota Lighthouse.

## Congratulations To The MENDOTA LIGHTHOUSE

From  
**Bill and Mary**

at the

**SAND HILLS LIGHTHOUSE**  
5 Mile Point Ahmeek, MI **337-1744**

Lighthouse

## It's a party, and you're all invited

By **VANESSA DIETZ**

Gazette Writer

**HOUGHTON** — The doors to the Keweenaw will open to the world for Independence Day travelers celebrating the revival of the Mendota Lighthouse.

Owner Gary Kohs of downstate Birmingham said friends from across the country and from Europe will be on hand to witness the event.

"I'm really looking forward to it," said Uwe Lachna of Hamburg, Germany. A friend of Kohs' and editor of Model Magazine, Lachna will head to the World Expo in Toronto afterwards.

"I think (Kohs) has a tremendous success. In some respects, he is a kind of artist. He has very good taste," Lachna said.

David McComb, a business consultant from Bolton Landing, N.Y., has helped Kohs research models for the project and is looking forward to making his first trek to the Upper Peninsula.

"I suspect there's nothing like the

Keweenaw Peninsula," he said. "There's no need for lighthouses," at his Lake George residence.

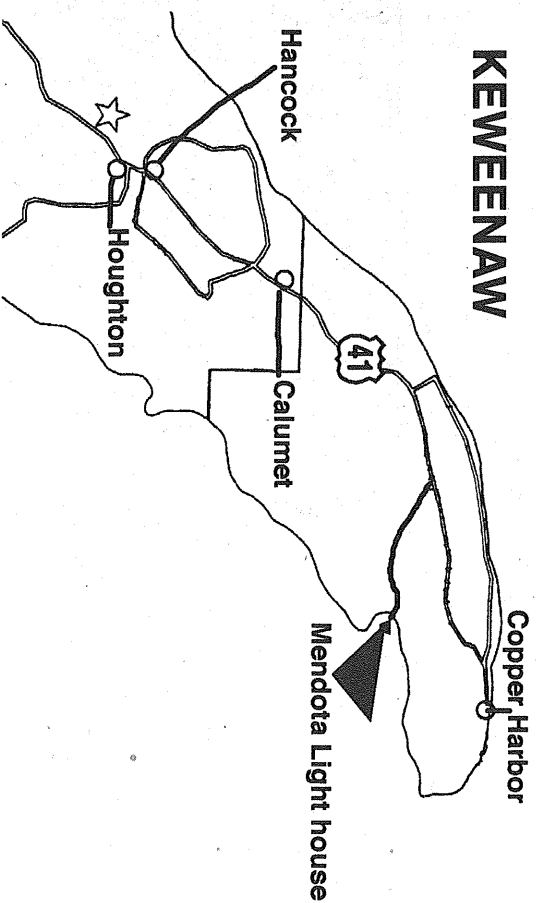
"Preserving (the Mendota Lighthouse) is a fabulous idea ... richly deserving of support," he said. McComb is looking forward to seeing the Fresnel lens that is to be in reinstalled and re-lit.

"This will be a piece of jewelry from which the light comes. It's neat to see how a 100-watt bulb can be projected through all these many pieces of glass out on a beam that reaches out to the horizon," McComb said.

Kohs is encouraged by the support he has enjoyed so far.

"These are people who want to be part of it," he said. "They're coming because ... they also want to see the Keweenaw. That tells me something; (there's a) tremendous amount of interest."

Having owned a camp on Little Traverse Bay for 20 years, Kohs bought the century-old lighthouse last year and is intent on preserving it for future generations.



Follow U.S. 41 north toward Copper Harbor. Take a right at the road to Lac La Belle, then turn left when the road splits at the bottom of the hill. Bete Gris is a short, scenic ride. Follow the road to the Mendota Canal, where boats will be waiting to take passengers to the lighthouse.

## Compliments Of The Keweenaw County Historical Society

HCI, Box 265L  
Eagle Harbor, MI 49950

The Daily Mining Gazette, Page 7



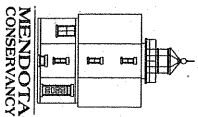
# MENDOTA

LIGHT STATION

BETTE GRISSE, MICHIGAN

## RELIGHTING

JULY 5, 1998  
OPEN HOUSE 9-6 • JULY 4-6, 1998



FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE MENDOTA CONSERVANCY, PLEASE CONTACT:  
MENDOTA CONSERVANCY, P.O. BOX 225, BIRMINGHAM, MI 48012  
PHONE: 248.288.4410, FAX: 248.288.4412