

# Etcetera

## Tour from 1A

which is on the southeast side of the island, with a wind that was blowing directly into the dock, and that makes it difficult to stabilize the boat for people to get on and off," Holman said. "That was responsible for why the boat that tied up next to me (ended up) ripping a hole in the side of the sponson. The wind was blowing some real heavy chop into that dock."

This left the first group temporarily stranded while a "rescue" boat was called in, though nobody was complaining as they explored the sunlit island and stunning renovated lighthouse interior.

The accident prohibited any more groups from docking, but Holman said the damage to the boat was minimal.

Czop said if anyone in the group was disappointed they didn't get to tour the island, they didn't let it show.

"As part of the lighthouse society, we frequently get into situations we have to get out of," she said.

"We've been on some boats where we've been drenched wet. ... Sometimes we miss a boat or our bus gets stuck in the sand or in the mud. Folks on the bus just make the best of it and on we go. ... They're a wonderful group."

The incident illustrates the challenges of creating reliable public access to the water-locked historic site, Holman said.

"It's a rocky cliff for one thing, and depending on which way the wind is blowing, hard, you have to have a place to park the boat," Holman explained. "Another challenge is, if you were to make plans for a public trip like this, you can't rely on the wind direction or the intensity of the waves, and so you can make all the plans you want ... and, within a few hours, be prevented from making the trip."

Holman, who bought the lighthouse for about \$80,000 in a government bid in 2000, said he has clocked winds of up to 145 mph and had two aluminum flag poles snapped in half on the island.

A lifelong diving enthusiast and long-time instructor, Holman said he still spends about one month per year diving in the Caribbean, so he knows how Superior compares to other bodies of water.

"I would rather be running that boat in 9-foot waves in the ocean than running a

boat in Lake Superior with 5-foot waves, because the chop in Lake Superior is very unique," Holman said. "It's like a washing machine, it just comes at you in all directions. ... Lake Superior has its own personality."

Michigan is home to more than 120 lighthouses, the most of any state in the U.S. Most of them are owned by nonprofit organizations that are tasked with raising money or collecting government grants to keep them open for public access.

Soon after Holman purchased the Granite Island Lighthouse, legislation was passed requiring all transfers of government-owned lighthouses to be to 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations instead of private owners.

"But it is difficult to raise enough money that way to do a serious renovation of a lighthouse," Holman said. "I think there's something to be said for private ownership, where someone is willing to put their energy and time and money into something that they have ownership in."

Holman declined to say how much he has spent on the house's extensive renovations, but it's been "more than a few eggshells," he joked.

Holman opens the lighthouse for others' use when there is a good reason, he said. He has donated trips to the island for charitable fundraisers, like Rotary International and Lake Superior Theater, and also offers the site free of charge for use in weather research and extending NMU's 4G WIMAX Internet to rural areas.

"We are so thankful that Scott Holman allowed us to do this," Czop said. "This was a once in a lifetime opportunity to get out to Granite Island. He was very gracious to allow us to come out, and we know he put a lot of work and effort to get us out there."

Holman returned the appreciation, saying it was too bad not everyone could tour the island, but he loved the group's enthusiasm for lighthouses and maritime history, which he shares.

"I thought they were just very enthusiastic about lighthouses in general," he said. "But specifically, I think they had a good time out there, and so I was pleased with the results."

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## Change from 1A

inal handwriting in the living room at the light station. The records include the history of three deaths that occurred on the island, two from storms coming or going to shore and the other from a heart attack, Holman said.

Holman became interested in the property when he found out it was for sale, based on his fascination with maritime history. He recalled taking many students on diving expeditions to the island as well as to various shipwrecks on the lake when he, as a Northern Michigan University undergraduate, owned a small diving shop in Marquette called Lake Superior Skin Diving Company.

"I've always been interested in, for most of my life, been interested in maritime history," Holman said. "So I was familiar somewhat with the island, but the history part was interesting to me. So when it became available, I just thought that would be right up my alley. ... Subsequent to that, there were opportunities to do some things with it besides the history."

To provide power to the lighthouse, which is obviously "off the grid," Holman erected solar and wind power units on the island. He also gave the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the University of Nebraska permission to set up research equipment to help monitor and understand

water levels of the Great Lakes and how they are impacted by weather conditions.

It has provided the infrastructure for a United Nations weather station and supports the WIMAX service link from NMU to the Powell Township School District.

Granite Island Lighthouse has also hosted charitable fundraisers, a wedding, legislative visits and a high school reunion, he said.

Holman was born and raised in Ishpeming and was the first in the Upper Peninsula to have had a Scuba diving shop. He served as director of the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society at Whitefish Point for 12 years, as well as former chairman and current member of NMU's Board of Trustees, past president of the Steel Founders Society of America and regional vice chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

He is retired from making steel castings at Bay Cast, Inc. and test support systems at Bay Cast Tech in downstate Bay City, where Holman lives part of the year.

For more information on the light station's history, the restoration process — including slideshows and video — and a live virtual view of the island any time, visit its website at www.graniteisland.com.

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## Cuba set to reopen embassy



In this July 15 photo, a worker removes the Cuban Interests Section sign in Washington just days prior to the building being accredited as the Cuban Embassy. Cuba's blue, red and white-starred flag is set today outside the country's diplomatic mission in the United States for the first time since the countries severed ties in 1961. (AP photo)

## Man survives plane crash

PARK TOWNSHIP, Mich. (AP) — Authorities say a 66-year-old man walked away with only minor injuries after crash landing a small plane on a Lake Michigan beach.

Steven Stam told officers he was flying Sunday evening along the lakeshore in western Michigan when the plane's engine began having trouble. He brought the plane down in dune grass in Ottawa County's Park Township, near Holland State Park.

No one else was in the plane and no one on the ground was injured.

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