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"Lift-off" for Sankaty

BY PETER B. BRACE INDEPENDENT WRITER

By late yesterday afternoon, Sankaty Head Light was 14 inches taller than it was yesterday morning.



ROB BENCHLEY/The Independent A silvery sixty-ton jack, one of 16 under the lighthouse, was used to lift the brick icon yesterday. Steel I-beams are part of the upper part of the picture, while the dark area at right shows a 14-inch vertical gap between sand and brick at the base of the light.

Expert House Movers and International Chimney, the contractors who are moving the lighthouse northwest 390 feet, jacked Sankaty out of the ground, and rested it back down on its main transport beams on Tuesday; this week the movers expect to raise the light an additional two feet, readying it for its crawl away from the edge of the bluff.

Expert House Movers president Jerri Matyiko said that despite the strong winds blasting his crew with sand, a lot more excavation than he expected, and the cost of transportation and doing business on the island, he is ahead of schedule. With a sprinkler keeping the blowing sand and glacial dust at bay, and with the installation of the moving beams to be wrapped up this week, Matyiko is confident he and his crew can begin moving the lighthouse on Oct. 1 or 2.

They finished the steel work late Monday; Tuesday morning they finetuned the I-beam alignments with a bulldozer, wedges and brute strength.

'Sconset Trust President Bob Felch said earlier this week that he and Buffalo, N.Y.- based International Chimney President Rick Lohr expected part of the brick foundation to detach from the lighthouse.

Yesterday, however, this separation did not occur; the light was raised entirely intact.

Felch said that when Expert House Movers moved the lighthouse at Cape Hatteras in North Carolina, they used a diamond-blade chainsaw to cut the lighthouse free of its foundation. After Sankaty arrives at its new, five-feet thick foundation, Felch said that the most exciting part of the move will begin, as the lowering of the 70-foot lighthouse down onto a new foundation of bricks and concrete is a tricky matching process.

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This will probably happen right around Columbus Day Weekend, he said.

Felch added that Lohr expects moving crews to work well into November on what is the fairly labor-intensive job of grafting the bricks from the old foundation into the new one.

But not all of the lighthouse's adaptations will occur on land. Once the lighthouse is properly situated on its new foundation and its light turned back on - the light will be off during the move - the U.S. Coast Guard's Aids to Navigation team will need to calibrate the light to ensure it flashes every 7.5 seconds.

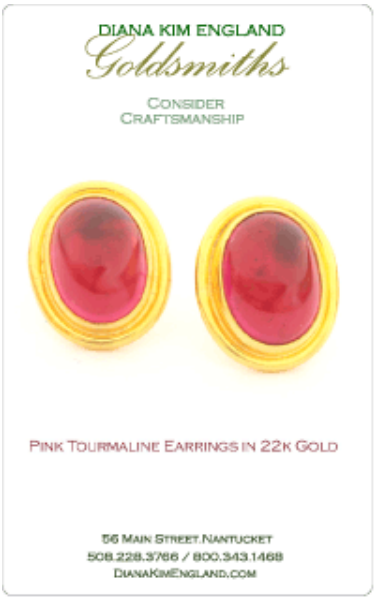
For boaters off of Sankaty during the move, the changes in their navigational capabilities will be minor during and after the move, said U.S. Coast Guard Station Brant Point Senior Chief Terrill J. Malvesti.

"It will not be powered during that transition time and there were will be a temporary broadcast notice sent to mariners by email and on our Web site stating that the lighthouse will not be operational during the move," he said. "When the charts are updated, the new locations will be changed. Since this is such a slight change, I don't see this as a detriment to the mariners; it's not going to

change that much." **I**







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