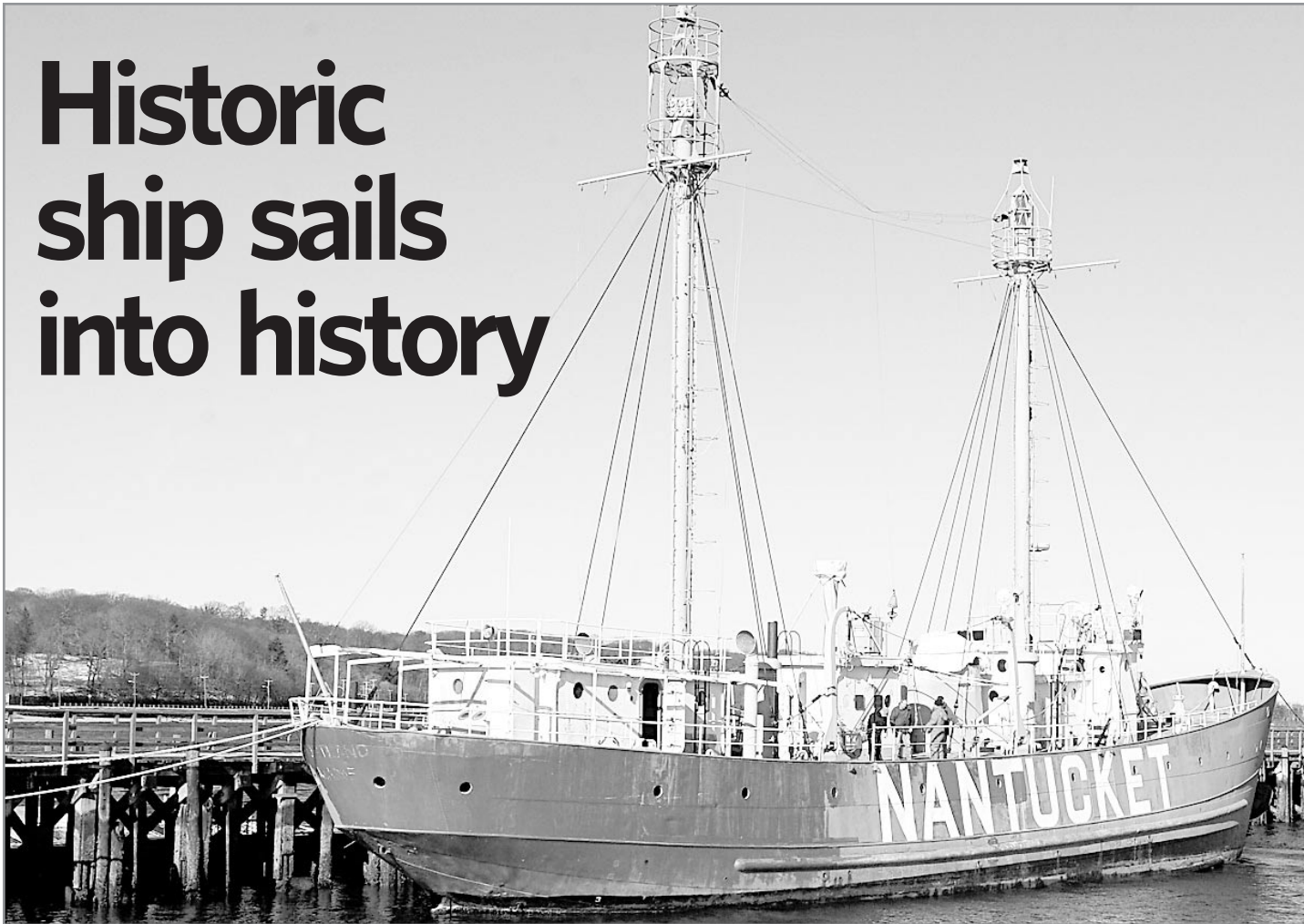


Historic ship sails into history



NEWSDAY PHOTOS / KAREN WILES STABILE

■ **Nantucket Lightship** to be restored as a museum

■ **73-year-old vessel** to move to Boston Harbor

BY SOPHIA CHANG
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The Nantucket Lightship spent years warning boats crossing the Atlantic Ocean away from the treacherous sandbars off Nantucket island, with radio signals and 48 locomotive lightbulbs mounted atop the ship's two masts that blinked 500-watt messages into the distance.

After the Coast Guard ship was decommissioned in 1975 and designated a national historic landmark in 1989, she set out on a wandering path typical of retired vessels: a Tall Ships parade here, a temporary berth with the USS Intrepid in Manhattan there.

But the Nantucket has new digs in her future, and a dozen or so volunteers set out yesterday to ensure the 73-year-old ship will be able to make the journey from Oyster Bay Harbor to Boston Harbor, where a nonprofit organization plans to restore it and turn it into a museum.

"It's good we're taking it out,"



said Bob Mannino, president of the United States Lightship Museum. The nonprofit based in Salem, Mass., raised \$200,000 from private donations toward the restoration. Mannino and his wife, Christine Paul, came from South Hampton, N.H., to help ready the ship for the 34-hour tow trip.

The volunteers sealed port-holes and secured equipment in preparation of the ship's move in a few weeks, possibly at the end of January or in February.

The Nantucket came for the Oyster Festival in Oyster Bay in 2003 and never left. Visitors

once could take guided tours of the ship but those were stopped as the ship deteriorated and languished in the harbor.

Despite the years of neglect, flaking paint and junk crammed in the captain's quarters, the ship is still in decent shape, Mannino said.

Four of the volunteers were former crew members.

"This is the first time I'd seen it in 49 years," said Pete Penfield, 68, of New Hartford, Conn., who served aboard as a fireman and engineer on the lightship from 1960 to 1961.

Penfield recalled riding out

The Nantucket Lightship, above, sits in Oyster Bay. Bob Mannino, left, and Pete Brunk, along with others, get the ship ready to go to Boston Harbor.

Hurricane Esther in 1961 on the Nantucket — "the only time I've ever been scared in the Coast Guard." Another time, he awoke on the rocking ship and ran on deck, where he watched a massive whale roil the waters as it swam by.

Former Capt. Pete Brunk, 73, of Portsmouth, Va., remembered one close call when a training submarine from New London inexplicably fired a dummy torpedo that struck the lightship, which escaped damage.

The Nantucket is rich with history. The 150-foot ship is the largest of a class of Coast Guard lightships that served as mobile lighthouses in pre-GPS times. She was built in 1936 with funding from the British government after the RMS Olympic — sister ship to the Titanic — accidentally ran into the previous Nantucket Lightship on a foggy night in 1934.

"I think a lot of people here would like to see it stay," Mannino said, nodding at local volunteers Bill Perks, of Centerport, and Bill Shephard Sr., of Plainview. "I'm going to miss the people here."

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CORRECTIONS

Jack Agostino of Amityville, with 398 victories, could soon become the second Suffolk boys basketball coach to reach 400 wins for his career. A story yesterday incorrectly said he will be the second on Long Island to reach that mark.

THIS DATE IN HISTORY

1805: The Michigan Territory was created.
1861: Alabama seceded from the Union.
1913: The first sedan-type automobile, a Hudson, went on display at the 13th National Automobile Show in New York.
1935: Aviator Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly solo across the Pacific Ocean.
1942: Japan declared war against the Netherlands and invaded the Dutch East Indies.
1964: U.S. Surgeon General Luther Terry issued the first government report that said smoking might be hazardous to one's health.
1977: France released Abu Daoud, a PLO official behind the massacre of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics.