

Custom Rigs Become Means of Expression for Truckers

Highway Haulers Show Patriotism, Honor Loved Ones at Show

By Ryan Schlehuder

Whenever he was in his 2000 Freightliner, hauling a load on the road or participating in a truck show, Bob Brinker's daughter, Amie McKnight, was always with him.

She died September 10, 2005, and Mr. Brinker, and his wife, Shelley, memorialized her by decorating his rig with portraits of her and her favorite actor, Johnny Depp, in a scene depicting Disney's blockbuster film, "Pirates of the Caribbean, Legend of the Black Pearl." The truck won Best of Show for bobtails in this year's Richard Crane Memorial Truck Show in St. Ignace, held Friday, September 15, to Sunday, September 17.

A bobtail is a tractor without a trailer, and on the hood of Mr. Brinker's bobtail is an airbrushed image of Mrs. McKnight and Johnny Depp, as Captain Jack Sparrow,

both dressed in pirate attire.

"Johnny Depp was Amie's favorite actor," said Mr. Brinker. "She loved the show."

Mr. Brinker, of Grayling, planned a pirate theme for two years, but it became more meaningful after the loss of his daughter.

Artist Al Proulx of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, airbrushed the images on the rig in stunning detail, and added waves on the truck's running boards and other characters and ships from the movie, including

a sunken pirate ship. That took two months.

Inside, the flooring, cabinets, and panels inside are made of birdseye maple, suggesting the interior of a pirate ship.

"Al's dad is a retired wood grader and he picked out the wood for the interior," said Mr. Brinker. "It really set it off as a pirate theme."

Fish netting, a talking toy parrot, a treasure chest, and a bell also add to the interior's pirate theme.

A dragon theme proved successful for Mr. Brinker's truck at past St. Ignace Truck Shows, winning Best

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of Show three times. The Brinkers missed last year's St. Ignace Truck Show, owing to the loss of their daughter, however, "we're here to take back the title," said Mr. Brinker, which they did, winning five other awards at Sunday's

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Steve and Brenda Lewis entered their rig and trailer in the truck show's newest category, Wash and Show, which allows truckers to display their rigs and participate in the Parade of Lights without having to compete. The Lewis' trailer depicts patriotic images of soldiers, the U.S. military, the American flag, and images from the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Falling Leaves Fest To Begin on Island Fri.

Commemorating one of Mackinac Island's most notable women, Madame LaFramboise, and highlighting early American fur trading on Mackinac is the focus of the biannual Festival of the Falling Leaves Moon, to be held on Mackinac Island Friday, September 22, through Sunday, September 24.

The Mackinac Island Tourism Bureau will feature several events during the weekend, including a fur fashion show at the Gate House restaurant Saturday afternoon, a recreation of an 1812 battle, and encampments and reenactments by members of Spirits of the North. Friday and Saturday, this reenactment group will give demonstrations on military drills, fur trading, and early living in three encampments. An Indian encampment will be at Windermere Point, a military encampment will be set up on the school grounds, and a voyageur camp will be on the beach at the end of the boardwalk.

A bonfire with storytelling, tomahawk and knife demonstrations, and the requisitioning of goods from downtown businesses are other planned events.

Madame LaFramboise was a prominent fur trader of Ottawa descent who lived from 1779 to 1846. Married to a French fur trader and able to speak fluently in French, English, and in the Ottawa language, she was successful in dealing with Indian traders on Mackinac Island. When she died, she was buried underneath the altar at Ste. Anne's Catholic Church on the Island. Her grave was later moved and she now rests in the courtyard of the church. The Tourism Bureau wants eventually to erect a statue of Madame LaFramboise on the Island, although it may not be ready for this year's festival.

On Sunday, September 24, The National Society of United States Daughters of the War of 1812 will dedicate two plaques in her honor. One will be mounted on her tomb and the other will be placed at her former home at Harbour View Inn.

The society was organized in 1892, and, in 1901, it was incorporated by an Act of Congress, approved by U.S. President William McKinley.

The festival is in honor of the Anishnabe season for the celebration of the trees to stay awake for seven days and seven nights, which, according to legend, only the cedar, pine, and spruce trees obeyed. As a reward, they are called "ever-green" and those trees which did not obey were to shed their leaves each fall.



Winning Best of Show for bobtails (tractors without trailers) in this year's St. Ignace Truck Show was Bob and Shelley Brinker's truck, with its "Pirates of the Caribbean, Legends of the Black Pearl" theme. The theme was dedicated to their daughter, Amie McKnight, who died last year. Her image is airbrushed into a scene from the film onto the hood of the truck. She is wearing pirate's clothing and is standing with the film's star, Johnny Depp, who played Captain Jack Sparrow. The annual Truck Show was held Friday, September 15, through Sunday, September 17.

Old Mission Cemetery Deeded to Preservation Group

Burial Ground Is Significant to Native People

By Amy Polk

Clark Township Board deeded the historic Old Mission Indian Cemetery in Hessel to the Native American Society for Historic Preservation (NASHP) in August, and the deed was officially presented to the society Thursday, September 7. The transfer is the culmination of the organization's goal to own the historical burial ground for American Indian people, who have been buried at the site at least since the late 1800s, and maybe earlier, said Dianne Yarnell, a member of the group.

"Old Mission Cemetery is significant to Native people in that it is still being operated as a burial site for Natives in the community," she said. "Many Natives in the community have relatives buried in Old Mission Cemetery and wish to be placed next to their relatives, when that time comes."

This cemetery will be used only for the burial of Native Americans and their families. Many family members have been maintaining the site since it was first established as a burial ground for those then known as the Les Cheneaux Band

of Indians. The NASHP does not know the exact age of the cemetery, but does know there have been Native American burials there since the late 1800s, Mrs. Yarnell said. Many of the graves are unmarked, however a NASHP member specializing in genealogy is researching the history of the site.

"We assume the original old Catholic mission that was located there started the cemetery, thus the name Old Mission Cemetery," Mrs. Yarnell said.

In 1940, Michigan deeded the property to Clark Township for use

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St. Ignace Leaders Seeking Tri-City Communication

By Karen Gould

St. Ignace Mayor Paul Grondin and City Manager Eric Dodson are proposing dialog between St. Ignace, Mackinaw City, and Mackinac Island, three communities that in vic for the same tourist dollars in the Straits of Mackinac.

"We're all in this together," said Mr. Dodson at a Mackinac Island City Council meeting Wednesday, September 13. The two men attended a Mackinac City Village Council meeting the week before.

"We are the Straits area. The issues of tourism, the issues of tomorrow, we all face together," Mr. Dodson told Mackinac Island politicians and residents at the meeting.

"Our agenda is to promote communications between the three governmental agencies we have within five miles of each other," said Mayor Grondin. "We think that's important."

Island council members responded positively to the communication plan and Mackinac Island Mayor Margaret Doud pointed out the communities have common interests and ties, including the boat lines that transport residents and visitors between the Island and docks in St. Ignace and Mackinaw

City.

Messrs. Dodson and Grondin now plan to organize an October meeting in St. Ignace and to establish monthly or bi-monthly meetings, depending on schedules. In

March, they met with Mayor Doud and Alderman Armand "Smi" Horn in St. Ignace and met once during the summer with Mackinaw City Manager Jeff Lawson and Village President Bob Heilman.

Mr. Grondin said communication between the three communities has dissolved over the years, although

he doesn't know why.

"We're all competing for the same tourist dollar," he told *The St. Ignace News* later. "We continue to compete, but Eric and I believe that it would be more beneficial for all three communities if we could work together. Positive results could come if we all work together."

Mr. Dodson agreed. "I think tourism is the biggest issue," he said Monday, September 18. All three communities are impacted by tourism and high gas prices and the meetings could provide an opportunity to bounce ideas around. He said the communities share other concerns, like high

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St. Ignace Marina Business Drops 15 Percent This Year

DLZ To Be Engineers on Bus Station Project

By Ryan Schlehuder

St. Ignace marina fuel sales are down as much as 15 percent this year, the St. Ignace City Council was told at its meeting Monday, September 18. Other business included hiring an engineer for the bus station project.

Marina director Eugene Elmer reported the marina business slump in terms of gallons of fuel sold this summer, compared to last summer, which he said is the best gauge. Gallons of fuel sold is down 13 percent for transient boaters and down 11 percent for seasonal boaters at the marina, and is down 15 percent at the public launch site.

"I contacted Lansing [State Waterways Commission] and they said the average margin across the state for marinas is down 10 to 20 percent," he told Council.

The city marina enjoyed a boost in business two summers ago when it was expanded from 22 slips to 136. Last year was the marina's first full summer operating with 136 slips, and, said Mr. Elmer, it was the marina's best year on record. This summer's numbers are similar to those in 2004, he said.

He said he doesn't tally the

occupancy or income figures until after the season ends, so precise statistics are not available.

The marina deficit has been reduced this year from \$94,000 to \$30,000, he noted.

"That's including the raises all the marina employees received this year," said Mr. Elmer. "They never got a raise last year."

Mr. Elmer said mooring along the marina's breakwall by boats waiting for slips was minimal this year owing to the water near the shore being too shallow.

The marina is scheduled to close for the season on October 22.

Council hired DLZ of Lansing to engineer a new bus station at the corner of Church Street and US-2. The next step will be to budget the project. If DLZ cannot meet the city's budget criteria, then the next-bidder-in-line, R.S. Scott, the city's regular engineering firm, will be given the chance to submit a bid within the city's acceptable range, said Public Works Director Les Therrian, who, with Mr. Dodson and representatives from Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), reviewed the bidding finalists.

DLZ, which has offices in

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