

'Homecoming' Stories Distinguish Feature Boats at Les Cheneaux Show

August 11 Event's Guest of Honor Is Grandson of Chris Craft Founder

By Amy Polk

The Les Cheneaux Antique Wooden Boat Show is about memories and connections to the past. Families piled inside a boat for a sunset ride. Damp old boathouses sheltering dark, sleek hulls of wooden boats. Creaky wooden docks with boats attached by slender white lines. The thrill of a youngster driving a boat for the first time after years of enviously watching adults do it. Polishing the wood deck until it shines like a tabletop. Boat names that commemorate ancestors. The scent of varnish, oil, and lake water that cling long after the boat ride is over; and the distinct, deep sound of a gurgling engine that echoes in memories.

Chris Smith, grandson of Chris Craft founder Christopher Columbus Smith, knows that sound well. He can often tell a boat by the engine sound, and that's how he reunited with a boat from his past, 45 years after parting with the vessel. Standing at a boat show in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, hundreds of miles from Michigan, where he last operated the boat, he heard a boat's twin engines start up a few feet away. He thought the sound was familiar, and he followed it to a 1956 Chris Craft Continental that was custom made for him while he was still working for Chris Craft. He owned the boat for six years before selling it.

Mr. Smith, who turned 80 this July 4 while vacationing with family and friends in Cedarville, is this year's boat show guest of honor.

He says he literally grew up in Chris Craft's wooden boat factory in Algonac. When it came time to choose a career path, he picked

what he knew and loved best. He started at the ground level of the business, and worked his way up to the engineering department. His first job was counting screws on boats to make sure each had the correct number.

"I can honestly say I've never received a paycheck from anyone but Chris Craft," Mr. Smith said while in Cedarville July 5.

He participated in Cedarville's Independence Day festivities Wednesday, July 4, where he rode in a boat through the parade and distributed flags to the crowd. He



was the guest of honor at the 1983 boat show in Hessel, and has been a regular show participant in other years, showing his prized antique boats, *Odyssea* and *Odyssea II*.

Two more stories about memories that connected boats to their owners will highlight the 30th Anniversary Les Cheneaux Antique Wooden Boat Show and

Festival of Arts in Hessel this year. Activities will start Friday night, August 10, culminating in the Saturday, August 11, show and art festival, and ending with a Sunday brunch at the Les Cheneaux Yacht Club in Cedarville for participants.

One of this year's feature boats, *Boss*, returning to the Les Cheneaux show this year, is featured on the 2007 show poster. The poster is Diana J. Windsor Grenier's artistic rendition of the magnificent 42-foot, 1921 Great Lakes Boat Building Corporation vessel designed for cruising parties and day trips. Janet Carrington of Cedarville and Florida recalled seeing it when she was a young girl, and was determined to find the boat again. Tom Mertaugh of Classic and Antique Boats of Hessel eventually found the boat in the Grand Rapids area, and she was able to buy it and bring it to

The 26-foot, 1926 Hacker Craft *Uandi* took the Best of Show and People's Choice awards at the 2006 Les Cheneaux Antique Wooden Boat Show. The boat will return to the 30th anniversary show as one of the three feature boats.

the 2006 show.

Another of this year's feature boats is *Uandi*, a 26-foot, 1926 Hacker Craft that won the 2006 show's two top prizes: Best of Show and People's Choice. The vessel's owner, Norman Betts of Ann Arbor, spent 10 years trying to bring the boat home after its 30-year absence from the Les Cheneaux Islands, where the Blain family used her during summers at their cottage. The Blains are now Mr. Betts' in-laws, after his 1987 marriage to Keeley LaRocca, a granddaughter of the Blains who established the cottage. Years of stories told the importance of the boat to his new wife's family, and Mr. Betts finally acquired the boat in 2006.

The third feature boat, *Chief Waramaug*, owned by Ted and Barbara Grulikowski of Brighton, is a 26-foot, 1927 Chris Craft Cadet. It was purchased in January 1927 by Stuart Augustus Mead of Greenwich, Connecticut, at the New York Motor Boat Show in New York City, where he also met

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Open House Celebrates New Office for Michigan Works!



Michigan Works! and Work First opened a new office at 6 Spring Street in St. Ignace with a ribbon cutting open house, assisted by Chamber of Commerce ambassadors Friday, July 13. Pictured (from left) are Deb Evashevski of the Downtown Development Authority, George Ford of the Chamber, Bill Sutter of Consolidated Community School Services in Kincheloe, Dulcey Kantola of Work First, Pat Ramsay of the Chamber, Jay Caldwell of Michigan Works!, Gwen Worley, director of EUP Michigan Works!, and Pat Rickley, Eileen Evers, and Jo Ford, all of the Chamber of Commerce. The agency matches workers and employers, and offers several free services to job seekers. Mackinac County has the biggest seasonal fluctuation rate in the state for employment, Mrs. Worley said, ranging from 20% unemployment in the winter to only 2% unemployment in the summer. "In summer, we can't find enough people to fill the jobs" in Mackinac County, she said.

Reading Boost Is State Goal

Hemingway Works Chosen for 'Great Michigan Read'

Ernest Hemingway's "The Nick Adams Stories" will be read by people across the state for the Great Michigan Read, a community literacy program, the Michigan Humanities Council announced Monday, July 9. Engadine Library and St. Ignace Public Library are two local libraries participating in this program.

The works, considered literary classics, chronicle a young man's coming of age in a series of linked short stories, most of them set in Michigan.

After reading "The Nick Adams Stories," available at libraries, people can use the reader's guide and Web site to talk about the work, and participate online in Great Michigan Read activities. The Web site offers information about Ernest Hemingway, his work, and his Michigan connections. It will also post programming schedules for live radio broadcasts about the book.

On Sunday, July 22, Engadine Library is hosting Jack Jobst, a retired professor from Michigan Technological University, who will speak about Ernest Hemingway and the Upper Peninsula at the Mill Pond Park pavilion at 2 p.m.

Crooked Tree Arts Center in Petoskey will host an "Up North with the Hemingways" exhibit from July 27 through August 25. A traveling version of this exhibit will tour several Michigan communities through June 2008. More than 100 community libraries are participating in the Great Michigan Read.

The Great Michigan Read Web site is www.greatmichiganread.org.

ORV Safety Will Be Focus of Class

The Mackinac County Sheriff's Department and the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians will host off-road vehicle (ORV) safety classes at Little Bear East Arena in St. Ignace Monday, July 23, and Tuesday, July 24, from 9 a.m. to noon. Participants must be 11 years or older and can earn their ORV safety certificate free of charge. Preregistration is not required.

Sunday Marks Heritage Day at Engadine

Engadine's Heritage Day celebration is Sunday, July 22, at the Garfield Township Hall and Mill Pond Park. There is no entrance fee. The event begins at 10 a.m. and continues into the evening. Square dancing begins at 5:15 p.m.

Heritage Day offers residents and visitors a chance to delve into the history of the area and enjoy food, desserts, and music.

The event includes arts and crafts for sale by local and regional artists, a quilt show at the Engadine High School gymnasium, and tours of the Engadine Historical Museum.

From noon until 2 p.m., partici-

pants can enjoy a barbecue dinner, hot dogs and chips, and strawberry shortcake will be served until 3 p.m.

The raising of the American flag and the singing of the national anthem will take place at 1 p.m.

Other events will include the presentation of a plaque to the Fenske family, in honor of the family's log house, which has been a fixture in Engadine for more than 100 years.

Later there will be hymn singing, face painting, and retired professor Jack Jobst will give a presentation about Ernest Hemingway in the Upper

Peninsula as part of the "Great Michigan Read" statewide community reading program.

Fly tying, polka music, and a quilt raffle will also take place.

A host of antique cars and farm machinery will be displayed on site, along with the creations of spinners and weavers, and an authentic Native American teepee.

Organizers suggest visitors bring lawn chairs.

The annual event developed from a celebration of Engadine's centennial year, marked in 1994. Heritage Day is organized and promoted by the nonprofit Engadine Historical Society.

Lake Huron in Crisis Is Focus of Cedarville Program

By Amy Polk

The health and well-being of Lake Huron and its historically low water levels will be discussed at a Friday, August 10, seminar, "Our Middle Lakes Crises: An Update on Issues, Programs, and Progress" at the Community Center in Cedarville. Cedarville Bay's weevil treatment and local water quality will also be discussed.

The program is open to the public and free of charge, and follows the Les Cheneaux Islands Association's 2005 meeting with the Georgian Bay Association in Cedarville. This meeting will update the information provided at that meeting, and report progress by the groups. Doughnuts and coffee will be available at 9:30 a.m., and the presentations will begin at 10 a.m. A question and answer session will begin at noon.

Mary Muter, vice president and environmental chair of the Georgian Bay Association of Canada, and Bill Bialkowski, director, consulting engineer, and hydrologist for the Georgian Bay Association, will present the water levels update, discuss other key Lake Huron issues, and describe international progress toward a solution to low water levels.

In addition to the Georgian Bay

Association presentation, Bob Smith, environmental chair for the Les Cheneaux Islands Association, will discuss Cedarville Bay water quality, and the Les Cheneaux Watershed Council's weevil treatment program to fight Eurasian watermilfoil in Cedarville Bay.

The Les Cheneaux Islands Association and Clark Township Board of Trustees are co-hosting the seminar because of low water level complaints and concerns raised by the community.

Three years ago, the Les Cheneaux Islands Association joined the Ontario-based Georgian Bay Association in its call for a remedy to falling water levels members believe exceed cyclical levels recorded by the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

"According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, water levels have never been this low, for this long," said Les Cheneaux Islands Association member Mike Mahoney.

Mr. Mahoney is spearheading the Islands Association's involvement with the Georgian Bay Association, and has been a liaison between the two groups since 2004. The Georgian Bay Association (GBA) has broad international reach, Mr. Mahoney

said, and has worked with the Healing Waters Coalition, Great Lakes Think Tank, Ontario's Round Table, and the International Joint Commission, a bi-national organization that prevents and resolves disputes between the United States and Canada on shared Great Lakes boundary waters like the St. Marys River and Lake Huron. The GBA has lobbied Environment Canada, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and International Joint Commission for action on water levels.

The Georgian Bay Association has commissioned research on Lake Huron water levels, which resulted in the widely read W.F. Baird study, which shows Lake Huron and Lake Michigan water levels dropping, despite increasing levels in Lake Erie.

The study speculates the drop is caused by extensive erosion of the St. Clair River bottom, near its source at Lake Huron's southern shore, Mr. Mahoney said. The study connects the erosion to escalating outflow from Lake Huron into the lower lakes via the St. Clair River. The Baird study estimates lakes Huron and Michigan are losing 845 million gallons of water, in addition to normal losses,

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Movies a Success, City Reports

Success was apparent for St. Ignace's Movie Under the Stars event, as the parking lot and the north lawn of the Little Bear East Arena and Community Center was filled with vehicles and people who came to watch family movies featured on an outdoor, inflatable screen Monday, July 2, and Tuesday, July 3.

The evening shows included Disney's "Cars" the first night, and a movie about the building of the Mackinac Bridge in 1957 and "Night at the Museum" the next night.

The event was free of charge. The City of St. Ignace raised \$4,200 to pay for the event through sponsorship of 12 local businesses.

Popcorn was offered free of

charge and candy and beverages were sold. There were more than 135 vehicles parked in the parking lot the first night, St. Ignace City Manager Eric Dodson said, and just as many showed up the second night.

Those enjoying the event from their vehicles were able to tune into an AM radio station to listen to the movie. The outdoor theater was also equipped with large speakers that could be easily heard throughout the Little Bear East area.

The event is planned to continue next summer, at least twice, Mr. Dodson said.

The 26-foot-wide digital theater screen was provided by Great Outdoor Movies of Rochester Hills.

No One Hurt in US-2 Fire Friday

An engine malfunction was the cause of a fire that engulfed a 1983 Coachman motor home on US-2 near Pte. Aux Chenes Friday evening, July 13.

The motor home, driven by Jeff

Valliere of Alanson, who was accompanied by two passengers, was totally destroyed, however, no one was injured, reported Michigan State Police in St. Ignace.

Jim Bishop, Blue Water Ramblers Will Perform at St. Ignace Marina



Blue Water Ramblers

Jim Bishop will be featured in a Locals on the Bay concert Wednesday, July 18, at 7 p.m. at the St. Ignace Marina. Mr. Bishop offers a wide selection of music, including ballads, polkas, pop, western, and contemporary. He lives in St. Ignace and Englewood, Florida.

Also at the marina, Blue Water Ramblers will perform for Bayside Live! Thursday, July 19, at 7 p.m. The band's repertoire comes from their Michigan life experiences and the history of the Great Lakes region. Songs include lake and lumbering ballads, Michigan humor, love songs, gospel music, and civil rights and protest songs from the '60s. "Banjo Jim" Foerch and R.H. "Bear" Berends have been playing throughout Michigan and the Midwest for more than 30 years.

Next week, Crazy Moose will perform at Locals on the Bay July 25, while Pub Runners will perform at Bayside Live! July 26.



Jim Bishop