

# Carrington Rekindles Youth Memory, Reunites With Beloved 1921 Cruiser, *Boss*

By Amy Polk

When she was eight years old, Janet Carrington saw a sight that remained in her memory for 50 years. Docked alongside the E.J. Mertaugh Boat Works gasoline dock in downtown Hessel was a boat that shined with quiet beauty. Its clean, white painted hull and crisp brown canvas set off its molasses-colored wood and shiny brass and copper hardware.

"Everyone admired it," she said of people in Hessel, whose heads were turned by the sight of the boat. "It was so long, and sleek, and beautiful. Then it left the dock and was gone for the year."

It's coming back again as one of the feature boats in the 2007 Les Cheneaux Antique Wooden Boat Show in Hessel. The boat, *Boss*, will be on display at the show Saturday, August 11, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Mrs. Carrington's summer sightings of the 42-foot, 1921 Great Lakes Boat Building Corporation cruiser made a lasting impression as the boat visited Hessel throughout her youth. Years later, as an adult, she prioritized



**Boss, a 42-foot express cruiser made in 1921 by the Great Lakes Boat Building Corporation, is one of this year's three feature boats at the 30th Les Cheneaux Islands Antique Wooden Boat Show and Festival of Arts.** (Photograph by John Grenier)

four things she wanted to do before she died. Owning the *Boss* was one of them.

"It was a lifetime dream," she said.

She considered commissioning Antique and Classic Boats of Hessel to make a reproduction for her. Then a friend came across an article that featured the boat, and

several weeks of research revealed its location. Mrs. Carrington purchased the boat in 2006, and brought it back to the place she first fell in love with it. Spectators

at the 2006 Les Cheneaux Antique Wooden Boat Show were able to view it in almost the same location at Mertaugh's where Mrs. Carrington had seen it years before.

A forerunner to the massive cabin cruisers to come, *Boss* was built to the specifications of A.D. Goldman of St. Louis, Missouri, who owned a place in Charlevoix. He wanted a boat suitable for use both around the Charlevoix area and in Florida waters during the winter. The cruiser needed to be 42 feet in length, have sleeping accommodations for four, and offer "extensive accommodations in a cockpit for large day parties," according to the written specifications. The Milwaukee, Wisconsin-based Great Lakes Boat Building Corporation made the vessel with a Cyprus hull, canvas deck, brass and copper air vents, and an unusual wooden mast. The Bridgeport Coach Lace Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut, originally supplied a fabric for the interior seat cushions, and an artificial leather material for the deck cushions. The main cabin is furnished

with seating cushions that form upper and lower sleeping accommodations for four people. A galley in the cabin was built with a kerosene range with oven, ice box, sink, lockers, and dish rack so that passengers could sustain themselves for extended cruises.

Another unusual feature of the boat is its 9.5-foot width, which is considered relatively narrow and small for a cabin cruiser. Mrs. Carrington suspects the boat was built for a person shorter than six feet tall.

A built-in seat across the stern and wicker chairs in the cockpit outside are sheltered beneath a canvas canopy with side curtains that can be lifted or lowered. The canvas top was made to be removable "so it can be dispensed with on fishing trips either in northern or southern waters," according to the written specifications.

Much of the canvas is original. In fact, most of the boat is original, said Tom Mertaugh of Classic and Antique Boats, who performed some restoration and all the maintenance on the boat since her return to the Les Cheneaux Islands.

"The boat is almost completely original, which is very unusual," Mr. Mertaugh said. "It's pretty much had nothing done on it but maintenance. We painted her hull from the rub rail down, and that's about it."

He estimates that about 99% of the boat's wood is original as well. In the 1930s, the owners upgraded its original Sterling Dolphin engine with a 290-horsepower, 1937 six-cylinder, 24-valve model Sterling Special engine that remains in the boat. An original canvas and netting life raft also remain with the boat.

For Mrs. Carrington, that was the best part of the boat. When she examined the *Boss* before the purchase, she was sold on the fact that nothing much had changed from its original construction.

"It was so beautifully cared for and had never been messed with. I looked all around it to find something unoriginal, and there wasn't anything. No brass or wood was replaced," she said. "That's what really impressed me. It is such an unusual boat."

Historical accounts tell the boat achieved a top speed of about 25 miles per hour, and it served as a pleasure cruiser and fishing boat for most of its early days. It reportedly traveled to Florida, the North

\* Please turn to page 12

# Fishermen's Memorial Dedicated to Locals Lost to Great Lakes

A waterfront memorial paying tribute to the 25 local commercial fishermen who lost their lives in Lake Huron and Lake Michigan was dedicated during the St. Ignace Fish Feast Saturday, July 28.

A few members of the committee that raised funds for the memorial, near the boardwalk between the St. Ignace Public Marina and Wawatam Lighthouse, spoke to a large crowd gathered for the dedication.

The memorial features two bronze plaques with names of commercial fishermen who lost their lives while working, topped by a large metal whitefish on a stone foundation.

Reverend Wayne Foote of the Glen Memorial Baptist Church remembered many of the men who perished while fishing in the Great Lakes. He blessed the 25 men whose names are listed, and those who still grieve for the loved ones they lost.

"The waters of the Great Lakes are so beautiful, but yet they are also unforgiving," said Rev. Foote. "Our hearts still grieve for you and your loved ones."

Both St. Ignace Mayor Paul Grondin and City Manager Eric Dodson thanked the fundraising committee for their efforts in com-



**The newly erected Fishermen's Memorial near the boardwalk between the St. Ignace Public Marina and the Wawatam Lighthouse was dedicated during the St. Ignace Fish Feast Saturday, July 28. Pictured are supporters and committee members who helped fund the memorial: (from left) Andy Valentine, Jim Artis, who sculpted the metal whitefish atop the stone memorial, St. Ignace Mayor Paul Grondin, Violet Gustafson, Shirley Bentgen, Ray Halberg, Jim Brown, Paul Gustafson, Steve Grondin, and Eldon Winberg, who donated the masonry work to erect the memorial.**

pleting the project.

The committee, headed by Shirley Bentgen, includes Violet Gustafson, Paul Gustafson, Ray Halberg, Jim Brown, Steve Grondin, and Andy Valentine.

The committee raised an estimat-

ed \$7,000 to build the memorial.

The men from Mackinac County who have lost their lives while commercial fishing and are memorialized on the monument are:

**1851**  
Michael McCann, 36, Mackinac

Island

**1936**  
Louis Hart, 28, Epoufette  
Robert Goudreau, 33, Epoufette  
Jim Dishaw, 47, Epoufette  
**1937**  
Carl Matson, 28, St. Ignace

Ray McLean, 30, St. Ignace  
**1945**  
Teddy Paulson, 17, Naubinway  
**1946**  
Frank L. Brix, 38, Naubinway  
**1954**  
John G. Ellison, 63, St. Ignace Twp.  
John J. Ellison, 29, St. Ignace Twp.  
**1964**  
Art Stiebe, 31, St. Ignace  
**1969**  
Terry Halberg, 16, St. Ignace  
Melvin Frazier, 51, Naubinway  
**1977**  
Alvin Gustafson, 67, St. Ignace  
Gary Gustafson, 37, St. Ignace  
**1980**  
Cliff Bigelow, 22, Epoufette  
Mike Bigelow, 24, Epoufette  
**1983**  
James Converse Jr., 28, Naubinway  
Edward Moses, 27, St. Ignace  
**1986**  
Edward E. Perkins, 47, Naubinway  
Rusty G. King, 31, Naubinway  
Kirk J. Peterson, 28, Naubinway  
**1993**  
Robert Rickley, 23, St. Ignace  
Rick Wessel, 35, Mackinac Island  
**1999**  
Roy C. Frazier, 25, Naubinway

# Inaugural St. Ignace Fish Feast Dubbed a Success; Plans for Bigger Event Underway

By Ryan Schlehuber

The inaugural St. Ignace Fish Feast, held at the Public Marina Saturday, July 28, was judged a success by organizers. Cheryl Schlehuber said she and other event coordinators did not get to see much of the event, as they were too busy with ticket purchases.

"We sold the last fish basket at 10:25 p.m.," said Mrs. Schlehuber, president of the St. Ignace Chamber of Commerce and one of the many coordinators for the feast, who added she was able to buy the second-to-last one. "My biggest regret was that I didn't get to go around to see everything. We were just too busy selling tickets."

Participants exchanged cash for



**Avery Fitzgerald, 4, of St. Ignace, concentrates intently as she paints her fish at the gyotaku (pronounced gee-oh-tah-ku) station during the inaugural St. Ignace Fish Feast at the public marina Saturday, July 28, which coincided with the 50th anniversary of the Mackinac Bridge. Gyotaku participants painted different colors onto fish and then a white T-shirt was pressed onto each fish to produce a permanent design. The program was coordinated by Lora Brown.**

tickets used to buy food from six local restaurants, which set up booths featuring their best whitefish- or seafood-themed dishes. A variety of food choices and a beer and wine tent were offered.

The Mackinac Grille Restaurant alone sold about 600 pounds of cooked fish, said owner and lead event coordinator Mark Sposito.

Along with the food provided, visitors were treated to music by the folk Irish band Pub Runners. Many games for young people were available in the marina parking lot, including a fishing tank, a dunk tank that featured local residents, a hockey station, T-shirt painting, a station, face painting, and local artists' wares.

The Fishermen's Memorial, a

newly constructed monument for commercial fishermen who lost their lives on the job in Lake Huron or Lake Michigan, was dedicated during the Fish Feast Saturday. The memorial sits near the boardwalk between the St. Ignace Public Marina and Wawatam Lighthouse. A large crowd was in attendance for the dedication.

The Fish Feast was created by the Chamber of Commerce but was headed by the St. Ignace Visitors Bureau's special events committee.

The Fish Feast's great success this year was probably due largely to the draw of the 50th anniversary celebration of the Mackinac Bridge, however, said Mr. Sposito



**A long line of people await a tasty dish of fish from Mackinac Grille Restaurant's booth at the Fish Feast. Six local vendors provided Fish Feast visitors with a variety of fish- or seafood-themed dishes.**

and Mrs. Schlehuber, the local event is expected to be bigger and better for next year.

"Plans for next year are already underway," said Mr. Sposito.

The special events committee, which meets every first Thursday of the month at Mackinac Grille Restaurant, is planning to incorporate more of the commercial fishing heritage with the event, inviting local experts and historians and having displays of the industry on hand.

Mr. Sposito said he is hoping to include a ferris wheel and an

inflatable water slide for next year. Traffic control is another area that needs improvement.

"That is probably our biggest tweak, to figure out how to handle the number of people we saw this weekend," said Mrs. Schlehuber. "We have to figure out how to anticipate the crowd number we'll have for next year, when we won't have the bridge anniversary."

Safe traffic crossing across State Street will be needed, said Mr. Sposito.

Restaurant vendors will be set up differently, as well, he said, to

avoid any bottleneck congestion created by long lines of people waiting to eat, and each booth will have better advertising displays.

"We put in a lot for the advertising campaign of this event," said Mr. Sposito.

Every business and nonprofit organization involved in the Fish Feast did very well, said Mrs. Schlehuber.

"The Fish Feast was one of the most awesome things we've done so far, it was a great turnout," she said. "I'm looking forward to next year."