

Custom-designed *Music* To Be Featured at Les Cheneaux Antique Wooden Boat Show

By Karen Gould

Moored among the vintage wooden boats at Hessel this year will be a three-month-old, custom-designed, 34-foot Grand Craft sport cruiser. Launched in May on Lake Macatawa in Holland, Michigan, the unique mahogany boat, *Music*, is a featured vessel at the 31st Annual Les Cheneaux Islands Antique Wooden Boat Show Saturday, August 9.

The classic design of the boat captures the best features of its forebears, Chris Craft, Hinckley, Riva, and San Juan, along with the original ideas of its owner, Howard Veneklasen, and the design team at Grand Craft in Holland.

"The inspiration of this boat," said Mr. Veneklasen, "came from over 25 years of looking at wooden boats and recalling aspects I like best of all the boats I ever saw."

Over the years, he said, the Les Cheneaux boat show has provided him with a wealth of information and discoveries.

"Every time I attend the show," he said, "I find something new that I didn't know was made. They have a great representation at that show."

Summer residents of Coryell Island, Mr. Veneklasen and his wife of 28 years, Julie, have been coming to the area for more than 25 years and are not new to wooden boat ownership.

Once Mr. Veneklasen decided to move forward with the project to have a custom-built boat, he recalled features he had appreciated in other boats over the years, including a 1930, 24-foot Chris Craft Cadet, the first boat he owned. Mr. Veneklasen had that boat entered in the first Les Cheneaux boat show.

When he sold the Chris Craft Cadet, he took a hiatus from wooden boat ownership, although not for long. His love for the vessels quickly returned. Appreciating their beauty and uniqueness, he likes



Music, the 34-foot Grand Craft sport cruiser owned by Coryell Island summer residents Julie and Howard Veneklasen is prepared to be launched in early May on Lake Macatawa in Holland, Michigan. (Grand Craft photographs)

knowing that without even looking, a wooden boat can be identified simply by the sound the engines make as the boat cuts through the water.

"There's nothing like a wooden boat," he added, "as far as the looks and the ride."

In 2004, Mr. Veneklasen walked into the office at Grand Craft with pages of specifications and features that he wanted included in his next vessel. His design request broke new ground for the company, which had specialized in building 24-foot to 28-foot runabouts and 36-foot commuter boats. At that time, it was the company's first effort at building a larger sport cruiser.

With the final design approved, the keel was laid in April 2005. Striking a balance between form and function, said Mr. Veneklasen, was paramount.

The 34-foot boat with a 10-foot beam is fitted out for Great Lakes cruising and features a Global Positioning System (GPS), Garmin radar, and a complete set of Volvo

instrumentation. The twin Volvo, six cylinder diesel engines provide a total of 870 horsepower and the boat tops out at 45 miles per hour.

The vessel weighs about 20,000 pounds.

Other features aboard *Music* include a galley with a microwave and refrigerator, Corian countertops, high quality marine leather trim, a non-slip cork floor, and heat and air conditioning. *Music* sleeps four comfortably.

Grand Craft was founded in 1979 by Chris Smith III, the great-grandson of the founder of Chris Craft. At that time, Chris Craft was moving from wooden boat construction to fiberglass boats. James Sheely, who is in sales and marketing at Grand Craft, said the company produces vintage boats with lower maintenance with construction that does not require the boat to be soaked each year.

The boats built by Grand Craft have a nostalgic appearance, said Mr. Sheely, without the maintenance of an older vintage wooden boat.

All of the company's boats are custom ordered like Mr. Veneklasen's *Music*, said Tim Masek, owner of Grand Craft.

"I think it demonstrates to a lot of people that not only can we build a traditional wooden boat, it also demonstrates we can customize, add appointments, and modern conveniences that people would want."

"We worked to successfully produce a product that is stunning and a cool boat," he said of *Music*.

While she's docked in Holland, many viewers want to know how old the boat is, a question Mr. Veneklasen takes as a compliment. The question, he said, confirms the boat retains the heritage of classic wooden boats.

The Veneklasens expect to enjoy years of boating in the Les Cheneaux Islands and also long distance traveling. This summer's cruising plans include excursions to Milwaukee and Chicago.

"I feel good about what we did," he said of *Music*. "It turned out well."



Grand Craft engineers and the Veneklasens test *Music's* twin Volvo, six cylinder diesel engines, which propel the boat up to 45 miles per hour.

St. Ignace Tree Committee Eyes Grant Program To Combat EAB

By Karen Gould

Taking action against the aggressive emerald ash borer (EAB), the St. Ignace Tree Committee is expected to recommend participation in a matching grant program totaling \$10,000. The grant would pay for an inventory of the city's ash trees and offer a management plan to treat them. The city's cost would be about \$5,000.

A similar grant, for the same amount of money, is available to replace dead ash trees.

The decision to have the Tree Committee review the grant requirements and make a recommendation to council was reached at the Monday, July 21, city council meeting.

Council likely will take action on the committee's recommendation at its next meeting, as the grant has to be used by September 1.

City Manager Eric Dodson, who recommended the city participate in the program, said the study and inventory would be done on trees on city-owned land, which would include the downtown area and the golf course.

More than 80 ash trees are estimated to be on city property.

Bernard Hubbard of Curtis, a consulting forester working with Michigan Technological University, outlined the EAB grant program, administered through the Department of Natural Resources. He told Council the management plan would include recommendations for each tree, with two options, either treat the ash trees or cut them down.

The pesticide treatment is made by injection into the tree and has to be done every two years. It is 98% effective, Mr. Hubbard said. The chemical travels through the tree's vascular system and can be found in its leaves within 24 hours.

"What we are trying to do is slow the spread of it so that research can catch up and try to figure out how to live with the creature," he said of the quickly-spreading EAB. "When it first came in, our goal was to eradicate it, but I don't think that is possible any more. Now we need to figure out how we can live with it and not lose the ash trees within the state, and within the country, actually."

In China, where the bore originated, where EAB originated, the insect has been known to move on to kill lilac and walnut trees, once it has destroyed all ash trees.

Michigan State University, said Mr. Hubbard, is leading the county on research of the emerald ash borer and Michigan Technological University leads the way on research for managing the trees.

The project, said Mr. Hubbard, is called Slam, to slow the spread of the emerald ash borer. The project uses the resources of both universities, state and federal departments of agriculture, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Michigan

Department of Natural Resources, and it also will be expanded to work with private land owners.

In other business Monday, following a public hearing on the matter, council approved a renewed lease with Arnold Transit Company for use of city property at Dock #3, near the Coast Guard station. The company ships freight between St. Ignace and Mackinac Island from the dock. No public comment was offered during the hearing.

The five year lease, which expires December 31, 2012, is for \$20,000 annually with increases each year beginning in 2009 and based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). At the suggestion of Councilmen Don Gustafson, Council approved the lease with the stipulation that the CPI used be consistent each year and specified in the lease.

The old lease called for annual payments of \$18,000.

Council also voted to abandon a clear-vision corner at Ferry Lane and Bertrand Street, following a public hearing on the matter.

The request was made by Fred Paquin, whose family is purchasing Gateway Lanes bowling alley. He attended the hearing and said they would like to pave the parking area, which has been used as gravel for the establishment.

The site contains 1,639 square feet and resembles a triangle with sides of approximately 64 feet by 65 feet by 75 feet. The Paquins will pay to have the abandoned right-of-way added to the bowling alley property description, and the bowling alley will be liable for the property taxes on the piece.

Council agreed to spend approximately \$10,000 for a new wrestling mat to be kept at Little Bear East Arena. The money will come from the community center fund, which has a \$61,000 balance.

Recreation Director Scott Marshall presented the request.

The wrestling tournament held earlier this month, he said, generated \$2,500 in revenue, and mats were borrowed from schools in St. Ignace and Sault Ste. Marie. A second event now is scheduled for September 21 and six more are scheduled for next year. He said the mat would pay for itself by next year, if the revenue holds up. Such mats have an estimated life of 15 years.

Participants commented on the quality of this month's tournament, said Mr. Marshall, and noted the St. Ignace venue gave them a mini-vacation, as well.

Mary Maurer of St. Ignace was reappointed to the St. Ignace Library board for a five year term. Her current term expires this month.

For the monthly water and sewer report, said Mr. Dodson, the sewer account is at a positive \$63,952, while the water account has a

Turn to page 17: St. Ignace

Locals on the Bay and Bayside Live!

Bishop, Conga Se Menne To Play Next Week

Jim Bishop will be featured in a Locals on the Bay concert Wednesday, July 30, 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, Conga Se Menne will perform for Bayside Live! Thursday, July 31, at 7 p.m. The high-energy alternative reggae band from Marquette performs originals with a mix of Calypso, funk, "sauna reggae," and ethnic Finnish sounds.

The outdoor concerts are free of charge. Audience members may bring lawn chairs, and bleacher seating is also available.



Jim Bishop

Rudyard Community To Celebrate Summer Fest This Weekend

The annual Rudyard Summer Fest will offer a wide variety of activities to celebrate the season Thursday, July 24, Friday, July 25, Saturday, July 26, and Sunday, July 27. Events, open to the public, include concerts, contests, and games for adults and children.

Historical Fashion Show Thursday

The event begins with the Our Town historical fashion show at Rudyard Middle School at 7:30 p.m. Donations will be accepted at the door.

Softball, Basketball, Horseshoes, Races, and Dance Featured Friday

A 4 p.m. softball tournament begins Friday's activities. Teams must pre-register by calling (906) 478-7879.

Events at the park begin at 6 p.m., including a horseshoes qualifying round, and three-on-three basketball for elementary students. Players sign up at the court area. The cost is \$10 per team.

An outhouse race takes place at the community center parking area, also. At 7:30

p.m., there will be fiddle music at the middle school. Admission is \$5 or \$2 for children 10 years old or younger. A youth dance follows at 8 p.m. The cost is \$3 per person.

Car Show and Parade Saturday

Softball and horseshoes will continue Saturday at 9 a.m. Teams pre-register by calling (906) 478-7879.

Beginning at 9 a.m., a car show will take place at the community center parking lot. Call (906) 478-4191 for information.

A parade begins at 10 a.m. Proceeding down Main Street, it will feature Everything Elvis, Favorite Storybook Characters, and Family Heritage themes. The parade is followed by a garden tractor pull at noon and an antique tractor pull at 1 p.m.

The Rudyard Historical Society will host an open house at the community center starting at noon Saturday and Sunday.

Free games for children begin at 1 p.m. At 4:30 p.m., there will be three-on-three basketball games for middle-school students.

Sign up is at the court area for \$10 a team.

At 9 p.m., easy rock band Hair Trigger will play for an adult dance at the pavilion. The cost is \$5 per person.

Triathlon, Crafts, Races, and Concert Sunday

A 5K triathlon will continue the festivities at 9:30 a.m. Sunday. A horseshoes doubles tournament will follow at noon.

BMX races and family softball games begin at 1 p.m. Bike racers register at the track for \$3. Softball information is available at (906) 478-7879.

Christian rock band Outshined plays at 2 p.m. at the pavilion.

At 2:30 p.m., there will be three-on-three basketball for high-school students and adults at the high school. The cost is \$10 per team. Sign-up is at the court area.

A 4 p.m. raffle drawing ends the festivities at the pavilion.

For more information about events, call (906) 478-5041.

Clark Twp. Hires Assessor, Turns Down Planning Commission Nomination

By Paul Gingras

Polly Cairns, owner and operator of Watson Assessing Services LLC, will take over as Clark Township assessor Monday, July 28, three days after the current assessor, Sherry Burd, completes her service. Mrs. Burd will complete the Tuesday, July 22, Board of Review before she moves to the Plainwell area, near where her husband works.

The Clark Township Board of Trustees unanimously approved an updated assessor's contract and selected Mrs. Cairns at its Thursday, July 17 meeting. The contract is for \$58,000 for 2008, \$59,000 for 2009, and \$60,000 for 2010 and includes almost all assessing-related expenses.

Not included in the contract are fuel expenses, which will be paid by the township when Mrs. Cairns represents Clark Township

at the Mackinac County seat in St. Ignace and before the Michigan Tax Tribunal.

She is a level-three assessor and is earning level-four status. Mrs. Cairns works for the Grand Traverse County Equalization Department, a position she will vacate before taking over as Clark Township assessor. She also serves as assessor for Glen Arbor Township, Mrs. Hudson said.

Mrs. Cairns was chosen from a pool of six potential assessors, which was narrowed to four qualified applicants. Her experience, ability to work with people, and workload were deciding factors, Mrs. Hudson said.

Mrs. Cairns and her husband, Tim, will be moving to the area soon, Mrs. Hudson added.

At its Thursday, August 21, meeting, the board will hire an

employee to clean township facilities. Carolyn Hamel has been performing the duties since an employee resignation in May. Township Clerk Cathy Nordquist will make recommendations for a replacement from applications received.

A vacancy remains on the township planning commission, owing to the board's 2-3 vote not to approve Mrs. Hudson's nomination of Amy Polk of Cedarville. Mrs. Nordquist and Mrs. Hudson voted to add her to the commission, while treasurer Katie Carpenter, trustee Dana Leach, and trustee Mike Lofdahl voted against.

"My no vote had nothing to do with Amy Polk or the other two candidates," Ms. Carpenter later told *The St. Ignace News*. "I cast this vote solely because of procedural questions and timing of the letters of interest and timing of the appointment."

Two other residents had expressed interest in the appointment.

The board approved removing a large, healthy cedar tree at Cedar Cemetery because it is on a family plot that will be used. The board is examining how other municipalities plan cemetery landscaping in hopes of avoiding such situations in future.

Volunteers To Paint Storm Drains Sunday

The Straits Area Watershed group hopes to raise awareness of storm drains with an activity Sunday, July 27, at 6 p.m. at the American Legion playground pavilion in St. Ignace.

Volunteers will paint the storm drains. All area storm drains will have a sign that says, "Don't dump, drains to Lake Huron." The

organization wants people to recognize that whatever they put in the storm drains, on the streets, on driveways, or in their yards, will end up in the lake. This activity is open to all, and participants will be treated to ice cream at the pavilion.

For more information, call 643-7870.