

# Maritime Heritage Alliance To Display *Champion* at Hessel Boat Show

By Jonathan Eppley

The Maritime Heritage Alliance in Traverse City is reaching out to at-risk youths by taking them on sailing adventures in northern Lake Michigan. Alliance volunteers take small groups of youngsters from the northwestern Lower Peninsula out on the Great Lakes cutter *Champion* each week to teach them basic sailing skills and counsel the youths on issues they are facing.

Each week, youths enrolled in a four-day program spend Mondays on land participating in team-building exercises and learning about the boat. Tuesday through Thursday, the group spends its time on day-excursions sailing in Grand Traverse Bay and northern Lake Michigan.

Mark Thompson, executive director of the alliance, said the day-trips give the children a chance to learn new skills and ways to cope with problems.

"It's a therapeutic sailing experience for at-risk youth in northern Michigan," he said. "We're just giving them an opportunity to experience something different."

At left: Members of the Maritime Heritage Alliance sail the Great Lakes cutter *Champion*. The boat will be on hand for tours at the 32nd Annual Les Cheneaux Islands Antique Wooden Boat Show in Hessel Saturday, August 8. (Photo courtesy of Maritime Heritage Alliance)



The boat is the only one of its kind in the alliance's 26-boat fleet with the goal of counseling at-risk youths. The group has two tall ships, which are larger than *Champion*, and smaller row, sail, and motor boats in its fleet.

*Champion* will be on display for tours during the 32nd Annual Les Cheneaux Islands Antique Wooden Boat Show in Hessel Saturday, August 8. Mr. Thompson and a few volunteers will be on

hand to guide visitors above and below deck while describing the boat and its youth programs. It will be docked at the Hessel Marina for tours from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. that day.

Mr. Thompson has been attending the Les Cheneaux boat show for the past five years and said he thought it would be fun to display the boat at this year's show. He contacted the Les Cheneaux Historical Society to see if it was interested in mooring the vessel during the show, and they jumped at the opportunity, he said.

"They are excited to have us come up there," he said. "It's a good excuse to have a little working vacation."

The boat is a 39-foot Great Lakes cutter built by the Concordia Company in Dartmouth, Massachusetts, in 1968. The alliance acquired it about a year ago from Henry Barkhausen of Harbor Springs, who donated it to

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## Genealogists Will Pool Resources at St. Ignace

Vast Store of Records Available at History Weekend

By Mark Tower

Families of Native American and French Canadian descent, which includes many Straits area families, will be the special focus of amateur and professional genealogists who plan to meet in St. Ignace over the weekend to use a collective pool of knowledge and documents and, together, research family histories and bloodlines.

The group will host a workshop at the St. Ignace Middle School cafeteria Saturday, August 1, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday, August 2, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is open to the public and all who are interested in family histories and research are welcome to attend and share their own historical records.

The workshop coincides with History on the Bay, a weekend history festival in town.

A wide range of experience and information will be brought together by first-time family history researchers and expert certified genealogists like Cindy Leutz, who plans to attend.

Mrs. Leutz said her obsession with genealogy began while helping her daughter look back to find the family's Native American heritage. After her daughter died, she continued to search and eventually found the family link they had been looking for.

About 10 years ago, Mrs. Leutz began holding gatherings like the one planned in St. Ignace, in which she invited anyone with an interest

in researching family history to compile research materials and work together to uncover the names and stories of their ancestors.

"The idea is to get people and records together in the same place so they don't have to go searching all over the place for it," she said.

In her years of research and experience, she has built a vast collection of materials chronicling the history of people, especially of Native American descent, in the upper Great Lakes region.

"They have hundreds of records. Anyone who has relatives in Mackinac County, they will know about them."

— Judi Engle, Michilimackinac Historical Society

"We just have binders full of this stuff," Mrs. Leutz said. "It's just mind-boggling with what we've put together so far."

Although most of the records are in French, she has developed a basic understanding of the language and a "cheat sheet" that almost anyone can use to read the lists of families, births, baptisms, marriages, and deaths.

Mrs. Leutz said she also has researched families in New England and has a lot of material for any families who originated there, although she won't be able to bring it all to St. Ignace Saturday owing to space restrictions.

Any records from family history would be useful to the entire group, said Judi Engle, president of the Michilimackinac Historical Society in St. Ignace, and should be brought in by interested researchers.

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## St. Ignace

## Dog Park Plan Moving Forward With Volunteers

By Mark Tower

Planning for the proposed St. Ignace dog park is moving forward after 14 people attended its first public informational and planning meeting Wednesday, July 22. The purpose of the meeting was to gauge community and volunteer interest in the idea of developing the park in town.

The suggested multi-use park would involve three phases: an approximate-two-acre dog park where people can exercise and play with pets, a two-to-three-acre Native American interpretive trail area, and a general-use park on the rest of the total 20 acres on the piece of city land requested by the dog park planners.

The parcel under consideration, currently owned by the City of St. Ignace, is behind Little Bear East Arena and runs east of I-75 to Cheeseman Road.

George and JoAnn Ford from the Mackinac Animal Aid Association planned Wednesday's meeting, and said beforehand that the community's interest would be very impor-

tant to the success of the park idea.

"We were very pleased with the turnout," Mrs. Ford said, "especially that there were some new faces there."

Next, the group needs to work out an agreement with the city to use the property, form a planning board or committee for the park within the Animal Aid Association, and apply for and receive a grant to cover construction costs, Mrs. Ford said.

"I think the people that showed up were truly interested in getting something going," she said. "In two weeks, we will probably get some concrete plans going."

Deb Evashevski, Downtown Development Authority director for the city, worked at an unsuccessful attempt to turn the same area into a park in the past, and said much of the work she did could be used to plan and design this park.

"There's no sense in re-inventing the wheel," Mrs. Evashevski said.

Mr. Ford said there would be some fundraising involved in the

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## Fish Feast Now 'Stands on Its Own,' Organizers Say

By Mark Tower

In its third year, the St. Ignace Fish Feast has become well established and popular enough to be a standalone event, organizers said, and they were pleased with ticket sales for food, drinks, and games.

In 2007, the first Fish Feast was offered in conjunction with the Mackinac Bridge's 50th anniversary. In 2008, the second year of the event was combined with the LaSalle High School All Class Reunion.

This year, the third annual Fish Feast was the one big event in St. Ignace Saturday, July 25, and Eileen Evers of the Chamber of Commerce said ticket sales were up from 2008, although an exact count was not available at press time. Last year, about \$20,000 in tickets were sold. The tickets are used to purchase food and beverages.

"It stood alone this year," Mrs. Evers said. "I think we exceeded our expectations this year."

The Fish Feast celebrates St. Ignace's maritime and commercial fishing heritage.

This year was the first time the Fish Feast charged an admission fee of \$2 for all those entering the marina dock for the festivities. Mrs. Evers said about \$2,800 was received from admissions (about 1,400 people), which will be used for start-up money next year.

"Everybody had smiles on their faces and really looked like they were enjoying themselves," Mrs. Evers said. "I just really think it was a great event."

Mackinac Grille employees reported good sales but were down from last year. That is probably because more food vendors brought more food this year and stayed open longer, which reduced lines.

Peter Dewey, manager of Village Inn restaurant, said he made more money than last year, selling about 1,000 pieces of food. He brought more food this year and was better prepared for the crowd than in 2008, he said.

"I think it was a success," Mr. Dewey said. "It's so encouraging to see the crowds out there."

Elizabeth Brown, owner of the Pavillion, which sold wine and souvenir glasses at the event, said her sales were down a little from last year.

Mrs. Evers credited many volunteers from the community who helped coordinate and work at Saturday's festival, which included carnival-style games, live music, boat tours, food, drinks, and fireworks over Moran Bay.

The return of former St. Ignace residents is becoming a tradition for the Fish Feast, City Manager Eric Dodson said.

"It's kind of becoming a homecoming, too," Mr. Dodson said. "We had great crowds and good weather. It was absolutely fantastic."

Summer cottagers like Rosemary Bailey of Florida and Kathy Colyer of Kalamazoo also turned out, as did visitors like Bob and Laura DeLine from Grand Rapids, who were celebrating their 30th wedding anniversary.

The Fish Feast included a blessing at the waterfront

Fishermen's Memorial to honor those who lost their lives in the commercial fishing industry at the Straits. Darryl Brown and Jerry Dutcher offered a prayer acknowledging the fishermen who had lost their lives on the lakes, and appealing for future protection for those who continue that way of life today.

Thunderclouds could be seen most of the day to the north and south, but the sky above St. Ignace stayed remarkably clear and rain-free the entire day.

A dunk tank, children's trout fishing in a tank, and a bowling game offering candy bar prizes were among the carnival activities set up at the marina.

On the marina dock, throngs of

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At right: Darryl Brown offers a prayer at the Fishermen's Memorial near the city marina in St. Ignace, as part of the Fish Feast Saturday, July 25. The Fish Feast celebrates St. Ignace's maritime and commercial fishing heritage, and each year a blessing is offered at the memorial for fishermen who have died on the lakes.



Crowds mill about the city marina's dock Saturday, July 25, during the third annual Fish Feast celebration in St. Ignace. Visitors enjoyed food, music, boat tours, games, and other activities, which culminated with the weekly fireworks displays St. Ignace is offering Saturdays through Labor Day.