MacKenzie Exhibit Construction Still Ongoing, To Be Done For Opener

The WCHM exhibit hall is in a bit of disarray these days, as new exhibit construction and various other changes are completed before opening day on May 28. The major project that is ongoing now is construction of a new 2016 annual exhibit, a display to honor the life’s work of consummate craftsman and builder Tom MacKenzie. The exhibit is being designed by various people, including Alan Craig, Karen MacKenzie, Jill Dean, Jamie Dunn, and WCHM Executive Director Jed Malischke, with the actual construction and assembly being done mostly by Dunn. “This is one of our most elaborate display endeavors ever,” says Malischke, “and we’re grateful to have a great collaboration of folks working on it.”

Tom MacKenzie was a great supporter of the WCHM and its mission, and his estate has provided the museum with many of his tools and unique canoe forms. Along with this generous donation, the museum has raised over $10,000 in a MacKenzie Fund Drive this year to pay for the display as well as transportation of the MacKenzie artifacts from South Carolina to Wisconsin. “We’re also grateful to all of Tom’s friends as well as our many museum supporters who donated to the fund for this display and to help preserve Tom’s legacy,” continued Malischke, who made the 1,200 mile journey by truck, “and to Karen MacKenzie for organizing everything and giving up so much of her husband’s life to share with the rest of the canoeing world.” Memorial donations to the fund can still be made by mailing to WCHM, PO Box 365, Spooner WI 54801, or making gift online at https://www.razoo.com/us/story/Wisconsin-Canoe-Museum.

Museum To Expand Storage Capacity
[reprint by permission of an article written by Shaun Anderson and published in the Spooner Advocate]

The Spooner City Council voted seven yes with one absent on April 7 to appropriate $9,000 of the $18,000 in assistance requested by the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum for construction of a new 24-by-36-square-foot storage building. The remainder will be paid out over the next three to four years.

The council also approved a land swap deal for the endeavor since the proposed building site which is located directly behind the museum building (which the city owns) is owned by Thompson Trust. In an interview with Jed Malischke, executive director of the museum, he described how the museum is like other museums in that many items are kept in storage due to periodic changes in displays and acquisitions of new artifacts. He said they currently have three storage garages around town which are full and gave the example of how the museum is awaiting the arrival of three collectible canoes from Canada but lacks storage space.

Malischke further pointed out, however, that the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum is unique in that it is the only museum in the United States devoted solely to canoes. He explained the museum has expanded over the past six years in ways such as classes and workshops offered as well as presentations by authors and travel writers. Malischke hopes to have the building completed by this season’s kickoff on Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Day—the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend. The event will close the street, have live music and a beer tent, and feature a canoe and wooden boat show in front of the museum.
Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Day May 28 In Spooner

Back in 2010 the Wisconsin State Legislature proclaimed the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend to be Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Day. The Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum (WCHM) in Spooner, Wisconsin, is continuing this tradition with their Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Day on Saturday May 28, 2016. From 10:00 am to 4:00 pm there will be the annual canoe and wooden boat show in the street, museum tours and open house in the museum exhibit hall, ongoing activities in the canoe workshop, and live music and food and beverage in the beer garden. Over twenty exhibitors are expected to provide a wide variety of canoes, boats, and canoe related materials of all types. Classic and modern, traditional and contemporary, for sale or just for show, it will all be on display at this former grain elevator turned museum.

A few of the new highlights this year will be the expanded musical program, a silent auction, and of course the new 2016 Tom Mackenzie exhibit. The silent auction was such a success last year it was decided to expand it this year. One of the featured items in the auction will be a classic 1959 Chetek Debutante Model 162 wooden boat and complete with a 1965 Evinrude Starlight V75 motor and trailer. You’ll want to pick up a bidder’s number as soon as you arrive and check out the other items on display that will be auctioned throughout the day.

In the beer garden you will enjoy the music of Pushing Chain, Brave Cowboy, and Les Fils de Voyageur while sampling the food and beverages available there. Pushing Chain, a folky-tonk duo from Minnesota’s north shore, features award winning songwriter Boyd Blomberg on guitar and Adam Moe on fiddle. You may have heard them singing the national anthem before a recent Minnesota Twins baseball game. And just like the character in Edward Abbey’s book, Brave Cowboy refuses to be branded, labeled, or fenced in by musical stereotypes. Jason Rabuck on harmonica and guitar and Eric Schubring on banjo and guitar provide an inspired and vibrant blend of folk, rock, blues, and originals. Then journey back in time with Les Fils du Voyageur, otherwise known as the Sons of the Voyageur. They bring the fur trade era to life through songs of the voyageurs and their authentic period garb. They have been singing together since 1976 and have travelled the entire Midwestern region from Lafayette, Indiana to Winnipeg, Manitoba, performing these songs as well as logging songs and Great Lakes sailing songs.

Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Day will be from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm on Saturday May 28th. The public is invited to this free event at 312 N Front Street in Spooner, Wisconsin. For nearby motel lodging we recommend the Best Western American Heritage Inn at 715-635-9770. For camping, travel, or other lodging information contact the Spooner Area Chamber of Commerce at 800-367-3306. For more information visit www.WisconsinCanoeHeritageMuseum.org.

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**News Briefs & Upcoming Events**

**Miller Canoes To Be Added To WCHM Collections**

A shipment of three historic canoes is expected to arrive soon to the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum from Nicatu, New Brunswick Canada. Miller Canoes is the oldest continuously operating canoe builder in Canada and has been operated there by three generations of the William Miller family. Each of the three canoes being acquired for the WCHM Collections represents one generation of the Miller family business. According to Jeremy Ward of the Canadian Canoe Museum, “Miller is a maker worth collecting as a latter-day, small-time canoe maker of significance and considerable endurance. Bill is the third William Miller to make canoes on the Tobique River in northern New Brunswick. His grandfather made the first Miller canoe in the attic of the family home. This grandfather ran a string of lodges along the Tobique and started making canoes in the ’20s. Bill’s father took over the business and Bill, himself, took it over in turn in 1974.”

**Business After Five Open House May 27**

The Spooner Area Chamber of Commerce is presenting a “Business After Five” networking event that is being hosted by the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum along with a museum open house. The socializing, appetizers, etc. runs from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm on Friday May 27th at 312 N Front St in Spooner. The event provides an opportunity for local business owners, area residents, and out of area travelers coming for the opening day events planned for the next day, to greet their colleagues, make new acquaintances, and get a sneak peek at what the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum has to offer in 2016. The open house will be preceded by the WCHM annual general membership meeting and election for the Board of Directors at 4:30 PM.

**WCHM To Be At Fish Opener Expo**

Fishing enthusiasts will be flocking to Heartwood Conference Center & Retreat in Trego, Wisconsin on Friday, May 6th for the inaugural Wisconsin Opener Fishing & Outdoor Expo. The WCHM will also be there with its traveling promotional booth and 2016 raffle canoe. Other displays expected include fishing equipment vendors, equipment demonstrations, seminars and casting clinics, including demonstrations by the host of One More Cast, Shaw Grigsby. The event is run by Wisconsin Indian Head Country in partnership with Washburn County Tourism, Wisconsin Department of Tourism, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and Heartwood Conference Center & Retreat. More information can be found at http://www.washburncounty.org/wi-opener-expo.

**Upper Great Lakes Regional Assembly Aug 19-21**

The Regional Assembly of the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association will be held in Marquette, Michigan, on Aug 19-21 under the beautiful canopy of pine trees at Tourist Park on the Dead River. The Assembly will feature a full day of demonstrations, vendor booths, raffle and silent auction, opportunities for river paddling, and time to learn from exhibitors. Special plans are underway this year for a “Century Circle,” a display to honor canoes built in 1916 or earlier. For more information contact Judy or Craig Kitchen at 906-225-1769 or jkitchenmqt@gmail.com. For camping reservations at Tourist Park call the park directly at 906-228-0465 or www.mqtcty.org.
Author Mike Elliott Coming July 22

Mike Elliott, author of “This Old Canoe: How To Restore Your Wood Canvas Canoe,” is coming to the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum (WCHM) in Spooner, Wisconsin, for a presentation and book signing on Friday July 22nd beginning at 8:00 PM. The book is a step-by-step guide through the process of transforming an old, forgotten canoe into a cherished, classic heirloom. Where other do-it-yourself canoe books concentrate mostly on building wooden canoes, this book is the only one available dedicated exclusively to the restoration of wood-canvas canoes.

In his presentations, Elliott, who has restored over 170 canoes since 2003, lets you in on the trade secrets of how to successfully return your canoe to its former glory. Using over 300 photos and 70+ plans and illustrations, this book is designed to simplify the many challenging tasks of canoe restoration including canvassing, how to weave rattan seats, and how to steam-bend wood. Elliott began restoring canoes as a hobby in 1995. That hobby bloomed into a full time career in 2003 when he opened Kettle River Canoes in Grand Forks, British Columbia, where he’s been restoring wood canvas canoes ever since. His popular CanoeGuy’s Blog is read by over 5,000 canoe enthusiasts each month.

Mike Elliott will be at the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum in Spooner (312 N Front St) talking about wooden canoes and their people - the ties that bind them and the restorations that bring them back together again, as well as signing copies of his book which will be available for purchase. The presentation begins at 8:00 PM and is free and open to the public. For more information call 715-635-2479 or email to info@WisconsinCanoeHeritageMuseum.org. For nearby motel lodging we recommend the Best Western American Heritage Inn at 715-635-9770. For camping, travel, or other lodging information contact the Spooner Area Chamber of Commerce at 800-367-3306.

Canoe Building Class Planned For August

Alex Comb from Stewart River Boatworks in Knife River MN will be teaching a cedar and canvas canoe building class at the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum (WCHM) in Spooner WI. The class is scheduled to begin Saturday August 9th and continue daily through Friday August 15th. In the Comb’s group class, the students will build up to two beautiful cedar and canvas canoes. On the first day cedar ribs will be bent over a solid canoe form and on the following day planking the canoe with thin cedar “planks” will begin. Once planked and the hull constructed, canvas will be stretched over the canoes. Finally, the canvas is filled with water-proof filler. In this hands-on class everyone will be invited to participate in the construction. By the end of the week the canoes should be ready for paint and varnish with seats, thwarts, yokes and gunwales installed.

The canoe building class will be limited to twelve students so that each will have the opportunity for a real hands-on experience. Depending on the number of students, there will be one or two canoes built by the group. A lottery will be held at the end of the class to decide who may go home with at least one of the canoes for the cost of materials. The cost of the class is $700 and interested students can enroll by contacting WCHM Executive Director Jed Malischke at 715-635-2479 or info@wisconsincanoerheritagemuseum.org.

Thank You to These Supporting Members

Jim Hart
Jill Weber Dean & Jeffrey Dean
Kurt & Susan Sroka

Contact WCHM

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