

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT - PAT & SHEILA CHAPS October 2012

Before Pat & Sheila met, they enjoyed boating, separately. Through the 1960's, Pat's uncle owned an 18' Chris Craft Sea Skiff and then a 34' Chris Craft Sea Skiff. In the 1980's, Pat's uncle decided to sell the 34' Sea Skiff and offered it to Pat.



Pat jumped at the opportunity to become a boat owner and his passion for boating continued to grow.



Sheila was primarily into sailing on the east coast: Massachusetts, New Hampshire and in New York on Lake Champlain. Sheila then migrated to the Midwest and her passion continued to grow while she enjoyed sailing on Lake St Clair in Michigan.

In the early 1990's Sheila and Pat met.

They merged their boating worlds together with a 28' Chris Craft Catalina Express and were married in 1995. Many fabulous trips were taken on the Catalina: Lake Huron, Lake St Clair, Lake Erie, lots of wonderful memories.

The Chaps had been without a boat for a couple years when they bought "Moxie", a 26' Chris Craft Sports Express. She had been fairly well cared for, but of course, there is always work to be done, especially on a wood boat. Pat and Sheila dove into their "new" boat with vigor. Sanding, painting, varnishing, & polishing. After a few years, "Moxie" was entered into several antique boats shows and she did very well, winning many awards.



(1956 26' Chris Craft Sports Express
"Moxie" on the left.)

So now, "Moxie", was more of show piece, gleaming in the sunshine. The problem was, Pat & Sheila became very aware of every little move they made when onboard "Moxie". "Make sure you don't wear a zipper, as it may scratch the varnish!" While they loved "Moxie", they wanted a boat on which they could truly relax, travel, and enjoy cruising.

The search for a Commander begins...

The 35' Commander model first drew Pat & Sheila's eye and their search began. They attended several shows but just could not find anything that struck their fancy. They preferred a boat without a fly bridge, of which they all had.

Pat then came across the book "The Legacy of the Fiberglass Chris Craft Commander" written by fellow club member Paul Pletcher. In this book, Pat sees the 28' Sports Express. This is the boat! A new search begins and in 2010, the Chaps find their 1972 Chris Craft Commander 28' Sports Express and named her "Allure".



This boat, like many Commanders, had a lot of wood on the interior. The Chaps have added more wood to the interior and replaced most of the old naugahyde. Those of you that attended the 2012 Rendezvous probably enjoyed the “Allure” and her flawless beauty.



The “Allure” has served the Chaps well, taking them on many, many cruises, all over the Great Lakes. The Chaps spend weeks at a time on the “Allure”. Those of you familiar with Great Lakes know that they can be quite a challenge when Mother Nature is misbehaving. Sheila made an interesting comment, saying that even though the “Allure”

is so close to the water, she is very stable and they feel very safe on her. The “Allure” was now a beautiful boat on which they could cruise, relax and enjoy.



Just for fun, Pat & Sheila decided to enter the “Allure” in a couple of the antique boats shows and she’s won awards, as well! She won Captain’s Choice at the St Clair Antique Classic Boat Show and Runner Up in the non-wood cruiser category at the Algonac Antique Boat Show. She’s giving “Moxie” a run for her money!!



The Chaps joined the Commander Club in 2010 and have thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship and wisdom of the club’s members. The Chaps appreciate the club so much that when they won the 50/50 drawing at the Rendezvous, they chose to donate their winnings back to the club!!!

The Chaps keep their Commander at the St. Clair Boat Harbor in St. Clair, MI. The Commander Club is fortunate to have the

Chaps as members, and look forward to many more years of their friendship, enthusiasm, and contributions.

/ Pam Sorensen, CCCC PR-Chair