

IN THE NEWS

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by **Madalyn Buursma**

Couple launches Ahh! Venture Cruise on Lake Macatawa in Holland

PARK TWP. — A local couple wants to share the joy of boating with their new private cruise business.

Ahh! Venture Cruise is offering private cruises from Lake Macatawa to Lake Michigan in the Holland area. Cal and Terrie Morrow, both licensed captains through the U.S. States Coast Guard, started the business as a way to enjoy the lake in retirement.

“We started it because we’re retired and we couldn’t think of a better way to spend retirement life than on the water,” Terrie said. “So we decided ... we love the Great Lakes, we love people. Let’s start a boating business and take them out.”

The cruises are tailored to the experience guests are looking for — whether you want to cruise along the shores of Lake Macatawa, swim in Lake Michigan or head to Saugatuck. The couple offers sunrise and sunset cruises and everything in between. The boat can fit up to six people and can be two to eight hours long.

The Morrows hope the cruises will help people relax and experience “the joy of boating.”

“The reason we’re called Ahh! Venture Cruise is, whenever we go out into the big lakes, you get to escape the stress of life, the busyness of your schedule,” Terrie said. “You go out in the water and (what) comes to mind is ‘ahh,’ because it all goes away.”

Cal said you get the same feeling diving into Lake Michigan and feeling the water on your face.

“It’s like a cool drink,” he said.

They’re also going to be doing some specialty cruises, like a three-hour yoga cruise scheduled for June 24 with five spots available. Ahh! Venture will take guests to a secluded Lake Michigan beach, where a yoga instructor from Dutch Roots will lead everyone in yoga.

After, the Ahh! Venture will have complimentary “breads and spreads.” Each cruise offers the refreshments, with items from local businesses like DeBoer Bakkerij, Fustini’s and the Holland Peanut Store.

Instead of bottled water, there’s water from local business Boxed Water. The Morrows are very invested in sustain-

ability, especially when it comes to the Great Lakes.

Terrie, a retired teacher, worked with the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative throughout her career. She hopes they'll also be able to share that passion for the Great Lakes through Ahh! Venture.

"The one thing all of us have in common ... is the need for freshwater. That's important to us. ... We have four adorable little grandchildren and it's important that we pass on freshwater to their generation and those after," Terrie said.

"We need water to sustain life. We need it for recreation, we need it for beauty, we need it to feed everything (that's living on the Earth). We need fresh water, so we need to take care of our fresh water."

The couple has decided to split any tips they receive between the VFW (Cal is a Navy veteran) and Project Clarity, a community partnership working to improve and protect Lake Macatawa and the Macatawa Watershed.

"It's important ... that we are able to give back," Terrie said. "We have been blessed with so much goodness in our life and we want to be able to give back."

Figuring out how to start their own business has come with a steep learning curve, the couple said, but it was also a delight.

They worked closely with the Michigan Small Business Development Center and SCORE, a nonprofit that offers free business mentors. One of them is Ken Brune, who worked for decades as an executive in the automotive industry.

"I started it in October primarily because I'm a lifelong businessman and I wanted to give back to the community," Brune said. "I wanted to be active and I wanted to work, but I didn't want a job. So, this is a wonderful opportunity."

He said the Grand Rapids chapter has around 50 retired executives who volunteer as mentors. They helped Ahh! Venture with things like coming up with a business plan, creating a waiver and setting up social media.

The Morrows have been "magnificent," he said, adding SCORE sent them a video on how to set up a website and Terrie came back the next day with one completed — she'd stayed up until 3 a.m. putting it together.

"I'm just putting my 40 years of automotive experience to work, helping people in my community to enjoy their lives and live their dreams," Brune said.

He encouraged anyone looking to start a small business or looking to improve a small business to sign up for SCORE.

"We've been around for a while and we know some of the tricks and we can help people," he said.

The Morrows took Brune and his wife and granddaughters, along with a WOOD TV-8 crew, for a cruise Friday, June 9. The couple says they're not just there to sell a ticket; they also want to make connections.

"We want to share what it's like to be boating on the Great Lakes," Cal said. "Many people don't get to see that."

For more information, visit ahhventurecruise.com.