

## Remembering the Bradley

# Painter portrays tragedy

By CORINNE ABATT

He didn't want to look at his watch. It would only make the time until sunrise seem longer. It was the evening of Nov. 18, 1958, and Frank Mays was clinging to a raft, precariously riding the crests and troughs of 30-foot waves on Lake Michigan.

The Carl D. Bradley had broken in two and sunk. Four of the crew scrambled onto the raft made of 55 gallon drums with boards on top and bottom. Mays and Elmer Fleming were picked up alive the next morning, the other 33 crew members perished.

Now, painter James Clary of St. Clair had the watch, given him by Mays when he saw Clary's painting of the Bradley that tragic night.

Clary, one of eight artists featured in the marine and wildlife print and painting exhibit at Somerset Mall, July 12-22, treasures the watch. He's an avid collector of maritime history and memorabilia as well as a maritime artist.

Mays, who recalls the events surrounding the tragedy, said that when he heard the first sound indicating something was wrong, "things that stuck in my mind were watch and wallet."

He went and got them and put on his life jacket.

Mays said when he heard the second bang, "I knew something was wrong. The aft end went down and came up. I still believe she broke from underneath. When I looked up, I couldn't see the aft end."

By this time, Mays was up on deck with other crew members.

"When a ship starts to go down, seamanship tells you to go to the high side.

*'When a ship starts to go down, seamanship tells you to go to the high side. They did, but I didn't. I went to get the raft ready. I was untying the oars when she went down. When I came up out of the water, my arm touched the raft.'*

— Frank Mays, Bradley survivor

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Even though Clary had talked extensively with Mays, now an officer for a cement company in York, Pa., he still asks more each time they meet.

Clary, a self-taught artist, has, expectedly, an almost insatiable curiosity about all events of this kind. He has done paintings of ships in three different series — Great Lakes, Peared Lost, and Classic Ships.

The Bradley falls into the Great Lakes category. Clary said he calls the Great Lakes Museum his second home, because he spends so much time there researching.

One of his paintings, "The Battle of Lake Erie," was purchased for \$20,000 and donated to Baldwin Wallace College in Ohio.

Most of the originals, acrylics about 24 by 30 inches, are in collections, but the lithographs are available.

Many of these, ranging in price from \$45-\$450, will be in the Somerset Mall show.

Presently, he is working on a painting of the Greater Detroit with the 1938 Detroit skyline behind it.

This was an excursion ship and, Clary said, 1938 "was the company's prime year."



Frank Mays, left, Bradley survivor, and St. Clair maritime artist James Clary look over the pictures of the ship which went down in Lake Michigan in 1958. Mays, now office manager for Medusa Cement Co. of

York, Pa., never went back to sailing after that fateful night on a raft in stormy waters. (Staff photo by Stephen Cantrell)

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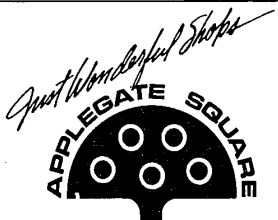
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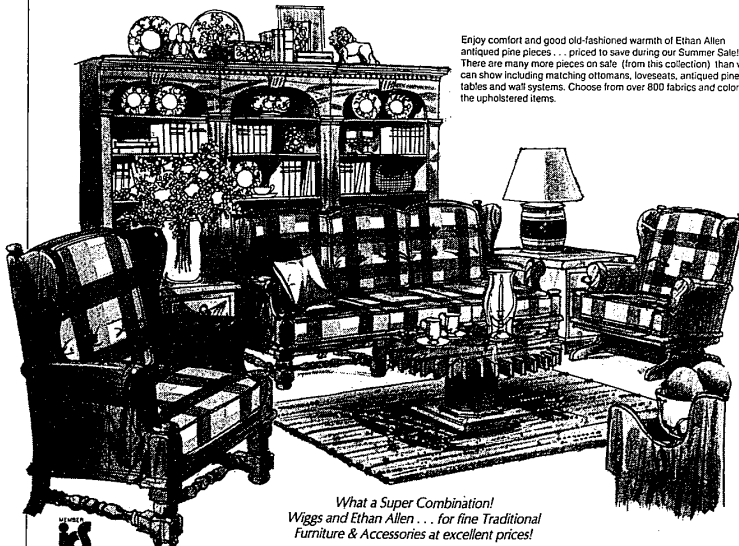
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