

## TRAVEL

## Clear the decks this summer to spend some time in Put-in-Bay

BY MARY BARBERIO  
SPECIAL WRITER

"Put in the bay! Put in the bay!" shouted the captain of the small schooner, sniling the waters of Lake Erie a long time ago. The sky was turning an ugly color of green and the shallow waters were churning and throwing 10 foot waves up over the bow of the small craft. The captain knew he had to find a safe harbor for protection from the violent storm that was brewing.

Put-in-Bay, on South Bass Island, is still a safe harbor but it's better known today as a summer resort.

It's easy to get around. The island is only three miles wide. Vehicles are permitted but not necessary. In fact, unless you plan an extended stay, you're better off without one. You'll find plenty of island transportation. Rent a bike or golf cart. Take a bus, a taxi or a tour train. If your activities are limited to the downtown area, walking will be just fine.

Since we love to explore, we chose bikes. We brought ours across on the ferry, but if you opt not to, don't worry. Bike rentals can be found at both ferry docks. Hop on and follow along for our tour of the island.

## Perry's Monument

Our first stop is Perry's Monument. Located in the downtown

harbor, the 352-foot column was completed in 1915 to commemorate the victory of the Americans over the British navy in the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812. With a much smaller fleet, Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry defeated the British making famous his saying, "We have met the enemy and they are ours." If you time it right, you can catch the musket firing demonstration and a mini history lesson.

Back on our bikes, we pedal over to one of my favorite stops, the Alaskan Birdhouse and Wildlife Museum. There we are held spell-bound by the fascinating stories told by the owner-tour guides.

In need of refreshment, we stop at Heinemann's Winery. Since we toured the winery and cave (with the largest geode recorded in the world) last summer, this time we just sit and rest, sampling the island's excellent wines.

Renewed, we hike to the State Park. There we gaze at the ruins of the natatorium and a few stone pillars, all that remain of the Hotel Victory after a fire destroyed it in 1919. For a while we step back in time, trying to imagine what the hotel looked like in its heyday in 1892. A local history book describes the hotel as a first-class resort. "The guest register carried the signatures of Presidents Hayes, Taft, and Harrison." There were concerts and

## Planning your trip

South Bass Island is three miles north of the Ohio cities of Port Clinton and Catawba and can be reached by boat or small aircraft.

## ■ By ferry

Miller Boat Line - provides service for passengers, vehicles and bikes from Catawba to the southern shore at the Line Klin Dock. Check departure times as they vary. Call (800) 500-2421 or (419) 285-2421 or www.millerferry.com

Jet Express - from downtown Port Clinton to downtown Put-in-Bay. Passenger and bike service only. No vehicles permitted. Cost is a bit higher than on the Miller Line, but they offer later Put-in-Bay departures, #5 N. Jefferson St., (800) 245-1538, www.jet-express.com

## ■ By your own watercraft

Coordinates for downtown Put-in-Bay are 41 degrees, 39 minutes north and 82 degrees, 49 minutes west. Caution: dockage is limited, especially on weekends and holidays. Not all take reservations. There are 81 mooring buoys.

## ■ Lodging

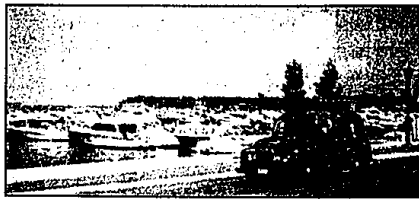
There are 14 bed & breakfasts on the island; 35 motels, hotels, rental cottages and homes, and camping at the state park. For more information, contact the Put-in-Bay Chamber of Commerce (419) 285-2832, fax (419) 285-4702 or write Box 250, Put-in-Bay, Ohio 43456; e-mail: island@put-in-bay.com or visit www.put-in-bay.com

dancing, clay tennis courts, boat rentals and regattas.

There was even a natatorium where men and women swam together, an event that was considered shocking for its time. The hotel had rooms for over 800 guests and massive kitchens outfitted with the latest appliances including ranges and automatic dishwashers. The dining rooms were said to be so large that over 2,000 guests could dine at one sitting, and the lobby could seat 1,000. How unfortunate that this

magnificent hotel, which had taken four years to build, was destroyed in a few short hours, never to be rebuilt.

We're off to the downtown area where we park our bikes and continue on foot. Looking for island memorabilia? T-shirts, sportswear, jewelry, pottery, candles, toys, antiques, paintings, and just about anything nautical can be found. Hungry? You'll find fine dining, fast dining and lots of homemade fudge, cookies, and our favorite - ice



Safe harbor: You can get to Put-in-Bay, on South Bass Island, by ferry, or take your own boat.

cream.

## Walk on the Boardwalk

After a bit of people watching, we head down to the Boardwalk, enjoy the breadbowl-filled lobster bisque, the peel and eat shrimp and a little taste of wait-eyes. Later we watch the sun setting over the bay and listen to an incredibly good Janis Joplin wannabee belt out Bobby McGee and ponder our next stop. So many choices.

You might have heard of the Beer Barrel Saloon, reported to have the world's longest bar with 160 bar stools and 66 beer taps. Or you might have guzzled a frosty one at Frosty's, sampled the chicken at the Chicken Patio, or listened to Pat Dailey sing.

We meander for a while, it's

late now, and we must retire to our delightful bed and breakfast. But there's always tomorrow. We'll visit the Historical Museum and catch the afternoon parade of classic cars. We'll consider taking the ferry over to Kelley's Island. The rest will wait for another visit - the Aquatic Visitor's Center, harbor tours, exploring Perry's cave, Kimberly's Carousel (one of the few remaining merry-go-rounds with all wooden horses), jet skiing, parasailing, and golf. We'll return. We do every year. When you go, make reservations early. Summers are hopping on the island.

Mary Barberio is a Northville resident and writes about travel for the Observer Newspapers.

## Climb aboard for fall Chicago-Van Gogh, Toronto train trips

BY DOUG JOHNSON  
STAFF WRITER

Retired Livonia Public Schools French teacher David Green will be conducting two escorted weekend trips this fall.

One will take in the Van Gogh and Gauguin show at the Art Institute of Chicago and the other will be a theater trip to Toronto.

The Chicago trip, Friday-Sunday, Nov. 30 to Dec. 2, includes roundtrip train ride from either the Ann Arbor or Dearborn Amtrak station (your choice),

two nights in deluxe rooms at the Chicago Hilton, two continental breakfasts and a VIP ticket to the Van Gogh-Gauguin show.

The Toronto trip, Friday-Sunday, Sept. 14-16, includes rail passage from Windsor and a four-course meal both ways on the train, two nights at the Sheraton Centre, express check-in, continental breakfast and a ticket to either *The Lion King* or *Mamma Mia*.

Main floor seating will be guaranteed for either show.

## Don't miss the show

The show at the Art Institute of Chicago will be the only chance to see the Van Gogh and Gauguin *Studio of the South* exhibition in the United States. The show is being sponsored by the Chicago Museum and the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

It is the first show to explore the relationship between Vincent Van Gogh and Paul Gauguin and their brief collaboration in Arles, France in 1888.

Among the paintings will be

the Yasuda Fire and Marine Insurance Company's version of sunflowers as well as two other Van Gogh sunflower pictures, one from The National Gallery in London and one from the museum in Amsterdam.

The sunflower pictures became a symbol of the two painters' attempts to reinvent modern art.

The last months of 1888 were a period of sustained creativity for Van Gogh. Gauguin painted a famous portrait of Van Gogh in front of a canvas of sunflowers.

The exhibition will explore

their lives, their mutual admiration, extended professional dialogue and creative competition - all in the context of their famous paintings.

## What does it cost?

Cost for the Chicago trip is \$340 per person (double occupancy) and designed to hit Chicago at the right time for holiday decorations. The Van Gogh-Gauguin show opens Sept. 22 and runs through January, 2002 before going back to Europe.

Cost for the Toronto trip is \$485 per person (double occu-

pancy). There is the possibility of also seeing a second show, *The Full Monty*.

Green, who taught for many years at Stevenson High School in Livonia, is an expert in French art, history and culture. He has taken numerous conducted tours to Europe; most recently he toured Russia with a group of travelers from Wayne and Oakland counties.

He can be contacted about these two trips through Carlson Wagonlit Travel (Suncoast) in Plymouth, (734) 456-5810.

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