

A tall ship sails into a sailor's lifelong dream

By JUDY OWEN

It's not often a man gets to see his lifelong dream come true, but for Art Erikson, the Osprey represents the culmination of one dream and the beginning of another.

Erikson of Birmingham loves the sea, traveling and the out-of-doors. Most of all, he loves those ships of the past with the sails and rigging.

For the past 15 years, he has been sharing his experiences with others as he made travel films and hit the lecture circuit visiting college campuses and speaking to civic groups.

His films and lectures usually encompassed anthropology, natural history, and natural sciences of his travels and Erikson has done occasional museum exhibits.

But Erikson's long-standing dream was to have his own sailing ship.

"These were active ships. They were moving," he explained. This meant adding traveling to catch up with them. When it became apparent that this was not going to net him the type of vessel already rigged and outfitted that he wanted, he turned his search elsewhere — to sailing ships which had rigs and masts removed.

"They were hardly recognizable as sailing ships," he said.

The Osprey, built in 1937 in Sweden, was such a ship.

ERIKSON RETURNED to Birmingham to pick up his family and in July 1974 with his wife Becky, daughter Laurie and the family dog and turtle, returned to Denmark.

They immediately moved onto the ship and lived there throughout its extensive re-rigging "as they voyaged, really tore the whole ship apart," he said.

WHILE ALL OF this was going on, Erikson was busy interviewing people for the crew which was to sail the Osprey to America.

And there were the usual delays with labor strikes and shipyard shut-downs playing havoc with the schedule.

"But the important thing is that we did complete the ship — a staggering job," Erikson said.

All the time, the Eriksons who had added son Ivan to their family wanted to beat the winter weather.

They first took the ship to sea in a full gale. The next time out when experts went along to check the compass, it was an ideal day.

BUT THE ERIKSONS were to suffer more delays when severe winter storms hit all across Europe.

They finally set sail for Germany on Jan. 4 in the middle of the night, then waited for a break and headed into the North Sea where, Erikson said, "the ship proved herself for the first time."

The ship is equipped with a German-made engine to provide another source of power than sails.

He pointed out that although the Osprey was built in Denmark it was designed for use in the tropics where it could make maximum use of the trade winds.

"THROUGH SLOW, careful, intelligent handling and maneuvering," the Osprey made it to the Canary Islands where minor adjustments and maintenance were taken care of. The family took on supplies for the month-long trip across the Atlantic.

Now the Eriksons will put the Osprey to the use for which she was intended — world-wide expeditions, study, research, sail training, cruising and blue water adventure.

It will all begin in the fall when with his family and the 50 persons who have signed up to join them, Erikson will begin a 20-month voyage.

"It will be a full-scale expedition. We will visit out-of-the-way places and study subculture in the backwater regions of the world," he said.

He is quick to point out that this is not a pleasure cruise. Expedition members must be expected to have the stamina to help with the maintenance, painting, scrubbing and other mundane chores which must be performed to keep the Osprey shipshape.

"IT'S BOTH mental and physical," he said. "It isn't child's play."

The expedition will spend about 50 percent of the time on the ship. Some will be forming groups to study their specific interests. Some will be getting college credit.

All will be giving up 20 months of life in one place.

"They will be breaking the train from the cradle to PhD to retirement to actually do something different," he said. "It will leave them more adequately prepared to fall into the routine of life."

And they will have the \$9,800 to cover the cost of the trip.

Erikson said that there are still a few openings for persons interested in area change of pace which involves a lot of work. Persons interested in joining the group should contact him at 293 Berwyn, Birmingham, 48009.



Art Erikson charting his course at sea

Bike race stems from teen's idea

By JOHN BOZZO

Birmingham's Bike Club began as an idea supplied by a 15-year-old Seaholm High School student.

The event is now in its fourth year and has grown steadily with over 300 riders from all over the United States and the world expected to travel to Birmingham for the July 11 event.

Mailing said, "On the surface it seemed preposterous to have a 16-year old kid come up with an idea like this."

Before appearing before the city commission, Mailing wrote to the traffic, safety, police, and parks and recreation departments, and to the chamber of commerce.

Ted Rice, who is directing the preliminary planning for the race, remembers how the idea for a race began in the Common Ground Alternatives program which he also coordinates.

Five years ago, Chris Mailing was a participant in the Alternatives program which is tailored to taking the ideas of youth and making them a reality.

"He (Mailing) came to me one day and, 'How would like to have an international bicycle race in Birmingham,'" Rice recalled. "I asked what would that involve and he said, 'Closing down some streets like Woodward for six hours and streets like Lakeside for 12 hours.'"

The night of his appearance before the city commission he was facing the ill effects of a cold and barely able to ask the council to approve plans for a bicycle race before sitting down. After he sat, Mailing told representatives from the various groups he had contacted would support of the race and subsequently receive approval from the city commission.

"I was amazed at the city procedure," Mailing recalled. "They approved it after my brief description, almost right away. I learned how responsive the city of Birmingham is to an idea when it is properly presented. After that we settled down to the gritty getting all the prizes together."

Mailing's own recollection of the incident is somewhat different.

"Ted is kind of dangerous," Mailing said. "You throw out ideas as a joke and he talks about it seriously. Originally the idea was a joke," he said. "We really can do that (ignore a bike race)." I said, 'Well, if you say so.'"

"I had been involved in racing since 1971," Mailing said. "Most races are run on the streets. I saw one race in Lakewood, Cleveland which was raced around the downtown area. There were more people watching that race than I've ever seen at a bicycle race."

"We talked about how it would be great to do something like that in Birmingham," Mailing said. "We stole a lot of ideas, and even their name. Their race is called the Great Lakewood Bicycle Race. Mailing is now a student at Cornell University where he majored in industrial engineering and will be a junior this fall. He returns to his home in Birmingham in the summer and took time out from his two summer jobs to research the struggle he went through for one-and-a-half years to get the event off the ground."

Local businesses supplied the prizes and the city departments helped block off streets for the race. Everything looked good for that first event except one thing—entrants were slow.

"For awhile I thought we would have 25,000 in prizes and only six riders," Rice said.

Then the floodgates opened and 180 riders registered for that first race, despite the double entry fee charged for late registration. Of the riders, 159 were members of the American Bicycle League.

The following year there were 250 ABL riders and 40 non-ABL riders. In 1974, the number of participants rose to 300 with 250 being members of the ABL.

Now the ABL has merged into a group called the United States Cycling Association and Race expects at least 250 of its members to compete in this year's edition of the race.

"This year should be more or less a matter of turning the handle and cranking out a bicycle race," Mailing said. "In 1974 I was jumping up and down and putting my hair out."

Race sponsors are even relieved of going to the city commission to receive approval for the race. After the success of the original event the commission voted to make the Great Birmingham Bicycle Race an annual event.

"THE HARDEST part was talking the city into letting us do a better yet help."

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RACES WILL BE divided into five age categories: Intermediate, 12-15 years old; Juniors, 15-18 years old; Women 18 and older; Seniors 18-35; Men and Veterans, men over 35.

Dates to be raced range from seven miles for intermediates to 35 miles for the senior 1 and 11 racers.

A total of \$5,000 in prizes will be awarded thanks to donations from local merchants. Intermediates boys will receive five prizes worth a total of \$150, and girls will be awarded four prizes worth a total of \$100. Seniors 1 and 11 will receive 12 prizes for a total value of \$1,200.

Races are also available to those who are not members of the United States Cycling Federation. A couples' medley with a 500 prize, a Baby Carrier Race for 12-14 years, big wheels obstacle competition for 14-year olds, and obstacle time trials for 14-19 year olds.

The Birmingham course, starting at Henrietta and Maple, covers four-fifths of a mile and leads the rider through Birmingham from West Maple to Bank, south to Townsend, east on Townsend to Pierce, north on Pierce to Merrill, east on Merrill to Woodward, and north on Woodward back to West Maple.

PAL tournament draws touring pros

By JOHN BOZZO

When the host of touring professionals descended upon Wakeek Country Club in Bloomin' Hills for the Fourth Annual J.P. McCarthy Wakeek 1976 PAL Invitational July 20, they will benefit from preparations begun in April and carried out by over 600 people.

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Larry Tomasco, head golf professional at Wakeek, notes that the course will be roped off prior to the event, allowing the 30,000 expected spectators to view action around the perimeter of the course.

In 1975, the event drew a crowd of 15,000 and with the addition of touring professionals like Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus, Tomasco expects the year's total could hit the 25,000 mark.

A one-day tournament with all proceeds going to the Police Athletic League, the event earned \$67,000 for the year-old group last year.

Play will begin with a 24-team shotgun start at 8:30 a.m. and another 24-team shotgun start at 1:15 p.m. The shotgun start, or Texas Scramble, begins play with teams on every hole when a gun is sounded.

"Touring golf professionals and local golf professionals will serve as fifth men to teams of four amateurs. Each of the amateurs pays \$60 for the privilege of playing with the professional golfer."

The field of players is described in promotional literature as the "greatest array of golf professionals ever assembled on the Detroit area for a one-day team playing for PAL. Besides Palmer and Nicklaus, Johnny Miller, Hubert Green, Larry Ziger, Sam Snead, Jerry Heard, John Mahaffey, Kenner Zarley, and Roger Maltbie are among the touring professionals participating in the event."

Money provided by the tournament to PAL will be used to buy bats, balls, gloves, uniforms, masks, rackets, paddles, packs, and all the equipment necessary to run its athletic programs.

Most professional Tomasco, expects most of the spectators to be grouped around the third and 15th holes where the land forms a natural amphitheater and fans are able to sit and observe play.

Spectators will have limited access to the 11th, 12th, and 13th holes where Tomasco said there is danger of being in the way of the golfers.

"We have to time out the golf course for players," Tomasco said, "putting time on the repair areas where golfers are allowed free drops. We also have to put in more stakers to identify water hazards."

Over 100 high school golfers, Tomasco said, will help to stake the course on the Sunday before the tournament, to identify water and other hazards for the golfers.

During the tournament, 300 policemen have volunteered to serve as marshals.

Golfers can expect fast greens as the maintenance crew will cut the greens late Monday and again early Tuesday morning.

The Wakeek course will be familiar to at least one of the touring professionals, Jack Nicklaus, who helped design the course.

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