

FREE

WEEK OF APRIL 5 - 11, 2012

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The County Compass

360 Degrees of News Coverage

County Opry in Grantsboro

plans to host an 'Open Mic Night' on the first Friday of every month.

The popular event kicks off Friday, April 6, at 7:30 p.m.



Boat show hits stride



Attendees at this year's Oriental Boat Show can expect to encounter many useful, handy accessories, like the patented WaveFront TillerClutch.

ORIENTAL - The Rotary Club here expects blockbuster attendance for its Fourth Annual In-Water Boat Show, but chief organizer Sam Myers concedes weather for the April 13, 14 & 15 event is just about the only thing he has left to Fate.

"The first year, in 2009, we

had absolutely gorgeous weather," chuckled Myers. "But, to say the least, neither 2010 or 2011 were great, so this year I figure that we are due."

In recent months, Myers has been a publicity machine. As recently as Wednesday, he made

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himself available for TV interviews in Kinston and Rocky Mount. And, on the way home, he planned to quickly execute the old 'boat show flyer – Scotch Tape trick' in the front windows of numerous high-traffic stores and restaurants.

Myers, always alert to angles, recently suggested that one up and coming boat show exhibitor, WaveFront, describe its unique and very affordable product. To that end, we thank co-owner Katherine Smart for the following:

**Sailing Accessory—Tested on Neuse
and Selling Worldwide—
to be Showcased in Oriental
for First Time**

After years of rigorous testing on the Neuse and other North Carolina waterways followed by rapid sales across 40 states and 20 countries -- a newly patented and U.S. manufactured tiller control device will be on exhibit in Oriental.

WaveFront, owned by Peter Crawford and Katherine Smart of Chapel Hill, will showcase its popular TillerClutch™ at the 2012 Oriental In-Water Boat Show, April 13–15, at Pecan Grove Marina.

Built with marine-quality metals, the WaveFront TillerClutch is a compact, highly durable mechanical device that holds the helm with just the click of a

lever.

The lever is conveniently positioned beneath the tiller, right at the sailor's steering hand and out of the way. By clicking the lever with a finger, the sailor can release or engage a control line to instantly enable hands-free sailing and precise steering adjustments.

Quick and easy to use, the TillerClutch comes in handy when the helmsman needs to let go of the tiller and use his or her hands to set sail, reef, furl, tack, lower a sail, grab some equipment or a drink, anchor, or even change hands at the helm. It can hold the boat's course when the steering gets tough, or provide welcomed steering relief in steady winds.

Crawford, a civil engineer for the USDA and an avid sailor, started developing the TillerClutch after trying every other tiller-controlling device he could find. None of them met his rigorous requirements. It had to work efficiently without protruding knobs, friction to fight, plastic to break, ropes to knot or bungee cords to adjust.

When sailing alone, like so many sailors throughout the centuries, Crawford needed an extra hand at the helm to keep his boat on course.

"The Neuse, the Intercoastal Waterway, the Atlantic and area lakes became not just my sailing playgrounds, but also my testing waters," said Crawford, who used a San Juan 21 and a Pearson 27 as his



primary testing vessels. “When other people were out just cruising around, I was doing things like using a spring scale to measure loads on the helm in various wind and water conditions. I needed to know exactly how much holding power is needed—enough to hold the tiller in above average conditions, but not so much as to risk rudder damage in severe situations.”

When not pursuing her hobby of horseback riding, Smart helped her husband test five prototypes over as many years.

“I’d let him know when I thought it needed to be simplified, and then he’d start over and redesign it,” she said. “The final product is so easy and intuitive to use, I can’t imagine it not being there.”

The couple has kept their Pearson, named “C-Horse” derived from Crawford’s name and Smart’s love of horses, at several area marinas. During the testing phase, they frequently sailed in and out of Oriental, often with friends of a sailing group called NC Sail. Many of their friends volunteered to test the product on their own tiller-steered boats. Based on the positive feedback they received, they knew they had a winning design.

“I’ll be posting a ‘very satisfied customer’ item on WaveFront’s marvel TillerClutch,” volunteered one friend on the NC Sail Forum. “I will say, if

you’re ever struggling in 20 to 25 knots winds and waves of two to three feet, in 50 degree weather on the ocean, trying to get home, you’ll want to have the TillerClutch on your tiller. Never once in the eight hours from Cape Lookout to Beaufort Inlet did it ever fail me.”

Since officially launching the product at the 2010 Annapolis Sail Boat Show, WaveFront has sold the TillerClutch across the country and worldwide. Internet sales have grown through word of mouth, articles in highly popular magazines such as *Good Old Boat*, *Practical Sailor*, *Small Craft Advisor* and *Practical Sailor*, and attendance at a pocket cruiser boat show in Lake Havasu, AZ in 2011. WaveFront has also formed successful partnerships with several tiller-makers and boat manufacturers, such as Sage Marine. Just recently, the government issued a patent confirming 12 unique claims, or features, for the product.

“It’s been exciting to see how popular the TillerClutch has become, and we can’t wait to come back and show it publicly in Oriental, since this is where everything really started,” said Crawford. He noted that while he created the product, his wife named, branded, marketed and publicized it to drive sales. Speaking of sales, buyers at the boat show can get a 10 percent discount and save on shipping costs.

To learn more about the TillerClutch, visit WaveFrontMarine.com. ■