Patterson Marine helps keep Ensign Fleet 70 afloat in Pentwater

By Marsha and Mike La Haye

Jack Patterson built Patterson Marine from the ground up in 1988. He decided to leave the hustle and bustle of Chicago for the small town life of Pentwater, a place he had visited many times during his youth. He had worked for many years in the Chicago area in the marine business and had been around and worked and raced sailboats of all kinds for most of his life. He could almost rig a sailboat with his eyes closed; he was that good at it. It was a good thing for Pentwater to have such an experienced sailor move to town and start a business.

Jack was given his first and only Ensign #788 which he renamed Shamrock in 1999. He convinced Dave Roseman and Gary Nicholson to also buy Ensign’s and as they say, “the rest is history”. Fleet 70 received its Charter in 2000. Because of Jack, the fleet continued to grow over the years, until we currently have 17 boats registered with Fleet70. Patterson Marine was the location to store and work on all of the Ensigns from the fleet.

Unfortunately, Jack passed away in December of 2013 leaving a huge void in our fleet. Several members of the fleet pondered what to do about losing Patterson Marine and decided the best thing to do was to buy out Jack’s wife, Marylou, and keep the business running as Jack intended. Three Ensign Sailor’s, Frode Maaseidvaag, Dave Roseman, and Mike LaHaye along with one non-Ensign owner bought the business in April of 2014.

Patterson Marine continues to support the Ensign Fleet 70. They store 90% of all the Ensigns from the fleet. They make space available for owners to work on their Ensigns during the off season with indoor heated work space complete with all the tools, paint, lifts etc. it takes to restore and maintain these beautiful old boats.

In the fall of 2015, Joel VerPlank from the Ensigns Forever Committee called and asked if Patterson Marine had room to store the deck mold plug. They did, so one fall day Chad Lewis of Ensign Spars delivered the plug to Patterson Marine and it is now stored on the mezzanine of the new shop building.

Patterson Marine hopes to continue for many years to come to store and help restore Ensign Sailboats. Like all other fleets, boats move around here in Pentwater, but we have been able to retain most of the boats and continue to have a strong sailing fleet. We have a short racing season because of the weather, but we race on Wednesday nights for FUN and Saturday’s for trophies.

Fleet 70 has done many things to keep the fleet alive and well. They put an Ensign in many of the parades that Pentwater has. We also displayed an Ensign at the Historical Society last summer during the 1st anniversary of the new Historical Society Building. We have several events throughout the summer where non-Ensign people and kids especially are offered rides on Ensigns at the Pentwater Yacht Club.

The Ensign fun doesn’t stop when boats come out of the water in Pentwater. We organize a “Race around the Dinner Table” schedule for throughout the winter months to keep members of the fleet together and talking sailing. Patterson Marine also hosts two of those dinners in October and May with a potluck dinner.

If you get near Pentwater, stop in and say Hello. The coffee is always on at Patterson Marine.