

Commercials Showcase Natural Beauty of Mackinac Island

Filming Began With 2004 Lilac Festival

By Jessica Delaney

One image shows a freighter majestically sailing through the straits. Another portrays a horse pulling a carriage up Cadotte Avenue. A third features Scottish bagpipers marching in the Lilac Parade. All three of these scenes share two vital things in common: First, their connection with Mackinac Island, and second, their appearance in a new video.

Working with filmmaker Rand Shackleton, the Mackinac Island Tourism Bureau has put together a series of commercials and stock video to distribute to

television companies. The stock footage, known in television parlance as b-roll images, already have been aired on CNN.

"Every tourism town should have their own b-roll," said Tourism Bureau Director Mary Slevin. "We need to show all the different things on this island."

The filming, editing, and scoring of the video was done by Mr. Shackleton of Cross Village. He worked 10 years with Russ Roe Advertising in Detroit and has shot footage around the world, including a feature on Antarctica.

Filming for the commercials began with the 2004 Lilac Festival and continued over the past year, although some images have been taken from an earlier video that Mr. Shackleton made.

Each section is a short, 30-second feature with a general theme. There is a commercial, for instance, on horses, the fort and history, fog and lighthouses, and the Lilac Festival.

"I'm trying to promote general natural beauty, lighthouses, scenes that are not where you buy things. What is needed is a general, overall image, and then people can go to the Web sites and see the B & Bs and the shops," said Mr. Shackleton.

Mr. Shackleton has attempted to create a sense of peace and natural rhythm in the commercials. With his experience in the

advertising world, he has noticed that the majority of marketing is geared toward high-activity attractions. In the short vignettes, he has attempted to provide more of a balance.

"There is no target market for this," he said. "Everyone is a potential market. This is for the general audience."

Along with multiple shots of nature, woods, and shoreline, Mr. Shackleton also has let the music for each commercial dominate the atmosphere. The music is composed by Wayne Richards, who wrote "Mackinac Dreams," and woven into the melodies are the sounds of birds, waves, foghorns, and music played at weddings and parades.

"On Mackinac Island," said Mr. Shackleton, "you can hear nature, and that's a big selling point, it's something people like to do."

Mr. Shackleton thinks television is an especially important medium for advertising. Local spots can be important, he said, because he said 50 percent of all travelers come here to visit friends or family and do not necessarily have an attraction in mind. So, when an ad comes on, it can encourage them to take advantage of an opportunity they may not have known about. In addition, he said there is a market for local people and television spots can improve other forms of advertising.

"Print ads and radio ads," he said, "become that much more effective because people also have the visual imagery of the commercial."

"We realized that other towns are not on TV, so it's cool that we've had a good working relationship, and we appreciate his talent and insight into tourism, Ms. Slevin said of Mr. Shackleton. "Now, if anybody watches TV, this will capture them."

One-dozen spots are finished, but Mr. Shackleton has a few more days of shooting before signing off on the project,

including an extended section on the Island in fall. He filmed the Fudge Festival last weekend.

He hopes the images will encourage people to visit the Island and entice people to come for more than one day.

"I don't look at this like a commercial," said Mr. Shackleton. "I look at it more like 30 second pieces of art. It's an opportunity to take a person on a visual tour of the Island."

According to Ms. Slevin, the footage has already come in

handy, not only as a marketing tool, but as a way to inform travel operators of their opportunities here.

"So far it's been great, and it's a great tool for tour operators," she said. "It shows them this other side. It's a concise product to help sell Mackinac. It really is all about the beauty."

Once all of the filming and editing has been completed, the project will be compiled onto a DVD or video tape and made available for purchase.

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Bishop Attends Trinity Service

Rt. Reverend Jim Kelsey of Marquette (left), the Episcopal Bishop of Northern Michigan, attended Trinity Episcopal Church Sunday, August 28. Pictured with him are his wife, Mary, and their close friends, Evelyn and Ed Cook of Buffalo, New York. (Photograph courtesy of Charles Kleber)

Man Who Drove Carriage in 1957 Bridge Parade Returns to Island

"It was a thrill," said Robert Fitzgerald. "I can always tell people I drove the carriage in the Bridge dedication parade. I was quite honored, as a matter of fact."

Mr. Fitzgerald was back on the Island staying at the Mackinac Island Yacht Club for a few days and stopped by the *Town Crier* office in search of the name of the 1957 Lilac Queen who rode in the Mackinac City parade with him. That queen is Island resident Alice (Bunker) Blosswick.

Originally from Caro, Mr. Fitzgerald spent six years on the Island. In 1957 and 1958, he worked for Jack Chambers in the summer and was a student at Central Michigan University the rest of the year. When he returned from military service in 1962, which included time in Vietnam, he stayed for four straight summers, working for Mr. Chambers, then Carriage Tours, and finally at the yacht dock.

He also honeymooned on the Island in 1962. "It's really something," he said. "Once you've worked here, you can always come back and see friends. It feels like one of the family returning."

Mr. Fitzgerald and his wife, Annemarie, spent three days on the Island visiting friends before returning to their home in Oak Island, North Carolina.

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