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OVERVIEW

The offshore race St. Clair River Classic turns 25, doubles in size

The Spin Doctors and Blue Oyster Cult headline St. Clair Riverfest

By Jim Bloch

For The Voice

If you're looking for a quiet Adirondack chair in which to enjoy a beachy book and a summer beverage against a background of gentle breezes and croaking frogs, you're in the wrong river town.

You might find an Adirondack chair in St. Clair July 26-28, but chances are that it will already be occupied. Forget about quietude and gentleness and frogs.

St. Clair Riverfest is biggest, rowdiest weekend on the city's summer calendar.

The event began 25 years ago as the St. Clair River Classic, a handful of races race boats against one another on the fast-moving St. Clair River. The event was produced by a handful of

MEDIA NEWS GROUP FILE PHOTOS

pitting thunderous offshore organized into a nonprofit Cedar. group known as the Blue Water Offshore Racing Association.

local racers and race fans first year," said Mayor Bill tion, is partnering with the New Zealand.

To celebrate the race's 25th anniversary, the race's St. Clair from far-flung losanctioning body, the Off-"There were 14 boats the shore Powerboat Associa-

international Powerboat-P1 to bring races teams to cations such as Europe, the United Arab Emirates and

"Boats are coming from all over the world," said Bob Currier, secretary/treasurer of BWORA.

Officials expect more than 60 race teams in town, known act.

about double last year's to-

Race teams test their boats in the river on Saturday with races beginning at noon on Sunday. The races are free.

In its early years, BWORA joined with local groups to add a carnival to the weekend of fun.

The tenor of race weekend remained loud but relatively low key until 2005, when BWORA partnered the Funfest Events, the Mount Clemens-based production company. Funfest added two nights of rockand-roll to the event, featuring a series of warm-up bands culminating each night in a rousing performance by a nationally







In 2019, The Spin Doctors, the New York City rockers who hit Number Seven on the Billboard Hot 100 chart in 1992 with "Two Princes," are the headliners on Friday night, July 26, playing on the Malcolm Marine barge 10:30-11:45 p.m.

Blue Oyster Cult, the hard rock band ets available for \$25.

that originated on Long Island in 1967, headlines on Saturday, playing crowd favorites like "(Don't Fear) The Reaper," "(This Ain't) The Summer of Love" and "Godzilla."

The concerts are free, with VIP tickets available for \$25

Funfest didn't stop with just music.

Funfest also fills nearly a half mile of North Riverside Avenue with vendors selling beer, wine, barbecue, cotton candy, sausages, t-shirts, sunglasses and hats.

The street of shops and hops doubles

as the dry pits, so boat race teams will be on hand to talk to fans and hawk merchandise of their own.

All totaled, St. Clair Riverfest will draw tens of thousands of visitors to the city for three days of boat racing, rock and roll and street partying.







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MUSIC

See Spin Doctors, Blue Oyster Cult at Riverfest 2019

Four regional groups heat up each night ahead of headliners

By Jim Bloch

For The Voice

When the Blue Water Offshore Racing Association teamed up with Fun-St. Clair Riverfest, the most weekend became music -two nights of raucous rockand-roll, each capped off by the tunes of a band of national stature.

It was a recipe for giant crowds. Despite some tinkering, the ingredients have remained basically identical.

Marine, stacked with speakers and anchored to the seawall of Palmer Park.

headliners Friday, July 26, night, 10:30-11:45 p.m.

day, July 27, in the same defined the BOC sound and time slot.

first album Pocket Full of Kryptonite in 1991. The record got big push from the mobile HORDE festival with cemented its funky, jam million copies. band rep; the album sold

NURSERY & SUPPLY

lineup features four original members.

The Spin Doctors are the origins to an old clapboard house in Stony Brook on taking the last set of the the north shore of Long Island. The band formed in The metal rockers Blue 1967, but didn't hit it big un-Oyster Cult top off Satur- til 1975. The next six years the band was savvy enough The Spin Doctors formed to use the new MTV to boost fest, Inc. in 2006 to produce in 1988 in New York City, a its career. Their LP Agents generation after Blue Oys- of Fortune went platinum in notable new feature of race ter Cult. They released its 1976 and gave rock fans the soft metal hit "(Don't Fear) The Reaper." The album Spectres in 1977 birthed the band's appearance at the harder rocking FM radio hit "Godzilla." The band's 1978 Phish, Blues Traveler and LP Some Enchanted Eve-Widespread Panic, which ning sold more than two

> The warm-up bands -five million copies in the back up to four per night

barge donated by Malcolm Princes." The band's current would make two nights of great music.

BROKEN kicks off Fri-Blue Oyster Cult traces its day night with a 5:45-6:15 evening headed in the right p.m. set, the band's second straight appearance at Riverfest. Indecision follows, 6:45-7:30 p.m. The Brent 6:45-7:30 p.m. Los Gringos, Mireau Band takes the out of Port Huron, takes the stage 8:00-8:45 p.m. with stage 7-7:45 p.m. The band its country inflected rock; it's the band's second consecutive appearance at Riverfest. The Gobies, the hot lor on drums and Jonny local band that plays every- Blashill on bass, playing and restroom for \$25.

Johnny Cash, heats up the barge, 9:15-10:00 p.m.

Casting Shadows gets the direction on Saturday, 5:45-6:15 p.m., followed by the spicy sounds of 86 Noodles, features Eddie Stephens on lead vocals, Robert Kerrigan on guitar, David Tav-

The stage is a working U.S., led by the single "Two from three last year -- alone thing from alternative to an eclectic blend of rock, stretching from the Beatles and Led Zeppelin to Nickleback and Train. EZRA, the classic hard rock band from Detroit, takes fans up to the headlining set by Blue Oyster Cult. Ezra plays 9:15-10:00 p.m.

> All totaled, fans get nearly five hours of live music free each night.

> Advance VIP tickets are available online, featuring up-close seating, private bar



PHOTO FROM WWW.SPINDOCTORS.COM



PHOTO FROM WWW.BLUEOYSTERCULT.COM

29500 23 Mile Rd (1/4 Mile E. of I-94) New Baltimore/Chesterfield, MI 48047



Blue Ovster Cult takes the stage on Saturday, July 27.

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RIVERFEST

Boat race gains new top sponsor in St. Clair Inn

Broadco comes out of retirement

By Jim Bloch

For The Voice

The St. Clair River Classic offshore boat race picked up a new presenting sponsor to mark its 25th anniversary and enticed a former champion out of retire-

The St. Clair Inn will be the primary sponsor of the race, which will now be known as the St. Clair the inn itself would not be River Classic Presented by the St. Clair Inn.

"It represents a major investment over a number of years," said Bob Currier, years of the race," Katofsecretary-treasurer of the BWORA.

"We felt it was important too." that we get involved in the

community," said Jeff Katofsky, the Californian developer and principal owner of the inn, which is nearing the end of a two-year overhaul. "One way you do that is to get involved in community events."

There is no bigger special event on the St. Clair calendar than Riverfest, which draws tens of thousands of visitors to the city for offshore racing, nationally famous rock and roll bands and plenty of partying.

open in time for the race. He is now eyeing an early September opening.

We missed the first 24 sky said. "But we missed



PHOTO FROM SPEEDONTHEWATER COM

ing the Broadco race boat, Katofsky regretted that owned by St. Clair Shores helmet on and commu-other feeding the gas to residents Chuck and Kelly Broaddus.

Broaddus, who won the River Classic in 2014, is coming out of retirement to race this year.

The last time the couple the first 92 years of the inn, raced in St. Clair was 2017 with Kelly behind the wheel

don't know the difference miles an hour? between 100 miles an hour Kelly.

drive and Mark Nieman has your foot on the gas out of Sarasota will be his pedal," said Currier. throttleman.

"Strapped in with your person steering and annications in your ear, you a boat that travels at 160

"Think of driving your and 160 miles an hour," said car with your spouse next to you and one of you has This year, Chuck will the wheel and one of you

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than any other course because of the current."

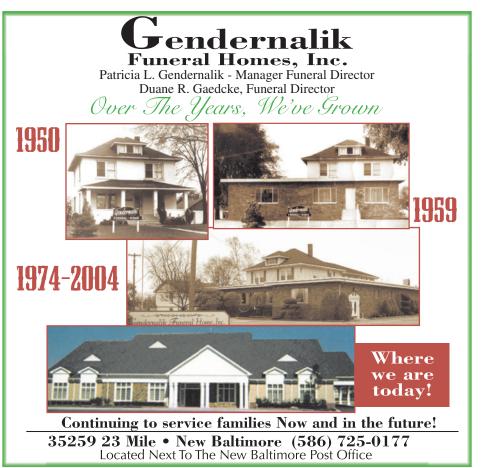
Racing upstream past the crowds in Palmer Park, the race boats typically lose two to three miles an hour. Downstream on the Canadian side of the river, the boats pick up three to five miles per hour, Chuck said.

The river's fast current works against a boat's G forces to hold it tight in the north turn. The south turn -- where a boat's momentum is charging in the same direction as the current -- is another story. The south turn can mean trou-

"Let's go racing!" said Chuck.

Jim Bloch is a freelance "And this is probably the writer. Contact him at





WEDNESDAY, JULY 17, 2019

RIVERFEST

Fans have plenty of chances to see race teams up close

International presence boosts boat total up to 60

By Jim Bloch

For The Voice

The St. Clair River Classic -- the clash of the biggest, baddest offshore race boats in the nation -- is national.

the race, expect as many as 60 race teams from all over the world, including Europe, the United Arab Emirates and New Zealand, the result of a new partnership

year.

That also means that race fans will have twice as many opportunities to interact with the drivers, ever before.

aspects of race weekend is the close proximity of fans the wet pits. and race teams.

turning 25 and going inter-riving on Friday morning produces the race. Board The officials of the Blue along "race village," which charge of the wet pits and Water Offshore Racing As- runs along North River- organizing the patrol boats sociation, which produces side Avenue from Clinton north to Vine Street. The boat teams will be interspersed with concessionaires, hot dog sellers and beer vendors, which means the street of shops and hops

many teams as raced last the most accomplished boat tographs at 6 p.m. Saturday. kick off at 11: 45 a.m. racers in the world.

They can watch the boats being lifted off their trailers by cranes and gingerly plopped into the Pine River. throttlemen and crews than They can watch teams make final adjustments along the One of the most thrilling north wall of the Pine at Rotary Park, which serves as

The Bluewater Off-The boat teams begin ar- shore Racing Association and staking out their spots member Linda Rouse is in for Sunday's race.

Testing begins in the St. Clair River at 12:30 p.m. on Saturday with the boats charging up the north straight-away so close to the seawall that fans will

BWORA board member Scott Rouse will be up early Sunday morning.

"I make sure the race course is set," said Rouse.

"I help with the opening ceremonies," said board member Phil Lundman.

"I run the meetings and try to keep everything on track," said BWORA president Steve Brunner. "During the race, I'm the head gofer."

If everything stays on track, Brunner is anticipat- Jim Bloch is a freelance The opening ceremonies ing five heats of boats rac-

ing noon-5 p.m. on Sunday.

The awards ceremony is set for 7 p.m. at War Water Brewery in the courtyard of Riverview Plaza: Winning offshore racers up-close at your local watering hole.



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WEDNESDAY, JULY 17, 2019

RIVERFEST

Just Bouncin' inflates a midway for St. Clair Riverfest

By Jim Bloch

For The Voice

bouncin' good time."

That's the order from Just Bouncin', the Brownspecializing in inflatable bounce houses, slides, obblow-up adventures.

Just Bouncin' promises name implies: A bouncin' good time.

All you have to do is attend St. Clair's 14th annual Riverfest, slated for July 26-28 in downtown St. Clair, and plunk down a few dol-

The firm is blowing up its most popular inflatables at Riverfest for the

officials at Blue Water Off- Rush Obstacle Course. shore Racing and Funfest, Inc. did not renew the con-"Jump, laugh and have a tract of a disappointing carnival in 2016.

Look for the dual lane Amazon Zipline, which stown, Michigan firm promises the ultimate rush as riders zip along a line 36 feet high and 70 feet long stacle courses and other over a sloping, jungle-like inflatable.

> gee jump from their favorite spots.

Brave kids will be able to test their physical prowess as they progress higher and higher through an obstacle course before plunging down a slide in the Toxic

Sweating summertime home improvements costs?

The Meltdown is an inflatable eight-player action game with two spinning booms designed to knock you off your podium -- if you're not agile enough.

Bounce around inside of giant Hamster Ball and race against your fellow hamsters.

Be sure to slip down the The 24-foot tall Rockwall traditional double-lane kids of all ages just what its allows as many as six climb-slide, bounce in an origiers at once to ascend a stud- nal Bounce House, which is ded wall in the shape of a shaped like a multi-colored giant tree trunk and bun- castle and completely enclosed for enhanced safety. Enjoy the aptly named Combination Unit, which joins a slide to an original bounce house.

"Prices range from \$15 for unlimited bounces on select units, to \$5/ticket or 5 third consecutive year, fill- Drop Obstacle Course. And tickets for \$15 for the units," ing the void created when don't forget to try the Turbo according to Just Bouncin'.



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