

Vitality

YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO AGING WITH
GRACE, PURPOSE AND WELL-BEING



NAUTICAL NICHE

Warren man fashions
museum-quality boats
from scratch

PAGE 22

SOCIAL & WELL-BEING

Shelby Township
athlete, 71, named
National Senior Games
Personal Best

PAGE 24

HEALTH & FITNESS

Trouble sleeping,
fatigue could be linked
to vitamins and food

PAGE 6

SOCIAL & WELL-BEING

Warren man fashions museum-quality boats from scratch

By Debra Kaszubski
Contributing Writer

A spare bedroom in Leonard Treppa's Warren residence is home to a miniature marina rilled with dozens of model ships. There are sail, tug, and paddle boats, war and cargo ships, and famous movie vessels.

Each was made from nothing but planks of wood and supplies.

Treppa, 74, has been building boats for about 25 years. He estimates that he's made about 50, and those that aren't at his home are on permanent display in museums.

He hasn't sold any boats and doesn't give them away as gifts.

He is a member of the Great Lakes Nautical So-

ciety, and through the group, Treppa exhibits his ships at various events, including recent shows at the Gibraltar Trade Center and at a longtime exhibit at the Roseville Public Library.

Treppa's creations have been featured in magazines, as well, including the December 2014 issue of "Model Boats," which highlighted his paddle steamer named Monarch.

He works from photographs and will recreate ships based on vessels he's actually seen and photographed or from pictures in magazines or books. He even built miniature versions of the Orca from the movie "Jaws" and the African Queen vessel from the movie of the same name.

He built an Alaskan

fishing boat named Miss Tammy; a British fishing vessel/cargo ship called the MFV 96; a ship that sank in Lake Michigan called the Erie Hackley; and many more.

"I make everything," he said. "I draw it up first, and when I'm satisfied with the drawing, I start building. It's what you call bread and butter construction. The bread is wood and the butter is glue; it's layers of wood glued together."

The insides of the ships are hollow but do feature a personalized stamp Treppa puts on every piece.

While most model builders work from kits, Treppa makes nearly every piece of the ship him-

TREPPA » PAGE 23



DEBRA KASZUBSKI - FOR VITALITY

"Miss Tammy" is an Alaskan fishing boat created by Leonard Treppa.

Treppa

FROM PAGE 22

self. He has a wood shop in his basement, complete with a table saw and plenty of tools.

Along with his collection of ships, Treppa has built various old-fashioned cars, a pickup truck, and fire trucks out of wood. He also fashioned a wooden city — complete with lighthouses that actually illuminate — and a wood dock for his boats.

This display is mounted on a wall in his spare bedroom.

Two larger sailboats are displayed as well. These vessels are Treppa's oldest; he built them during wood shop class in school.

"At Belle Isle they had a regatta every year, and we used to race them," he said. "I still have some of the ribbons," Treppa



PHOTOS BY DEBRA KASZUBSKI - FOR VITALITY

Leonard Treppa, 74, built this luxury yacht called the Ulysses. It is on display inside his home.

works on ships in the cooler months and spends time in the fall and winter gardening or working in the yard.

He had four real boats in the past and used to be

an avid fisherman, but he gave up the sport after his fishing buddy moved away. He retired from the Warren Tank Plant, where he manufactured tools.

He values the ships at

thousands of dollars each, but he has no plans to part with them anytime soon. "I told my son they are on layaway. When they lay me down, he can take them



Along with many ships, Leonard Treppa also built this working lighthouse. It illuminates his seashore fishing villages, which he also constructed from wood.

away," he laughed.