



# SWAN VALLEY

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was available in October 2000. It was a bit of a daunting proposition for the couple, who'd be trading careers in manufacturing and design for a new venture.

"We had to ask ourselves — are we willing to throw it all in and cash in our 401k's?" Geoff said.

Their decision would mean several years of constant work, seven days each week, just to maintain operations. This year, though, the Britts are now preparing for new improvements.

Timed to coincide with the kickoff to boating season, Kelly W. Britt will open her Whispering Wings Fine Art Gallery on Memorial Day weekend. Housed inside the upper portion of the split-level marina building, the gallery will replace the gift store.

"It had typical tourist items, like t-shirts, magnets and shot glasses," said Kelly. "It wasn't doing very well, and I realized that I should be showing my art-

work in the space."

The gallery will feature original watercolors by Britt, along with pottery and other art from northwest Michigan. With an emphasis on Charlevoix and Emmet county artists, Britt expects the artworks will serve as significant reminders of visits to the area — more special than the standard Michigan souvenirs.

For all the changes, though, Geoff Britt is making sure that some things are constant at Swan Valley Marina.

"It used to be that you, Dad, and Grandpa would go out on the lake and fish," he said. "Now, kids have their video games and

computers. Just to get them out on the lake, you'd better be doing something fun, which, for them, might be something fast."

Along with wall space reserved for tackle supplies, Britt stocks skis, wakeboards and flashy inner tubes. But the quiet water sport items stand their ground. Kayaks and canoes are available at the marina, along with modern-day paddleboats. And, if you look closely, you can still find the gentle rowboat, aluminum and powered by a six-horse motor.

More information, call 536-2672



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