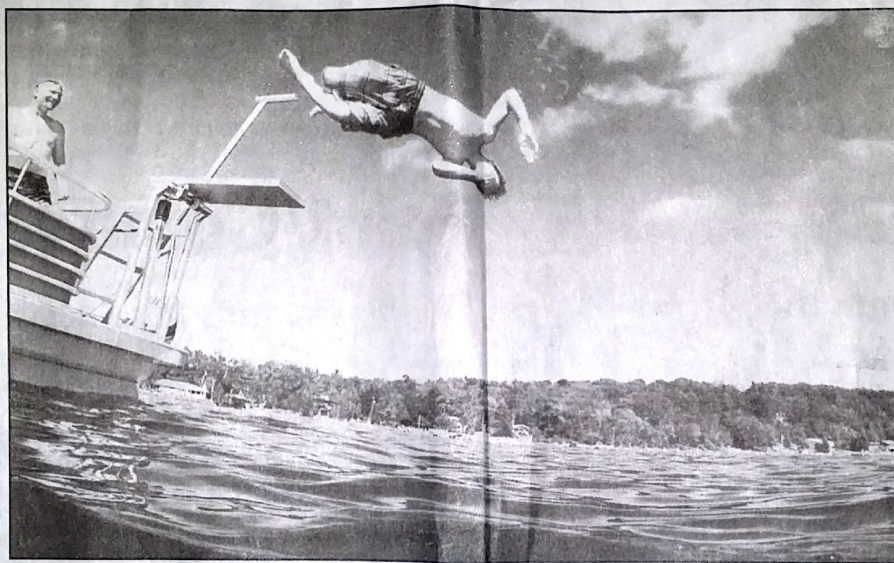


Couple creates business from summer time idea

BY TINA SUNDELIUS
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Avery Schaub flips off his family's innovative new invention, the Lillipad diving board, which was developed after a trip to visit family near Antrim County's Six Mile Lake.

EAST JORDAN - While enjoying Six Mile Lake in northern Antrim County, Corey and Ann Schaub found the inspiration for what has become a fulltime business.

Corey was raised in Traverse City, Ann in East Jordan, but the couple was residing in Fort Wayne, Indiana during the summer of 2012 when they and their three children visited Ann's parents, Al and Joy Hettig, at their home on Six Mile Lake.

They were getting ready to head out on the Hettig's pontoon when Ann got the idea to make the day a little more fun for the kids by adding a diving board to the slow moving boat. Her husband obliged, and within 20 minutes in Al's workshop, some scrap wood, duct tape and a basketball became what is now referred to as the "redneck diving board."

"The basketball was intended to be a spring, but honestly, didn't do a whole lot," laughed Ann.

The makeshift diving board was the source of so much fun that week-end that during the trip home Ann Schaub conducted some research to see if they could purchase a "real" diving board.

"But when searching for a production diving board for our boat, all that I found online were pictures of other people's "redneck diving board," posts of people asking if anyone

knew of where to get a production diving board for their boat, and finally, tons of comments on why a diving board could not be installed on a boat," she said.

Armed with demand from others and a challenge from those who said it couldn't be done, a development idea began to take shape.

Although the Schaub's were both employed full time they started taking steps to design, develop and market a boat-mounted diving board.

Corey, who grew up in a family of "do-it-yourselfers", and whose work

background included being a service manager for boats and recreational products, and designing extruded aluminum products and sales, focused on the project's engineering aspects.

Ann Schaub, who has a business management degree, focused on marketing the new diving board. Sons, Austin and Avery, now 15 and 17, respectively, offered input as the invention progressed.

"It was truly a family project," said Ann.

The main challenge in develop-

ing the board was finding a way to manage the downward forces generated by a diver jumping off the end, which with a traditional diving board caused significant up-and-down jarring of the boat as well as extreme force to the boat's frame.

The Schaub's design makes use of a special spring to cancel the force from the jumping. "After tackling the issues with the force, to make the product marketable other important factors that we focused on were safety, the ability for the diving board to be stowed when not in use, durabili-

ty, and the overall look of the product" said Ann.

They named the board the "LilliPad" after their new baby, Lillian, and began to look for a manufacturer in the fall of 2013.

By the spring of 2014, the LilliPad was available to customers and hundreds were sold the first year. "When we went to our first tradeshow we heard over and over that the diving board was the "coolest" thing at the show," said Corey Schaub.

Since then the Schaub's have won several awards including a prestigious Innovation award at the Miami International Boat Show and have a dealership network of over 100 dealers.

Now living in Traverse City, the family is working on selling the Lillipad full time. "Leaving a VP role with a salary was a little scary, but we feel truly blessed to be back home and are making nice strides with our business," said Ann.

LilliPad Diving Boards recently announced a partnership allowing its product to be offered as an option on Michigan-built Avalon and Tahoe pontoon boats as well as Trifecta houseboats.

The Schaub's have also been contacted by the television show "Shark Tank".

"We are considering going on the show, so stay tuned," said Ann.

For more information about LilliPad diving boards, visit www.lillipaddingboards.com