Written by Mark Jaeger
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Shop owner says brightly colored bikes reflect ‘a groovy bike life’

COLORFUL BIKES ARE being seen on the Interurban Bike Trail, courtesy of the newly opened Zu Zu Pedals shop in Port Washington. Marissa White (lower left photo) showed some of the beach cruiser bikes available for rent. Store owner Tammy Thompson-Oreskovic found the location on Franklin Street (lower right photo) with the help of the Port Washington Main Street organization. *Photos by Mark Jaeger*Any fan of classic cinema knows that Zuzu’s petals, remnants of a little girl’s prized flower, were a powerful reminder to Jimmy Stewart that “It’s A Wonderful Life.”

A variation on the name came in a flash of inspiration to Tammy Thompson-Oreskovic when toying with the idea of opening a bike-rental business in Port Washington. And so, Zu Zu Pedals was born.

“The concept for the business came to me because of my love of bike riding. I have always enjoyed taking vacations to the East Coast with my family and renting beach cruisers to knock around in places like Myrtle Beach,” Oreskovic said.

“That led to my riding in Ozaukee County on the Interurban Bike Trail, where I would stop in Port Washington, often to fix a flat tire. I’d usually carry a spare with me, but after doing a little checking, I found Port didn’t have a bike shop in town.”

Oreskovic said she surveyed downtown properties and found plenty of potential for her business to take root.

“There are a lot of vacant storefronts, which is both good and bad for a community,” she said.

Oreskovic began working with Port Washington Main Street, a downtown redevelopment organization, and became convinced she had found the perfect venue for her new business.

“Sara Grover from Main Street explained how Port is going through a renaissance of sorts, with new businesses coming into town that are attracting even more businesses,” Oreskovic said.

On July 1, she settled into the former Wardrobe Safari shop at 228 N. Franklin St.

“It is right at the corner where all the boats turn when they are heading to the marina, so there is

lots of visibility," Oreskovic said.

A brochure for the shop is included in gift bags given to visiting boaters when the come to town, and that connection has brought in quite a bit of business.

The store offers a selection of bike apparel, helmets, water bottles and supplies, but the star attractions are the 12 vibrantly colored Sun Cruz bicycles available for hourly, daily and weekend rental.

"They are a retro style that is really popular today, easy to ride and virtually indestructible," Oreskovic said.

Adult, tandem and children's bikes are available, along with baskets and towable trailers. The daily rental charge is $25 to $50, with hourly charges of $15 and $25.

The store is open Wednesdays through Sundays.

Eventually, Oreskovic hopes to add a line of beach cruiser bikes that will be available for purchase.

She said the shop's tag line, "For a groovy bike life," perfectly fits the playful vibe she wants to convey.

When interest in bike rentals falls off as temperatures cool, Oreskovic, said the shop's focus will shift to spinning and yoga classes, which will be offered in the shop's lower-level studio.

"Biking, spinning classes and yoga all seem to fit perfectly together in promoting a healthy lifestyle," Oreskovic said.

"I see the shop appealing to the experienced biker as well as those who are just starting out."

Oreskovic is able to keep her boundless enthusiasm for the new venture somewhat in check because of a considerable amount of business savvy.

She is president and CEO of Arnold's Environmental Services, a Town of Saukville business she co-owns with her husband Pat.

Since 1992, the business has specialized in the rental of portable restroom facilities.

"It is amazing how well these two businesses fit together. A week doesn't pass during the summer when we aren't providing restrooms to bike races and other riding events around the area," Oreskovic said.

"There are a lot of people who think I am crazy to be taking on even more with the new store, but when I get an idea, I can't just let it rest. I'm a big believer that things happen to us for a reason."

Oreskovic also has a background in marketing, which becomes apparent as she reflects on the passion she has for the biking lifestyle.

“There is something universal about the simplicity of the bike,” Oreskovic said in the shop’s promotional brochure. “The wind in your hair and knowing that the faster you move the sooner you will get there … wherever that may be. Life is a trip, enjoy the ride.”