



Chronicle photo • Kendra Stanley-Mills

Brent Vanderstelt, a co-owner of Hess Lake Rentals, stands near a two-unit, two-bedroom cottage at 9837 Kathleen in Grant. The cottages are typically one story, with two to three bedrooms and a bathroom. They are, "fully furnished, with amenities including cable TV, gas grills, appliances and Internet," Russell said.

Low-cost cottages

Waterfront vacation spots open year-round

By **Kyle Berlin**
Chronicle correspondent

GRANT — Waterfront, waterfront everywhere, but where can a vacationer stay?

Even though West Michigan has lots of local lakes — great or other-wise — housing on the water can be very expensive. But many people are searching for alternative means of finding an affordable, pleasant vacation spot on the water.

Hess Lake Rentals, based in Grant, is a rental service that offers lower-cost cottages on Hess Lake and the Muskegon River.

"There's something here for almost every taste," said Rosemary Ankerman, a retired real-estate agent from Holland and co-owner of the business.

Ankerman, along with real-estate investors Sherri Russell and Brent Vanderstelt, maintains and operates the business, which is open to renters year-round.

The business currently owns five properties on Hess Lake and one on the Muskegon River.

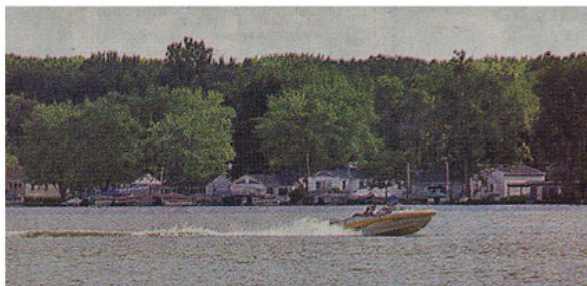
The cottages are typically one story, with two to three bedrooms and a bathroom. They are, "fully furnished, with amenities including cable TV, gas grills, appliances and Internet," Russell said.

Renters also have access to sailboats, paddleboats and other craft to have fun on the water, Russell said.

A diverse array of amenities at the different locations is meant to provide an experience tailored to the situations of the renters, many of whom bring young children.

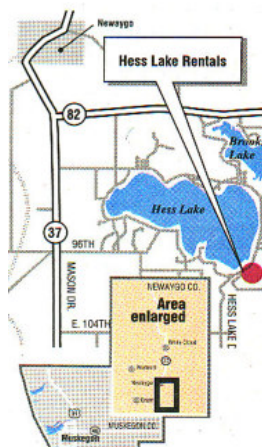
To that end, Vanderstelt and Russell are putting up a volleyball court on the property on the Muskegon River.

"We try to steer them into the



Chronicle photo • Cory Morse

Hess Lake Rentals currently owns five properties on Hess Lake. Renters have access to sailboats, paddleboats and other craft to have fun on the water.



Chronicle map • Stall

appropriate place," Vanderstelt said.

Vanderstelt was also careful to stress the modern condition of the properties.

"A lot of people think these are backwoods cottages with no heat," he said.

■ **What:** Hess Lake Rentals, a rental service that offers lower-cost cottages on Hess Lake and the Muskegon River year round.

■ **Who:** Co-owners Rosemary Ankerman, Sherri Russell and Brent Vanderstelt.

■ **Where:** 9837 Kathleen, Grant, MI 49327.

■ **Call:** (231) 206-5333.

■ **On the 'Net:** www.hesslakerentals.com.

Renting during peak season, from May-September, costs between \$550 and \$950 per week, although there are daily and week-end rates available. Rates during the fall and winter can range from \$300 to \$550 per week.

This is Hess Lake Rental's first full season of business.

The idea for forming a rental company began with the acquisition of three properties on Hess Lake in the fall of 2005, which they worked straight through the winter to fix up, according to Vanderstelt.

They have had renters from all over the Midwest, and business has picked up steadily, Russell said.

"We're taking baby steps, making sure we're successful instead of getting in over our heads," she said.