



GORDY BUBOLZ EXECUTES a “hoochie glide” inverted aerial move July 10 along the Wolf River in Fremont. Bubolz is a former World Wakeboard Association World Champion. He is retired from the sport, but continues to teach others.

Wakeboard pro shares sport's passion with kids

Some kids spend their summers hanging with their friends. Some work. Some go to summer school. Gordy Bubolz, though, was not your regular kid.

By the time he was 8, he was regularly water-skiing. By 16, he was running a water ski camp. At 21, he was a world-champion professional wakeboarder.

Today, Gordy, 32, is sharing his passion for the sport with hundreds of enthusiasts every summer. They come from across the United States, even the world.

His parents, Allen and Kay, sparked his interest in the sport. His dad started him water-skiing at age 8, though he admits it scared him until he turned 10 and his father took him out on a kneeboard.

COVERAGE ON POSTCRESCENT.COM

Audio slideshow: Gordy Bubolz shares his passion for the sport.

brother Bill taught him how to ski barefoot. Gordy was hooked. He couldn't get enough of it for the next two years.

His parents nurtured his passion. They bought him a ski boat and backed him when he started a water ski camp in 1992 at the age of 16. He had one customer his first year, but it was the start of a life of professional accomplishments in wakeboarding and a passion to teach others his craft.

The same year he taught

ents sent him to the Christian Family Water Ski Camp in Florida. It was there that he saw the owners' son Thomas Horrell using a wakeboard (for we Wisconsinites, picture a snowboard on water). "He was doing some pretty cool things on it," Gordy recalls.

When Gordy returned to the camp in 1993, Thomas had turned professional and was doing all sorts of flips. "When I saw that, I knew I had to try it. ... I really had to get into it. So I kind of stepped away from the barefoot side of things and started wakeboarding as much as I could."

Gordy says he always liked hands-on activities. Building things gave him a sense of accomplishment. Wakeboarding gave him

"I would see people doing really cool tricks in the magazines and it would seem like it was so far off. But I would keep working at it and eventually I would get that trick that seemed unattainable just a few months before," he says. "That sense of accomplishment was awesome. It got me hooked."

When Gordy moved to Florida to study civil engineering, wakeboarding became all-consuming. No longer constrained by Wisconsin winters, Gordy could wakeboard every day. And he did. Every moment he wasn't in class, he was on the water.

The practice paid off. He began to enter grassroots competitions, and he did well. In 1997, he entered nationals and took third place, which qualified