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SUBMITTED PHOTO *Delavan Enterprise*

Darien's Ron Bigelow joins Clinton's Mark Madson and Janesville's Bob Clapper as they splash Madson's converted 1974 Cadillac Coupe DeVille into the water at Madson's Little Limestone Quarry. The area men will be on the cable television show "Monster Nation" at 7 p.m. Tuesday.

National television discovers area's wild and crazy guys

By Thom Aiello
EDITOR

In the 1970s, Dan Aykroyd and Steve Martin played Georg and Yortuk Festrunk – two wild and crazy guys – on "Saturday Night Live."

Fast forward to 2004 and switch on the Discovery Channel at 7 p.m. Tuesday and you will see this area's version of wild and crazy guys – Ron Bigelow of Darien and Mark Madson of Clinton.

The two, joined by Bob Clapper of Janesville, will be on the "Monster Nation" show. That show is a spin-off of the cable television show "Monster Garage." You could say "Monster Nation" is a travel road show that looks for unusual things.

Bigelow and Madson pride themselves on being a bit different. Ever see the truck up in a tree off Highway 43 near Beloit? That would be Madson's.

So, what got them this TV gig? Well, they're not Czechoslovakian brothers. But they did convert a 1974 Cadillac Coupe DeVille into a boat and launched it into Madson's Little Limestone Quarry.

The public is invited to join Bigelow and Madson at Dane's Place, the former Colonial Club in Darien, for the airing of the show Tuesday.

Madson sawed off the roof of the Caddy to make it a convertible. He filled the doors and fenders with 40 cubic feet of industrial-grade grate material and 75 cubic feet of Coast Guard-approved Styrofoam. He

added dual three-inch flame-throwing exhausts. Then the men – or are they overgrown boys? – took the S.S. Cruising Cadillac for a cool, wave-smacking drive into what they call Little Devils Lake.

"I was just looking for a place to cool off, since I wasn't feeling very well," said Bigelow, noting that the event took place on a Sunday, after a long Saturday night.

Bigelow, a landscaper by trade and a graduate of Delavan-Darien High School, enjoys coming up with crazy ideas with his pals. Madson, who graduated from Clinton High School (as did Clapper) and owns the Little Limestone Quarry, said the three guys have been friends since high