

Local Business Profile: CJF Saddlery & Upholstery

by Calvin and Kate Holtrop

Started in late 2000 by owner Joel Forrest, CJF Saddlery & Upholstery is a custom leatherwork and repair business. CJF Saddlery began by making horse tack and moved into working with upholstery, among many other things, over the years. The business has moved several times in its history, finally landing here in Fruitport two years ago, at 5751 Airline Road, near Fruitport NAPA Auto Parts.

Joel has a reputation for excellence in his jobs. Forrest has been called "a saddle and upholstery expert" by the Grand Rapids chapter of the American Sewing Guild. He hasn't been getting much saddle work lately, because the saddle parts are slow to come in. But he says business has picked up more with boats and custom-made furniture, as well as with smaller things, like belts and knife-sheaths that are still made of leather. He says he gets a lot of those small items. "But the holsters that we used to make that were of leather, those have changed to more Kydex or plastic now," Forrest said. "So [I] still make 'em, but that's a whole different [story]."



A saddle done by Joel Forrest, at CJF Saddlery & Upholstery

Though he can sew pretty much anything, from inch thick leather down to just regular upholstery fabric, Forrest especially enjoys doing the more unique jobs. "There's so many different people, so many different jobs," Forrest declared. "And a lot of times people come in and it's not even a standard job, it's a, like, 'Well, hey, I've got an issue with a chair. I love it but I can't sit in it because I had hip surgery.' So [I] have to modify it for them, you know. It's always [these] cool little things. That's always, always fun. And then there's the real old stuff that people bring," Forrest continued. "We've done a lot of restoration work for museums and stuff like that. So, people bring in something real old, [like] an heirloom. And if you can't restore it, [you] can at least duplicate it, so it's still useable. And they can still keep the original one without making it look like it was all cobbled up. So, yeah. Every job is different, really."



Joel also reupholsters furniture

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Forrest also enjoys fixing things for truck companies.

Joel also shared a bit of his history. "I worked a little bit with Ottawa County with the sheriff's department, then with Lowell with the fire department, and then, after I moved out of Lowell, I left there and have been just doing this [business], full-time."

The meaning of Forrest's business name has changed ever-so-slightly over time. "It was Circle JF," Forrest said. "When I first started doing horse tack, that was my brand. [It] was a circle with a J and an F in it." Currently, though, he goes with the CJF instead of Circle JF. "I've got a two-year-old and his name's Camden; so eventually it'll be 'Camden Joel Forrest.' His first and my first and last name."

Forrest's dog, Bud, is the greeter at CJF Saddlery. "He's been here for three years," Forrest said. When Bud is greeting newcomers, he does his job happily.

If you'd like to contact CJF Saddlery & Upholstery, you can call Joel Forrest at (616) 893-2441, or go to cjf-saddlery.business.site to get a quote, give a call and get directions.

Pincrest Bar & Lanes Corner Update

We've been working hard to be THE place where folks come to celebrate! This summer guests were able to enjoy our new pavilion and walk-up bar, and we hosted a variety of events such as corporate parties, fundraisers, class reunions, bike runs, and our Sunday Funday's (featuring local musicians). Next time you're planning an event, give us a call, we love hosting groups ages 21+.

Local businesses play a big role in their neighborhoods not only by providing goods and services, but also creating avenues for giving back to the communities in which they serve. So, while we were enjoying a beverage or two under the pavilion, we made time to do some good deeds. Township Supervisor Todd Dunham is a talented musician and we hosted him for several of our outdoor events this summer. Each time Todd played at Pincrest,



Marine Corps Muskegon Detachment 703 presenting the Commandant's Award to Pincrest Bar & Lanes and Hot Rod Harley Davidson

he donated his gig money and tips to the Fruitport Township Flag Fund. Folks really got into it and rallied their support, and over the course of the season Todd was able to collect \$7,600 for the Flag Fund! Wow Fruitport, nicely done. Also, together with the crew from Hot Rod Harley Davidson we helped organize a series of Bike Nights, where guests enjoyed live music, local food vendors, and prize raffles. Thanks to all of you, we were able to raise over \$1,500 for the Marine Corps League Muskegon Detachment 703, and we were honored to receive the Commandant's Award for outstanding support.

It felt good this summer seeing so many people laughing, singing, dancing, catching up with old friends, remembering loved ones, and just enjoying each other's company in the spaces we created. It makes all the effort we've put into updating a 70+ year old business feel like it was a worthwhile and important venture. Thank you for making us a part of your celebrations.

As always, we hope to see you at the corner!
Aimee & Tom Johnson

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