ISSUE 70

THE DEVICE

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DISPRO OWNERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Photo: Paul Jenner

Under threatening skies, the flotilla of dippies with their hardy crews navigate the South Channel of Parry Sound at the annual regatta on Saturday September 6, 2025

President's Letter • November 2025

Well, we have had a very successful boating season that has now come to an end. The club had three UUMMTs and the regatta had a different format, a highway motel with daily launching of boats at a local marina.

The Fall Workshop was well attended with four very informative presentations and some new faces. Your executive is planning next year's regatta plus three UUMMTs to complement the regatta. More information will follow in the April edition of the Device.

The next Annual General Meeting will be held at the Coldwater Legion on Sunday, April 26, 2026. I hope to see you there but for now I am setting the boat in the garage ready for the annual dippy refurbishment on January 1st.

Have a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year. ***Bill Otton,*** President

Ebb & Flow

Social Events, Milestones and News About DOA Members

It has come to our attention that on November 23rd, member **Tony Martin** will be turning 90. We extend our congratulations to Tony.



A Memorial Gathering was held on Sunday, September 14 for **John Thomson**, hosted by Happy Thomson and family. A good contingent of DOA members were on hand to celebrate John's many contributions to the club. It was great to see two of the longest serving members of the DOA reunite, **Happy Thomson** and **Paul Dodington.**

Volunteers Needed

The Antique and Classic Boat Society - Toronto are again displaying boats at the Toronto International Boat Show January 17-25, 2026. A Dippy will be part of the display. We are asking our members to volunteer in the booth. If you are interested in helping, please contact Rita Adams at *ritaadamsfw@gmail.com* and she will provide you with all the details and times.

John Storey

New Information for the June Centre Spread Photo

Referring to the centrefold in the June Device, I can shed some light on some of the unidentified boats.

The white boat in the distance, the first white powerboat in the foreground and the barely visible boat the other side of the canopied launch look like Richardson Specials. These 16-footers with their truncated fantail sterns were built in Meaford, (some might have been built in Pointe au Baril) planked in sitka spruce, and usually powered by a St. Lawrence engine. Three of these lived in Pointe au Baril, Aggie, Maggie and Flos. For a time, annual races were held between these three boats off the Ojibway Hotel dock. Only Aggie remains today. I restored it in 1993 after it was rescued from the bottom of the channel to Pointe au Baril Station. It currently resides across from Id. # 330-A.

The dippy looks so much like Utawana, (3788) but it's not. It is more than likely an early Lindsay-built "Scout" model and probably carries a 6-hp Caron engine. This explains the ultra high engine box, which not only accommodated the tall cylinder of the large Caron engine but also the near vertically-mounted cast iron Maxim silencer. It's a very fast boat at minimal RPM, authoritatively turning a 10x18 three-blade propeller.

It's too bad J.W. Bald (photographer) didn't date his photos as identification could be assured.

Paul W. Gockel



UNOFFICIAL UNAUTHORIZED
UUMMT № 57
MINI MISERY TOUR

Bala Bay

Monday August 18

The day started with somewhat of a delay, due to a last minute change of launch site from Torrance Bay to Cleaver Bay. Also, the tardy arrival of two members, no names mentioned, but we know who we are. Thanks to John Storey for directing the latecomers to the alternative launch site.

Eventually, the fleet of dippies headed out into Bala Bay. It was a lovely sunny day, breezy and warm, just perfect for a cruise. The boats were ably led by Brad Jackson and his daughter Marnie Madore. The lunch stop at Windsor Park in Bala provided ample space to have our picnic lunches and to socialize. Soon the lunch break was over and it was time to start up the boats again and head back to the launch site. All in all, a pleasant day of boating was had by all.

Paul & Dorene Jenner





Photos: Paul Jenner

The Fall Workshop

The workshop at the Coldwater Legion on Saturday, October 25 was well attended with 34 participants and a notable number of new faces.

John Storey started the workshop with a recount of a summer of mysteries about his Coventry Victor engine. He eliminated fuel and carburetor defects and ignition issues as the source of the engine's misfortunes. He showed pictures of oil deposits on the spark plug and cylinder head, all stemming from an out of round cylinder bore and leaking piston rings, plus worn Babbitt on the connecting rod. His solution was to bore the cylinders to 56mm and fit new pistons. The connecting rod required new Babbitt but this work requires the making of steel moulds to contain the molten Babbitt as it is poured into the mould. Once the connecting rods are machined and the engine reassembled, the Storeys can enjoy their Dippy next summer. John included many pictures and a video of the Babbitt process. Thanks John for an informative presentation.

Kerry Harmon concluded the morning with a talk on electric dispros and the sizing and placement of the batteries with attention to maintaining the trim of the boat. This talk generated a lot of discussion.

A lunch of soup and sandwiches was followed with a presentation by Bob Burk on the device, explaining the importance of the fit and tolerances of shafts and bushings required for vibration free performance.

Paul Jenner talked about the rebuilding of the ball seats of a Kingston carburetor. All presenters gave excellent handout drawings or instructions so the attendees could go home and repair their dippy with confidence that it will work. Through the afternoon we all shared our tips and tricks for achieving results the easy way. Thanks to all who shared the day and to Sheila Burk for organizing the room and lunch.

Bill Otton



John Storey

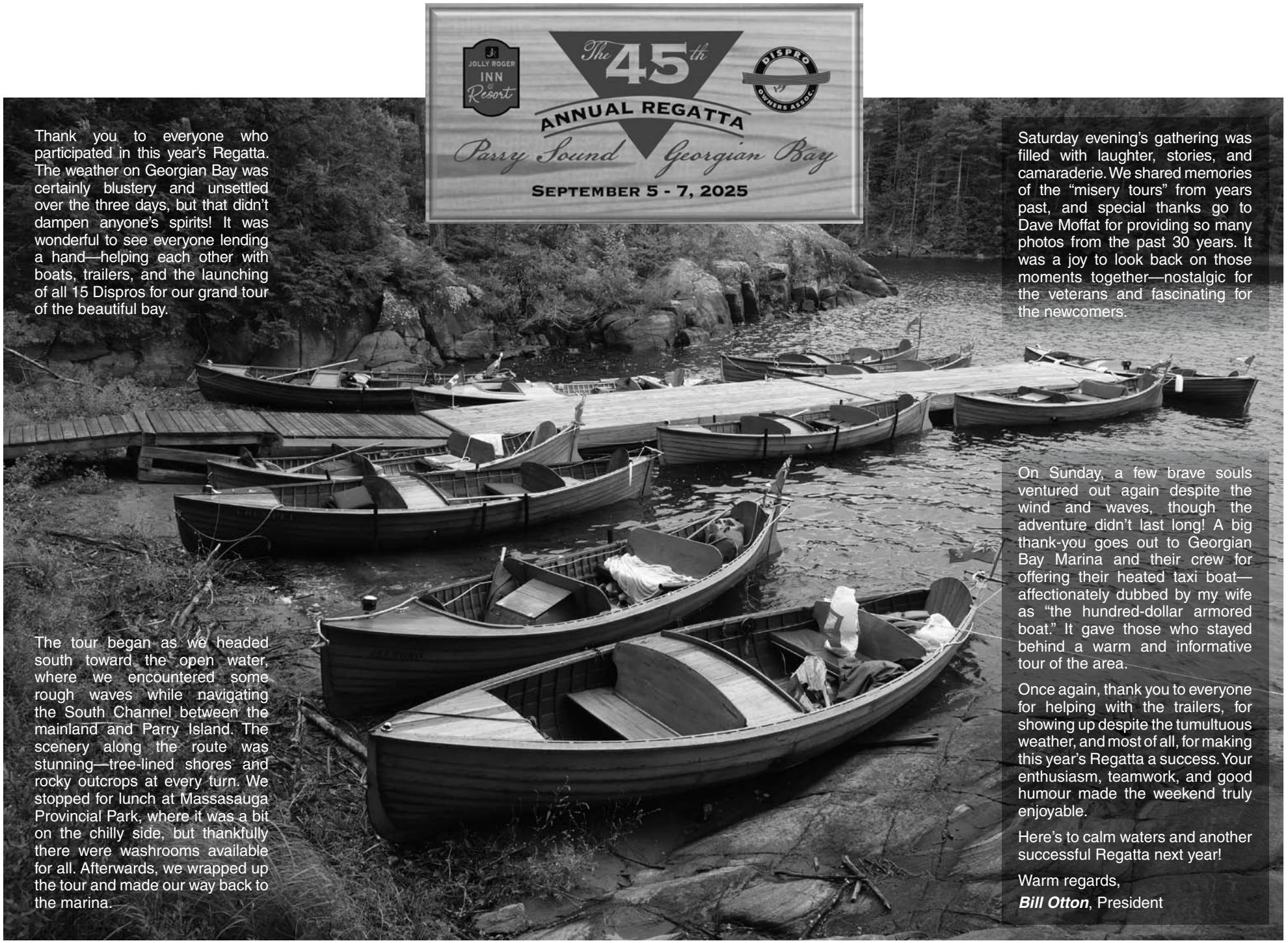


Bob Burk



Kerry Harmon

Photos: Paul Jenner



Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's Regatta. The weather on Georgian Bay was certainly blustery and unsettled over the three days, but that didn't dampen anyone's spirits! It was wonderful to see everyone lending a hand—helping each other with boats, trailers, and the launching of all 15 Dispros for our grand tour of the beautiful bay.

The tour began as we headed south toward the open water, where we encountered some rough waves while navigating the South Channel between the mainland and Parry Island. The scenery along the route was stunning—tree-lined shores and rocky outcrops at every turn. We stopped for lunch at Massasauga Provincial Park, where it was a bit on the chilly side, but thankfully there were washrooms available for all. Afterwards, we wrapped up the tour and made our way back to the marina.

Saturday evening's gathering was filled with laughter, stories, and camaraderie. We shared memories of the "misery tours" from years past, and special thanks go to Dave Moffat for providing so many photos from the past 30 years. It was a joy to look back on those moments together—nostalgic for the veterans and fascinating for the newcomers.

On Sunday, a few brave souls ventured out again despite the wind and waves, though the adventure didn't last long! A big thank-you goes out to Georgian Bay Marina and their crew for offering their heated taxi boat—affectionately dubbed by my wife as "the hundred-dollar armored boat." It gave those who stayed behind a warm and informative tour of the area.

Once again, thank you to everyone for helping with the trailers, for showing up despite the tumultuous weather, and most of all, for making this year's Regatta a success. Your enthusiasm, teamwork, and good humour made the weekend truly enjoyable.

Here's to calm waters and another successful Regatta next year!

Warm regards,

Bill Otton, President

Photo: Paul Jenner

Dispro No. 3591 Returns to Birthplace in Port Carling

Our youngest daughter, Vanessa, and her family lived in Thunder Bay for six years from 2014 to 2020. During that time period, we made the car trip from Port Carling to TB several times to visit them. A fifteen hour trip.

At the northernmost point on the hump of Lake Superior you pass Schreiber (Scriber to locals). On the highway, there is a gas stop and friendly diner that became our regular stop.



On one of these stops we overheard the following conversation from the next booth containing two obviously local elders in baseball caps and plaid jackets.

E#1. " D'ye 'member them two fellas, said they was uncle and nephew, who drove all the ways up here from Pint o'Carling and Gravelpurse..... somewheres near Tranna?"

E#2. " Yep, amazing! Came all that way t' looksee that rotted wee boat on Walker Lake. That Burton girl got hold of one o' them off a program on the telly. She scored big time I heard tell."

E#1. "Yep! Brought their own trailer..... loaded her up..... paid good money..... and carted her away. Bottom was rotted clear through and all them wood parts as black as my boots! No savin' that pile o' junk!"

E#2. " A fool or two borned every minute..... Ol' man Burton would've been real proud of his daughter. Wonder whose ended up with that there prize.

Good Luks t' himself, where's ever he is."

As the story goes, our own beloved friends, Paul D. and Mike W. did indeed make that trip to Walker Lake, a bit northeast of Schreiber, in 2007. The Burton daughter, likely now well into her eighties, had contacted Paul D. after seeing the wonderful TVO program featuring Paul and others.

The Uncle Sam Deluxe model was purchased by Byron Burton in 1924.... #3591.... and likely shipped by rail from Gravelpurse to Scriber.

According to the daughter, this Dippy was well used and loved over the years until she ended up sitting on logs in her little boathouse. The roof leaked and time took a toll on her.

This neglected treasure had twice saved the Burton family from disaster as they were forced to flee from forest fires. They retreated into the middle of the lake in the Dippy, to escape



the flames and, in their haste, the second time, forgot the oars which burned in the fire.

And so this wonderful wee boatie is/was a heroine in her own right.... bravo.... and we are her very proud and Luksy (lucky) owners.

To backtrack a bit, Paul and Mike returned to Port C and their prize sat behind Paul's house on a trailer, under an old decrepit tarp, awaiting a guileless new owner. Enter Eric Luks.

Ever since we purchased Billy Johnston's house in Port C, in 1986 and discovered her interesting history, we hoped to find a Dippy to go with the house. It seemed fitting given the history and besides that, Eric is a boat guy! Paul D., unknown to us previously, (we were Windermere people), got wind of this dream and invited Eric over to looksee his acquisition from Walker Lake. A deal was struck and a sale completed!

A short time later, Eric invited me (Cynthia) to go over to Paul's emporium to view the Dippy. I declined, trusting his judgment on boat matters. However he persisted and I eventually complied.

Eric knocked on Paul's door and asked if I could view the boat. This was my first intro to the illustrious Dr. Dippy.

Paul rolled back the tarp and when he saw the horrified expression on my face he said..... " She's all there..... she's all there!" I thought..... is this guy balmy or WHAT! ..... because I saw grass through several holes in the blackened hull! SHE clearly was NOT ALL THERE!

Now speechless as well as wide-eyed, I looked at Paul for some/any explanation. "Get down in there and smell that wonderful oily smell. It's so good!"

As I continued to be dumbfounded, Eric stepped in to talk to Paul in about restoration, allowing me some recovery time. Questions were asked on our way home.

Fast forward to the Dippy Regatta 2008, and we were there in our magnificent fully restored #3591, with huge thanks to Mike Windsor who restored her woodworks to perfection and to Paul Dodington, who rebuilt and restored her engine. Her dignity was regained and she runs beautifully. Most of the time.

We named her "Auntie Mae" in honour of Mae Johnston who had many nephews and nieces here in Port Carling, as she was a daughter of one the seven James sisters (one brother also).

We love our very beautiful "Auntie Mae" and she now has her own little boatport here in Port Carling at the site where she was born. A glorious return to glory befitting a heroine. We could not be prouder.

Cynthia Luks



Photos: The Luks

100 PLUS YEAR OLD

DISAPPEARING PROPELLER BOATS

1920 Dispro Restoration Complete: 35 Years Later!

Two years ago I wrote a column for Classic Boat with the assistance of Terry Philpot telling the story of a boat house "find" on an island in Stony Lake. For an antique boat enthusiast who's restored two dozen Lakefield/Peterborough cedar strip runabouts and canoes and several Port Carling Dispros as a hobby over 38 years, this was a "find" and then some.

Of many aging watercraft in the boat house, one was hidden away on the second floor wedged under the rafters. After careful examination it turned out it was a 1920 Port Carling Water-Ford Dispro. It was one of the originals! The Kingfisher 2 ½ HP motor and other assorted parts belonging to the boat were scattered about on the floor nearby.

It turns out the boat had been sitting there for three decades after undergoing a partial restoration in Muskoka back around 1989/1990. For some reason the restoration stopped in its tracks as the boat was perhaps one quarter done. The boat and motor had been transported back to Stony Lake and that's where everything sat until last Thanksgiving weekend.

The boat was and still is owned by the Farrow family of Toronto….long time island cottagers on Stony Lake. Trevor Farrow picks up the story……

"My mon's parents – the Weatherstones – arrived on Stony in the 1940's, and our family has been here ever since. My father, Dr. Grant Farrow, loved cottage projects almost as much as he loved Stony Lake. Our boathouse was a vibrant laboratory of wooden boats and other assorted "gems". This Water-Ford – found years earlier leaning against a woodpile at the back of a neighbour's island on Stony Lake – had been modified into a stern-drive green and orange work boat at some point in its storied past. Having been partially restored, it then sat dormant. Decades later, a mutual connection happened to introduce me to Prior Smith. Having been introduced to the history of Ontario wooden boats as a kid, I always knew its potential. But it took Prior's vision, experience, skill, determination, immense generosity and incredibly collaborative and friendly network of kindred boat-colleagues to really put the spark and potential back into the balance of this saga."

The boat was wrapped in plastic and towed/floated to my workshop. When the plastic wrap was pealed off the first thing to do was figuring out what was there and what wasn't there. There were no seat backs or floor boards. The removable front and back seats were there but beyond repair. The gas tank was there but no longer useful. There was no rudder. There was no hardware, no decals. The cross bracing under the second middle seat was there but damaged and had to be replaced. The boat was one of the really early ones to roll out of Port Carling, complete with clenched iron nails. I need not tell you what that meant in terms of rot in some of the original planking.

The boat had had many touch ups, paint jobs and modifications over the years. Strange but true. At one time the motor had been mounted behind the second middle seat! Typically, with all of the factory numbers in all of the usual places, one would expect to find numbers written in pencil. Unfortunately, they were no longer visible. However, numbers stamped on the motor's copper jacket plate that are still visible told us what we needed to know.



Photos: Prior Smith

The good news is wood work had been well done in Muskoka back in 1990 or thereabouts on the keel, stem posts front and back, some bottom planking and some decking. The rebuilt motor appeared to be in good shape, as were the drive shaft and U joint, the Kingfisher muffler and the device.

As the restoration began, the first item of business: phone calls to Dispro club and ACBS Toronto members who might be able to provide a little assistance. Call number one was to Ian Dickson. He responded with two Kingston carbs, two buzz coils and other parts that would be needed. His directive: use whatever you need and return what you don't use! Mike Windsor dipped into his collection of Dispro parts and came up with two brass oar locks and six brass rope guides. No rope guides, no steering! The next call was to Paul Dodington who, surprisingly, remembered working on the Kingfisher motor and the device back in 1990. Paul was an invaluable source of information and he came across with a brass exhaust deflector and three Dispro decals needed for the deck and oar locks.

Terry Philpot lives a short drive away. He owns a 1922 Water-Ford. He provided his seats and seat backs so patterns could be drawn and exact copies made. Paul Gockel searched high and low for an original knife switch for the battery connection. He came up with one that was beyond repair but he gave it a good try. Later on when the motor was misbehaving, Doug Barraball dropped by on a Sunday morning. An hour and a half later the motor was doing what it should be doing! It's the old story…not necessarily what you know but who you are fortunate enough to know…people who are more than willing to lend a helping hand.



Calls were made to various lumber yards I've dealt with over the years. Not one had Florida cypress wood in stock or available. I needed plenty of it! That led to a call to Exotic Woods in Burlington. They not only had some in stock but could access more of it within days. The wood they provided was spectacular. It was prepared to my specifications and ready for pick up within two weeks.

One other item was needed….a new gas tank. My neighbour three doors down on Clear Lake, Dave Dobbin, another ACBS Toronto member, took one look at the old tank and decided his mechanical engineering firm in Peterborough would take care of that little problem. A custom fitted stainless steel gas tank that retained

the original brass filler cap was on my door step at the end of April as I was in the final stage of restoring the boat from stem to stern. The project took 8 months.

As the Farrow family reflects on this past year, “It’s an amazing story of determination, history, craft and true community kindness. I’m grateful to the incredible generosity of all those who contributed to the boat’s restoration. And – together with my spouse Mary Birdsell and our kids – I am grateful to honour my father’s love of old wood boats and my parents’ love of the lake. What a great historical journey of this little Ontario boat, which now lives on!”

The boat is now in better-than-new condition and back in its island boat house on Stony Lake. It has a new lease on life to be enjoyed (if they can keep the cantankerous 105 year old motor running) for years to come.

Prior Smith



No Wonder the Lady Couldn’t Get Her Dippy to Run



A periodic cleaning of the fuel line is sometimes a good idea, especially if you’re still using a pot metal filter bowl in a steel tank. This is the kind of crud that accumulates and will stop you dead in the water, provided you got going in the first place. The brass screen on the carburetor’s banjo bolt was just as bad but it was easy to clean. This crap was so well packed in the metal housing above the glass bowl that a stiff wire and compressed air were necessary to dislodge it. Blowing by mouth was worthless. I saved what I could for this photo. Imagine what got away. After some magneto adjustments, her boat runs just fine now.

Paul W. Gockel

Device Submissions: Please send all written and photographic submissions for The Device directly to the editor at: ***paul.jenner@sympatico.ca***



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