

ISSUE 17

THE DEVICE

MAR 2012

DISPRO OWNERS

ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



www.dispro-owners.ca

Photo: Paul Jenner

The audience was very attentive as Paul Dodington, the "Dippy Doctor" conducts a thorough examination of an ailing Dispro, A successful diagnosis was made. Fall Workshop 2011.



President's Letter • March 2012

The “winter that wasn’t” is almost over. With daily temperatures above freezing and daylight saving time coming shortly, boating season cannot be far away. An early spring will encourage everyone to get their Dispros spruced up and ready for launching in plenty of time to partake in this year’s events.

It was rewarding to have so many members participate in last year’s events. I would personally like to congratulate the volunteers who helped plan and organize the UUMMT’s, boat show display, regatta and workshop for their great efforts and success.

Everyone can look forward to an exciting agenda of events again in 2012. Past President, John Storey, has been busy lining up locations and dates for UUMMT’s. They are listed in the upcoming events section of this issue. Robert Clipsham will be coordinating this year’s regatta on Georgian Bay, to be held at the Delawana Inn. The Dispro Owners Association will also be joining other boat clubs in a special event celebrating the 100 Mile Cruise.

On Sunday April 22nd, the Annual General Meeting will be held at the Muskoka Boat and Heritage Centre in Gravenhurst. Lunch will be provided. Guest speaker will be our own Mary Storey with a presentation titled “Celebrating 125 Years of R.M.S. Segwun”.

Be sure to fill out the enclosed AGM registration form and sign up for the regatta if you have not already done so.

As a quote from the famous book *Wind in the Willows* states, “There is nothing – absolutely nothing – half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.” Keeping that in mind, I vision many Dippys putt putt putting across the waters and having lots of fun together.

Gary Campaigne

2011 Fall Workshop Recap

Yet another successful Fall Workshop took place October 22nd at Grace & Speed Museum. Full details accompanied the January President’s Letter mailing.

Doug Theobalds from Epiphanes North America gave us the low-down on varnishes while Matt Fairbrass expanded our knowledge of fuels and lubricants.



Gary Campaigne hosted the event.

Paul Gockel enlightened us with “Old vs New” when it comes to copper clout nails and wood. His full report on wood appears elsewhere in this issue.

Mike Windsor’s slide presentation showed us the many steps involved in Dippy restoration while Paul Dodington conducted a successful trouble-shooting demonstration on a Dispro that was running poorly.

All in all, a very informative workshop, giving all who attended a greater insight into the workings of our beloved Dippies.

An Invitation to an Historic Event

All Dispro owners are invited to join 100 wooden boats and RMS Segwun as they re-create the famous 100 Mile Cruise on the Muskoka Lakes. At 8:30 am, Saturday August 18, 2012 a large flotilla of antique wooden boats will be leaving Muskoka Wharf in Gravenhurst. They will proceed through the Port Carling locks, into Lake Rosseau and Lake Joseph and on to Little Lake Joseph, where a short ceremony and aerial photos of the boats surrounding RMS Segwun will take place before they head home.

100 miles
boats
Segwun
passengers



All Dispro owners are encouraged to be a part of this event. Launching at a public ramp or marina on Lake Joseph will allow you to get to Little Lake Joseph in time for the event. Locations for launch sites, hotels, lunches and washrooms will be shared upon registration at www.acbs.ca.

Any questions, contact **Mary Storey**, co-chair of 100 Mile Cruise Committee 705-684-9560 or mstorey@cogeco.ca

Secondary Metabolites in Old Growth Lumber

or

Why Doesn't My Dippy Rot?

*Extracted from a talk given by Paul Gockel at the Dippy Workshop,
October 2011, Gravenhurst*

I'm not a chemist or a biologist, but I have friends who are and I owe much of the information submitted here to them. Frustration with new wood and questionable research of others led me to research and compose this article. I don't consider this the final word on the topic, so anyone who can contribute positively to this essay is welcome to do so.

Old growth is good because it's old! New growth is bad because it's new. It sounds like something I would say anyway, but this time I can substantiate my premise.

Onions, basil, mint, cocaine, caffeine, nutmeg, mistletoe, vanilla. This isn't my shopping list, but these also aren't the terms one expects to hear starting on the topic of old growth lumber. You'll never see a bug-bored hole in the leaves of basil or mint, because these plants quickly mature to grow their defense mechanisms known as secondary compounds. Onions' secondary compounds are the horrible things emitted that your eyes notice when you cut into them.

Animals can run to defend themselves; plants cannot. Therefore plants grow their own kind of defense mechanisms. In "fight or flight", plants need to fight.

Secondary compounds or secondary metabolites are not directly concerned with plant growth. Growth, development and reproduction are the concerns of primary compounds. These develop early in the plants' life. The secondary compounds--the plants' defense mechanisms, develop only during a specific period in the plant's life. Trees take a lot longer to develop these than an onion does. An onion can be harvested in a season and still make your eyes water; a tree takes a hundred years before it becomes our coveted rot-proof boat lumber. Secondary metabolites in trees come with age--and a lot of it. They're complex chemicals made by the plants as an evolutionary arms race which act primarily as pesticides.

Certain trees when under attack can send out airborne alert chemicals that drift over to other trees. Thus warned, the neighbour trees produce more tannins in their leaves making themselves less palatable to the attackers. A second line of defense is using chemical signals to attract parasites and predators of the attacking insects, as

emitted ethanol brings woodpeckers to home in on bark beetles. "Plants don't only warn each other; they also call in friends." This doesn't have much to do with our story of lumber but it does elucidate another facet of trees' defense mechanisms.

People have secondary compound defense mechanisms, too, but don't grow them. We use medicines and some recreational drugs to ward off evil spirits. Cisplatin, a chemotherapy drug, is made from plants.

These secondary metabolites proliferated in the lumber used in our precious old boats. The trees had stood for hundreds of years in the pre-industrial and undisturbed fertile soils of the southern swamps. They had two ingredients which we won't find in today's lumber--time and good nutritious soil. Living off the rot of last season's decayed leaves and needles, nourished the next year's growth. Even the woods considered today as no good for boatbuilding were fine for that purpose a hundred years ago. Consider the Pioneer. It is the earliest documented Minett launch still in service. Built about 1903 on the shores of lake Rosseau, Bert Minett used the stands of clear white pine from the Cleavelands House property which had stood there for hundreds of years before he harvested them. To this day, the white pine planking above the waterline in that boat is still the same sound lumber used in its construction 108 years ago. What was below the waterline was NOT rotten either; it had been so mutilated and oil soaked by so many different engine installations over the years it was difficult to tell planks from holes. It's all been replaced with cypress, albeit new-growth cypress.

For years, we've been led to believe the heart wood of trees is dead. It's not dead. It's alive, but like uncle Joe, it just moves kinda slow. It's a reservoir for moisture to get trees through droughts. If it were dead the heartwood would need no nourishment, but it does need nourishment. Nourishment flows to the heartwood via the radiating parenchyma cells--cells which transcend the boundaries between heart and sapwood. As nourishment flows up through the sapwood, parenchyma cells carry that nourishment inward (radially) to the heartwood. It is via these parenchyma cells that the valuable secondary compounds eventually bathe the heartwood and are deposited in the heartwood. The purpose of this is to protect the tree from heart rot, fungi which penetrate the trees via the roots. It's this valuable bit of biology that also keeps our old dippies from completely falling to bits and helps to explain why so many are around today, no matter how much abuse they've endured.

The value in old growth lumber is just that--it's old! It has had time to mature. It's had time to develop its defense mechanisms. It's had time to manufacture and store its secondary compounds. New lumber would be just as good if we'd leave it alone for a few generations. Remember all this before you rev up that chainsaw! Old growth lumber is full of defense mechanisms gained from many years of evolution and of standing in rich, nutritious soils of decayed matter from it's own waste. Aside from speed of growth, climate doesn't play much of a role in this. (Did you know petrified cypress stumps have been found in the Arctic?) Those defense mechanisms stayed with the tree as it was turned into useful lumber for our boats. Fastened with poisonous copper nails and taken care of, it should have outlasted all of us.

(Copper nails not only do not corrode in fresh water, but when they do slowly dissolve they produce a toxin which is poisonous to decay organisms. So there's a double-edge sword in our favour of boat defense using copper--no corrosion and rot prevention.

continued next page . . .

Compare that to iron: once it's quickly gone it takes the boat with it! If you've ever seen a corroded steel nail in a boat, you'll see not much wood left around the nail, no matter what species of wood it is. This isn't new information; it explains why old sailing ships' bottoms were clad in copper.)

Eventually we will all need some new lumber in our boats. The fabric of the boat is organic and therefore subject to decay, no matter how rot resistant the species used. What needs to be done is to have a judicious look at what really needs replacement and replace only that. Structure, serviceability and strength is one thing--cosmetics is something else. If you can replace it with reclaimed or harvested old growth cypress or cedar, then you and the boat are the winners.

New growth lumber, no matter what species, is pretty much crap. But this crappy lumber is not the trees' fault. It's ours. Cut well before they should have been harvested leaves us with soft, pithy sponges instead of solid boat lumber. Left alone for an extra hundred years would probably yield good lumber once again. Consider all this when you think you should replace a plank in your boat (or your old house, for that matter) because it has a slight flaw in it. Replace it, make it look all brand new, and you lose! This is also a premise for keeping your old boat old, and not turning it into a reproduction, claiming oldness.

Remember my shopping list from above? All those things smell nice. They're aromatics. Have you smelled turpentine recently? It's about 10% of the pungency it was when my grandfather used to wash his brushes in it. Have you smelled fresh-cut cypress lately? It too is bland compared to what I was cutting in the 70s. There is a direct correlation between the pungency of the aromatics and the durability of the wood. This too is all based on our now precious secondary compounds.

Finale Probably the worst atrocity I ever witnessed in boat restoration was when a customer of a prominent boat shop outside of Port Carling bought an all-original 21-foot Ditchburn. To the owner's dismay, it was a painted hull and the hull was planked in cedar--highly rot-resistant old-growth eastern white cedar. This ignorant pile of new money couldn't stand to have a cedar boat (OMG! What would the people think of him at the boat show?? Who cares, anyway.), so instead of shopping for an all-mahogany launch, and surrendering the painted cedar one to an appreciative owner, he had the entire thing ripped apart and replanked in mahogany. Historical revisionism at its worst, yet he still had the gall to say it was built in 1922. May the organisms of decay attack his bottom with a vengeance.

For those still with me, here's a highly abbreviated list of woods and their longevity as relates to our hobby, #1 being highly rot resistant, #4 subject to a quick decay:

long leaf yellow pine: 1	western red cedar: 2
eastern white cedar: 1	Sitka spruce: 4
white oak: 1	ash: 4
white pine: 1-3	hemlock: 4
cypress: 2	

Many thanks to Beth Heard, Larry Giles, Jack Schultz, and Sarah McQuat

Paul Gockel

Upcoming Events in 2012

The Dispro Owners Association has planned exciting events for 2012. We would like to see you there! PLEASE, mark these dates on your calendar, so that you don't forget them.

Sun. April 22 11:00 am AGM at Muskoka Boat and Heritage Centre, Gravenhurst
Enjoy lunch with fellow Dispro owners. Guest speaker Mary Storey will be giving a presentation titled "Celebrating 100 Years of RMS Segwun"

***Don't forget** to complete your enclosed Registration Form and mail to Mary Storey by April 13.*

UUMMTS for 2012

Unofficial Unauthorized Mini Misery Tours are a lot of fun, and a great way to enjoy your boat in the safety & comfort of the company of your fellow Dippyites. Plus, you get to explore new areas that you wouldn't ordinarily venture to in your Dippy! There will be 3 UUMMTs this year so let's get a good turn out.

Further details for the UUMMTs will be forthcoming in subsequent issues of The Device.

Sat. June 23 10:00 am UUMMT 22 – Lake Rosseau, Muskoka
Our first mini misery tour of 2012 will start out at the public launch on Skeleton Bay, Lake Rosseau. It is directly off Hwy 141, a short distance west of the Bent River Store and Gas Bar. Once in our Dispros, we will travel from the cliffs of Skeleton Bay, turn south and make Windermere docks for lunch. In the afternoon we will go around the bottom of Tobin Island and up the west side through many island channels, eventually making our way back to Skeleton Bay. Nearest town is Bracebridge about a half hour drive to Skeleton Bay via Route 4 and Hwy 141.

Contact: John & Mary Storey

Sat. July 21 10:00 am UUMMT 23 – Six Mile Lake, Muskoka (north of Port Severn)
Plan to meet at Six Mile Lake Marina. Travel on Highway 400 north of Port Severn. Exit at Interchange 162 (White Falls Road). Continue north on White Falls Road (Route 34). After it bends to the right, turn left on Vollicks Road. The marina is 2 kilometres on this road. We will explore this lovely lake which has a provincial park and many bays and islands.

More details in the next Device.

Sat. Aug. 11 UUMMT 24 – Kennisis Lake, Haliburton
Details in the next Device

Weekend of Sept. 7-9 Annual Regatta – Delawana Inn, Honey Harbour, Georgian Bay
Details in the next Device

Dispro Owners Association Annual General Meeting

Muskoka Boat & Heritage Centre, Gravenhurst • Sunday, April 22, 2012

AGENDA

11.00 am	Heritage Centre opens Only pre-registered attendees - \$17.50/person Includes lunch and admission to Heritage Centre
Noon	Lunch
1:00 pm	Call to order of AGM Minutes of 2011 AGM Treasurer's Report Reports: • Membership • Club Archivist • The Device/Dispro Trader • Club Historian • 2012 UUMMTs • 2012 Regatta Election of Officers Short Break New Business Speaker Mary Storey: Celebrating 100 Years of RMS Segwun
3:00 pm	Adjournment

Books For Sale The Greatest Little Motorboat Afloat

Muskoka Boat and Heritage Centre has several soft cover books for sale at \$25.00.
Further inquiries: Ann Curley 705-687-2115 or acurley@realmuskoka.com



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