

ISSUE 61

THE DEVICE

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DISPRO OWNERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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please regularly visit
our website at

www.disproboats.ca



Photo: John Cooper

What's this, you may well ask? A bird's nest perhaps? No, it's actually fresh weed salad direct from Chemong Lake, thoroughly wrapped around the propeller and skeg of Gary Canpaigne's boat. All attendees at the July UUMMT had to stop sooner or later and do a little harvesting.



President's Letter • August 2023

It is a pleasure to share with the membership some good news regarding our Association. Since April of this year, we have added a significant number of new members. Hopefully, we will have the opportunity to meet with some of these new folks at one of our upcoming events: the Muskoka UUMMT on August 21, the Thousand Islands 2023 Regatta on September 8-10, and/or the Fall Workshop on October 21 in Coldwater. Please see details and Registration Form for the Fall Workshop enclosed with this issue.

The new members come from a variety of locations, primarily in Ontario – Osgoode, Glen William and London, but also from among our neighbours to the south – Point Pleasant, New Jersey and North Granby, Connecticut.

But the news gets better! During our recent participation at the ACBS Boat Show on July 8th in Gravenhurst, at least three more new members were added from Minden, Orillia and King City. As all will appreciate, the ability to keep our Association vibrant and evergreen is vital to our future. Welcome to all new members and we hope you will enjoy with us the camaraderie, the boat mentoring, travel and good times of the DOA.

I am pleased to also note that the first two UUMMTs of the 2023 season in North Bay in June and Lake Chemong in July were successful events, despite the afternoon rain at the latter event. A big thank you to the two organizers, Jenn Matthews and Terry Philpot, respectively.

Ian Gibson

Upcoming Events in 2023

September 8-10 – Annual Regatta – Glen House, Thousand Islands

We return to the welcoming Glen House Resort in the heart of the Thousand Islands on the historic and picturesque St. Lawrence River.

Glen House reservation information and the DOA registration form have been mailed to all members.

FYI: The block of rooms set aside for the DOA Regatta will expire after August 31 so book early to avoid disappointment.

Be sure to visit the DOA website at: disproboats.ca for the latest information.

Sat. October 21 – Fall Workshop – 9:30am - 3:30pm

Coldwater Legion 2 Michael Anne Drive, Coldwater, Ontario

To register, please complete the enclosed registration form.

John Storey is organizing this event so please contact John with any questions at mstorey@cogeco.ca



Significant Contributors



Paul Gockel

Paul recounts how he first became involved with Dippies, "Contrary to popular opinion, I found out about dippies all on my own and it all started in a swamp. "The Swamp? Our Avon Bay, Lake Joseph neighbor owned a swamp. As little kids we watched movies where people were hopelessly sucked into quicksand and lost forever. aahahhhhhh!!!! blub. Quicksand always exists in a swamp, so we wanted our neighbor to show us real live quicksand. "Any bodies?" "Real quicksand?" He did show us as he gleefully dragged three gullible children through his mosquito-infested swamp pointing to any low spot as quicksand. We believed him. I now know he was full of it, and I don't mean quicksand.

At the end of the swamp tour, he took his hiking stick and beat it on the bottom of an overturned, double-ended boat lying on his "quicksand" beach. "This here is an old DP" "Hey mister, what's a DP?" "That's a Disappearing Propeller Boat." Bug eyed, I was so fascinated by the name that I had to know more. So started my 1966-to-today occupation of "hound-doggin'" as Ian Dickson would say.

He now knows that swamp Dippy was a 1939 Greavette. It had been painted green and white, and modified to accept a Buchanan Midget. The device was gone. The swamp owner then gave him the boat. After Paul purchased another Dispro, Idle Hour, he gave the swamp Dispro to a neighbor. It has vanished, along with the neighbor and the swamp.

Muskoka back in those days was not sanitized like it is today. It was charming and mysterious. Valuable old junk could usually be found at any marina, shoreline, swamp, riverbed, wreck site, and used as landfill under the highways. It was a wonderful place to go exploring all summer long.

Hound doggin' paid off as he found Idle Hour at Duke Boats. He's owned that boat longer than her original owners did, and it was from them he bought it. Paul purchased 1924 Idle Hour, deluxe model, in 1968 through the auspices of Duke Boats. It had been vandalized by replacement of the Dispro engine with a Coventry. Thankfully, the original owners from Torrance had saved the Dispro engine, and all its related parts, so it was put back in the boat. Unfortunately, he never kept track of the CV's serial number, so he doesn't know where it is today.

Getting involved with the club was equally serendipitous: Paul was hanging out at Duke Boats one day. He seemed to hang out there a lot, when Joe Fossey came in to talk with Ed Skinner about Dispros. Ed immediately transferred the conversation to him. This was pre- DOA days. It was as if Joe was doing his market research to see if a club was viable. So eventually he joined the burgeoning Dippy club as a charter member.

Early club regattas were memorable. Breakdowns ruled the day. Hardly was a cruise completed before many tow lines were deployed to bring some wreck back to the beach. Hi-capacity bilge pumps were also necessary to keep flywheels from spinning



bilge water overboard. As the years went by, fewer and fewer breakdowns occurred, bilges got tighter, tow lines were stowed, and more time could be spent greeting each other, now usually through an arthritic “thumbs-up” gesture. Today, more time is spent socializing, not mending. He doesn’t know if this is an improvement or not.

Many of Paul’s best and charter member friends from the club have passed away. That’s the problem with being the youngest charter member. However, many a charter member who is still on life support and Paul still gather to yack...if we can hear. Something that he found valuable with the Dippy club is that so many members have huge interests and occupations that far transcend owing a dippy. Machinists, old car people, plumbers, attorneys, architects, musicians, engineers, business typhoons, artists, you name it. Scratch a DOA member and you’ll probably find something worthwhile underneath whose extra knowledge can be pumped. It amazes others how I know who I know. “How do you know him?” “Oh, they’re Dippy club members!”

Paul’s advice for the future of the club: “I think muddling along as it does is good. I think other organizations are jealous of our dedicated and stable membership and our definitive journal. Try to get young people interested. The same problem exists in the car clubs. There is a whole wide, wonderful world outside your phone. The car clubs have started funding for qualified young people. Something for the DOA to consider? With popular interest in DPs at nearly minus 273° Kelvin, it’s a scary thought to consider what the future might be for our prized possessions”.

Paul Gockel



Trout Lake • North Bay

It is always a bonus when a member offers to organize and host a UUMMT. We were thrilled at the 2022 Regatta, when Jennifer Matthews offered to host the first UUMMT of 2023, June 17-18, in her neck of the woods, on Trout Lake in North Bay.

We had a most pleasant drive up on Friday afternoon. After settling into our hotel rooms we enjoyed a lovely Italian dinner with other members.

Saturday morning dawned warm and sunny, although, depending on the wind direction, we did experience the smell of smoke from the unfortunate wildfires burning at the time in Ontario and Quebec. Eleven boats and twenty eight people were launched and off, with Jennifer’s husband Rob keeping a close eye on his Sea-Doo in case of a breakdown. After a pleasant morning run we stopped to enjoy our lunches at Armstrong Park in North Bay. This stop was perfect with washrooms and plenty of seating. Our afternoon run continued down the opposite shore and back to the launch ramp.

It was while waiting to pull out that we became stuck on a very large rock protruding just below the water. We tried paddling, but this only made us go around the rock in a circle. Leaning to one side and rocking the boat didn’t provide the desired results and eventually we accepted Rob’s offer of a pull to get us free. Fortunately, we had been going at a crawl and only our egos suffered any damage. After pulling out, we all met for a delicious dinner at the Beef n Brand restaurant in North Bay. We unfortunately had to head home, but others stayed for a run on Sunday.

On Sunday, six boats launched again at the east end of Trout Lake. We travelled down the Voyager Route of Samuel de Champlain along the Mattawa River to Turtle Lake. The long, narrow entry into Turtle Lake is riddled with Canadian Shield and large boulders lurking just below the surface. All boats dutifully followed the lead boat single file without incident and the reward was a wonderful trip through miles of unspoiled shoreline.





When we got to Turtle lake we were greeted with absolutely still, glass-like water and the lake all to ourselves. We cut our engines and floated and chatted and took in the scenery. On the way back we saw a few other boats, and on the straight of way beyond the aptly named "Stepping Stones", we went straight down the water ski course of local World Champion waterskier, Jamie Bull. Our timing at the busy launching ramp was very good for both in and out.

Special thanks to Jennifer and Rob for organizing and taking care of us to make it such a special weekend.

Barb Dickson and Jennifer Matthews



Chemong Lake

The Dispro club is certainly about socializing and friendship and it was because of friends that we were able to enjoy the 50th UUMMT on Saturday, July 15th, on Chemong Lake. When the hungry neighbourhood squirrels chewed the wiring harness on our car, John and Mary Storey kindly offered to let us accompany them. Our pleasant drive was interrupted in the village of Oakwood. We are not sure if it was a mirage, but we were certain we saw a lady walking her dog wearing a sweatshirt and shoes and not much else. It may have been the early hour or lack of coffee, but it certainly started some conversations and giggles in the car.

Eight boats and twenty people arrived at Terry and Roberta Philpot's home and museum in a beautifully restored former dance hall on the shores of Chemong Lake, near Peterborough. After some initial greetings, boat preparations and launching, we were off to explore the lake with Terry and Roberta in the lead. Although the skies were slightly overcast the temperature was perfect. We nearly had the lake to ourselves except for a few fishing boats and one high speed boat which created an enormous wake and gave one member her second bath of the day. Several boats needed weed removal stops and we were most thankful for the invention of the handy aquascope.

It began to rain just as we were tying up for lunch. Terry and Roberta provided us with





Photo: Paul Jenner

Terry kindly fired up his tractor to retrieve the boats which made things so much easier.

plenty of tables and chairs for us to enjoy our lunches and everyone enjoyed visiting and catching up on each other's lives. Terry and Roberta are passionate collectors and we enjoyed exploring their collections ranging from various boats, cars, engines etc. all beautifully displayed on the gleaming hardwood floor of the dance hall.

When the rain became heavier and it was obvious we would not be boating in the afternoon, Terry used his tractor to assist us with getting the boats on to their trailers. This was very much appreciated. I am sure our hosts thought we were never going to leave as members were still chatting in the driveway late into the afternoon. Yes, it truly is the socializing and the people connections that make our club, with our little boats the common denominator.

Thank you to the Philpots for hosting a most enjoyable day.

Barb Dickson





An overhead view of some of the treasures in the restored dance hall of the Philpots.

Fuel for Thought

I've owned a 1921 Uncle Sam Dispro for 35 years. When I found the boat in a dilapidated boat house near Fenelon Falls it was basically a wreck. The boat had been sitting on its side under a leaky roof for probably fifty years. There was a lot of rot but the good news was there was enough of it there to make restoration possible. The additional bit of good news was the engine was in pieces all over the floor...and, it turned out, all of the original parts were there!

It took me a year to restore the boat. It's in show condition and in frequent use to this day. Thanks to the late Everett MacFarlane the now 102 year old engine got a new lease on life and Paul Dodginton did a masterful job of restoring the Device.

My goal from day one back in 1988 has been to keep the boat running in exactly the same form as it was running in the summer of 1921. No fiberglass reinforced bottom, no electric conversion, no add-on lights or aquascope, no updated anything! It's called keeping it real! (Though I must admit to several modern parts stashed away behind the scenes on standby!) But, one thing about the boat that's driven me nuts over the years is the fact the engine, while it runs most of the time, is dirty. The bilge has to be cleaned every time I turn around. Mixing pump gas (that may or may not be laced with ethanol) with conventional, black 2 stroke oil is a pain. The side of the boat has to be constantly cleaned given soot build up at the muffler/exhaust port and I'm routinely cleaning soot

continued . . .



off the sparkplug. There's the problem of pump gas going skunky while sitting in the tank week after week and then there's the matter of draining gas at the end of each season.

A year or so ago, I started using "engineered" alkylate gas in all of my portable engines including chain saws, grass trimmer, lawn mower, leaf blower, portable generator, etc. If ever there was a mystery product, this is it! Pump gas that we all use in one form or another is a chemical soup produced with dozens and dozens of ingredients...none of which I'm familiar with and few of which I can even pronounce. Alkylate gas has, to the best of my limited knowledge, only six ingredients. All of the extra stuff in pump gas that only a chemist can comprehend isn't there! The octane rating is 92, the same as premium pump gas. All of the small engines run smoothly, they fire up instantly and the exhaust is virtually clear and odourless. Most importantly this "engineered" gas contains NO ETHANOL!

The product is available under a number of brand names including TruFuel, Aspen, Gulf Pro Fuel, and it's available at outlets such as Home Hardware, Canadian Tire, and Home Depot in one U.S. gallon cans. It's also available at many outdoor/power sport equipment dealers. It comes in straight form for use in four stroke engines plus 50:1 and 40:1 pre mix versions with synthetic oil for use in two stroke air cooled engines. In a sealed can the stuff lasts up to five years. When it's opened and put into a gas tank it's good to go for up to two years. No fuel stabilizer is needed and there are no worries about the product going skunky in several months. The only drawback: it's expensive... in the range of 30 bucks a can. But, if you use only three or four gallons a year all of a sudden the cost is no longer a factor.

It dawned on me there must be a way this stuff can be used with a modern synthetic marine oil in small inboard and outboard engines that get only occasional use.

After several discussions here in Canada I made a phone call to Amsoil headquarters in Superior, Wisconsin. The conversation began with an explanation of what a 102 year old Disappearing Propeller Boat is all about. That, no doubt, had eyes rolling at the other end of the line! Try explaining to the uninitiated a boat equipped with a single cylinder water cooled copper jacket engine that's started by flipping an exposed flywheel. When you start it up, you're going. There's no transmission. The prop can be raised and lowered. Steering is done with a long piece of sash cord that runs around the boat connected to a rudder attached to the stern post! You get the picture. The conversation led me to a product called Amsoil HP two stroke synthetic 50:1 marine oil. It was suggested I use the straight (4 cycle) alkylate fuel and start at the rate of a 32:1 mix with the Amsoil synthetic marine two stroke oil and work my way up depending on performance.

Bottom line: after numerous runs at 32:1 the engine runs cleaner, faster, smoother and cooler than ever. The exhaust is virtually clear and odourless. The ancient Champion X spark plug is clean as a whistle. Could I run at 40:1 or 50:1? Perhaps. I'm happy with it running just as it is.

The engine is old...but based on performance to date it's now running better and cleaner than the day it was new!

Prior Smith



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