

ISSUE 41

THE DEVICE

MAR 2018

DISPRO OWNERS

ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



www.disproboats.ca

Photo: Paul Dodington / Caption: Paul Jenner

As the earth's climate warmed, the mighty glaciers began to recede. Emerging from beneath the heavy cover of ice were wonderful examples of man's ingenuity and inventiveness from the late cast iron age. The objects appear to be mechanical devices of some sort.



President's Letter • March 2018

Recently a friend said to me "you seem to me to quite enjoy your job with the Dippy Club". Later as the idea percolated, my feelings collected as did my perception of what the Dippy club has meant to me before and during this role as president. Quiet but strong, it's the generosity, friendship, and the excitement of it all that counts. Now with the next adventure as past president arriving I know what drew me in when the opportunity unexpectedly landed in my lap at an UUMMT meeting 2 years ago. That adventure has been a surprising walk down a path made by comfortable, caring shoes worn by many of you who are still there in the forest, always ready to reappear with your help and your encouragement to us, your followers.

As I move along this path, I will promise to continue to support your legacy of those three attributes and others that I encountered and acknowledged above. So many stories, so many characters and so many good deeds contribute to this legacy.

To all of you, I say let's make this one more rip-snorting year of celebration. Enjoy one another, your boats, the trips, our meetings and also let us be thankful for the amazing richness we have of members who know so much, who generate elegant and workable ideas (like the Device) and who keep us moving gently and with assurance along that path that found my feet.

Helen Byrne

P.S. Barb Dickson, DOA Membership Secretary has asked me to pass on the following information:

The second renewal letters have been sent out to members who have not yet renewed their membership for 2018. This will be on bright pink paper. If you have not already done so, please send in your remittance to Barb as soon as possible, to ensure you don't miss any Dispro information or events. Thank you.

~~~~~ Dippy Vignettes ~~~~~

Dispro Dementia, or You Can Get Here from There but You're Crazy to Try

It wasn't too difficult to find a Dispro in 1972. Lack of employment gave me plenty of time to scan the classified ads in the Toronto Star. I'd planned to become a retired millionaire before I turned 30, but had been only half successful. Unfortunately, it didn't mean I'd earned half a million dollars.

The ad said, "20 foot Dispro boat. Coventry 6 hp engine. A-1 condition". So far, so good. The owner, a trusting soul, gave directions to his cottage and offered to let me try the boat in his absence.

Dispros were something of a mystery. When I was young, my father had described a strange type of motor boat with a retractable propeller, and I'd often wondered how such a thing might work. None appeared to exist around Lake Simcoe by then.

I'd never seen one until my first visit to Clayton in 1970. The Marsdens had two Dispros

there. Only one of them seemed to run, a quirk of which I failed to take proper notice at the time. All I could see was what an ideal vessel they seemed to be in all respects except perhaps speed. Graceful lines, seaworthiness, practicality and mechanical eccentricity; what more could one ask?

I made a deal with the trusting owner of the DP advertised in the Star, but I was stuck for a way to get it from Bobcaygeon to Lake Simcoe. Not knowing any better, I concluded the logical way was by water. With blissful ignorance, Heather and I showed up at Pigeon Lake on a Saturday morning armed with food, camping equipment and charts covering 70 nautical miles we planned to cover by Sunday night. Considering that conditions in the engine room of our new prize were anything but A-1 this was ambitious.

We waved good-bye to the former owner, and to my mother and aunt who had driven us there, headed for the lock at Bobcaygeon and promptly hit bottom. No problem; haul up and away we go. It was starting to seem like fun.

Nothing happens quickly at five knots, especially a trip of 70 miles. Even five knots was stretching it; sounds of a cat fight erupted from under the centre deck and inside the device at any more quarter throttle. Greavette's scandalous claim of 14 mph was clearly out of reach. Our boat was one of the few (four?) which had obviously been made by someone with five minutes to spare and only an axe at hand. Alignment between various components was non-existent, and the splined coupling and universal joint were worn out.

The trip was a marvellous education. We learned all about the effects of sunlight on exposed skin, airlocks in the gas line, cruiser wakes in narrow canals, oil on the floorboards and bilge water picked up by the flywheel. We discovered that every lockmaster on the Trent-Severn waterway between Bobcaygeon and Gamebridge used to own a Dispro, or at least had fond memories of them – usually because they were dimmed by time.

We discovered that when the oil pressure gauge starts reading zero, Canal Lake is at least 110 mile long. After refilling the sump, we watched in horror as the gauge plunged from 20 psi to zero before our eyes. Oil was being pumped out on to the flywheel as quickly as I could pour it in. Its effect against the hot exhaust pipe can be imagined. Unable to locate the leak, let alone repair it, we repeated two or three quarts worth of this exercise. Sunday was a long day.

With the bilges and engine compartments glistening in oil, our squalid little tanker oozed out of the last lock and on to Lake Simcoe late on Sunday evening. Making Snake Island that day was clearly out of the question. We half motored, half paddled into Beaverton Harbour and secured the boat as best we could. Through the dark we ran to catch the southbound bus – Heather to Toronto since she had to work the next day, me to the cottage to regroup for the final leg.

Monday morning I bused back to Beaverton and, with the aid of a charming old gentleman who lived next to the public dock, had the broken oil line repaired. The flare had cracked where it connected to the pump. Already starting to feel like a veteran, I found the last 15 miles in open water a piece of cake, slimy bilges notwithstanding. Our Dispro reached her new home on Snake Island, where she has puzzled other cottagers ever since.

We still haven't settled on a final name for our boat, since this is a weighty decision that takes time. However, a name for her is listed in the club roster. Pichou is a pet anteater in a French children's story book, and seemed appropriate for a Dispro. Both are eccentric, brown beasts, pointed at both ends.

John Cooper

Note: This article first appeared in the Dispro Owners Association Cookbook which was published a number of years ago.

Upcoming Events in 2018

Just a reminder to members that UUMMT's are unorganized and unauthorized and as such the DOA leadership is not in any way responsible for any misadventure that might accidentally occur during any such event. These "mini tours" are fun and we look forward to them each year, but please exercise caution and be safe.

Sun. Apr. 29 – AGM at Muskoka Discovery Centre, Gravenhurst

11 am Enjoy lunch with fellow members and get caught up with all the news! The registration form is included with this mailing so please, don't forget to **return registration form to Mary Storey by Friday April 20.**

Sat. June 16 – UUMMT 39 – French River

10 am We will be departing from Dokis Marina at 10 am. The marina is on the French River. We will be traveling toward the western end of Lake Nipissing. There are a few places to stay overnight the day before for those with a long drive to get there. I would suggest using Google to locate the nearby accommodations. Dokis marina is about 2 hours north of Parry Sound at 1053 Main Street, Dokis First Nation (705) 763-2491

Sat. July 7 – ACBS Summer Boat Show – Muskoka Wharf, Gravenhurst

Sat. July 28 – UUMMT 40 – Kawagama Lake

10 am We will be leaving from Mountain Trout House Marina at 10 am. Mountain Trout House Marina is about 20 minutes from Dorset.
1508 Russell Landing Rd, Dorset, ON P0A 1E0 (705) 766-2292

Sat. Aug. 11 – UUMMT 41 – Point Au Baril, Georgian Bay

10 am This will be the Ron Hill Memorial UUMMT. Point au Baril was one of Ron Hills favorite places. We will be leaving from Beacon Marina at 10 am. Beacon Marina is about 30 minutes north of Parry sound. Launching ramp and parking fees will be payable to the marina.
60 South Shore Rd, Pointe au Baril, ON P0G 1K0 (705) 366-2394

Sept. 14-16 – DOA Annual Regatta – Patterson Kaye Lodge, Lake Muskoka

Please note that this is one week later than the usual time for our annual regatta. More information will be forthcoming as details become available. One thing we do know is this is an **Auction Year** so please start by gathering all those treasures you've been hoarding for years but can now finally bear to part with. This fun event is always a highlight of the regatta.

October The **Fall Workshop** will also be part of this year's activities. More information will be available in a future issue. The date, time and location are yet to finalised.

IT'S
AUCTION
YEAR

From January 1920

The two articles below and the two ads on the following pages appeared together in the January 1920 issue of Canadian Motor Boat and Motor Ship. They offer an interesting insight into the history of the Disappearing Propeller Boat Co. and its suppliers at that time.

DISAPPEARING PROPELLER BOAT COMPANY'S TORONTO QUARTERS

The Disappearing Propeller Boat Co. of Port Carling, Ont., has opened general sales and executive offices at 92 King Street West, Toronto. This company has made remarkable progress and are building 1,000 disappearing propeller boats for 1920 season. They report having booked a large number of orders thus far, and their boats will all be equipped with single or double cylinder Dis-Pro marine motors.

A complete line of disappearing propeller boats and equipment, including the popular Uncle Sam, John Bull and Water Ford models, will be continuously exhibited at the new showrooms at 93 King Street West, Toronto. The company has increased its capital stock to \$300,000, and recently completed the erection of a large addition to their manufacturing plant at Port Carling, Ont.

A. D. FISHER MFG. CO. TAKES LARGER FACTORY

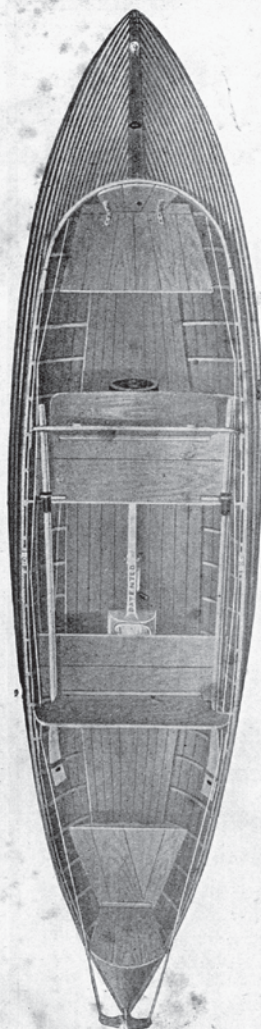
The A. D. Fisher Mfg. Company, builders of the 2-cycle line of marine motors, have removed their factory and extensive manufacturing equipment from the building at 43 Brittain Street which they have occupied for the past eight years, to larger and more desirable premises on the ground and first floors of the manufacturing building at 77 Front Street East. Extensive improvements are being made in the building and the manufacturing of Kingfisher engines, in addition to electric motors for various commercial and lighting purposes, will be conducted on a large scale.

Mr. A. D. Fisher, president and general manager of the company, is preparing for big business in 1920. The Kingfisher marine motor will be marketed by this company throughout Canada and abroad.

Paul Dodington, DOA Historian comments:

This documentation is of interest for several reasons. It indicates that the Port Carling operation has recently (1919) undergone a major expansion and that they intend to build 1,000 boats in the coming season (1920)! Also, they've just opened the new showroom and offices at 92 King Street West in Toronto and they are for the first time producing their own engines, called "Silent DisPro". The "silent" prefix came about due to complaints that the old Waterman and Kingfisher mufflers did little to reduce the exhaust noise, but now the engines were to be fitted with the new Maxim Silencer. This is similar to what Jet-Ski manufacturers have had to do to make their products more acceptable in recent years.

The Kingfisher ads are interesting too. They are increasing their production capacity, strangely, at a time when the D. P. Boat Co. stopped buying their engines and started making their own. Actually, the D. P. Boat Co. were having their engines built by a rival concern, Harry Knight Metal Products on Adelaide Street under contract.



"UNCLE SAM" MODEL

Alternate strip-decking. Built-on splash boards.
With Silent Dis.-Pro. 9 miles per hour
Single Cylinder
With Silent Dis.-Pro. 12 miles per hour
Two Cylinder

Length Beam Depth
18½ ft. 4 ft. 10 in. 2 ft. 1 in.

\$400 Single cyl. \$550 Two cyl.

3 Models only

Water-Ford - \$300

John Bull - - \$350

Uncle Sam - \$400

Standard Equipment

WE WISH TO ANNOUNCE the opening of our new Office and Showrooms at

92 KING ST. WEST, TORONTO, ONT., CANADA

Where a complete line of **Disappearing Propeller Boats** will be on display.

Our **Standard Equipment** for 1920 will include "The Silent Dis.-Pro." 3 H.P. Single Cylinder, High-Speed Marine Motor, also **The Famous Maxim Silencer**.

Special Equipment for John Bull and Uncle Sam Models **The Silent Dis.-Pro. Two Cylinder 6 H.P. High-Speed Marine Motor**.

These Motors are products of and guaranteed by the **DISAPPEARING PROPELLER BOAT COMPANY, Limited**.

Patented in Canada, Newfoundland, U.S.A. and all principal foreign countries.



The Greatest Little Motor Boats Afloat

Run over all obstructions with automatic propeller protection

Write for fully descriptive literature showing Boats and Engines in actual colors.

The DISAPPEARING PROPELLER BOAT COMPANY, LIMITED

HEAD OFFICE & SHOW ROOMS—

92 KING ST. W., TORONTO, CANADA

FACTORY—PORT CARLING, MUSKOKA LAKES, CANADA.

"KINGFISHER"

2½ H.P. ENGINE

WEIGHT 38 LBS.

YOU KNOW THE NAME—

YOU KNOW THE FAME—

Then don't accept a Substitute.

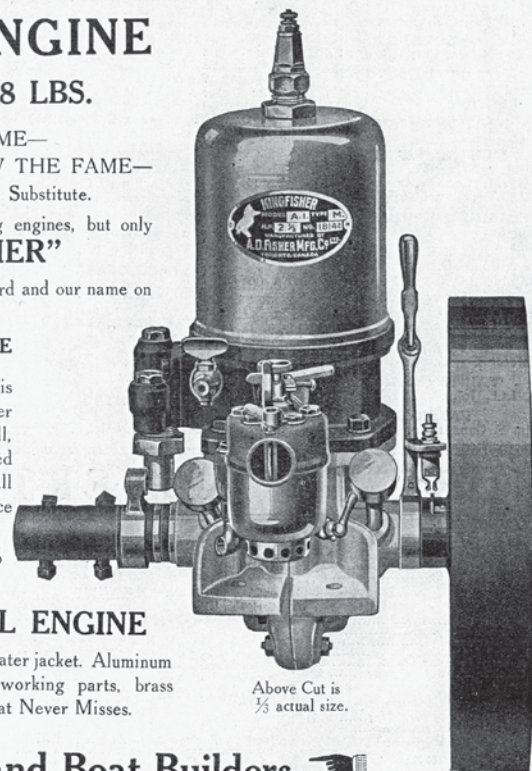
There are similar appearing engines, but only one real **"KINGFISHER"**

Look for the Kingfisher Bird and our name on the name-plate—

NONE OTHER GENUINE

The **"Kingfisher"** Engine is the last word in Marine Power endeavor, light in weight, small, compact and powerful, designed to operate all kind of small craft, where power plant space is precious and weight counts.

Ample power and low cost to operate.



Above Cut is ½ actual size.

A BEAUTIFUL ENGINE

with polished drawn copper water jacket. Aluminum base, and phosphor bronze working parts, brass trimmings, and a **TIMER** that Never Misses.

Agents and Boat Builders

Now is the time to write for further particulars and prices, if you delay we may not be able to fill your orders.

Manufactured and Guaranteed by

A. D. FISHER MFG. COMPANY

77 EAST FRONT STREET, TORONTO, CANADA

When writing to advertisers please mention CANADIAN MOTOR BOAT

Necessity Is The Mother of Invention

The old English proverb tells us necessity is the mother of invention. In other words the driving force behind the creation of anything is a need.

And so it is with cork carburetor floats for old engines. A little background.

30 years ago I placed a small three line ad in what was then called the Peterborough Shoppers Market. It was one of those small weekly publications that everybody in the Kawartha Lakes region would scan from front to back. I was looking for another Lakefield or Peterborough cedar strip to restore over the winter. I had room for one more word in the ad so I added the word Dispro figuring no one out there would have a clue what a Disappearing Propeller Boat was all about. A few days later a phone call came in from a guard at the Millbrook Penitentiary. He was calling on his lunch hour. He was browsing through the Shoppers Market and wanted to know if I was interested in a Dispro. I almost fell off my chair.

To make a long story short it was a 1921 Uncle Sam model that had been in his family for years. It had been sitting on its side in a leaky boat house near Fenelon Falls for decades. And, it was a mess. There was dry rot throughout. But, almost all of it was there including the engine that was in pieces scattered all over the floor. I gathered up everything I could find and brought it home.

One year later I had the hull looking like the day it was new. Thanks to an engine cleanup and overhaul by the late Everett MacFarlane, a little guidance from John Thomson and maintenance assistance and Device restoration by Paul Dodington it's still running like a charm....30 years later.

Up to several years ago it ran with all of the original engine parts. But then one day while I was putt-putt-putting down the middle of Clear Lake gas started flowing all over the place. When I took the carburetor apart in the middle of the lake I found the cork float in a thousand microscopic granules. The gas I was using at the time...gas laden with ethanol... had eaten/dissolved the cork! Nothing was floating in the carburetor anymore.

Over the next couple of years I tried using floats made out of synthetic material that was being used in Dispro circles but I never found them to be satisfactory. Then suddenly a brainwave hit me. If cork used with regular gas had worked for decades why not use cork again given the fact I was now no longer in the same area code with gas containing ethanol. I, like everybody else these days, had switched to supreme grade gas that contains no ethanol. Question: Where can you get your hands on real cork. Not the agglomerated stuff you see in some wine bottle stoppers, but real cork. A neighbour on the lake who lives in Oakville provided the answer: Jelinek Cork Group in Oakville. It turns out they know something about cork. This family run multinational company has been in the cork business in every way imaginable since the mid 1800's!

I placed a call and all but apologized for a request that was a little out of left field. The voice at the other end of the line assured me the request was not unusual...in fact, she had just finished dealing with the owner of an ancient Cadillac who was doing exactly the same thing. I was invited to go on to the company's web site and have a look at their line of rounded and tapered "bottle stoppers". "That's exactly what you need", she said. "All you have to do is cut and shape". Okay, now what?



The finished float for the Kingston Four Ball and the raw material from which it was manufactured.

I went to Jelinek's headquarters and they proceeded to bring out bags of "bottle stoppers" in sizes that might fit my Kingston Four Ball carburetor bowl. The sizes increase in 1/16th increments. I sat there and sorted through hundreds of them in an effort to find pieces that had no imperfections. They couldn't have been more helpful. Natural cork has small fissures and cracks. That's the way the material is when it's peeled off the trees and when it's used in any one of thousands of applications. I was looking for pieces that were flawless. I found them. They cost just a few cents apiece.

Making a carburetor float out of a bottle stopper is time consuming but relatively easy. To make a float for use in a Kingston Four Ball carburetor, for example, run the top of the stopper through a table saw to get the desired depth. Then, using a 1 ¼ inch wood hole cutter position the cork on a drill press in a way that puts the hole just fractionally off centre so the cork that remains where the float arm is to be attached is as big as it can be without rubbing against any portion of the inside of the carburetor bowl. Very little cork is left on both sides of the hole that's drilled to attach the metal arm so you have to be very careful. Using a fine hack saw blade and fine wood files/rasps the float is notched and shaped and a countersinking drill cuts the hole into which the float arm is attached. Then, there's a whole lotta sanding to make sure the configuration is perfect.

Continued . . .

After all, if the cork rubs against any portion of the interior of the carburetor bowl the float won't do what it's supposed to do...float...and control the flow of the gas/oil mix going into the engine.

Back in the day cork floats were coated in shellac. Why, I don't know but I did it thinking it was the right thing to do. I applied two coats and found that the shellac that remained on the surface all but disappeared within a few days of running. Additional coats have been applied as needed. The floats I've produced, and I've made about two dozen of them, have been used for the past two boating seasons and they've worked perfectly. As the saying goes....necessity is the mother of invention!

If you find yourself in need of a carburetor float for your old engine you might consider a similar approach.

Prior Smith



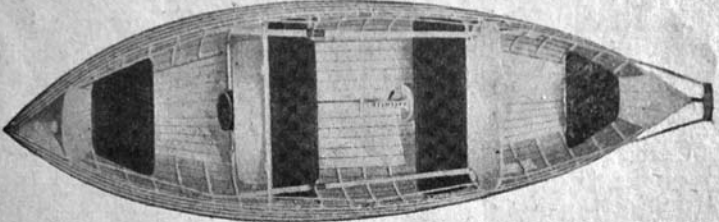
Photos: Prior Smith

The spotless and gleaming engine compartment in Prior Smith's Dispro.

What Does Sanity Have To Do With It?

A SAFE, SANE FAMILY MOTOR BOAT

One that is so simple to operate that a child can handle it without danger or difficulty. Will go anywhere with absolute propeller protection. The



DISAPPEARING PROPELLER BOAT

is equipped with the specially constructed silent "Dis-Pro" engine, which cannot be heard at a distance of 40 yards. 25 miles per gallon of gasoline and nine miles per hour. The propeller is protected with a skeg, which automatically raises propeller into propeller housing if it touches any obstruction, such as logs, driftwood, rocks, sandbar, etc., at the same time throttling engine from racing.

YOU WILL BE DELIGHTED WITH THIS BOAT

Ask to See the John Bull Model.

Disappearing Propeller Boats are used by thousands of Canadians and seven Government departments.

Send for handsomely illustrated catalogue, showing boats and engine in natural colors.

The Disappearing Propeller Boat Co., Limited

The Largest Makers of Motor Boats in Canada.

92 King St. West U.S.A. Offices—259 Willis Ave., Detroit. Toronto

All Boats are manufactured at Port Carling, Muskoka, and thoroughly tested on the Muskoka Lakes.

Image: Gary Campaigne

The above ad describes the Dispro as a "Safe, **Sane** Family Motor Boat"

Yes, of course, we all love our Dispros and why not. They are unique, quirky and very appealing little motor boats – when they are running!

But . . . when it slowly splutters to a stop mid lake and you can smell gas and notice that your float is stuck and fuel is dripping from the carburetor, or, all of a sudden you can smell something hot and notice that your copper jacket is glowing purple and realize your water pump has sent one of its balls into the bilge because you forgot to tighten the cap nut, or, you notice that the engine is working very hard but you seem to be standing still and then discover a mixed salad of greens wrapped around your propeller that you have to stop, take out the seats and reach down into your device to remove.

I'm sure most of us, at one time or another, have questioned our sanity at owning such a craft. I'm sure we've all experienced mishaps like these or indeed any of the many other things that a Dispro will send our way to test our resolve.

But a Dispro will teach you many things. Patience, resourcefulness, understanding, how to stay calm in the face of adversity, how to swear in more ways, how to not look downhearted when being towed, there is safety in numbers, and countless other benefits.

And through it all, we still find ourselves very attached to our Dispros and sanity has nothing to do with it!

Paul Jenner

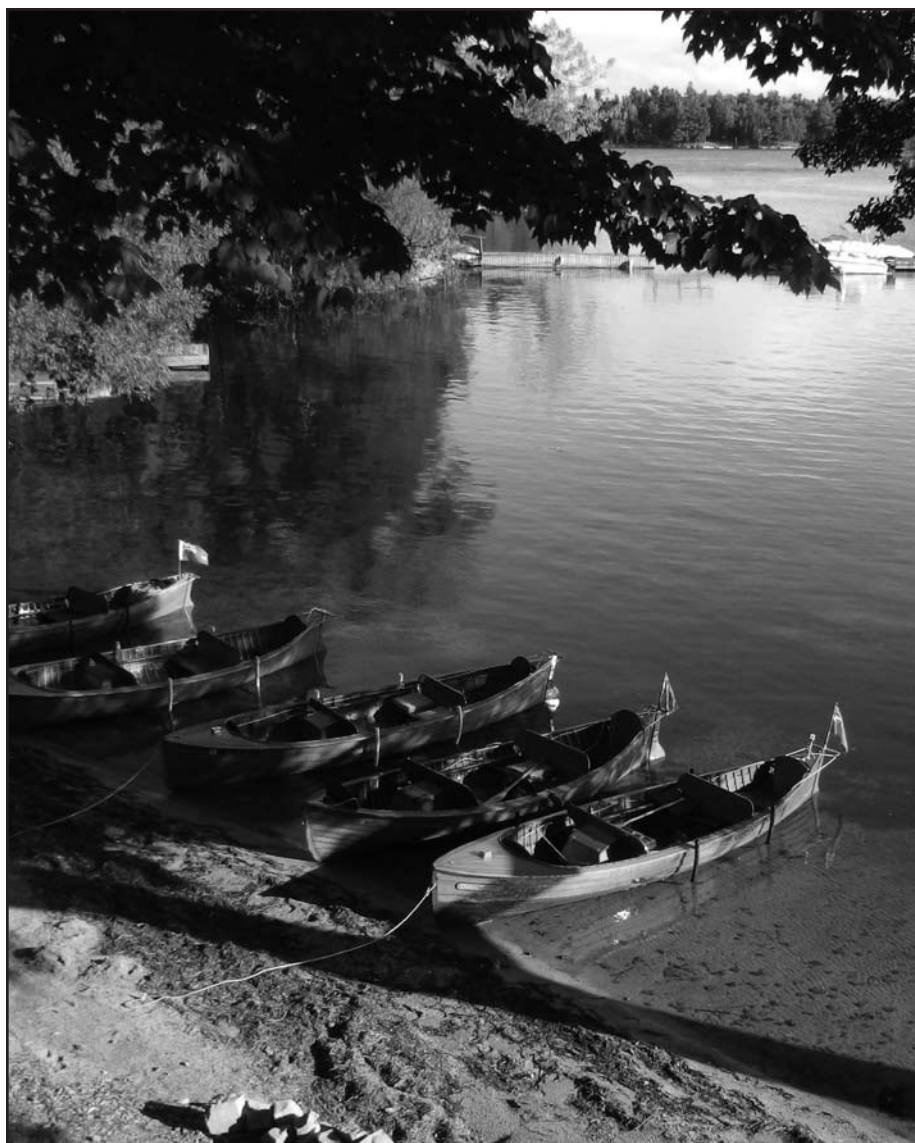


Photo: Paul Jenner

Dispros basking in the late afternoon sun on the beach at Glen House, 2017 regatta.



EPIFANES 

Gordon Laco

Epifanes North America Inc.

411 Hannah Street

Midland, Ontario

Canada L4R 2G4

mainstay@csolve.net

PH/FAX 705.528.1629 CELL 705.937.0694

www.epifanes.com



The Device is published 4 times a year in March, June, August and October. Deadlines for the submission of articles and photos is 2 weeks prior to the first day of the publication months.

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