

ISSUE 55

THE DEVICE

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DISPRO OWNERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

www.disproboats.ca



Photo: Tom Wood

Tom Wood's electrically driven Gladys looks just like a regular gasoline powered Dispro.



President's Letter • November 2021

Well the boating season seems to have come and gone very quickly this year. We are not sure if you feel the same, but the older we get the faster they seem to fly by.

We were happy to be able to attend the one UUMMT that we were able to have this summer. The weather cooperated and it was wonderful to meet friends again in person and to see so many of our little boats bobbing across the waters of Lake Muskoka. You can read all about it in the report that follows. Thank you to Past Presidents, Karen Boyer and Kerry Harmon for planning a well organized and fun day on the water.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the executive for their many contributions to keep our club vibrant. We also have non elected members who contribute to the smooth running of the club. In particular, we would like to recognize and thank Helen Byrne who so efficiently does the regular club mailings along with individual mailings to each new member. This is a vital and time consuming undertaking to keep members informed. Thanks Helen for your dedication.

We also would like to thank Bob and Sheila Burke for their hours of hard work securing the universal joints for the club members who have requested them. This adventure has taken many twists and turns with a few road blocks thrown in along the way. It now looks like clear sailing and they will have more details about this project in this Device.

As Covid numbers continue to decline and vaccinations continue to increase, we are looking forward to a more normal schedule of events next year including UUMMTs. The executive are pleased to let you know that we will be having our Regatta next year at Grand Tappattoo Resort, near Parry Sound, the weekend of September 16 -18, 2022. We expect that there will be much excitement and a pent up demand for rooms, so book early when registration forms come out in the spring. It is also auction year, so start thinking of items you can contribute to make the auction fun and successful.

Tuck your Dippy in bed, say a prayer that it will start in the spring and we look forward to seeing you on the water next year.

Keep safe. **Robert and Ian**

Dippy Humour

From "The Greatest Little Cookbook: A Boatload of Recipes"

Q. What was the condition of your Dippy when you acquired it?

A. A basket case. **Dennis Howchin**

Q. Are you going to keep your Dispro?

A. Is there death and taxes? **Jeff & Linda Reid**

The boat was in a storm and continually banged the bow into the dock. This broke the stem post. A Coca-Cola metal sign was bent around the bow, nailed and roofing tar for a sealer made the boat seaworthy. **Ray Roedding**

Q. How did your Dippy get its name "Heaven Knows"?

A. When the boat was acquired, I was routinely asked as to whether it would start up on desire, I would reply, "Heaven Knows!" – hence the name. **Jim Domm**



Ebb & Flow

Social Events, Milestones and News About DOA Members

The Dippy family, ACBS and the entire antique and classic boating world lost an unforgettable and valued member with the passing of Dr. Robert J. Johnson on July 1 of this year. Bob was also affectionately known as “Big Bob”, “The Tipster” or “Tippy”. The “Big Bob” came from Bob’s rotund physique, you couldn’t miss him. The term also describes Bob’s personality; it was big, engaging, and always pleasant. The term “Tipster” or “Tippy” came from the ongoing articles on boating and restoration tips that Bob wrote for several years in Chris Craft Club’s “Brass Bell”. Bob owned a Dippy for over 25 years. As a practising physician, Bob was always the “go to guy” when anyone needed medical assistance at a boat show. Bob served on the ACBS board of directors in the early 1990’s. “The Tipster” participated in more than 20 St. John’s river cruises and on many occasions trailered his boat, with his long term and devoted partner, Beth Kessler, all the way from Minnesota. May Bob rest in peace and have unlimited heavenly boat cruises.

Leslie W. Rue, President 2007-2008

We have learned that Ross Birch passed away early in the summer. Ross was the owner of Birch Marine, RV and Auto Supply in Port Severn. We send our condolences to Judy and to his family. His Dispro remains in the family as his granddaughter Charity, a new club member, has taken ownership of *Birch Barque*.

Submitted by Barb Dickson

2022 UUMMTs

Mark your calendars and think positive that we can safely gather for a summer of fun events, exploring our fabulous waterways. Details about each event in the spring issue of *The Device* or contact Karen Boyer – krboyer@vianet.ca 705 645 9513

UUMMT 46 – Saturday June 18 – Lake of Bays

Launch at Norway Point. Cruise to Dwight Beach for lunch. Explore the west shore on return.

UUMMT 47 – Monday July 18 – Six Mile Lake

Launch at Six Mile Lake Provincial Park. Cruise a circle route, returning to the Park for lunch. Explore a different route in the afternoon.

UUMMT 48 – Monday August 15 – Still working on details. Any suggestions?

Yes, you read correctly, UUMMTs on a weekday. Members strongly agreed in the survey returns that this is a good idea. The Park Rangers suggested avoiding weekends so we could have sufficient parking and dock space.

*For latest news and updates
please regularly visit
our website at*

www.disproboats.ca



Significant Contributors

Dr. Jim Smith

In our continuing series of Significant Contributors to our club, Jim Smith must be honoured. Along with Joe Fossey, he was definitely a 'founding father of our club'. The article below was originally written by his good friend, the late, Patrick Wren and appeared in the Yarns Book published three years ago.

For many of us Jim Smith was not only one of the founding members of the Dispro Owners Association but an intricate part of the very foundation of the club. If one owned or even showed an interest in a Dippy, an outboard motor or a Studebaker, among other passions, Jim was always happy to lend an ear and share in conversation on the subject.

Jim's love of water began in in the 1920s when he first began going to his beloved Floral Park summer residence on Lake Couchining. A lifelong love for fast outboard motors and quick planning runabouts soon developed. Jim was hooked. His love of speed and things mechanical was not limited to watercraft. Many a fine summer day would find Jim aloft soaring through the clear blue sky, above the confines of the earth in a small plane - solo, with a friend or an in instructor. Trips to Washago, Orillia or Muskoka Airport would be made behind the wheel of one of his beloved Studebakers or his 1938 DaSoto.

Not satisfied with only using, resorting or tinkering with outboard, boats and cars, Jim would spend many an hour researching and writing about his current restoration or interest. He then shared that hard earned and new-found knowledge through his writing in *The Antique Outboarder* magazine, with his fellow authors in *The Greatest Little Motorboat Afloat* book, for the Canadian Aviation Historical Society for members of the Studebaker Drivers Club or for his own family.

Jim always tackled a job in a very mechanical and determined way. The result was always a pleasure to behold. From Dippies to outboards, from Studebakers to Peterborough sailboats, Jim took pride in his work and always shared it with family friends and strangers alike. Much laughter was often part of the stories that followed. Many of us fondly remember Jim and Melba enjoying the Port Carling Dippy – Jim at the helm and Melba seated astern. A wonderful couple in a wonderful boat! Like any challenge that had come before, Jim tackled his fight with cancer in the same methodical and determined manner. Unfortunately, this was one obstacle that Jim could not overcome. After spending 82 incredible years here with us, Jim succumbed to his cancer on May 8th, 2000.

One could write many pages on Jim's accomplishments and contributions – his skills as a fine dentist, as a mechanic or as a writer. Yet, his greatest accomplishment was in who he was as a person. Jim shared his love of life with Melba, son Murray, daughter Anne, forty-four foster children and all that he met. He was borne of an age when gentlemen were a class in their own right. He was a person of great faith, Faith in God and his fellow man. His faith went beyond words – it was the very fabric of his life and he lived and shared it so freely. We, my friends were the recipients of that gift. A gift to reassure and a gift to share with those we encounter on the journey. For in having what Jim gave us, we do him honour.

Patrick Wren

The Little Universal Joint That Almost Wasn't

A few years ago the Dippy Doctor went searching for a new distributor of a Universal Joint that would be compatible with the one we currently have on our Disappearing Propeller Boats. You see...the reliable little company in Nova Scotia where we use to purchase this item has now closed.

After much research...Paul was in contact with Curtis Universal Joint Company in Massachusetts, U.S.A. The only company he could find that sold what was close to what we needed. He had a few conversations with them and sent diagrams.

Due to Covid no more progress was made, until this spring when a few members decided we needed to secure an outlet to purchase the Universal Joint. Ian Dickson and Bob Burk chatted about it and Bob proceeded with the project.

Bob contacted Curtis Universal – Company #1 and spoke with a rep who knew immediately what Bob was talking about. She even asked if it was to do with Dippies and if Bob knew Paul Doddington. She had not forgotten those enlightening conversations. She had the drawings quick at hand.

The company sold a standard universal joint that they could have drilled, bored and tapped to our specifications and then shipped to our Canadian distributor – Company #2. Note the phrase is – could have. You see Company #1 has now been sold to another U.S. company – Company #3. Company #1 would now have to ship the basic unit to Company #3 who would drill, bore and tap each unit to our specs and then ship to Company #2 in Canada.

OK sounds logical. Bob submitted updated drawings to the Canadian distributor – Company #2 who forwarded them to Company #3 for a written quote.

At the beginning when hoping to deal directly with Company #1 – Curtis Universal, we were expecting a price of \$ 165.00 U.S. per unit. Wait for it....the quote from Company #3 came back at \$ 450.00 U.S. per unit reworked to our specs.

Needless to say we were SHOCKED. Now what do we do?!? How do we break that news to the members. Thinking caps on!!!

Bob still has a few connections from the old days so we called a friend from the past. He gave us the name of a great machine shop in Barrie so we called them. Lets call them company #4. We asked for a quote just to drill, bore and tap the universal joints if we supplied them. His price was excellent.

So Bob has now placed an order for the basic – CJ648B Universal Joints thru company #2 – Canadian Bearings in Barrie who still have to get them from Company #3 in the States and once they arrive we will take them to Company #4 in Barrie to be finished.

Delivery of the basic U.J. has been confirmed for early December. Once they are reworked those who have purchased one or two will be contacted. Fingers crossed early January. We feel we will meet our projected cost.

The Universal Joint adventure has truly been an adventure. To all who have purchased a new Universal Joint(s) thank you for your patience. I will refund any excess money from each purchase upon delivery.

Any questions or concerns please feel free to contact us at 705-835-6489.

Merry Christmas. **Sheila & Bob**

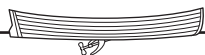




Lake Muskoka • August 14, 2021

They came from far and wide – well at least from Callander in the north and Niagara-on-the-Lake in the south. Sixteen in all heeded the call to “Let’s get boats in the water” for the first in-person DOA gathering since Regatta 2019. Greetings and chatter were non-stop at the George Road launch area before heading south along the Lake Muskoka shoreline through Alport Bay and onto Stephens Bay. The open water crossing to the south end of Browning Island was a bit choppy but we soon were in protected water and cruised along the shore admiring classic cottage architecture.

Johnston’s Park on Eileen Gowan Island was the lunch destination and the lineup of boats along the shore was not only an impressive sight but representative of the



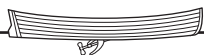


Photos: Tim Du Vernet

uniqueness of each vessel. Even more camaraderie continued through the extended landing. Then it was off to explore the set of islands on the west side of Gowan as we navigated back to the launch.

It was a successful outing for all and a great re introduction to UUMMTs!

Karen Boyer



Dippy Love

It can happen any time. In my case, it was 1948 or 1949. I was 11 or 12 years old. Our neighbor and friend, Cecil Fraser, had his Dippy tied at his dock at the Narrows in Port Carling. It was for sale for \$75. I wanted it. Nothing was going to deter me.

We were from Niagara Falls, New York. My parents had visited Muskoka before they were married and fell in love with it. Early in their marriage, they bought some land on the River and finished building our cottage in 1946. My mother, sister and I, always with a friend or two, spent summers in Port Carling from then on. The Dippy would be my first boat.

I announced to my mother that I was going to buy it. When she asked how I was going to do that, I said I would earn the money caddying at Muskoka Lakes Golf and Country Club, where my father played golf now and then. She encouraged me to go for it!

It wasn't as easy as I imagined. I presented myself early one morning at the caddy shop to the then Pro, Stu Christie, and announced that I was there to caddy. He laughed. He said girls didn't caddy. I persisted, pointing out that I was bigger and probably stronger than the young First Nations boys who at that time were the only caddies. I left that day, disappointed but still determined, and continued to march myself out to the course early each morning, insisting that I should be allowed to caddy. It was nearly a 3-mile walk each way.

Finally, one day Stu said I could shag balls for him when he gave lessons. I was thrilled. I was stationed under a big tree probably 100 – 150 yards out from the caddy shack on the 18th fairway. I loved it! But I kept insisting that I also wanted to caddy and told him I was trying to earn the money to buy the Dippy.

My big break came one day when Stu said I could caddy for him! There were no carts, of course, and only men could play at the Club. Caddies typically carried two heavy leather bags of men's clubs on their shoulders for 18 holes. I did it! And in addition to earning tips, I began to learn the game of golf, which to this day remains a passion.

Stu lived about three houses in from the highway in Port Carling on the Golf Course Road. As time went on, I would meet him at his home early each morning and ride out to the golf course with him to go to work!

By the end of that first summer, I had earned the \$75 I needed to buy my Dippy! It had been used, it seems, as a work boat of sorts; its floor boards were greasy and it generally was kind of beat up. It looked like a big rowboat and it had been painted gray.* My friends and I would regularly take the floor boards out, do our best to clean them, and put them back in! Its rudder eventually fell off and we would steer it with our feet while sitting on the back. It had a steering wheel on the side but of course, with no rudder, it didn't do much! The one cylinder motor was always breaking down – and we'd paddle it up to Duke's Boat Works, where they would tinker with it and get it going again. We did this for two or three summers. During the endless hours we waited at Duke's for the motor to be fixed, my friend Joan Braas and I carved our initials deep into one of their work benches. Sixty years or so later, Joan and I visited the old work space at Dukes, recalling the many hours we'd spent there, and lo and behold, our initials were still there!

Eventually, the dippy motor just couldn't be fixed any more, and the leaks were too pervasive to keep it afloat. I sold the motor for scrap iron and we let it sink in front of our cottage, where, for many, many years, its outline and pieces of it were visible. One day, it was no more.



The story doesn't end there. In 2013, 60+ years later, I was married in Muskoka. We received as a wedding gift an art object made of a brass dippy wheel sitting on a hand-carved rope base and covered with a glass top. You guessed it! It was the wheel from my old Dippy, dug out from the mud in front of my cottage more than 50 years after she had been sunk! Our good friend, Kenn Pray, had routed around in the mud one spring and found it. He cleaned it up, made the base (he's a great wood carver), and gave me back a piece of my childhood in an unimaginably beautiful way! It is pictured here, where I recently stood on my dock next to the area in which my Dippy had been sunk and her wheel eventually found and restored. She lives on!

And there is yet another piece to the story. In 2013, shortly after our wedding, I met Stu Christie's daughter – who was about my age and remembered me coming to their house to ride to the golf course with her dad on those early summer mornings to go to work to earn the money for my Dippy.

Dippy Love! It can happen to anyone – no matter what age!

Note: Stewart (Stu) Christie was the Golf Pro at Muskoka Lakes Golf and Country Club from 1946 until his untimely death in 1953. I caddied for him for several summers after that first year. I will always be grateful to him for making it possible for me to purchase my Dippy and for introducing me to golf.

Karen J Connell, October 2021

**Thanks to some sleuthing by Eric Luks, it appears likely that my Dippy was a Johnson John Bull Model built between 1918 and 1925.*



Gladys Updated

In the last issue I set out some thoughts on electric conversions for Dippys in general and my 1947 Greavette Gladys, in particular. Inspired by Kerry Harmon's collection of data and projections I began an electrification project in December 2020. When I wrote the previous article, Gladys was in Mike Windsor's shop. Since then she has accumulated 85 hours of running time.

Thanks to an early spring she was launched on April 17, 2021. I had loaded her with oars, a paddle, a pump and bailer, and a large fire extinguisher, in an attempt to be ready for as many potential disasters as possible. To my surprise and delight not one of the emergency items was needed. I just advanced the spark lever and off she went. It was very dull and very reassuring.

Of course, being a Dippy, Gladys wasn't going to let us off completely. A half hour into the trial, smoke started seeping from the engine compartment. Fearing the worst, I shut everything down and grabbed the fire extinguisher. However, upon examination, I found that the source was not the new electronic components, but the old stuffing box where the propeller shaft entered the device.

Somehow Gladys had managed to change shape sufficiently between the shop and the water to put the motor significantly out of alignment. This changed the shaft angle far enough to overheat the packing in the stuffing box. Luckily the motor mounting system allowed for easy adjustment and we were soon underway again.

Gladys' performance since then, has met or exceeded the numbers that Kerry Harmon predicted. We had set a design cruising speed of 6 miles per hour (9.6 kph). The reason for that number was that it is the most common and comfortable Dippy cruising speed. Eighteen-foot boats such as ours, have a hull speed of 6.3 mph. Once they are pushed faster than that they will try to climb over their own bow wave, dig in their sterns, and create lots of turbulence and wake.

The read out on Gladys' electronic display dramatically demonstrate the truth of this law of physics. At 675 rpm she will slip along at 6 mph making barely a ripple. The system draws only 18 amps producing .7 kilowatts of power. At 7mph with the motor turning 893 rpm, the power demand is 39.5 amps. Advancing the controller fully drives the boat at 7.8 miles per hour but at the cost of a current draw of 58 amps!



The electronic readout can be displayed as left or completely hidden as on the right.



To date, Gladys has logged 85 hours of trouble free running. Her most severe tests have been three trips of about five hours of continuous operation. On each occasion starting with fully charged batteries, she returned with between 40% and 50% battery capacity remaining. Realistically, leaving a reserve capacity, this means about 7 ½ hours continuous running per charge at 6 mph. Her design number was 7 hours so I am very pleased. I have taken to running her much of the time at 625 rpm. This produces 5.6 mph and an even quieter ride. At this speed she will run over 9 hours. Using power from a 110 volt (wall outlet) she recharges from 30% to 100% overnight.

The bulk of her running has been local cruises on Lake Rosseau where she lives but she has gone on some longer expeditions. On July 6th Paul Dodington and I launched her at Smoke Lake in Algonquin Park and spent the day cruising Smoke Tea and Canoe lakes re-tracing former UUMMTs. On July 17th she explored Little lake Jo in company with Karen and Kerry Harmon's T's Delight. And on August 2 she made a pilgrimage to her former home at Doug and Ann Brown's cottage near Bala on Lake Muskoka. It was great to be able to take Ann and her sister Joan for a ride around Gladys' old haunts.



Photos: Tom Wood

Her most recent trip away from home waters was the UUMMT organized by the Harmons on August 14. Here she demonstrated quite clearly that she could keep up with the fleet on prolonged outings with plenty of reserve capacity, one of her primary design requirements.

One feature of the project that gives me continual pleasure is Gladys' appearance. She remains a real Dippy minus only the noise, grease, oil, and exhaust odour. The motor, batteries, and electronic read out, all tuck away out of sight under the bridge deck. Thanks to Mike's ingenuity, all the necessary switches and controls are activated by original components on the original dashboard. The electrical plug for the battery charger is hidden under the fuel filler cap on the front deck. To a casual observer or even an interested one, she can't be distinguished from a gasoline powered boat until she gets underway.

I am very pleased with the results of this project. The hum of an electric motor can never replace the clack of a Kingston four ball carburetor, the solid thunk of a St. Lawrence, or the busy whir of a Coventry Victor engine. However electrical power has its compensations in terms of simplicity, cleanliness, predictability and environmental friendliness. My experience so far suggests that it is an excellent match for a Disappearing Propeller Boat.

Tom Wood



Recipes For a Cold Night That Remind Us of Dippy Outings

From "The Greatest Little Cookbook: A Boatload of Recipes"

Bilge Water Pea Soup

Recipe by Melba Smith

2 cups dried yellow split peas	3/4 cup chopped carrot
6 cups water	2 tbsp butter
1/2 tsp salt or to taste	1 can 2 % (385 ml) Carnation
2 cups chopped ham	evaporated milk
1/2 cup chopped onion	1/4 tsp cayenne or red pepper

Combine peas, water and salt in large saucepan. Bring to boil, boil 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Let stand 1 hour (do not change water). Add ham, carrots, onions, butter. Bring to boil, cover and simmer 35 to 40 minutes (until peas are tender). Stir in evaporated milk and cayenne.
Reheat to serving temperature.

"Dippy" Meat Balls in Grape Jelly

Recipe by Chris Nowak

2 lbs chuck or round steak – ground	1 cup celery, finely chopped
1 tsp salt	1 small jar grape jelly
Few gratings of fresh pepper	1 bottle chili sauce
1 med. Potato, grated	Juice of one lemon
1 med onion, grated or sautéed	1 cup water

Put meat into large mixer bowl, add salt, pepper, grated potato, onion and celery. Beat for 5 to 10 minutes. With wet hands form into small balls.

In large saucepan add grape jelly, chili sauce, lemon juice and water. Place on medium heat until jelly melts. Drop meat balls into this mixture and cook uncovered for 1½ hours or until done. Serve hot with toothpicks.

This recipe should be made the day before to achieve delicious flavour.

Variation: Substitute cranberry jelly for grape jelly.

Hint: When making meat balls do not press too firmly as this toughens the meat when cooked.



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