

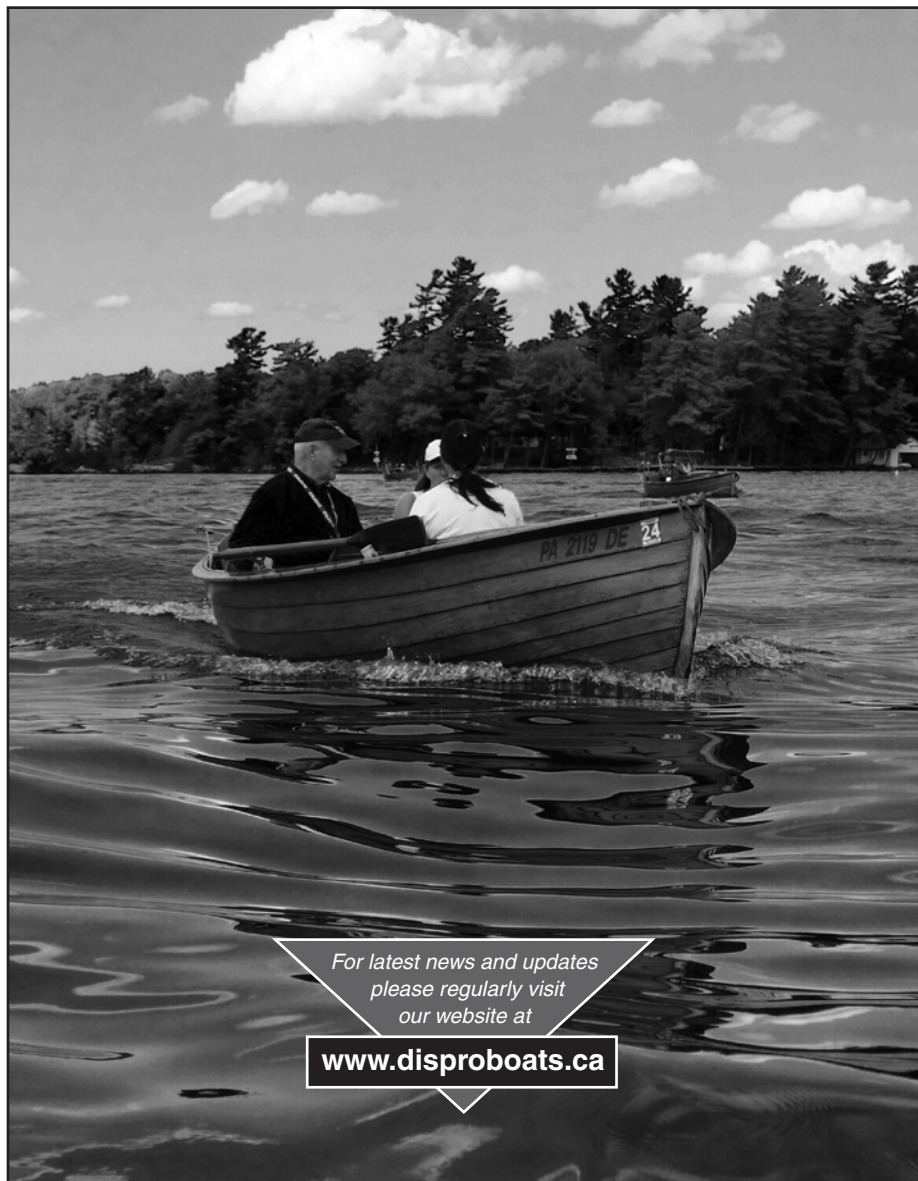
ISSUE 58

THE DEVICE

NOV 2022

DISPRO OWNERS

ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



For latest news and updates
please regularly visit
our website at

www.disproboats.ca

Photo: Paul Jenner

The Annual Regatta on Gloucester Pool was a great success.



President's Letter • November 2022

Regatta 2022 Report

The 2022 Dispro Regatta at Severn Lodge, put into horse racing terms, was a trifecta, plus! Our first win came with the weather! When we were following the weather earlier in the week, we shuddered at the possibility of rain for the weekend. To our great pleasure we were blessed with gorgeous weather for the entire Regatta. In fact some of us, after climbing the huge flight of stairs at the marine railway, were remarking on how hot we were. An ice cream cone from a local stand was the perfect answer.

Severn Lodge provided us with comfortable accommodations and great food in a pretty setting. Our second win! Friday evening, Ron Breckbill gave us an informative talk on the history of the resort and the area. Ron and his family previously owned the resort for many years. We were also fortunate enough to witness a full moon rising over the water. Pure magic! The resort provided us with a campfire on the beach which was enjoyed by some of the night hawks. Those who stayed up after 10pm!

Great boating! Win number three! Gary Campaigne was an excellent leader and lead us on several interesting routes through the waters that he knows so well. It was also reassuring to have Jeff Stevens as our safety boat. Jeff also knows the waters of Gloucester Pool well. Saturday afternoon, after climbing the many sets of stairs, many of us were rewarded by being able to watch the Marine Railway in operation. It truly is an amazing feat of engineering.

The plus and the real plus, was the wonderful friendships and social bonds that were made or rekindled after what seemed like a long absence. Stories, memories, jokes, lots of fun and banter and much catching up was the true highlight. It really is the members who make the club what it is, with some members coming from great distances. One notable attendee was Barbara Otton, who in her mid nineties acted as navigator and co-pilot with her son Bill as captain, on their four hour trip by Dispro to the resort from their cottage on Georgian Bay. They also did the return journey.

Thank you to all who helped to organize Regatta 2022. Particularly, Sheila Burk who assisted with regatta planning and organizing the auction. Many thanks to her auction team and auctioneers Sandra Turnbull and Mike McGarrell who kept things fun and moving. Thank you also to the many members who donated a wide assortment of items for the auction and to those who were lucky enough to take home many treasures. Gary Campaigne for assisting with boating routes and capably leading us. Those who dealt with trailer parking and launching and loading of boats, Bob Burk, Gary Campaigne, Paul Jenner, Jeff Hill and Tom Verth. It couldn't have happened without you. Many thanks!

We greatly missed having Co-President Robert and Pamela in attendance, but we know they were attending in spirit. We are happy to report that Robert is on the mend. Keep warm and cozy over the winter and we'll see you on the water in the spring.

Ian and Barb Dickson

Ebb & Flow

Social Events, Milestones and News About DOA Members

We have recently been made aware of the passing of **Stephen Caudwell** in March 2021. Stephen was a business man and was also passionate about racing cars and antique wooden boats. He was a Dispro member and a long time member of ACBS. Stephen delighted in his summer visits to Ahmic Lake. We extend our sincere condolences to his widow, Tanya Morrow and his extended family and friends.

Wilf Cosby, a man with a huge interest in boating, has passed away at the age of 92. The first time we remember meeting Wilf was when he appeared at a line up of Dispro and asked a lot of questions about how they were made and how the various engines worked. At that time, he stated: "I am going to build one of those!". Some of us will remember meeting Wilf when he appeared at a Pickerel River UUMMT with his tug boat. The next time, Wilf attended a UUMMT with his newly built Dispro Raina. This boat is now in the hands of his grandson Aaron and his wife Jennifer who are now members of our club.

Auction Report

*"Welcome to the Dispro Owners Association Biennial Auction.
Let the bidding begin."*

In the packed Regatta Room at Severn Lodge the tables that lined the room were filled with pictures, paintings, hand knitting, books, maple syrup, crafts, carvings, outboard motors, Dispro gas tanks, paddles, bumpers, boat fenders, spark plugs, other miscellaneous Dispro parts and much, much more.

The eager bidders were alert and didn't let anyone outbid them. A few people helped increase the bidding when they adjusted their hearing aids or swatted that fly away.

"Going, going, gone . . . to the old bald guy in the back corner. "Oh No!" That is Bob. Now what did he buy?"

In spite of all the wise cracks and excuses it was a fun evening netting the club \$ 2,140.00

Thank you again to everyone who donated items to be sold, took part in the purchasing and my loyal volunteers who once we got into our rhythm helped the evening go smoothly.

Sheila Burk

Dispro Universal Joints

If you are still undecided about purchasing a Universal Joint for your Dispro, please do not hesitate. Since the regatta we have sold 4 and we only have a few left.

Price is \$ 250.00 plus shipping. When they are gone they are gone.

If interested, please contact us at..burkbshe@csolve.net or 705-835-6489.

Sheila & Bob Burk

Lake Muskoka

Monday August 15, 2022

The day dawned sunny and calm – a perfect equation for Dippy cruising. Even though it was a weekday, the launch ramp was a busy site as it is a popular access point for the south end of Lake Muskoka.

The sight of the flotilla of a dozen Dippies departing from the Gravenhurst Wharf is one that onlookers never tire of admiring. We headed up the west shore taking advantage of the calm waters between the mainland and the long ribbons of Taylor and Miller Islands. After crossing some open water, we soon navigated along the shoreline of Browning Island with its picturesque, historic cottages.

One of the few area public parks on an island, Johnston's Park, was the lunch stop destination on Eileen Gowan Island. Dippies soon lined up along the sandy shore and captains and crew spilled out to enjoy their picnics. Of course, there was the usual calamity with a boat or two needing to be towed back to port, missing out on the adventure – or perhaps having one of their own.

For the return route we navigated along the eastern shore through bays and islands and once in Muskoka Bay, headed to Mary and John Storey's dock to enjoy their hospitality and pre-dinner refreshments. A dozen of us, not finished socializing, continued on to have dinner at Boston Pizza. This isn't quite the end of the saga; if you use a key fob to activate your vehicle and it inadvertently spends 24 hours under water at Johnston's Park, don't despair. It is waterproof and immediately activates (ask Kerry how he knows).

Karen Boyer



Photos: Tim Du Vernet

2022 Annual Regatta • Severn Lodge • Gloucester Pool



Mother Nature supplied the beautiful weather, Severn Lodge provided the comfortable accommodations and great food and Gloucester Pool offered up spectacular cruising. An all-round great weekend was enjoyed by all who attended the regatta. September 9-11, 2022.



Photos: Paul Jenner

**100 PLUS
YEAR OLD**

DISAPPEARING PROPELLER BOATS

As you have read in previous editions of the Device, Karen Boyer and I have been writing about Dispros that have celebrated their 100th birthday.

In selecting the owner of one of these boats for this edition, I made a list of all the Dispros that have reached this milestone this year. To my surprise there were many of them. First, the statistics:

1920 boats = 5 1921 boats = 13 1922 boats = 11

I find it surprising that there are that many boats that survived 100+ years and these are owned by members of our club. I wonder how many others are out there?

In the book, *The Greatest Little Motor Boat Afloat*, it states, "The Boatbuilder's section of the 1921 Toronto City Directory, the Disappearing Propeller Boat Co. was advertised for the first time as the largest motor boat builders in Canada." The graph on page 164 showing the entire production of Dispros has the 1920 to 1924 years as the largest production by far.

We have been featuring boats and the owners of this 100+ club. We now realize it is not possible to feature all 100+ Dispros in the newsletter. New plan: if you own or know about a Dispro that is 100 years old or about to be 100 years old, please write up a paragraph or two about the boat and send to :

Karen Boyer krboyer@vianet.ca or **Mary Storey** mstorey@cogeco.ca
We will see that your boat is featured in the Device newsletter.

Mary Storey

Photo of Port Carling



This is a 1920s photo of the Port Carling locks. The building on the right with the open doors is where the first Dispros were produced in 1916. On the left is the steamer Medora preparing to enter the locks as the swing bridge is open. In the background there is an unidentified steamer waiting to go southbound through the locks. The large building on the left is Hanna's General Store and George Sutton's Ice Cream and Refreshment store closer to the water. Both buildings and others were lost in the huge fire of October 1931.

John Storey

More Books, More Dispro Stories

In the newly published book *Treasured Islands 2*, which contains many stories from people who own islands in Muskoka, there is an interesting story about a Dispro. The chapter is titled "A tale of Two Dippies" and is written by Wilsie Mann. He states:

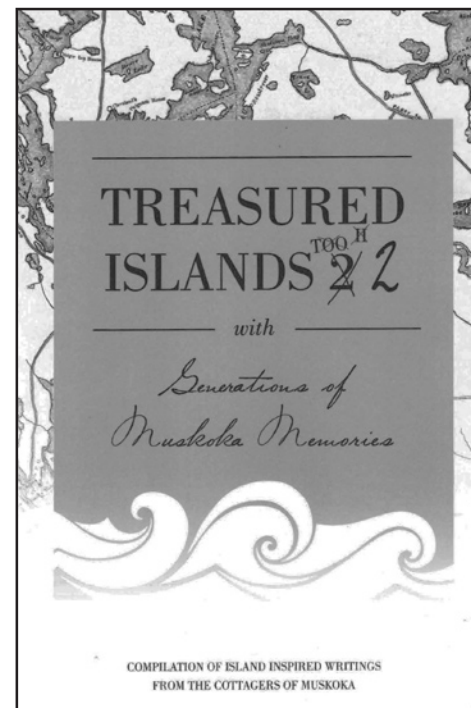
"Sometime in the early 1950's, a small rowboat was delivered to Star Island. At least to my young eyes it looked like a rowboat. Gramps got in it and pulled a small looking handle and with a puff of smoke and a cough, the boat started to move away from our dock. He disappeared around Sunset Point, and I listened to the "Putt Putt" noise as I ran around the paths following the sound. He appeared at the boathouse and brought it into the slip as all us kids stood on the dock and watched in wonder. The name on its side was "Little Rainbow" and I learned later that it was a Disappearing Propeller boat, affectionately known as a "Dippy" or Dispro. It was patented by Billy Johnson of the "Johnston Boat Works" and was perfect for the Muskoka Lakes with many unseen rocks, shoals and hidden logs. The crucial piece for the Dippy was the device which allowed the propeller to be pulled up into a housing to miss these hazards and drop it down when you cleared them.

To our eyes however, it was magic. As I was the eldest grandchild on the island, Gramps and I would go out in it, and he showed me all the levers and buttons and the handle that you pulled to start her. A pair of oars fitted along the edge of the seats in case the engine quit and we had to row ashore. There was a cord that ran around the boat and through the rudder that you steered with and I was allowed to do that as we putted around Star Island and some the small islands nearby. That small boat gave me my most wonderful memories of "putting" around Lake Joe, usually with my Mum or Gramps. I learned later that this Dippy had been lent to us by Uncle Harry. As it turned out, he was the famous Harry Greening who raced and won speed records with his Rainbow fleet. "

The story continues at length about how the Manns moved to Muskoka in 1992, opening a Bed and Breakfast and felt they had to buy a Dippy to give their guests tours of the lakes. Instead, they rebuilt one in their garage in Bracebridge noting that they steam bent and installed 33 ribs and clinched approximately 800 nails. They installed a serial number of #DP 92-01 in the boat which was christened with the name 'MEMORIES'. This Dispro spent many happy days at Star Island, Lake Joseph and at the B&B on Lake Muskoka.

This is another example of a Muskoka book with a Dippy story. They just keep coming.

Mary Storey



A Flying Waterman?

On a recent trip to visit friends in Maine, I looked in at the Owl's Head Transportation Museum. Housed in a large hangar, the museum displays an amazing collection of classic cars and trucks as well as vintage and reproduction aircraft, most of which still fly regularly.

In a back corner, there was an example of an early flying machines called an Ornithopter. Before the theory of flight was fully understood, Ornithoptors were designed to fly by flapping their wings like a bird. This particular design had two pairs wings that would flap up and down alternately. The wings were simply a light wooden frames covered by a wire mesh in which thousands of feathers were embedded. The theory here being that if feathers enabled birds to fly then why not man.

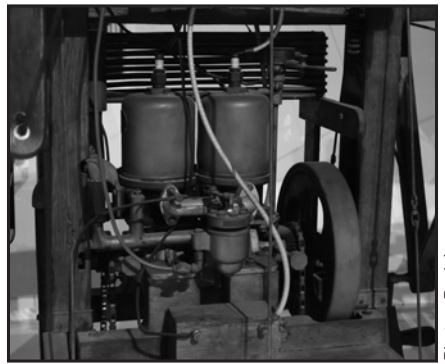
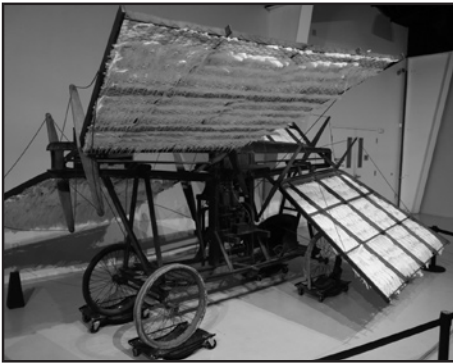
The inventor, James W. Clark of Bridgewater, Pennsylvania apparently first tested his machine in 1900, rebuilt it and wrecked it twice thereafter. After a last attempt in 1903, the machine was stored in a carriage house for over 60 years.

Amazingly, this contraption sported a two-cylinder, 4 HP Waterman K2. It was connected to the two pairs of wings by a chain drive. The engine was apparently added at a later date as a representation of the engines used in similar flying machines.

My question is would this have been successful? Given that the weight of the motor alone was some 60 lbs and the fact that it was water cooled and would need a cooling system such as a radiator. Add to that a fuel tank, the weight of the pilot and the relatively low 800 rpm of the motor and one doubts the feasibility of such an arrangement. It would probably have just bounced rapidly up and down on the ground until it finally collapsed in a heap of splintered wood and feathers.

Now wouldn't that Waterman K2 be better employed powering a Dispro!

Paul Jenner



Photos: Paul Jenner



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