

ISSUE 62

THE DEVICE

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DISPRO OWNERS

ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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Photo: Paul Jenner

It's nose up and full speed ahead as Mike Windsor and passengers cruise the St. Lawrence River during this year's regatta. Mike's 100 year old boat Allegro, with its Dispro D2 twin cylinder motor, exhibits a fair turn of speed. See the story of Allegro in this issue.



President's Letter • November 2023

With autumn now waning, we face the conclusion of yet another season. Boats, for the most part, have been pulled up and stored. For some, there will be some winter projects of repair and refinishing. We will now be looking ahead to the new 2024 season, our 45th as an organization, and planning our group activities for the new year.

However, at this time of year, as we approach Christmas, I would ask you to pause and reflect on those long-term DOA colleagues who are alone, perhaps living in an institutional facility now or missing a recently departed family member. Among these are the Fossey and Byrne families. Down in my corner of the world, the Niagara area, I am thinking of Ray Profit (Port Colbourne), Richard and Jean Bell (Niagara Falls) and Bob Butler (Vineland). Others, such as Jim Onions and Kathy Smale, also come to mind. And there are others! To all these people, your DOA friends remember you well and wish you strength and comfort as you enter the holiday season and the new year. Three cheers for you all and thank you for your long-term commitment and contributions that helped to make the Dispro Owners Association what it is today.

On behalf of your Executive, I would like to conclude by wishing all our Canadian and American members all the very best through the Christmas season and we look forward to learning about your future exploits on your local lakes and waterways in the new year. Good health and happy/safe boating to all!

Ian Gibson

Ebb & Flow

Social Events, Milestones and News About DOA Members

The DOA is saddened to report the passing of the following members:

Ruth Sutton 1926-2023

Active member of DOA including the Ladies Dispro Auxiliary and production of the *Greatest Little Cookbook: A Boatload of Recipes*.

Karen Billett 1948-2023

With her husband Keith, was a member of the Horseless Carriage Club of America and often attended DOA regattas, driving from Pennsylvania.

Peter Phelps 1932-2023

From his early teens, Peter cherished time with his family each year at his cottage, "Shebandowan", on Lake Rosseau in Muskoka and in his retirement spent many hours tinkering with his Dippy, getting her ready for the next regatta.

Stan Byrne 1937-2023

Stan and Helen own one of the earliest Dispros –1916. We remember Stan's love of Georgian Bay and his boating adventures near his cottage in that area.



Irene Fossey

A tribute to one of our founding members, just a quick note to pass on to the Dispro gang. Unfortunately, we lost one of our founding members, Irene Fossey, on Sunday, August 27, quietly at the age of 92. Irene and Joe were one of several people that were at that first meeting in Barrie in 1979 and are still members today.

Irene took on the responsibilities of keeping things organized like memberships, finances, people and places, all to get things started. She enjoyed helping with workshops, meetings, and adding to the Dispro cookbook and I am sure never missed a regatta. They still have their boat *Margie*, which is in storage.

Joe and Irene had known each other for 74 years and were married for 72 excellent years. Our family will miss her. Dad, now 94, is doing okay, although there is a very big void without her.

Mom always perked up when it came to talking about boating, family and all that life had to offer and the many people that always visited their home in Barrie.

We will move on and cherish her and look forward to seeing all our Dispro gang back on the water again.

Joe Fossey Jr.

Plaque Donation

Tradition within the Dispro Owners Association states that if a member attends an annual Regatta with a boat, they receive a wooden plaque to signify their boat's participation. Over the years these plaques are all unique and have become collectors' items. The DOA archives has one of each plaque except for four! Recently this problem was solved.

Thanks to a kind donation from Happy and John Thompson, a large mahogany board containing 36 plaques from 1979 to 2014 has been donated.

It is amazing how each of these plaques is unique! We owe the design of each plaque to the creativity of several club members as they celebrated various milestones in our club's history.

The plaques will be carefully stored with the DOA Archives at the Muskoka Discovery Centre museum in Gravenhurst.

Mary Storey



Allegro

Allegro is the Italian word for lively or cheerful and is used in music to indicate a musical piece that is joyful and uplifting. Ronda Turner and Mike Windsor's 1923 D. P. Boat Co. Uncle Sam Dispro is having a cheerful year as she is celebrating her 100th birthday. It is quite appropriate that Mike would name this boat Allegro given his musical talents.

Mike first saw the boat in 1987 when Peter Clarke owned it on Ahmic Lake. The boat was donated to the school where Peter taught. Peter, being a secondary school technical teacher, made the boat seaworthy before selling it to Rick McGraw. Mike bought the boat from Rick in 2002 and took it to his first Regatta in 2002 at Stanton House on Sparrow Lake.

After purchasing the boat, Mike, being a boat builder, thought he would purchase it for the hardware. However, he decided differently. He took on the restoration of the boat by making new stem and stern posts and replacing 50% of the planking and of course, refinishing the entire wood surfaces.

Mike and Ronda have enjoyed Allegro taking her to such places as Finger Lakes, Georgian Bay, Lake Ontario, Rideau River and Killarney. May Allegro have a cheerful next one hundred years!

Mary Storey



**100 PLUS
YEAR OLD**

DISAPPEARING PROPELLER BOATS

Ranger

A 1921 Tonawanda Dispro

On 8/3/1996, I attended the 32nd Annual Antique Boat Show in Clayton, New York. And at this auction there was this fantastic boat that I had never seen before. I decided that if it was affordable, I would buy it. The boat has had an interesting history and what follows are the details I received when I bought the boat.

Ranger was originally owned by Carl Shreck of Albany, New York. He had a furniture store (Shreck Furniture Co). He sold the boat to Douglas Frackelton of Cayuga, New York. Carl had the boat at a restoration shop but the operator fell on hard times and did not restore it. When Carl sold to Douglas the consideration was for Douglas to pay \$50.00 to the restoration shop for the storage bill.

Douglas is now 82 and retired from his insurance business. He also had owned a Waterford called "Stompjumper". It was bought by his grandfather in 1931 from a lumber company. It was double planked and used by the company in its logging operations.

When Douglas bought Ranger in 1958 from Carl Shreck he did not have time to restore it and later sold to Sid Marsden. After Marsden, Douglas sold it to Walter H. Wells from Pittsford, New York who donated the boat to the Clayton Museum in 1985.

The boat was on display in the museum for ten or eleven years and had suffered from neglect. I replaced some of the wood that was past repair. Also the bottom planking was so deteriorated, I used fiberglass everywhere below the waterline.

As far as adventures with the Dippy, they are mostly from regatta touring with the Dispro Club. As for my feelings of owning a 100 year old boat, I am comfortable with old equipment since two of my other hobbies include collecting and restoring 100 year old horseless carriage automobiles.

I currently own two Dispro boats and plan to give one to each of my two children. I am looking forward to reporting on my 1952 Dispro when it becomes 100 years old!

David Deardorff



Photo: Paul Jenner



The 2023 DOA Regatta was held at Glen House Resort in the Thousands Islands of the St. Lawrence River near Gananoque on September 8th to 10th. While the weatherman had predicted rain for the entire weekend, the rain graciously held off and all boating outings were completed as planned. As per our last visit to Glen House in 2019, we were fortunate to again secure the guiding services of Dave Williams, a long-time resident of the area, who safely ensconced in John and Mary Storey's Muggins, navigated us safely throughout the Islands, both Canadian and American. Dave was consciously backstopped in our excursions by Mac MacKenzie of the Resort in the safety boat, who despite a few temporary breakdowns en route, did not lose a boat and all 17 dispros returned to port at the conclusion of each outing.



The routes revealed a lot of the long-time history of the river, with many large fashionable turn-of-the-century cottages, each presumably with its own story. There were many more current smaller island cottages as well. Our routes took us down river, where we passed under the Ivy Lea border crossing bridge several times. We experienced fast water with strong currents and meandering small creek-like channels (yes, where our props accumulated some weeds!). Our entourage even crashed a small informal





shoreline wedding ceremony, escalating into a lot of mutual shouting and waving. The Sunday morning excursion traveled south across the river to investigate the Thousand Island National Park area. It was good boating!

Glen House Resort was an excellent facility, with admirable docking and launching. The staff were wonderful and helpful. In total, we were 52 adults and four children. Led by 96 year old Barbara Otton and her three generation family, there were many long-standing members in attendance, including the Dippy Doctor, Paul Dodington, who was doing consultations throughout the weekend. Alison Butler also made the trip in order to keep an eye on son, Jim. And of course, Ethel Armstrong, with her two sons Brad and Dave, made the 8 hour long

trip from the Sarnia area. From the U.S. came Jeff and Marilyn Hill (Texas), and David Deardorff, with friend. (Pennsylvania).

While other long-term members were not present, they were indeed in our thoughts. Names frequently mentioned in conversations and anecdotes, included Happy and John Thomson and the Hills. Jim Domm, Ray Profit and Bob Butler were also often inquired after. Our best wishes are with you all.

continued . . .

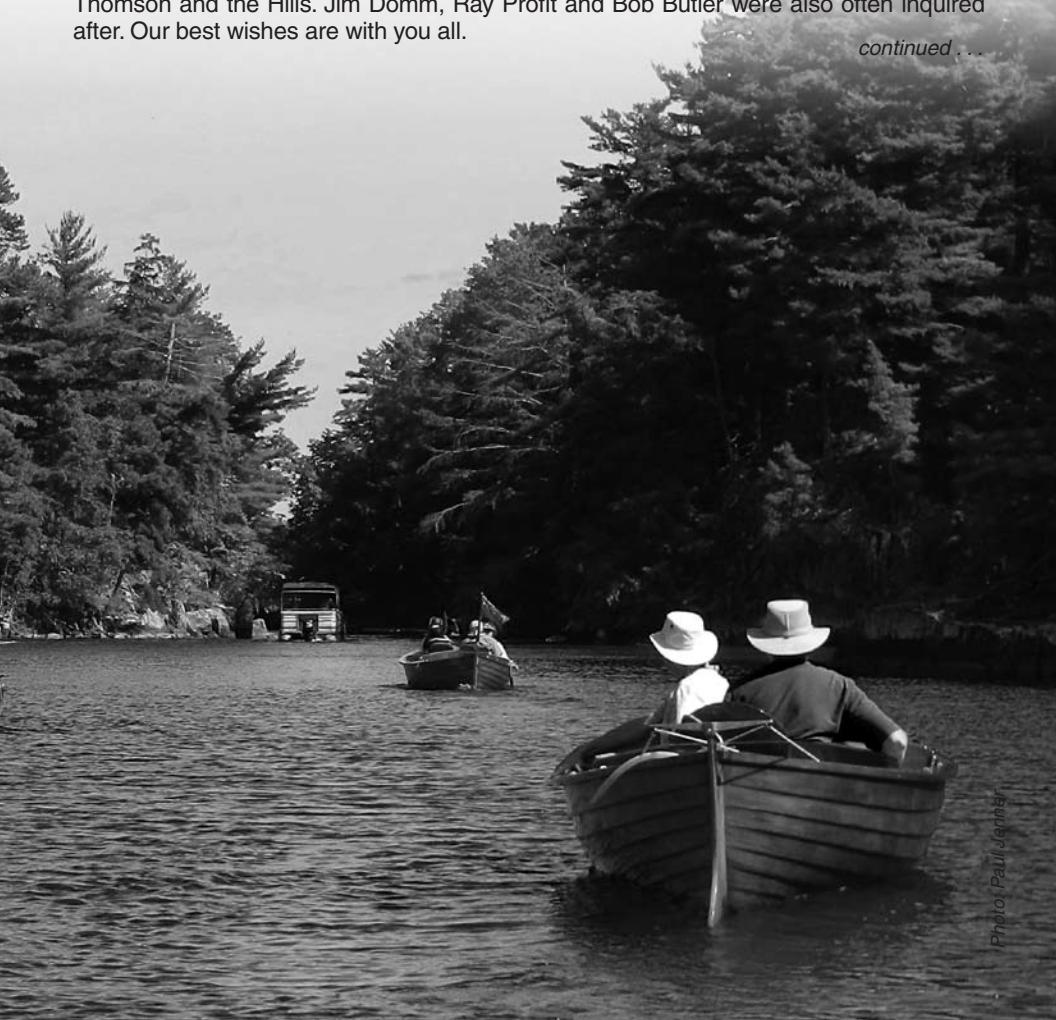


Photo: Paul Jenner

One of the highlights of this year's Regatta, our 43rd, was our guest speaker, Karen Wand. Karen was referred to us by the Gananoque Thousand Island Boat Museum as a local amateur historian, who has a particular interest in the north shore St Lawrence area and its fledgling marine and tourist industries. Fortunately for us, Karen embraced the opportunity and researched, interviewed and prepared for us a very comprehensive overview of the early boat building days in the Thousand Island area. With the development of fishing camps for visiting American tourist, the early resorts got their impetus. The rapidly evolving tourist trade in turn led to the early boat building activity, especially for tour boats.

Eventually, this led to a marine engine industry and, in turn, our favorite St. Lawrence engines, often featured in early dispros! Karen's efforts gave us an insight into the past two centuries of development in the area. There were many interesting parallels to the early development of the Muskoka Region in Ontario as well.

Finally, it would be an omission to not report on the young generation who came to share our adventures at the Regatta. Howard and Hannah, the children of Barry and Saeng Otton are becoming seasoned veterans at these events. Also Sheila and Bob Burke, brought their granddaughters, Harper and Fiamma, who have recently graduated to co-pilot status. We welcome the future.

Ian Gibson



Always time to tinker and troubleshoot.



Harper and Fiamma with President Ian Gibson displaying this year's plaque.



The Armstrongs and Butlers have a mid-river rendezvous.





Lake Joseph

On Monday, August 21, despite a brisk wind and very choppy waters, our Dispros were successfully launched at Foot's Bay Marina. It was a changeable day weather wise and the sun was somewhat elusive but thankfully the weather held and it didn't rain.

Eleven boats and thirty three people crossed the open waters of Lake Joseph for an extended tour. Beautiful scenery and amazing cottages abounded. We even had an escort/safety boat for this cruise. Sandra and Nick Turnbull joined us in their classic launch accompanied by Cynthia Luks.

Our lunch stop was graciously provided by Gwyneth and David Simpson at their beautiful cottage. Their spacious docks provided ample mooring for the boats and lots of seating for a very comfortable lunch stop.

After catching up with everyone over lunch we headed back across the lake to our launch site. Another successful adventure and a great day out enjoyed by all.

Dorene Jenner



more photos over . . .

The Turnbull's classic launch was a fitting escort.





Photo: Heather Cooper

The Simpson's ample dock space was the perfect venue for lunch and socializing.

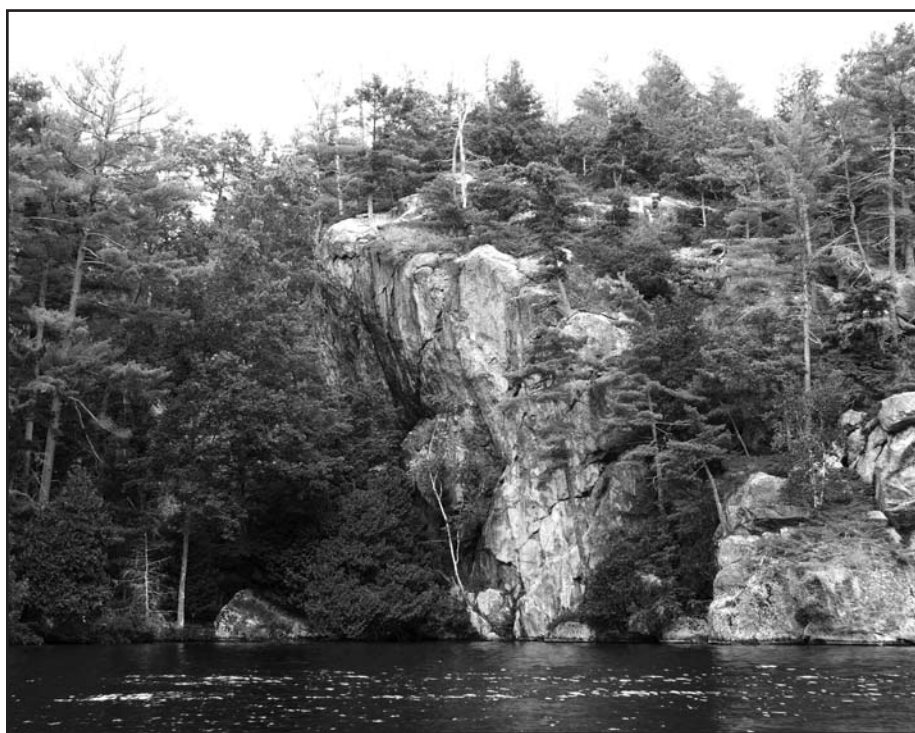


Photo: Paul Jenner

Spectacular cliffs were just some of the wonderful scenery encountered on Lake Joseph.



2023 DOA Fall Workshop

The DOA Fall Workshop was held at the Coldwater Legion on October 21st. The facilities were very good with a sound system and large monitor for presentations. The Legion's Ladies Auxiliary provided early coffee and donuts as well as lunch.

The three presentations started with Mike Windsor providing a video on bottom plank replacement and clench nailing followed by Kerry Harmon discussing the benefits of converting a dippy to battery electric power. Kerry even brought his Dippy to the Legion for those interested in viewing the components in the boat.

Following lunch, Bill Otton reviewed the proper care and maintenance of the device unit in all Dispros. The session ended with a question-and-answer session covering several topics by the participants. Paul Dodington, Ian Dickson and Mike Windsor offered their expertise to answer the questions.

It was a good day from the comments of the 40+ people attending. It was great to see many new members attending.

John Storey



John Storey, organized the Fall Workshop, welcomed the attendees and introduced the presenters.



Mike Windsor's excellent video presentation gave us all great insight into the processes involved in planking, scarfing and nailing.



Kerry Harmon gave us a good overview on the conversion of Dispros to electric propulsion.





Bill Otton outlined possible problems and solutions for that unique part of a Dispro – the device.



And finally, the brain trust was assembled to field any questions relating to Dispros, from their history, to technical aspects and maintenance procedures. L to R, Mike Windsor, Paul Dodington and Ian Dickson. The original "device" was displayed on the table in front of them.

Photos: Paul Jenner



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



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