The Great Outdoors

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O.P.P. Marine Unit ensuring safety afloat

by Sandra Lee Johnston
Chieftain Staff Reporter

The blue sky overhead, the billowing white clouds, hardly a hint of a breeze and the mighty St.Lawrence on our doorsteps...who would not choose a summer afternoon to take a boatride? As boaters and personal watercraft riders "Catch the New Wave..in boating"it is important that they are aware and comply with the safety controls that will ensure not only a safe but a fun time while on the water.

The good thing is that most comply with the rules as they take to the waterways of this province. "Most people are slowly getting used to the new rules," explain the OPP Marine Unit officers as we meet them ready to take to the waves, early on a Saturday morning.

It is evident from the backing the trailer into the water and unloading the boat that Constable Harvey Blokland and an Auxiliary Officer of the SD&G OPP Marine Unit have done this before. Carefully explaining the rules of the road as it were on the water to boaters who are not up to speed on the equipment necessary for compliance with the Canadian regulations. In 1997 a host of additional safety precautions came into effect. "Since these regulations have been in effect for that many years, the officers feel that those who boat have to become responsible boat owners and operators, thus knowing what is expected when they put their vessel into the water," says the officer.

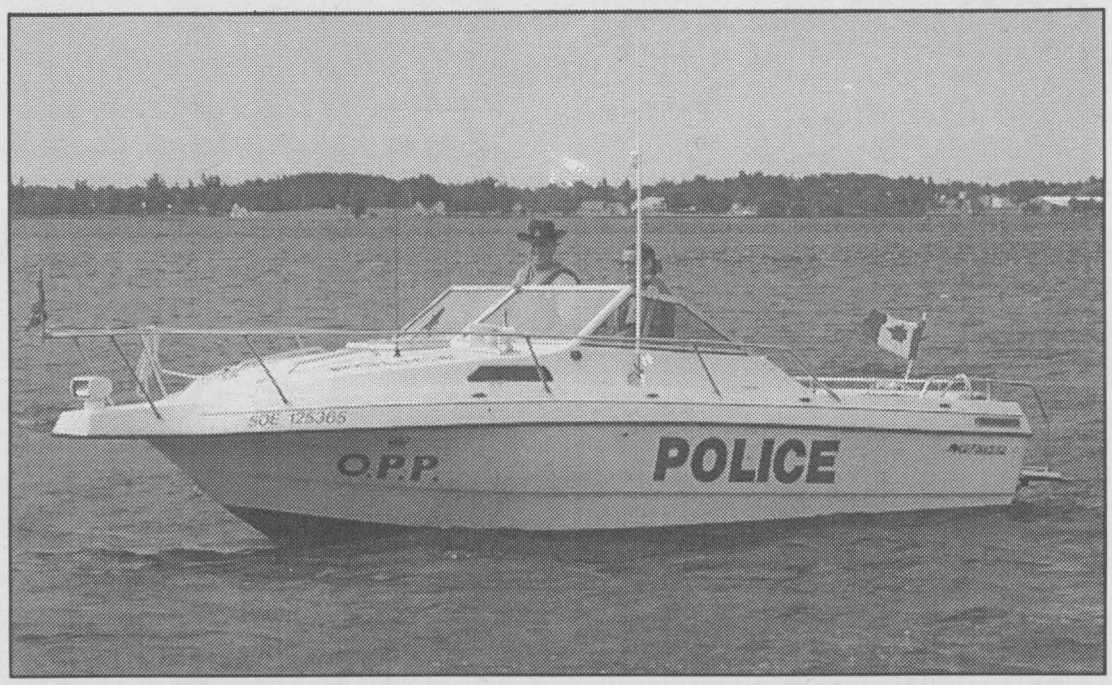
"Among the regulations, one of the most often forgotten is a waterproof flashlight," smiles Constable Blokland. He cannot help but break into a smile when he tells us that most people feel that if they are going out for an afternoon, they will not need one of these. "They think there is no danger of any problems that might cause them to become stuck on the water after darkness falls," says the Officer, knows better. He adds that the fine for not having one on board is a whopping $110., well worth knowing! Numerous factors come into play when the officers are confronted by a boater who does not have the necessary equipment onboard. Whether to issue a fine or a warning can be costly for the boater, and as far as missing lifejackets or open liquor on board, there is "zero tolerance" and the fine can exceed $200 for either infraction.

The OPP boat has been on the water since June and much of the time the officers spend on the waves is spent explaining to boaters what and why they need certain items on their boats. Constable Blokland tells us that the OPP Marine Unit spends time attending boat shows and community events where they encourage boaters and personal watercraft folks to think hard about being safe when out on the water. "Perhaps the most vital message we convey to people is - "Don't drink and boat!"says the Marine Patrollers. They hasten to add that it is not yet a big problem, in our area, but people need to be aware that it is just NOT acceptable.

They also say that wearing life jackets is important and most people do not wear them. "We encourage people to put them on, they can't save your life if you can't get to them," says Constable Blokland, "An accident happens so quickly there is just no time to grab a life jacket." This was demonstrated the very weekend we met an American lady was drowned due to not having her life jacket on and not being able to reach it in time. "Safety, the shoreline, or help are not always within swimming distance and so the jacket provides the lifeline."

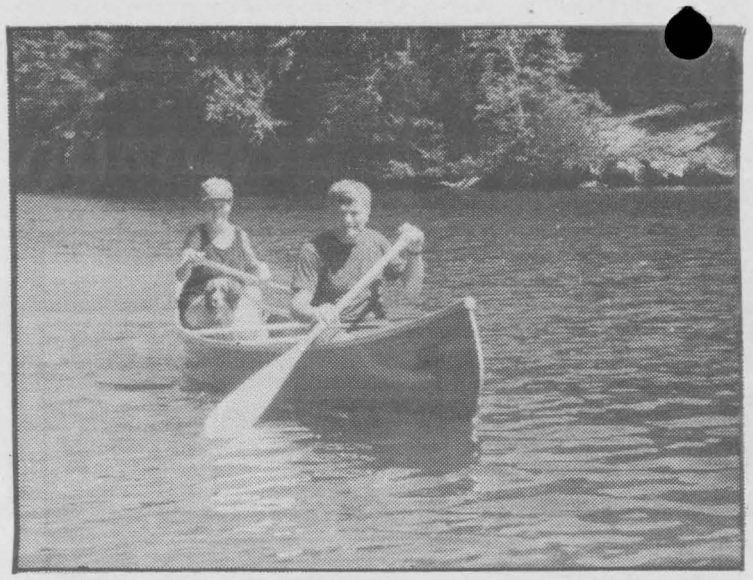
He continues explaining that personal watercraft speeding too close to shore is a problem they are keeping an eye out for as the number one problem with these fun machines."When within 30m of shore you should drive at 10km/hour so there is no wake created, as a rule of thumb." These

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OPP Marine Unit Patrols the Mighty St. Lawrence daily.

Chieftain Photo by S.L.Johnston



Paddling on calm waters, canoers dip and swing.

PROTECT YOUR SKIN
----The Sun emits harmful rays

The sun emits various types of radiation, ultra violet light being the most damaging to the skin. With some simple precautions against UV-A and UV-B rays, you can still enjoy the outdoors.

Keep in mind that the sun is most dangerous in summer and during the middle of the day (11am to 4pm). The beach is where the sun causes most trouble or on the ski slopes and when you are engaged in various winter sports. These are trouble spots since reflected light is dangerous. (From concrete, water, sand, and snow). It is important to remember that the sun is also dangerous on cloudy days.

When purchasing a sunscreen, be sure it protects against both UV-A and UV-B rays, is waterproof has a SPF (Sun Protection Factor) of 30 or more, especially for children. (If your sunscreen has an SPF of 30, your natural protection is multiplied by 30. If it takes 12 minutes to burn without sunscreen, then, when you use a 30 SPF, it will take 360 minutes or six hours for sunburn to happen.

It is important to apply sunscreen 30 minutes before being exposed to the sun. Reapply after swimming, excessive perspiring, or being rubbed by towels or clothes. Every two hours it should be reapplied to all exposed body parts including ears, lips, neck, nose and bare spots on your head.

There are a variety of ways to protect yourself. For example, wearing a wide brimmed hat will protect ears, nose and neck. Sunglasses that screen out the rays are a good idea. Wearing a loose, longsleeved shirt, long pants and using a parasol or umbrella or stay in the shade or simply reduce the time you spend in the sun and you should be fine.

Don't forget that an inadequate application of sunscreen can reduce the SPF value by as much as half.

All types of skin complexions require protection, don't kid yourself into thinking you are immune.

Reapplication does not extend the time you are protected against the sun nor does it double the SPF.

A bottle of sunscreen lotion is good only until the expiry date on it. A change in colour, consistency or smell indicates it should be tossed out.

The time it takes for sunburn to happen is linked to the daily UV index in the weather report, so it is wise to listen to the report and plan your needs accordingly.

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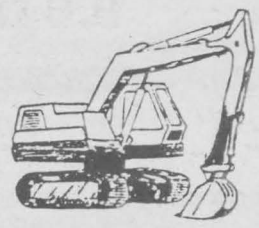
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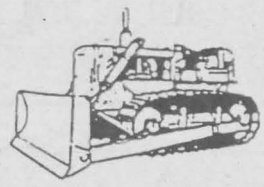
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Whether you are a walker, a biker or a boater - no matter if you like to check out the neighbour's flower beds or take a cool dip on a hot day - the great outdoors is yours to enjoy. Nature provides the perfect setting for everyone to take part in or just sit back and enjoy the sun, the sand, the air ...nature at her finest. She will even give a show free for the watching.

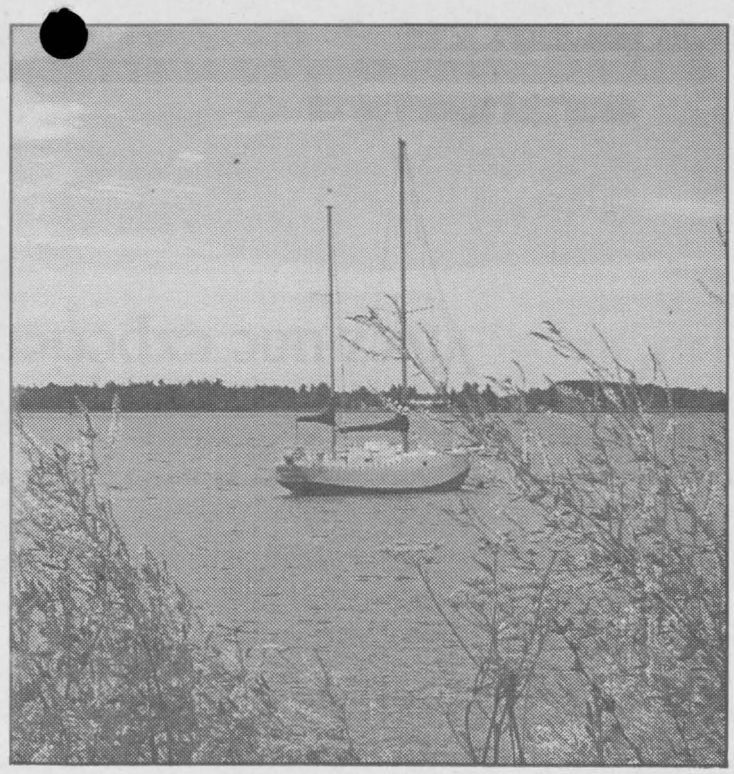
If we are to enjoy the beauty of nature, if we want to take in all that is around us, we need to slow down and give ourselves time to notice things. Allow our eyes to roam over familiar ground as it were, and rather than seeing an entire area, see only one plant, or study a tree, watch the motion of the clouds and be alert to the sounds. The buzz of insects, the croak of bullfrogs, the chirping of crickets. Were you aware that birds use their songs to mark their territory. Did you know that the sharp cry of a squirrel is a warning of danger? Often the absence of sound can be important too. Take for instance when the birds stop singing, when the forest becomes strangely silent, what does it signal?

The sense of smell we possess is limited and so will not help us alot. We do not rely on it very much. In order to increase your sensitivity to aromas you need to moisten your upper lip with a little water. Then pay attention to outdoor smells, they are valuable clues to what is going on around you.

The outdoors is awash with movement of the bushes.

Using your touch to better understand nature can be an adventure. Feel the texture of leaves, some are rough, others smooth. Weigh stones in your hand, wade into ponds, crawl through tall grass, roll in the snow, touch plants and animals and let them touch you. Run through the forest like a deer, swim along the bottom of a lake like a fish...walk a mile in the shoes of another to fully comprehend nature at her best.

Walk off the beaten path and enjoy what no one has seen. The air is fresh and the beauty of a sunrise or a sunset cannot be matched. When the rain stops and the drips fall leisurely off leaves and branches and the sun comes out from behind a cloud to dry up the puddles, the calm and stillness that pervades is so charming.



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Frogwild fishing lure leaps into the Seaway -

by Sandra Lee Johnston
Chieftain Staff Reporter

"Fish this weedless, meaty, long-casting, floating lure Texas-rig style in the heavy cover where the "hawgs" hang out. The self-correcting, vertically balanced design ensures the perfect pop every time. Rattles and bubbles make this noisy bait a hit with all types of big fish. Customize with your own colours and legs. Hand crafted from the finest woods by real fishermen, who discovered the power of the "World's Greatest Little Frog."So reads the back of the container the Little Frog comes housed in and once you realize that it really works, you'll go wild.

Many will recognize the name of Randall Prescott as Juno Award winning musician who has been honoured with a nomination for a Grammy, but until this spring, he was not sure how high his dreams could soar.

Meeting him earlier this year at the Gift Lane in Prescott, was a treat. Having met him years before when he and wife Tracey Brown were on stage in Matilda Hall, it was great to talk with him again and especially terrific to talk fishin'. "Everyone knows that before I'm a record producer, I'd rather be making a living fishing," says Prescott. For all these years he admits to spending time at his Clayton Lake recording studio staring at the water daydreaming about fishing. Well, that is indeed one dream that came true...to some extent anyway. He developed a fishing lure that has really caught on. A common item on numerous shelves throughout the Ottawa area, the Little Frog has come to the Seaway area. Inventor and marketer of the "Frogwild" fishing lure, Prescott has a winner on his line. A top-water bass lure that he believed could make a real splash in the North American bass fishing industry has done just that. "Attach this little frog to a heavy line, cast into the water and the wooden frog head floats on the surface while the colourful frog legs dangle independently beneath the water's surface. The legs sink under the lily pads, while the popper floats, and you just let her sit,"explains an enthusiastic Prescott. He continues telling us and other fishing folk that it is designed for swampy, weedy places, although the fish seem to find it just as tempting in open water. "Perhaps the best part of it all is that the strikes from the fish are explosive. Kids will be hooked for life."

Attending numerous outdoors and sportsmens' shows in cities like Montreal and Toronto, as well as smaller venues like Prescott (which he got a kick out of with the name thing going on!) and Carp he reports a very positive response and great results. "To date over 3,000 frog lures have been sold for around $18 each at stores from CTC to gift shops like the Gift Lane. We have assembed another 8,000 or so to try to keep up with the demand. We certainly never anticipated this. The orders are coming in fast and furious, those fishermen and women using them have been catching fish and we just can't keep up with the demand!" says a breathless entrepreneur.

Keeping things tuned, the entire family often perform at the shows and fairs where the frogs are being debued...wife Tracey Brown (of the Family Brown), son Kaylen and daughter Kelly join forces to assist Randall. Kaylen is a talented drummer, but he shows even more promise as a music producer, which he hopes will become his career. Kaylen harbours the same dream as his dad, as the lure of fishing is catching his attention...he has even suggested to Randall that he wants to be a pro fisherman! Kelly is 14 and is starting to draw a great deal of attention on stage. She, in fact drew enough crowds that Shimano gave her a new rod and reel for her performance at the Toronto Spring Fishing Show.

While a significant portion of Randall's time is being taken by the marketing of Frogwild fishing lures, he still finds time for music. He is producing Tracey's next album scheduled for a September release. He is also working with Kelly on a hip-hop-pop album...a couple of tracks have been laid down of it to date. He cannot devote as much time to music as he once did or as he would like since his once frantic agenda of music-making to deal with the pain caused by a case of kidney stones. "You have a lot of time to spend taking warm baths to ease the pain and as I sat in the water with various prototypes of Frogwild to get them to float properly, Randall ignored Tracey's laughter at his utilizing the tub as his lab. Health concerns also altered his mental focus. "It was my health problems that taught me going full tilt 24-hours a day making music wasn't

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Ian(Gift Lane) meets Randall and Big Jim.

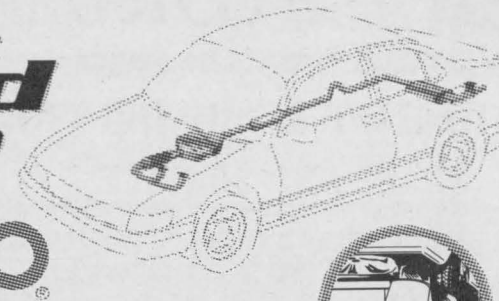
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Valley and beyond the waves

Continued from page 4

always for the best. I have a beautiful family, live on a beautiful farm and need to slow down and smell the roses," says Prescott.

"Life is certainly ironic," says Prescott, "It was my career of producing albums (Top quality at that!) at our Lakeside Studio that inspired me to create a new lure. I'd sit in the studio making music and see people fishing right in front of me, off the pint. I'd be trapped inside and these folks are catching two and three pound bass"...tinkering with bass-fishing lures for a few years until finally coming up with several prototypes which he worked on last summer, Prescott finally took the result onto the lake water. Fishing alone as well as with some buddies, he was amazed at the results, "They were explosive, almost immediately!" exclaims an awestruck inventor.

Each lure is handcrafted, with a wooden top-water popper complete with eyes and two replaceable plastic legs attached to the floating wood so they can dangle below the water. Hooks are embedded in each leg and the lures are painted so they blend in with their surroundings. Since some 80% of the shoreline of Clayton Lake is swampy and weedy, a weedless lure is necessary prevent it getting caught among the weeds.

The problem is that traditionally weedless lures are usually fishless lures. The hook is hidden so well that you can't catch any fish. Prescott's design imitates a real frog which is a sure fire way to bring home a fish supper. Large mouth bass typically go after frogs which are staples of their diets. When they see legs or shadows of legs just beneath the water's surface, they usually go after them. When they strike, a bass does so with terrific energy and does the same with a lure that resembles a frog so well, as the Frogwild Little Frog lure does. "That makes it so exciting, especially for youngsters when they hit." His son who is 17 is using his earnings from helping to manufacture the lures to pay his entry fee into bass fishing tourneys where he uses, of course the "Frogwild." "Frogs are the filet mignon for bass, and when the lure hits the water, the legs sink under the lily pads and bang, the bass go for them!" explains Prescott.

How did he get so pumped for fishing? Well according to the songwriter, producer and musician, it all began when growing up in North Bay. "The thing I loved more than music was fishing," he says. My father was a musician and so on the road a lot of the time. He left me a guitar and a fishing rod. "I arrived at Clayton Lake in 1971 and got turned on to large-mouth bass."

Randall says he did not come to these results on his own, "I had help," he adds. "A number of buddies helped along the way including Dave Fortune whom he took fishing and who caught one of the biggest bass on Clayton Lake in years, a 6 pound-4 oncer. Dave helps in the manufacture process. Another fishing buddy, Ed Atwell went fishing with Randall and after being outfished by his friend tried the Frogwild and was immediately hooked. He helped with patents and trademarks. Rosetta's Rose Bartlett designed the Frogwild graphics and website at www.frogwild.net while Paul Stickley finished off the look of the lure and took responsibility for manufacturing.

Randall credits "Big" Jim McLaughlin (A professional fisherman) of Franktown, who is with him in Prescott on this day with a great deal of support. "Jim is sending the lure to major suppliers in the US and Des Barnes of Aurora in Canadian Sales is marketing Frogwild along with his own product, Crackle.

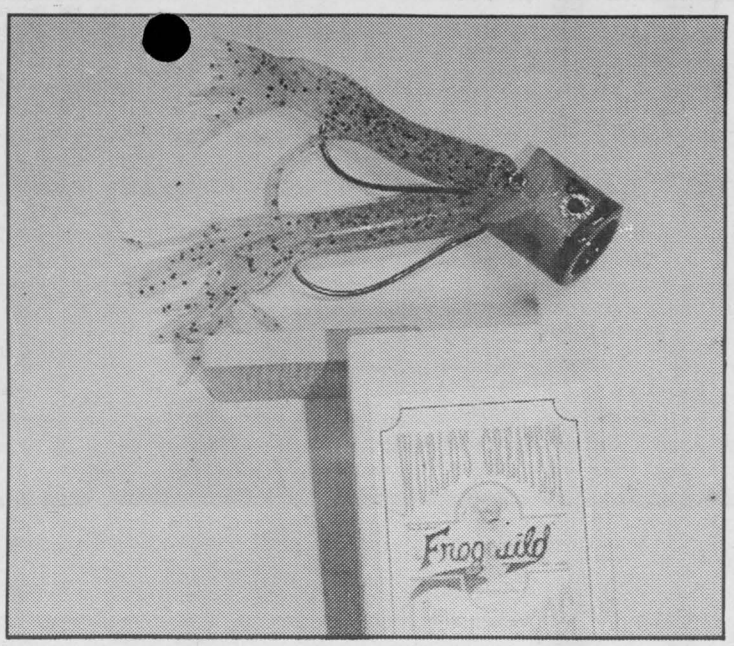
As Randall explains the production process, he says, "It is truly a Lanark project, a real labour of love." He has some financial investors who assisted with funding the set-up. When asked where the name came from he laughs, "it just came to me one day. It is catchy and the old term, "hogwild" stuck in my mind and so we patented it Frogwild.

The lures are made in a workshop on Tatlock Road, assembled from parts that come from a variety of locales, Vermont, Colorado, Quebec, Georgia and China. "The Hatchery" as the plant is known produces some 1000 lures a week. Overtures into the US marketplace have been initiated and when this huge 30 million bass fishermen and women who spend upwards of $60 billion/year on fishing equipment welcomes the Frogwild lure to their tackle boxes, a new, larger manufacturing location will be sought to supply the market.

While bass are hooked on the Frogwild, pikes like them too, so Randall advises the use of heavy line on your rod when you go Frogwild!

Next on the drafting table is a Muskellunge version of the lure, stronger, with ahead three times the size of the bass lure. The prototype is expected to be ready next month. A fly version is in the planning stages as well...this is an ever moving adventure for Prescott and his crew.

"The fishing industry is a new frontier and I'm loving it," says Randall Prescott. "This is something I can put my heart and soul into. Right now is a neat time for me. It is like graduating or getting your first job!"

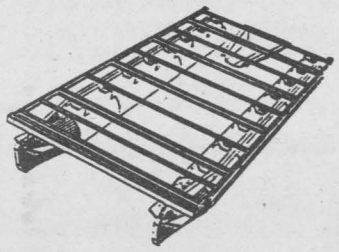


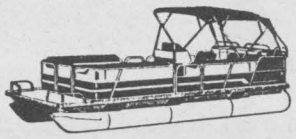
Frogwild a Lure with real frog appeal!

Chieftain Photo by S.L.Johnston

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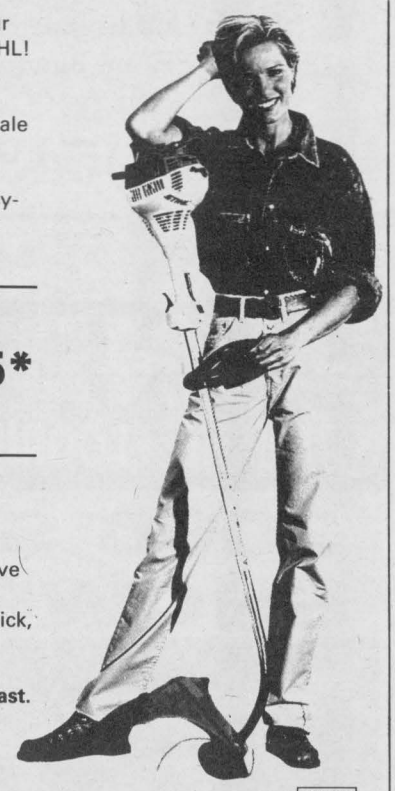
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Summer Clear-Out

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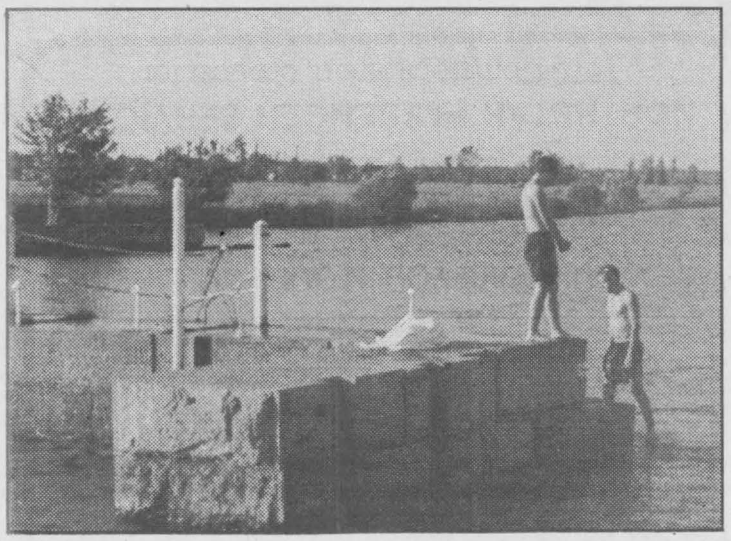
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Children travel well in an RV since they can be busy with video and board games, or by checking the scenery and not having to stop for washroom access enroute helps. Grabbing a snack as the driver continues towards adventure around the next curve allows everyone to enjoy the trip more. hook-ups. Some private owners like destination resorts with recreational facilities like swimming pools and golf courses. National and provincial parks provide natural surroundings for your enjoyment.

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RV camping is fun and provides a lesson in nature for the entire family.



A cooling dip along old locks in Iroquois.

Chieftain photo by S.L Johnston

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FROM FRONT

O.P.P.

quick little machines are often found to be too close to large ocean going ships, trying to catch the wake from the big boats they jump and scamper far too close to the ships and if the rider or operator were to slide off they would be sucked right under without any hope of being saved. The officers remark how this lesson is a tough one to get through to craft owners and operators.

During the years since the new regulations came into effect, the focus for the Marine Unit has been educating, and explaining to boaters what they need before they hit the water. According to the Officers, people are starting to catch on, we are finding really good compliance this year." Among the items necessary to have onboard is a PFD (Personal Floatation Device) or a life jacket, of the right size for every person on board: a manual propelling device (Paddles) or an anchor with more than a 15 metre rope, cable or chain: a bailer or a manual water pump with sufficient hose; a sound signalling device; navigation lights that comply with Collision Regulations if boating at night or in restricted visibility.

Certain items are specific equipment required for vessels up to 6m in length, including a buoyant heaving line longer that 15m (Often not on boats stopped by the OPP for checks) the aforementioned waterproof flashlight or three approved flares-type A,B or C and a Class 5BC fire extinguisher (if the boat has an inboard motor, a fixed fuel tank or fuel burning cooking, heating of refrigerating appliance).

If your vessel is more than 6 and up to 8m, you need even more specific equipment including the buoyant heaving line of more than 15m or one approved lifebuoy with an outside diameter of 610mm or 762mm attached to a buoyant line of more than 15m; one reboarding device (if the freeboard is more than .5m); one Class 5BC fire extinguisher if a powedriven vessel and one Class 5BC fore extinguisher if the vessel is equipped with a fuel burning cooking, heating or refrigerating appliance. All watercrafts have to have a waterproof flashlight on board and six approved flares of Type A,B or C.

There are also things you SHOULD have onboard, including charts for boating area and compass, a first aid kit and manual, basic tool kit and spare parts, an engine maintenance manual, and a VHF radio or a cell phone in case of emergency.

The Marine Unit deals with more than just safety infractions though. Also included in their mandate are boat searches, missing persons investigations, rescue calls on the water and dive team transport. When we spoke with the officers on this Saturday morning early in July there had been only one instance that the dive team had been in the area this year and no rescue call, but last Saturday changed all this as an emergency unfolded at Milles Roch Campsite.

Most of the time the Marine Unit boat is on the water, the concern for the officers is ensuring boater safety. Stopping boaters to ensure they have the necessary equipment and are not disobeying any water regulations keeps the OPP Marine Unit busy, with the hot sun beating down and the St. Lawrence a veritable playground for boaters, canoers, kayakers, sailors and PWC people the season this summer is much more of a challenge for the Unit than last year when it rained so much.

"We are not out there to spoil anyone's fun on the water, just to ensure that all those out there are safe and sober."

No boat is too small or too large to be stopped and checked, although the bigger boats, the cruisers all seem to be outfitted properly while the smaller craft are not always. The larger vessels are holiday types and they have all the gear they could ever need. Smaller fishing boats used occasionally may be missing some of the safety items required to be on the water, simply because they stay close to shore or seldom come out. They learn rapidly that they too must conform to the rules. Most of those who are stopped for a check by the Marine Unit are cordial and aware of what is expected of them as boaters. As they show what they have on board as far as equipment is concerned, they are on their way in no time. Some are less than pleased to be stopped but it is no different from being on the highway and so they endure the questions and present their equipment to show they are indeed ready for boating season. If an infraction occurs the Marine Unit officers are quite understanding and often wait while boaters go a[illegible]e and get their equipment out of their cars or trucks, oversights do happen, afterall.

As permits to operate pleasure craft become mandatory, things should get better for everyone afloat. Knowing the rules and obeying them will ensure a safe boating experience for everyone. Knowing the meaning of all signs and buoys is important as well as the rules of the road on the water.

Overall the St. Lawrence is a safe haven for boaters who attend to the rules of the waterway. The OPP boat is out and on the water as there are three full time officers as well as a student working this summer. The boats go out on 12-hour rotating shifts, seven days a week, so they could be out there any time of the day.

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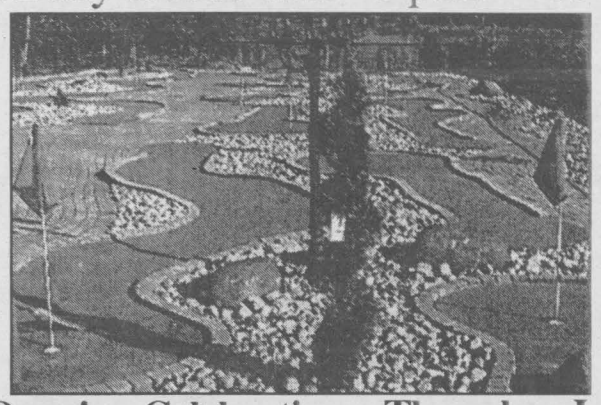
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