

# BOAT

*Pennsylvania*

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80¢

*The Keystone State's Official Boating Magazine*

## BOATING ACCIDENT STATISTICS



**Gene Spori**  
Assistant Executive Director  
Bureau of Waterways  
Pennsylvania Fish Commission

**T**he boating accident statistics for 1985 are in. The boaters of Pennsylvania are winners. In our Commonwealth each year we have typically been saddened by the loss of 25 to 30 people in boating accidents. In 1983, it was 23, in 1984, 21, and in 1985, the lowest ever recorded since we began keeping records: 16.

This is a remarkable statistic, albeit a sad one. In 1968, Pennsylvania won the Kiekhaefer Mercury Award for Boating Safety. There were 18 fatalities, but in 1968, there were less than 100,000 boats registered. In 1985, there were 228,000 registered boats.

We think a number of forces acted to reduce our accidents. We're sure that education, law enforcement activities, the new alcohol and boating laws, as well as the extensive media coverage of the new laws contributed to this decrease.

And let's not overlook the weather as a contributing factor. We had a mild winter with minimal snow runoff. In fact, we were under drought conditions in the central and eastern parts of the state for much of the year. With minimal snow melt, we had lower than usual stream and river flow, and fewer moving water casualties in non-powered crafts. Fewer fatal accidents were caused by hypothermia or dam hydraulics as well.

In the late summer of 1984, a strong "Boating Under the Influence" law was enacted. A great deal of publicity was generated. Our officers underwent rigorous training in the detection of intoxicated operators in the winter of 1984-85. Casual observation indicates that there was a definite downswing in tipsy boat operation last summer. Our officers prosecuted only 15 BUI cases, most of which were an extension of an accident or some other infraction of the law.

Once again this year, our accidents point out the need to continue to stress the use of personal flotation devices in education and publicity programs. Eleven of the 16 fatalities occurred when life preservers were either not used or not available.

Was 1985 a fluke? We hope not. We're hoping that everyone pitches in and continues to keep boating the safe sport that it is.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gene Spori". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in the bottom right corner of the page.

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## Pennsylvania



Technological revolution page 8



Pontoon boat pointers page 30

This month's cover, photographed by Dave Wonderlich, shows a paddler plying the course of the Tiadaghton Elm Classic, the largest two-day event on the East Coast. For more details, see the article that begins on page 29. Paddlers may also want to look over the opportunities outlined in the article on page 26. Do you own a fiberglass boat? You may want to check out the article on page 14 of this issue, and sailors can improve their skills with the material on page 4. Motorboaters could find the information on page 8 and on page 18 quite useful, and all boaters may want to read the sobering perspective in the information beginning on page 12.

**Four Keys to Boatmanship** by John R. Whiting  
Combining the old with much that's new is the secret to becoming an expert ..... 4

**Is the Plug in?** by Virgil Chambers  
A little planning can prevent a big problem ..... 7

**Technology Revolutionizes the Newest Outboards** by Tom Reinke  
Buying a new engine or repowering? Check out this overview of what's new on the market ..... 8

**1985 Boating Accident Statistics** by Joe Greene  
Taking a close look at the past can prevent a mishap in the future ..... 12

**Canoes to the North Pole** by Jim Dale Vickery  
Arctic explorer and Pennsylvanian Robert Peary may not have been first to the North Pole, but a new expedition under way now intends to verify or refute the claim. They're also using canoes in a new way ..... 13

**Quick Ways to Repair Your Fiberglass Canoe** by Cliff Jacobson  
Use these ideas if you'd rather spend your time paddling than puttering with repairs ..... 14

**Tuning Your Outboard** by Gary Diamond  
All those unlucky boaters getting towed off the waterway probably don't know this information ..... 18

**Floating the Spring Fresh in Northwest Pennsylvania** by Mike Bleech  
Spring float trip opportunities abound in the great Northwest ..... 26

**The Tiadaghton Elm Classic** by Dave Wonderlich  
This canoe race, the largest two-day event on the East Coast, offers much to participants and spectators ..... 29

**Pontoon Boat Shopping Tips** by Larry Bihlmeyer  
Getting the most for your money is the gist here ..... 30

**Viewpoint** ..... 2  
**Currents** ..... 22  
**Regulation Roundup** ..... 22  
**Calendar** ..... 23  
**The Law & You** ..... 24

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