

May/June 1987  
80c

# BOAT

## Pennsylvania

The Keystone State's Official Boating Magazine



# VIEWPOINT

## Novelty Craft



**John Simmons**  
Acting Director  
Bureau of Boating  
Pennsylvania Fish Commission

Recently a distributor sent us a video tape of a device that the company is trying to market in America. The question put to us was, "Is it legal on Pennsylvania waters?"

The device is a jet drive boat about seven feet in length, but there's no place for an operator. It comes equipped with a tether about 40 feet long with the controls at the end of the tether. A water skier operates the boat and skis at the same time.

It looked so easy, those young people skimming along, making the small boat ahead do any maneuver they wished. And it sure looked like fun. We had to respond to the distributor that we're sorry but these devices would not be allowed on our waters because, in addition to the skier, there must also be an operator and an observer. You've heard the expression, "It takes three to ski."

At the moment, I'm looking at a full-page ad in a boating magazine, displaying a pair of devices that look like water-borne snowmobiles. These boats are legal to operate in most waters of Pennsylvania. They look like fun, too.

We've mentioned only two of the many unique boats that are coming on the market daily. They are known variously as thrill craft, novelty craft, sea cycles, surf skis, jet skis, pedal paddles, and on and on.

The challenge faced by the authorities is to develop regulations to allow for the safe operation of these boats, and at the same time, impinging minimally on the freedom of the traditional users of our waters.

The process has started. Construction standards are such that those unique boats are stable, safely powered with jets rather than propellers, and well-designed with built-in safety equipment such as fire protection and positive flotation.

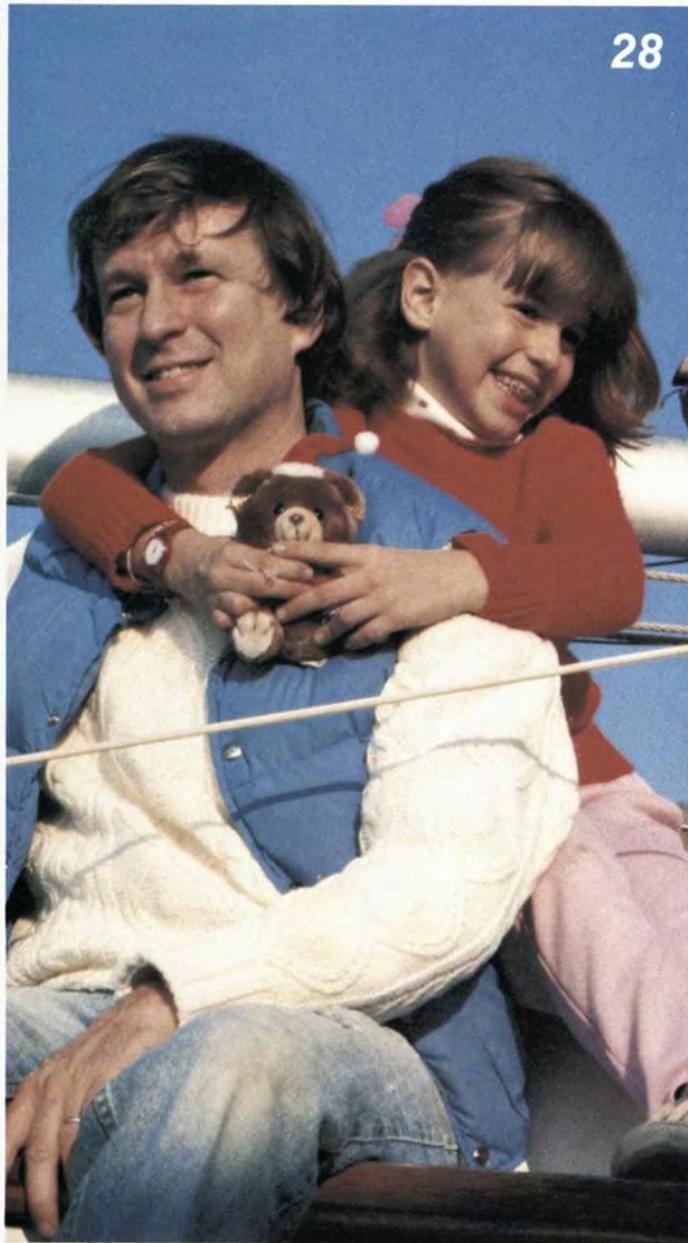
Just as it took imagination and innovation to design these boats, it is going to take imagination and innovation, and most of all courtesy and an open mind, to accommodate these boats on our waters.

Our population, though not as young as it used to be, is much more physically fit. We're taught now that rest and relaxation do not necessarily mean an afternoon on a beach towel, but that rest and relaxation are much more effective if we actively work off our frustrations. That's why bicycling, running, alpine skiing and swimming have increased in popularity. Even we of the sedentary set feel as if we should get out and walk regularly.

So our toys, even our water toys, are becoming more action-oriented. As regulators, we'll have to stay with it.

And we're doing something about it. This June, the Fish Commission is hosting the Northeast States Boating Administrators Conference in Gettysburg. The theme of that conference has to do with unique boats. We'll have water demonstrations, including hands-on operation, so that our regulators can see and feel for themselves the fun and pleasure that these new toys can bring.

*John Simmons*



**Pennsylvania Fish Commission**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| T. T. (Ted) Metzger, Jr.<br>President<br>Johnstown | Leonard A. Green<br>Carlisle<br>Ross J. Huhn<br>Saltsburg<br>Calvin J. Kern<br>Whitehall<br>Leon Reed<br>Honesdale<br>J. Wayne Yorks<br>Benton |
| Joan R. Plumly<br>Vice President<br>Jenkintown     |  |
| Marilyn A. Black<br>Meadville                      |  |
| David Coe<br>State College                         |  |
| Mark Faulkner<br>Boalsburg                         |  |

**Boating  
Advisory Board**

- Leroy Guccini  
Chairman  
Greentown  
Clayton Buchanan  
Pittsburgh  
Helen B. Lange  
Sharpsville  
Thaddeus Piotrowski  
Bloomsburg  
Edward J. Rogowski  
Holland

**The cover**

This issue's front cover, photographed by Joe Workosky, shows a youngster enjoying a free ride on Raystown Lake, Huntingdon County. Speaking of enjoyment, if you are a canoeist, see how much you really know about your sport by taking the test that begins on page 4. Water skiers will want to check out page 30, and motorboaters may want to scan the article that begins on page 22. Buying a boat? Don't until you read the feature beginning on page 8. For entertaining, informative reading, please see pages 12, 16, and 28.

**Test Your Canoe IQ by Cliff Jacobson**

How much do you *really* know about canoes and canoeing? ..... 4

**Systematic Boat Buying by Stephen A. Knox**

Taking one step at a time in this process lets you get the right boat at the best price..... 8

**The Boating Advisory Board by John Simmons**

Who are the members of this group, and on what subjects do they advise the Commission? ..... 11

**Rowboats... Remember Them?**

by Mike Bleech

You'd be surprised how many different kinds of rowboats there are, and just what is a "rowboat," anyway?..... 12

**Kids Page..... 15**

**Dave Bierig, Erie Sailmaker by Jack Grazier**

Mr. Bierig combines old-world workmanship with computer-age technology in this ancient art..... 16

**Hard Knocks Boat Operating Lessons**

by Art Michaels

Read this and maybe you won't have to go through some of these paces..... 22

**Shenango Lake—Boater's Delight**

by Thad Bukowski

The author reveals all about this Mercer County gem..... 25

**The Last Sail of the Season by Jack Grazier**

There are some family sailing experiences—then there are others ..... 28

**Water Skiing Basics by John M. Cornish II**

You're a water skier, but your boating guests aren't. Introducing them to your sport can be fun and painless ..... 30

- Viewpoint..... 2**  
**Currents..... 19**  
**The Law & You..... 19**  
**Calendar..... 20**

Boat Pennsylvania (ISSN0888-1561) is published bimonthly by the Pennsylvania Fish Commission, 3532 Walnut Street, Harrisburg, PA 17109. © 1987. Subscription rates: one year, \$4; single copies are 80 cents each. Second class postage is paid at Harrisburg, PA. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to: Boat PA Circulation, Pennsylvania Fish Commission, P.O. Box 1673, Harrisburg, PA 17105-1673. For subscription and change of address, use above address. Send all other correspondence to: The Editor, Boat Pennsylvania, P.O. Box 1673, Harrisburg, PA 17105-1673. Editorial contributions are welcomed, but must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Submissions are handled with care, but the publisher assumes no responsibility for the return or safety of submissions in his possession or in transit. The authors' views, ideas, and advice expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the opinion or official position of the Pennsylvania Fish Commission or its staff.



**S**pring is in the air! A wonderland of canoeing fun waited patiently for the ice to clear and now the rivers flow freely again. Some canoe folk will test their mettle by challenging the whitewater of spring runoff. Others await warmer weather and the joys of a lazy float with family and friends. And any time is a good time just to get out and paddle—lakes, rivers, mill ponds, no matter. It's not important when or where you canoe. Time on the water is what counts!

Unfortunately, all the dangers inherent to canoesport peak in spring. Each year, we hear about canoeists who inadvertently paddled over falls or dams because they lacked the skills to avoid them. The hazards of ice-cold floodwater, powerful currents, strainers and sweepers are thoroughly documented in every canoeing text, and at least once a year in every boating magazine. But people don't pay much attention. Accidents continue to happen.

Then there's the matter of inappropriate equipment. For example, lean, fast cruising canoes have no business on tough whitewater trips, and skittish slalom boats are plainly out of place on open-water cruises. Canoe designs are highly specific; each has a reason for being. "A canoe is not a canoe;" one model cannot serve all purposes.

Here's a simple quiz that tests your knowledge of canoes and canoeing. A perfect score won't guarantee your safety or even make you a more efficient paddler. Only skill and the right equipment can do that.

**1.** True or false: It's safe to run a dam in an open canoe as long as it's a low-head dam with a drop of less than two feet.

**2.** Ahead is a rapid with waves that are big enough to swamp your open canoe. The best procedure for getting through them is to: a) paddle powerfully forward, b) allow the canoe to drift through the waves at river speed, c) backpaddle.

**3.** You're canoeing a river in early spring. Just ahead, the river turns sharply to the right, and you observe much floodwater debris piled on the outside curve. To avoid the debris and negotiate the curve, you must: a) turn your canoe smartly toward the right shore and paddle! b) turn your canoe smartly toward the left shore and paddle! c) sideslip the canoe to the safety of the right inside bend. d) turn the canoe approximately 30 degrees to the current, tail-tucked toward the right, inside bend. Hold this angle as you paddle powerfully backwards.

**4.** Your canoe grounds on a rock and spins broadside to the current. To save the day you should: a) lean downstream; perhaps the canoe will slide off the rock. b) lean upstream; perhaps the canoe will slide off the rock, c) do not lean the canoe! You'll capsize it for sure!