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# BOAT

Pennsylvania



The Keystone State's Official Boating Magazine



# VIEWPOINT

## **Still a Bargain**

What does \$4 buy today? A meal at a fast food restaurant. Four gallons of gas. A half-case of Coke. A fishing lure. For \$6 you can buy a movie ticket, a one-day admission to the community swimming pool or a bleacher seat at a minor league baseball game.

What else does \$4 and \$6 buy? It buys a one-year registration for your boat. And what do you get for that \$4 and \$6? For starters you get the free use of over 270 boat launching sites. You get the use of 50 Fish Commission-owned lakes. You get free launching on 54 state park lakes and the use of 12 Corps of Engineers impoundments.

To make your day safe, you get the services of 71 waterways conservation officers and over 300 deputies. You get special boating regulations to control boat activity. You get over 1,000 aids to navigation to help you know and understand the rules and regulations and to know where the danger spots are.

Want your children to learn about boating safety? Try one of the 200 safety programs conducted each year in school districts as part of the Boating and Water Safety Program. How about sending your child through one of the many camp and summer programs taught by Commission volunteers, seasonal employees and full-time staff? Last year over 2,000 children were certified in one of these programs.

Are you concerned about the environment? Last year the Bureau of Law Enforcement successfully closed 381 cases against polluters of our waterways resulting in \$342,595 in fines.

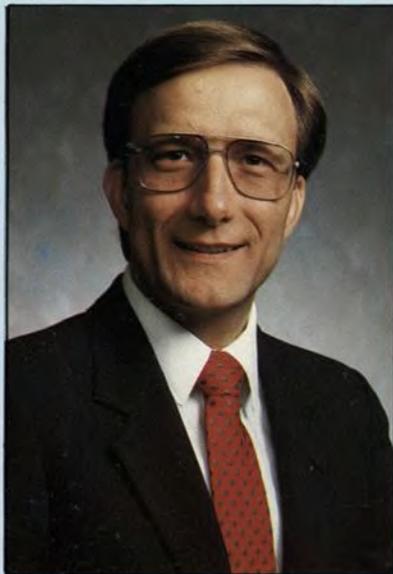
Get in trouble? Perhaps you will be rescued by one of the over 300 fire companies and water rescue squads trained by the Fish Commission. Or maybe you will attend one of the safety programs led by these individuals so that you won't get into a tough situation in the first place. Perhaps your son or daughter will be rescued by one of these trained individuals.

The average cost of a boat, motor and trailer in Pennsylvania is about \$5,000. Maybe your registration and the requirements for display of number prevented your boat from being stolen. Registration is cheap insurance. How much is your boat worth to you?

Pennsylvania has over 200,000 acres of boatable waters, 5,000 miles of boatable streams and rivers, and 800 square miles of Lake Erie waters. It registered 265,000 boats last year, ranking 14th in the nation. It has one of the few totally independent boating agencies that does not receive general fund revenues in support of its programs. Yet it has one of the lowest registration fees in the country. The present registration fees were established by the Legislature in 1963, when the Boat Law was first enacted. They have never been changed despite repeated attempts to update these fees to account for the effects of inflation.

Isn't it time that the boaters of the Commonwealth get behind their own Commission and support adequate funding of their programs? I don't think that anyone can say that he does not get his money's worth from registration fees.

What do you think? Are you content with 1963 funding for 1990s programs, or are you willing to commit yourself to paying for 1990s programs with 1990s dollars? The future of these programs depends on your answer.



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*John F. Simmons*

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### The covers

This issue's front cover shows two-time world champion jet skier Jeff Jacobs plying a slalom course on the Susquehanna River at Harrisburg last July. The photo was taken by Chris Lauber. The kayaker of the back cover has his hands full on the Youghiogheny River in Ohio State Park. The action was photographed by Scott Ridgeway. If powerboating interests you, don't miss the features on pages 4, 14, and 27. On page 8, history resting in the depths of Conneaut Lake comes alive. Water skiers will want to turn right to page 24, and sailors would appreciate the family effort described in the story on page 11. Finally, paddlers can find immediately useful ideas beginning on page 20.



*The Three Rivers Regatta is one of Pittsburgh's most popular events. The four-day summer extravaganza attracts thousands to the confluence of the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio rivers.*