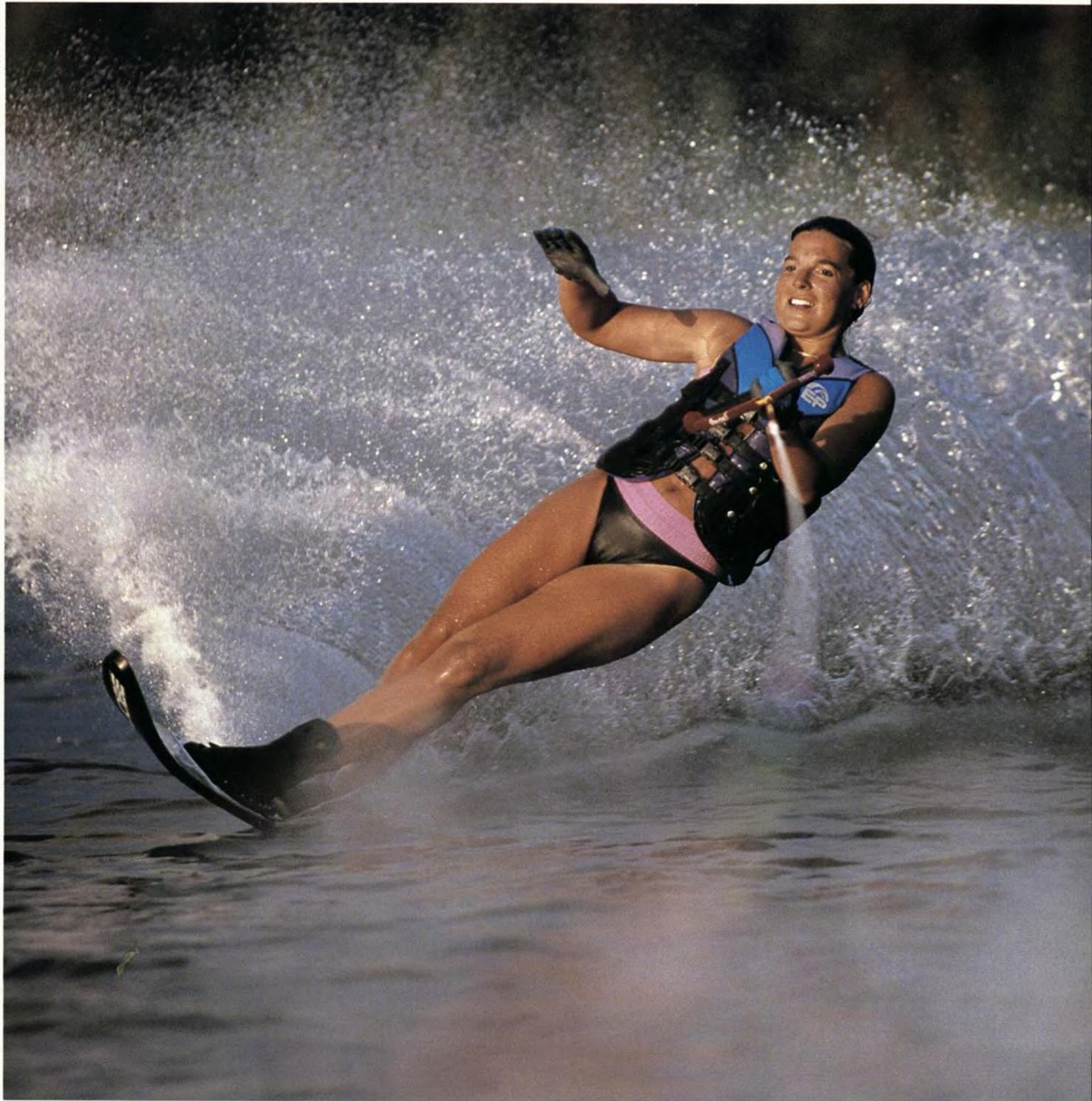


BOAT

Pennsylvania

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VIEWPOINT

Think Spring

When most people think of boating, they think of summer. The sun, the swimsuits, the warm water—this is what boating is all about. Others, however, think of the crowds, the noise and the bugs. For these people, spring is the best time of the year.

The sun starts to rise higher in the sky and begins to warm the earth. Temperatures begin to climb. Cabin fever has taken its toll and it's time to get out. And why not? With proper preparation, there is no reason why early season boating cannot be enjoyed.

Fishermen have long known that cool weather is the best time of year for fishing. On many state waters you can fish for walleye until March 14. Bass is open on lakes and ponds until April 15. On April 15, the focus shifts to trout. Walleye come back in season on May 5. Panfish season is open year-round on most waters and can provide many hours of enjoyable fishing and boating.

Dedicated paddlers know that the high water of spring freshets provides a good opportunity to get out and stretch muscles that have been neglected during the winter. Paddling a stream early in the season is a refreshing change from ordinary trips. Winter flows have washed away traces of man's intrusion and in most areas you can paddle for miles without seeing anyone else but the people in your party. Properly outfitted and paddling with a group in case assistance is needed, a trip down your favorite summer stream can be an entirely different experience in the spring.

The best sailing of the year can occur following the fresh breezes of a spring day. Sure it's chilly, but it is also invigorating. The cool breezes blowing across a warming lake can act as a tonic, waking the youth in all of us, sweeping away the doldrums of winter and preparing us for a new season.

Spring boaters can enjoy their sport only if they are properly equipped. Dry suits are available for a relatively small cost compared to the comfort and safety they provide. The dry suit keeps the wearer and his clothing absolutely dry. Coupled with adequate layers of some of the new high-tech clothing, a boater can comfortably participate in his sport in some adverse conditions. A personal flotation device, of course, is essential to a safe outing. But it won't do any good tucked under the seat. Find one that fits and wear it.

Spring boating can be a welcome extension of an all too short Pennsylvania boating season, but it is also the most dangerous time for boaters. Cold water can easily sap strength from anyone unfortunate to fall in. Even the cool breezes can take their toll. Combined, the result can be deadly.

Most fatal boating accidents occur in early spring to people who are not adequately prepared. Don't challenge waters that are beyond your skills. Spring is not the time to experiment. Have the proper equipment. Be alert for changes in the weather and most importantly, use common sense. If you say to yourself, "I don't think I should be out here," you probably shouldn't.

With adequate planning, preparation and equipment, spring can be a wonderful time for boating. Go out and enjoy.



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The covers

This issue's front and back covers, both photographed by Dave Brownell, hint at the fun and excitement on the water that await us this season. Look at the face of the water skier on the front cover. See the exhilaration? The delight? You can capture the same spirit as you bring out your water skis from storage, launch your boat on its 1990 maiden voyage, or silently paddle a spring freshet. The articles in this issue can help. For important lowdown on water skiing, please turn to page 4. Paddlers can find practical ideas on pages 18 and 23, and sailors should check out page 8. If you trailer a boat, see page 15, and all boaters have a stake in the information that begins on page 27.

Water Skiing

Water skiing is a fun sport that can be enjoyed by a family or a group of friends. It is an exciting hobby or can be a competitive sport. There is a wealth of equipment and opportunities available. In a 1987 survey of Pennsylvania residents, an estimated one-quarter of all Pennsylvania residents age 12 and older participated in recreational boating activities at least once in the year before the study. Of these boaters, 28 percent went water skiing at least once in the year before the study. Water skiing is one of the fastest growing water sports in Pennsylvania.

Kneeboarding, tubing and activities similar to traditional water skiing have also become popular because they are easy to learn. Tubes and kneeboards can be towed behind a boat at a slow speed. Falls are softer and beginners are less hesitant to try these new activities.

The sport has been relatively free of serious accidents, considering the number of participants involved. Keep it that way by following the safety rules and regulations!

