

# BOAT

**Pennsylvania**



The Keystone State's Official Boating Magazine

Summer 1991

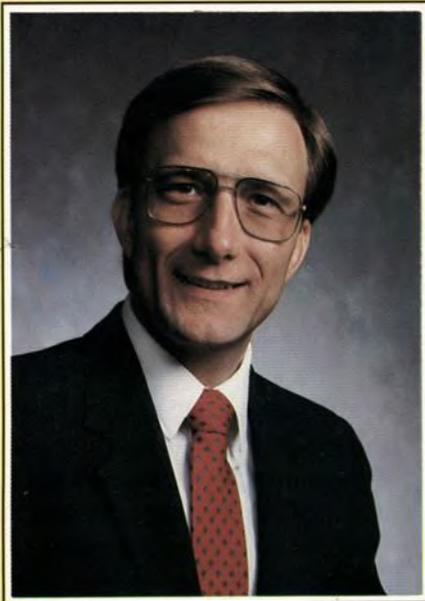
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# Viewpoint



## Know Before You Go



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

The theme of the 34th annual National Safe Boating Week, celebrated June 2 through June 8, 1991, was "Know Before You Go." The Pennsylvania Fish Commission is proud to continue its support of this national event. We hope its message was received by the citizens of this Commonwealth.

In 1980 some 184,000 boats were registered in Pennsylvania. In 1990 some 286,000 boats were registered. This growth has created a need for additional education efforts to permit the estimated two million Pennsylvania boaters to enjoy their sport safely. Despite the huge increase in the number of boats using our waters, the number of fatal boating accidents has been declining. In 1989, 13 people lost their lives as a result of boating accidents. Unfortunately, in 1990, 27 people died. This year we've recorded six deaths through early May.

There are many reasons for boating accidents. Some people don't know enough about boating safety and others simply ignore the rules. People forget that it is as dangerous to drink while boating as it is to drink and drive an automobile. Many boaters have never known why it is dangerous to overload a boat or even what constitutes an overloaded boat. They speed. They forget their life preservers or carry only worn-out cushions rather than one of the new vest models.

Spectacular boat collisions receive the most media attention. More people who are involved in boating accidents in Pennsylvania, however, are just out fishing or floating lazily down their favorite streams. Boating accidents occur because people find themselves in the water unexpectedly. Often, a little preparation and attention to safety is all that would have been required to prevent many tragic deaths in the past—and in the future.

In proclaiming National Safe Boating Week, President Bush urged boaters to accept the responsibility to "Know Before You Go." Every boat operator should know his craft inside and out. All boaters should know and obey the rules and courtesies of navigation. They should be aware of the environment in which they operate and the weather for the day on the water. Boats should be equipped with proper safety equipment. Equipment should be of sufficient quantity, quality and type to meet the needs of the boaters and the conditions under which the boat is operating and not just the minimum needed to comply with the law. Safety should be the primary concern of all boaters.

In proclaiming safe boating week in Pennsylvania, Governor Casey encouraged all boaters to make use of the many boating safety education courses that are available. Public awareness of safe boating concepts is the key to boating safety.

By emphasizing safety first, we can put tragic boating accidents behind us and enjoy more fully the beauty and excitement of the open water. The Bureau of Boating joins the President and Governor Casey in encouraging all boaters to have a safe and enjoyable boating season. It is our hope that someday we can become the first major state to say that no fatal boating accidents occurred. With your help this can become a reality. Let's make every week Safe Boating Week.

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### The cover

This issue's front cover, photographed by Tom King, shows the fun we can have this summer. Begin your trips using the launch ramp skills outlined on page 21, and find a few new water skiing spots in the article on page 26. To enjoy your paddling more, see page 8, and to protect your investment adequately, read the article on insurance on page 22. For a remarkable bit of history, on page 12 read the account of a canoe race held in 1933 that surprised a lot of people.