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BY ANDY ADAMS

HOME IS WHERE The Equity Is

In this issue of *Boating Industry Canada*, you will see positive editorial on all fronts, including an innovative and uniquely Canadian trawler yacht from Nova Scotia. Read about the continued export success of Kropf Industrial and Suzuki who has introduced four excellent new 4-stroke outboards in the popular mid-horse power range. Perhaps most significantly, Georges Jalbert continues to lead Mercury Canada into new expanded facilities.

This is 'go forward' stuff.

In the Forum column on page 30, *Boating Industry Canada* asked several industry leaders to comment on market conditions. We got a generally cautious but positive view of the coming season.

So, will Canadian consumers continue to buy new boats?

Probably nothing else has the power to slow the boat market down like declining real estate values.

For individual consumers, home is where the equity is and when their home starts to lose value, those consumers start to lose equity. They stop feeling rich. They slow their discretionary spending. Consumer confidence levels drop. Non-essential purchases get put off.

Within the last few weeks both Reuters and Canadian Press carried stories about the US and Canadian real estate markets respectively.

Reuters said sales of previously owned U.S. homes slipped (in April) and the backlog of unsold properties hit a record high. The data suggested that the US housing market's downturn still has a long way to run.

American home resales fell 1 per cent in April to a 4.89 million-unit annual rate according to the National Association of Realtors said. The stock of unsold homes surged 10.5 per cent to 4.55 million units leading economists to warn of further market woes ahead.

"The increase in unsold inventory suggests that the housing downturn will continue on through this year and well into next," said Moody's Economy.com chief economist Mark Zandi.

Also, the report showed the median home price in April was down 8 per cent from a year ago to \$202,300. It was the second-largest price decline on record, following the biggest drop in February.

Things are different in Canada.

Home resales have fallen for four consecutive months and the inflation-adjusted average resale home price registered its first quarterly decline in seven years during the first three months of this year, Scotia Economics noted in a May report.

"We expect overall sales volumes in 2008 to total about 15 per cent below last year's record levels, and home prices to increase on average by about five per cent," said Scotiabank economist Adrienne Warren.

"Price gains should slow further in 2009 with the return of a balanced market for the first time in a decade."

Warren went on to add that Canada's real estate market is not overbuilt and households are not excessively indebted.

This is pretty good news in our opinion. Considering that our real estate equity should hold up or even increase in 2008, I'm betting on a solid sales season this summer.

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Suzuki Powers 4-Ward With 4 New Outboards For 2009

By IAN GILSON

In May, Suzuki Marine invited journalists from across North America to assemble at a prestigious resort in Key Largo, Florida to witness two important unveilings. The first was the launch of a new-generation of mid-range 4-stroke outboards; their compact, lightweight and fuel-efficient 70, 80 & 90-hp engines. The second was the introduction of a new 100-hp outboard bringing new powerplant choices for pontoons, center consoles, runabouts and more. Better yet, the media would have an opportunity to test these new outboards on a variety of boats 16-24 ft. in length on beautiful Biscayne Bay.

At the opening reception, Larry Vandiver, Marketing Director for Suzuki Marine, heralded these new outboards as evidence of Suzuki's aggressive commitment to introducing a minimum of 2



Smaller, lighter, more fuel efficient DF70 outboard.

new outboards each year to the boating public for the foreseeable future. In fact, this commitment has been exceeded both last year and this with the introduction of four new offerings. In detailing the numerous innovations through "ground up" (re-)design of these models, Suzuki reported the following.

70, 80 & 90-HP MODELS

Len Hughes, Assistant National Manager – Marine Sales for Canada, stated that, "This new family of Suzuki 4-strokes – which includes their first ever 80-hp model – will bring a new level of performance, fuel economy and reliability to an important segment of the Canadian boating market."

To make these new motors lighter and more compact, Suzuki engineers began with a new 91.7 cu. in. inline 4-

Brand new addition to the 2009 Suzuki 4-Stroke line-up.

cylinder Dual Overhead Cam (DOHC) powerhead with 4 valves per cylinder. By incorporating an offset drive shaft and a two-stage gear reduction, Suzuki moved the engine's center of gravity forward and reduced the overall dimensions of the outboard.

The new DF90, for example, is almost three inches shorter than Suzuki's previous 90-hp 4-stroke and more than nine inches shorter than some competitive models at that power rating. This compact design means the new DF70, DF80 and DF90 will look better, fit better and balance better on a wide range of popular craft. Better balance also means reduced engine vibration and greater directional stability for a more enjoyable boating experience. A new lightweight cowl and lower unit help trim these motors down to a target weight of around 341 lbs. Suzuki claims this new DF90 is the lightest 4-stroke outboard in its power class.

Suzuki's new 4-cylinder DOHC 16-valve powerhead is designed to combine compact size with best-in-class performance. A new under cowl airflow design helps the engine "breathe" better, to optimize fuel/air ratio at all engine speeds. Suzuki's two-stage gear reduction system delivers the torque to swing large diameter, high-pitch propellers designed for the DF70, DF80 and DF90, for more thrust where it matters most. In addition, Suzuki's new streamlined gear case (first seen on Suzuki's flagship DF300 V6) reduces drag by 36-percent resulting in faster acceleration and greater speed. The Suzuki DF70, DF80 and DF90 also feature a powerful 2.59:1 final drive ratio, delivering the perfect balance of low-end muscle and top-end performance on a wide range of fresh and saltwater boats.

Suzuki's proven multi-point sequential electronic fuel injection and solid-

DF100 – Suzuki North America's first 100-HP Outboard.



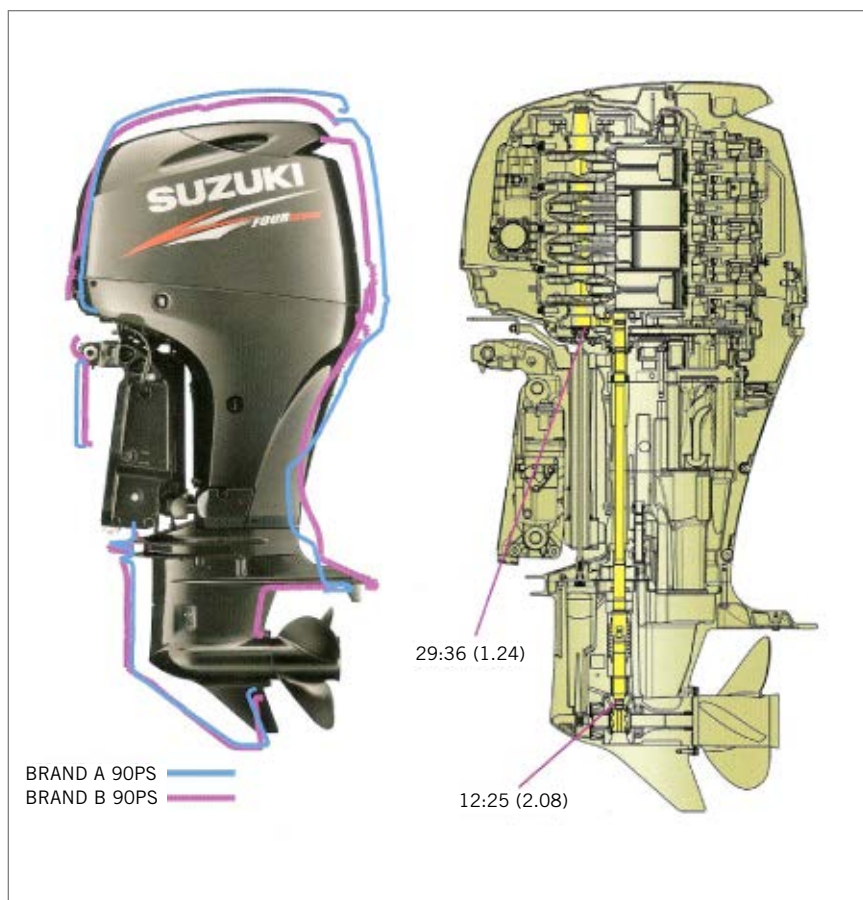
state ignition combine to optimize fuel efficiency across the performance range. This trio of new outboards also incorporates Suzuki's new Lean Burn Control Technology – a feature that predicts fuel needs according to operating conditions and allows the engine to operate on a very lean air/fuel ratio. This feature provides a significant improvement in fuel economy – especially at cruising speeds. Also contributing to superior fuel efficiency is a newly designed oil pump that delivers greater mechanical efficiency and has improved the internal hydrodynamics of the lubrication system

allowing oil to move through the system with less resistance. The new DF 70, 80 & 90-hp outboards have each earned the California Air Resources Board (CARB) 2008 Three Star "Ultra Low Emissions" sticker.

Contributing to lower maintenance costs and reduced downtime, Suzuki's new DF 70, 80 & 90-hp outboards are the only outboards in this class equipped with oil-bathed, self-adjusting timing chains, instead of timing belts. To minimize accidental damage during trailering, Suzuki has also included a user-adjustable tilt limit switch.



[PROPULSION]



100-HP MODEL

Suzuki's new DF100 outboard is available in both 20 and 25-inch shaft versions making it the ideal choice for a wide-variety of craft. Its innovations begin with a 118.9 cu. in. inline 4-cylinder Dual Overhead Cam (DOHC) powerhead with four-valves-per-cylinder. Suzuki's proven digital multi-point electronic fuel injection – controlled by a powerful computer receiving input from a network of sensors throughout the engine – optimizes performance under any engine load, temperature or altitude.

Performance-oriented features include the DF100's tuned and water-cooled intake system and water-cooled fuel rail, to squeeze the most power and the most miles from every litre of fuel. Suzuki's race-proven 4-into-2-into-1 exhaust system is tuned for superior performance and Suzuki has used a 2.59:1 final drive ratio to accommodate larger, higher pitched propellers for a superior combination of low-end power and top-end speed.

Similar to its 70, 80 & 90-hp cousins, the DF100 incorporates an offset driveshaft and two-stage cam drive to reduce exterior dimensions and offers better balance on the transom, translating into reduced engine vibration and improved performance.

Also, like its cousins, the DF100 incorporates an oil-bathed, self-adjusting timing belt to help provide rock-solid reliability. Further enhancing reliability over the long run are features like Suzuki's one-piece, forged crankshaft and durable stainless steel water pump. An air-cooled, high-output 40-amp alternator keeps its cool as it keeps plenty of juice flowing to power the sophisticated marine electronics, pumps, lights and accessories found on today's fishing and family boats.

PERFORMANCE TESTING

As test day dawned, and buoyed by a light breakfast (so as not to exceed maximum load limits on each craft), the media arrived at the dock, chose our

craft and headed out onto the bay. While the two, three and later 4-foot waves made it progressively more dangerous to venture out in all but the largest of the test boats, I offer the following observations of the outboards' performance from the testing I was able to perform.

I was immediately taken by the whisper quiet engines which, at idle, measured a mere 74-76 db at the transom. I had to be reminded that these boats had been fitted with new generation ignitions that need only be turned and released. (No need to hold the key until the engine springs to life.)

Suzuki's claim to vibration reduction was certainly evident as none could be seen nor felt. Shift and throttle response were immediate both in forward and reverse. Overall, in testing 3 of the engines, I was suitably impressed.

As activity on test day began to wane, my curiosity peeked as to why Suzuki would introduce four new outboard engines each separated by a mere 10 ponies. Not having seen boats in Canada with stated maximum horsepower ratings of either 80 or 100 also caused me to wonder as to Suzuki's marketing strategy. These questions were suitably answered: Suzuki not only wishes to provide maximum consumer choice within North America, but also wishes to gain a competitive advantage in Europe and Russia, geographic locations where maximum ratings of 80 and 100-hp are more commonplace.

One can't help but be impressed by a company that, despite rising gasoline prices and other economic uncertainties of our time, surges ahead committing to introduce new outboards each year. Their hope, I'm sure, is that these economic impediments are causing their competitors pause and that the time is ripe for Suzuki Marine to vault even higher in the top five rankings. As these new generation outboards hit dealer shelves this October and November, they may just experience a late season surge by those wishing to hit the water for the '09 season with Suzuki's mid-range best and brightest. We at *Boating Industry Canada* wish Suzuki every success with their new line-up. ●



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Credit: Neil Leblanc

with Style and Substance

BY GLEN CAIRNS

Commercial yards in Nova Scotia are adapting to the evolving marine marketplace by building serious long-range cruisers on heavy-duty workboat hulls. Here is one of those stories.

Downeast style yachts have always been popular with a certain segment of the boating community, many of them ex-sailors who appreciate the boat's classic lines. Most people picture a "downeast" style yacht as something derived from a New England lobster boat – a high lean bow and a sweeping sheer to a low stern. The most elegant evolution of this would probably be the Hinckley "picnic boats". A large number

of excellent cruising boats have been based on this model, but they do have limitations. The bow is usually narrow, limiting accommodation forward and the low freeboard aft can make for very tall cabin structures.

Moving further downeast to the Maritime provinces, the lobster yacht is a more recent development. For many boaters the conversion of an old lobster boat to recreational use was just a matter of economics. Many of these converted workboats provided their owners with great cruising at a very small cost. They ranged from tidy conversions to some rather awkward looking boats with the proverbial chicken coop on the stern deck. Adding a flying bridge and stabili-

Fishing 100 miles off Nova Scotia in November and December is no picnic (and no place for a "picnic boat"), so these lobster boats have to be tough and seaworthy.

ty was sometimes an issue. With the coming of fibreglass fishing boats, the wide variety of local boat styles have evolved into two major and very different types of boat.

What is commonly called the "Northumberland" style is found mostly along the north shore of Nova Scotia, on Prince Edward Island and along the gulf coast of New Brunswick. The New Brunswick boats have a distinctive flared bow while those from



PEI tend to have less flare, with a high bow and pronounced powderhorn sheer line. These boats are well-suited to conversion to yachts along the lines of the Maine boats. The other type is the “Cape Islander” more commonly just called a “Cape Boat”, or “Novi” by the Americans.

Quite a few recreational versions of the Northumberland boats have been launched in the last twenty years or so. These vary from very commercial style boats with minimal yachting extras, to some finished to a very high standard. Big Pond Boatyard on the Bras d’Or Lakes has turned out several yachts using a Northumberland style hull that rivals the best from the New England yards.

In Nova Scotia, the distinctive Cape Islander style boats originated on and around Cape Island in the early days of powered fishing boats. As engines became more powerful, the hull of the Cape Boat became larger and heavier. Today, some of these lobster boats and inshore draggers are really enormous. A special set of circumstances unique to the area of southwest Nova Scotia led to the development of extremely wide and heavy designs.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) put a limit on the overall length of the boats at 44’ 11”. As a result, fishermen have pushed the builders to produce wider boats to accommodate the loads needed. Since the local lobster season begins in November and the boats go well offshore for the best fishing grounds, it is necessary to have a boat

As the hull emerges from the mould shop the huge volume becomes apparent.

that can carry an enormous load of traps on “dumping day” (the first day of the season) as there’s just not time to make several trips. Fishing 100 miles off Nova Scotia in November and December is no picnic (and no place for a “picnic boat”), so these boats have to be tough and seaworthy. This has resulted in boats with a length to beam ratio of 2 to 1 or even more – not too different from what you would expect in a catamaran.

Laurie McGowan is a yacht designer based in the beautiful town of Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia. Laurie has reworked these commercial hulls for recreational use and admits that while the shape is not in accordance with some accepted principles of small vessel design, they work and work well. It takes some getting used to but once you get aboard, the incredible volume of the hull becomes apparent. The accommodation possibilities are endless. Unlike many boats with a wonderful open layout, these boats can really go to sea. This isn’t just hyperbole. You just have to talk with the fishermen who operate these boats to see how much they trust them. One of the first boats to be launched as a trawler yacht using the superwide hull was the “Cape Sable Grace”. She was designed by Laurie and built by Wade Goulden and his crew at Apple Island Marine of Shelburne, NS.

Laurie has further refined the design



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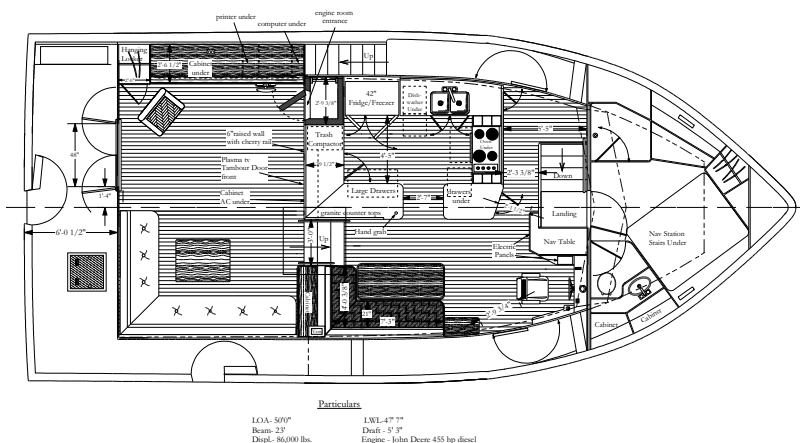
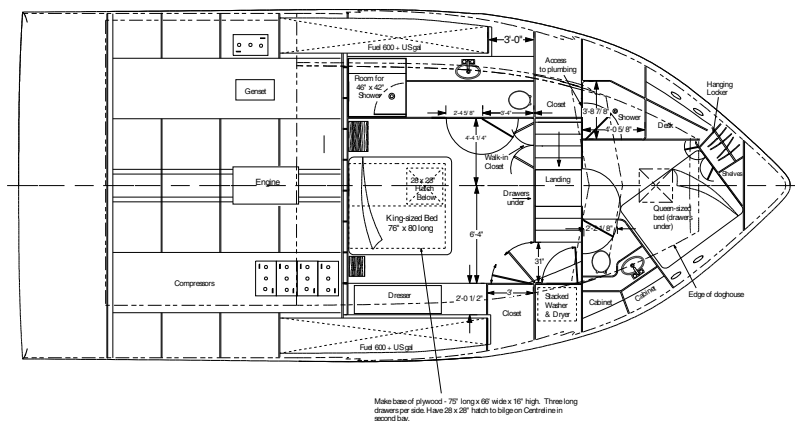
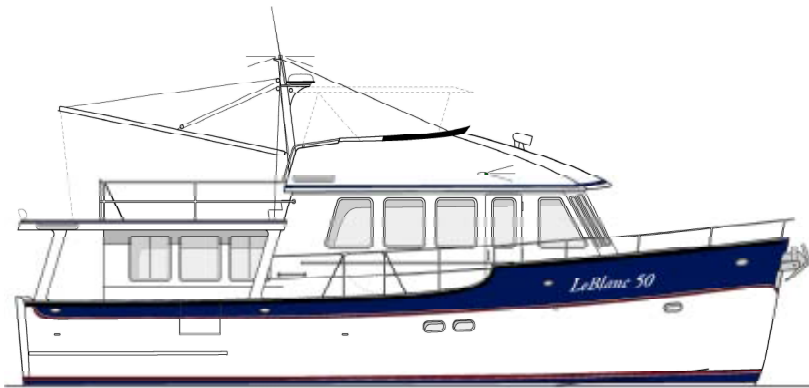
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[MANUFACTURING & FABRICATION]

and styling with the latest trawler yacht under construction by Leblanc Brothers Boatbuilding of Wedgeport, NS. For this project he has provided profile and layout drawings and done all weight calculations. Laurie says that given the builder's extensive experience with this type of hull, very little construction detail is required. The main purpose of the drawings is to show the owner what has been agreed to. Not restricted by DFO rules, the hull has been lengthened to 50' on deck. The other dimensions are 47'7" on the water; beam 23' and a draught of 5'3". Power is provided by a 12.5 liter John Deere diesel of about 450 hp, giving a cruising speed of 8 or 9 knots. The completed boat will likely need trimming ballast since she won't be carrying the same load as a commercial version. However, displacement would be almost 45 tons! To put this in perspective, a Northumberland style lobster yacht would displace less than 15 tons.

Leblanc Brothers Boatbuilding has had a great deal of experience with this type of vessel. In addition to commercial boats they have done a number of smaller yachts from 29 to 42 feet. The woodwork on the boats is all being done to a high standard and the result is a very handsome boat. In this case, the Trawler Yacht name actually means more than just style; there really is substance. Times are tough in the commercial fishing industry and this means the builders in the Maritimes are increasingly looking to the recreational market. Neil Leblanc knows that economic uncertainty has affected the recreational market as well, but this trawler yacht reaches a distinct niche market. Small yards don't need volume. Leblanc Brothers can complete one of these yachts in a year without having to expand. This means they keep a steady workforce, but don't over expand and leave themselves vulnerable to a sudden downturn. Skilled workers are in short supply in the boatbuilding industry. The goal of Leblanc and other builders is to keep their workforce at home. While the lure of the western oil-fields has taken a toll, many workers would rather have the lifestyle they know best in tight knit communities like



Specifications

LOA	50'
LWL	47'7"
Beam	23'
Draught	5'3"
Displacement	86,000 lb.
Engine	John Deere 6125

www.leblancboatbuilding.com

the Acadian village of Wedgeport. The key for most of the small boatyards in the Maritimes is to build on what they already know. These yards have been around for many years and I have every expectation they will be around for many more. ●

The LeBlanc 50

Let's take a quick tour of the LeBlanc 50 starting on the expansive flying bridge that had to be built in a separate shop due to height restrictions in the main shop. Overhead will be a permanent dodger mounted on an aluminum frame. Stepping aft onto the boat deck, there is plenty of room for a selection of tenders and other water toys. In this case, the owner will have a 13.5 ft. fiberglass dinghy and a nice 12 ft. sailing dinghy, both built and designed by Neil LeBlanc. On the starboard side of the boat deck is a section of safety rail up against the very edge of the deck. From here the skipper can operate the crane and easily make sure all is clear while launching the dinghy.

A couple of wide steps on the port side of the boat deck lead down to the pilothouse door. I asked why there was no access to the boat deck or flying bridge from inside the pilothouse as there is plenty of room to do so. Neil LeBlanc said they had discussed the possibility, but the owner felt it would mean water in the cabin as people moved about in poor weather. As it is, the steps are just outside the door and very easy to negotiate. The pilothouse contains the galley (kitchen really) on the port side. Except for an entrance opening, the cook is completely surrounded by counters. At the request of the owners' wife, there is a large window over the sink area giving the cook a great view. There is room for a full-sized, side-by-side fridge/freezer, electric range and microwave. This "kitchen" would do any condo proud.

On the starboard side is a lounge area with table. The helm is forward on the starboard side next to an access door. The visibility over the bow is excellent, but what is most impressive is the all around visibility. From the helm one can see the transom corners through the aft windows. This is definitely not the case on many pilothouse trawler yachts. At almost 20 feet wide, the salon has plenty of room for a large L-shaped settee on the starboard side; to port there is a long desk area for a computer and ship's office. Forward are built-in bookshelves and a large flat screen TV.

The stairs leading to the lower deck are located on the port side at the forward end of the pilothouse. This is not some perilous steep ladder but a proper staircase. Forward is the guest stateroom with a queen-sized berth and its own head with shower. At the foot of the stairs aft is the master stateroom boasting impressive space. Amidships sits a genuine king-sized bed. On the port side is the master head; again there is lots of elbowroom for toilet, sinks, a huge mirror and an enclosed, custom-built shower with seat and room for two (to save water, of course). At the foot of the stairs is an over/under washer/dryer.

Access to the engine room – which houses the 12.5 litre John Deere – is down a set of stairs from the salon. There is plenty of room port and starboard to access the engine for service and for the 21kw generator. Incidentally, the owner would have been content with an access hatch and ladder to the engine room, but the builders, with their knowledge of commercial boats, insisted on a proper door and stairs. Easy access to the most important room on the boat is a priority. Below the covered aft deck are hatches to the massive lazarette and easy access to stern gear. This boat presents a formidable appearance from any angle, but from the bow it is most impressive, especially with the large custom-made bow roller and 150 lb. Rocna anchor looming overhead.

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Ad Nauseam

BY JOHN MORRIS

Sometimes I find there are just too many choices for advertising. How do you assess the value of the local weekly? I find it hard to turn down my local rep.

Can't say no! – Gimli, MB

Marinas like yours are important businesses in their community, so it's no surprise they're on the hit list for every local newspaper, radio outlet and outdoor sign company. And, since those outlets are all motivated, very often their reps are charming, personable and, yes, hot. But to stick around, you need to pick your media to sell boats and stay on budget.

The local weekly may work well, but then again, it may not. The good news is that often the price is right so you won't blow the budget running a quarter page ad for a few issues. Try to ignore the deepness of your rep's blue eyes when you're making decisions; trust your gut, talk to locals and better yet, track your ads to see if they work.

If the results are good, keep it up. If nothing comes in, skip the publication. You are under no greater obligation to support the local economy than any other business.

I have seen the terms 'Publisher's Sworn Statement' and also 'Audited Circulation' on the circulation pages of various publications. What exactly does this mean?

Just wondering. – Barrie, ON

I love this question, JW, because I can't get the answer wrong – a 'publisher's sworn statement' can mean absolutely anything or absolutely nothing. There are no regulations, no uniformity and no

rules about the accuracy or even the interpretation of the numbers. The publisher might give you a print estimate, the number or copies they provide to the newsstand, or the number of copies they drop at the gate of the yacht club or marina or local chandlery. Whether or not that translates into eyeballs on your ad page is anyone's guess. On top of everything else, the people who are reading, may or may not be people who can buy boats.

In summary, a publisher's statement depends on the publisher's sometimes exaggerated decisions on what to count, the printer, the post office, newsstand truck driver and marina superintendent; it might be reaching the bin-dumpers at waste management.

If in doubt about numbers for a publication that you have a good feeling about, measure results for yourself over some reasonable test period and forget the publisher's honest or devious pronouncements.

A more objective source of information is 'audited circulation'. In this case, the publication lets an independent organization calculate the circulation stats. The auditor applies a series of standardized requirements (like your corpo-

rate auditor has financial requirements) that have to be met in calculating the circulation of a publication. With audited circulation, you have a third party confirming the number of issues printed and distributed. You still need to use some personal judgment (or advice) as to whether the publication is being read and whether your ad is working.

As Lever Brothers founder Lord Leverhulme remarked, "I know half my advertising budget is wasted – I just don't know which half".

I am apprehensive about computer baffle-gab. So, do I need a web site or can I live just as well without?

Old fashioned? – Bridgewater, NS

On this one I went to Joe, our creative guy, who says 'Look, it's 2008. You NEED a web site. Even if you don't know search engines from trolling motors, today your business must have a front door on the new main street. If you don't believe me, ask your kids.' Joe knows. Get busy. ●

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Kropf Industrial – Design Innovation



PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR EXPORT DEVELOPMENT

BY ANDY ADAMS

Our mission at *Boating Industry Canada* is to bring you some uplifting stories of Canadian manufacturing companies that are succeeding at home as well as in the export market.

A shining example is the ongoing success enjoyed by Kropf Industrial Inc., in Parry Sound, Ontario. Kropf has four manufacturing divisions: Con-O-Lift hydraulic trailers, Kropf Marine dock systems, Kropf Aquaculture fish cages and Kropf Industrial, the division of the company that deals with custom solutions and manufacturing.

The company is essentially a metal

fabrication shop but founder and owner Peter Kropf who is a Class A mechanic – now in his mid-50s and the president – has established a solid reputation as a design innovator and a guy who can make just about anything out of steel. Almost all of their products are built entirely in-house.

Parts like bearings, brackets and amazingly, even hydraulic rams are made at the plant in Parry Sound. Paul Fry who handles sales for the company was my guide through the facility and he explained that at Kropf, there is an easy way to get a hydraulic ram that meets their specifications – build it!

In spite of the concern about future economic conditions, they continue to



Check out the thickness of this trailer rail square tube! It must be close to half an inch thick.



As more and more marinas have to deal with the growing number of large yachts, the skill to design and custom fabricate a giant yard trailer like this Con-O-Lift model is the greatest strength that Kropf Industrial gives its clients.

This trailer is in the mid-stage of fabrication in the bay in the centre of the Kropf shop.



invest in new equipment. Their business continues to be strong. They recently acquired a new site service trailer and they are ordering two new trucks and a new high-definition plasma cutter. They're also in the process of building a new specially designed barge to install docks. That alone is a \$300,000 investment.

I asked Paul Fry how the company got its start and he told me that long ago Ollie Constable of Constable Boat Works asked Peter to create a yard trailer for them. Peter did and the trailer was taken to the Toronto International Boat Show. During the show, someone showed great interest in the trailer and it was sold almost immediately. Seizing the opportunity and starting at Peter's house, the company simply grew into the business



it is today. Later, they began building aluminium boats. That division was later sold to Conner Industries that became part of the Stanley line of boats; Kropf continued to focus on trailers, docks and steel fabrication.

Peter's son Darin, an engineer, has now joined the business as general manager, helping to expand the company's capabilities even more. Kropf Industrial

This large red Con-O-Lift yard trailer is in the final stages of completion at the Kropf Industrial plant in Parry Sound, getting ready to deliver to the customer.

sells across Canada and into the United States and more recently overseas.

Paul Fry told us that, "Europe has been tough for us but it is coming and

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[MANUFACTURING & FABRICATION]



These Kropf employees are welding up dock floats in the shop.

we have learned a lot. For two years now we have exhibited at METS in Amsterdam and through a contact from that show we just sold a 20-ton sling lift yard trailer to a company in Ireland. We now have representatives in the UK and Holland. We have sold 13 trailers so far into England and are looking forward to growth in the rest of Europe." Paul continued, "Interestingly, we recognize that the Europeans conduct business in a more "suit and tie" way".

Paul told us specifically, "Some people say 'your trailers are higher priced but they do more.' The Europeans are also looking for better quality products."

Learning what Kropf has gained in their overseas market development efforts so far leads Paul to suggest that Canadian manufacturers should be proud to say 'Made in Canada' on their products. Paul sees that we should all be promoting Canada and our Canadian quality. Europe is a huge and important market. From their experience as manufacturers and fabricators, Kropf feels that Canadian products may actually be more viable overseas than in the US right now, especially given the economy and a very tough US price environment.

When you see one of the Con-O-Lift hydraulic trailers, you realize that these products are very large and heavy, however, in spite of that, a Con-O-Lift trailer still fits into a container and for around

\$3,000 in shipping, they can get it all the way to Europe; so at present, cheap shipping makes Europe a realistic market to target.

For Kropf, even considering their many other innovative products, exporting trailers is key. That is the core business. However, they are now selling their boat stands in Sweden and in Panama. They are exporting dock systems to places like Minnesota. In fact, they had one US installation alone that represented \$2.5 million in docks.

To make sales like that possible across Canada and into the United States, Kropf operates their own fleet of trucks. Their hydraulic trailers need to be seen as a long-term investment. The very first trailer they ever built is still in use. Their trailers have fantastic resale value. Skyline Marine recently traded in its 1998 model on a new one and received almost all of their original purchase price as a trade-in.

This underscores the importance of Peter and Darin Kropf's design and innovation talents. In the future, imported products from China and India will get better but the special designs will command higher prices and the wisdom to buy higher quality that Kropf found in Europe, makes it an attractive target for Canadian manufacturers. ●

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BY ANDY ADAMS

Georges Jalbert and Mercury Canada Keeping the Faith

He is the warm handshake, the solid presence and the guiding hand behind Mercury Marine Canada. Georges Jalbert is General Manager of Mercury in Canada and he is a Canadian. Mercury is one of the flagship brands at the recreational industry giant, Brunswick Corporation – a publicly traded company.

With so much negative press coming out of the United States on their subprime mortgage crisis, falling home values and talk of recession, many analysts are watching closely as Brunswick Corporation reduces pipeline invento-

ries, rationalizes boat lines and closes some facilities in response to those current tough US economic conditions.

All the US doom and gloom had us wondering if Brunswick's business units in Canada, particularly Mercury Marine Canada, would be facing changes or cuts.

The only way to know for sure was for *Boating Industry Canada* to set up an appointment with General Manager Georges Jalbert to ask the question directly. It also offered us a chance to profile a key player who generally does not seek the spotlight.

"So Georges, what's happening at Mercury Canada?" we asked.

His smile told us that the bad news remains south of the border – at least for now. "Things are going well," Georges said, "and actually we will be making an important announcement shortly that Mercury Canada is getting an important renewed commitment within the Brunswick organization."

He has our attention now, that's for sure.

Georges Jalbert has been in the marine industry in Canada for 23 years now and before that, he spent 10 years

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in sporting goods in Québec with a focus on retail of hunting and fishing products. When that large, family-owned business closed, Georges joined Mercury as a Sales Administrator and rose to the level of Sales Rep in Québec, moving to Ontario 11 years ago.

He was promoted to National Sales Manager then Director of Sales and Marketing and finally to General Manager of Mercury Canada, about eight years ago.

Georges Jalbert came from Montréal's south shore area; he studied business administration at MacDonald Cartier and Dawson College, starting his career in retail on his graduation. While Georges' passion was hunting and fishing, and especially shooting, boating has also been a major part of his life for a long time. In his position at Mercury, he has the use of a company boat each year to ensure that he understands his own product from the position of somebody who's living with it.



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If he can't be boating, Georges rides a Harley to get the same feeling of freedom and relaxation as he gets from boating.

After such a long tenure with Mercury, it's hard to remember back to all of the product milestones and achievements the company has had, however for Georges Jalbert personally, one of the most important milestones was the day that Brunswick Corporation decided a Canadian should be the General Manager of Mercury Canada.

Georges Jalbert became the first Canadian to run Mercury Canada since Dave Brown retired. Canada had long had an US General Manager because the corporation realized that the Canadian operation provided an outstanding training ground for their top executives. It was a decision by George Buckley himself, head of Brunswick at that time, that a Canadian should run the Canadian operations. Georges Jalbert was chosen.

But, let's take a moment to look back at Mercury in Canada. On February 26,

1962, Mercury Canada opened on Dundas Street in Toronto. The company had decided to build engines in Canada because of the import duties. Soon, Mercury was building their full line of engines here.

At that time, responsibility was divided among three people. Production, manufacturing and sales were Dave Brown's, Bob Paterson was Director of Marketing and Don Simonson was Director of Service. Bob Culvert was the CFO. In 1998, Mercury moved into the current facility on Meadowpine Boulevard in Mississauga. That brings us to Georges' good news.

When the lease is up on Meadowpine Boulevard this year, Mercury plans to relocate into a new 110,000 sq. ft. facility – up dramatically from the current 60,000 sq. ft. in Mississauga. This marks an important new commitment and expression of Mercury's support for the Canadian market. The new facility is also going to allow them to focus more on in-house training.

Georges shared with us that the new facility will continue to share space with the Land 'N Sea division; a move that greatly enhances the parts and accessories and service levels that Mercury offers in Canada. Including their field personnel, Georges supervises a staff of 64 full-time people and, in the busy summer months, another 20 to 25 people to cope with increased seasonal business needs.

In addition to this, Mercury operates another 36,000 sq. ft. parts and accessories facility in Vancouver. Products produced in Asia land there before being shipped to Mississauga.

Across Canada, Mercury supports further service schools through third-party arrangements with organizations like Georgian College where they rent space to offer dedicated service training for Mercury brands. Despite these efforts, however, Georges Jalbert reminds us of the continued skills shortage, particularly in places like Alberta.

Other milestones that Georges Jalbert is extremely proud of include Mercury's transition from being a two-stroke to a four-stroke engine company. He described that process as quite dramatic; the transition took place in a short three-year period. Needless to say, some people in the industry were skeptical about Mercury's ability to achieve this so quickly. But they did!

Another great milestone was the introduction of the pod technology in the Zeus drives. Internally, their development engineers told everyone that this would be a revolution in technology for boating and as Georges Jalbert said, "When I actually got a chance in Miami to try out the product, I knew the revolution had started. We really had a winner. Now some of that technology has been introduced in the new Axis system and although I can't say anything right now, there are more exciting new developments on the way."

"Of course the Verado introduction was a major milestone, too," Georges continued "and you will see more aggressive advertising that compare Verado's performance and fuel economy to those of its competitors with head-to-head comparisons on identical boats."

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"Mercury Marine has always been an innovator though. The industry expects that of us and we will continue to break new ground and bring improvements to the boating experience through some remarkable new technologies that are coming from Mercury's development people. Products like Zeus, Axius, the new Vazar and more development on the Verado outboard platform too," said Georges.

"Our highest priorities though, are for more technical training and to bring both ever greater reliability and product

quality levels to the market, especially to support our smaller dealers. You know, it was George Buckley who had the vision to sustain all the smaller dealers – they are very important. Now, with our breadth of product choices in outboard, stern drive, inboard and diesel, you have to admit Mercury has no equal in our range of marine power. That is our specialty," Jalbert stated. "I promise you, we won't lose that focus; that is why I'm so proud to be a part of the Mercury organization."

Brunswick Reorganization

Dustin McCoy faces a tough shareholder challenge to maintain share value and profitability in the face of the US economic downturn. You have probably heard that Brunswick has reorganized and during our meeting with both Georges Jalbert and Adrian Rushforth, they shared with us some of the main points in this reorganization.

The company has defined a series of business units:

- Sterndrive Engines
- Outboard Engines
- International Business
- Sea Ray Boats
- US Marine & Outboard Boats
- Hatteras
- Boat Parts & Accessories
- Life Fitness
- Bowling & Billiards



It is interesting that Sea Ray and Hatteras are separate units. The company has then broadly defined their various business functions and has structured the organization so that there is contact and reporting both within the specific unit and also across all the other units.

For example, Marketing or Distribution are defined functions. People in Marketing report within their business unit of course, but also across the other eight units. In this way, innovation, developments in efficiency and cost control can be more readily shared, paving the way to improve profitability by controlling costs. At the same time, this should maintain and even improve support levels to the dealers.

Marketing, Distribution, Finance, Human Resources, Legal, IT systems and Planning are all spread across all the units. We asked Georges Jalbert directly, "What will the dealers see in the way of changes from this new reorganization?"

He paused for a moment and then said, "Dealers will see a more unified vision that will streamline processes, enhance marketing efforts, increase sales and service support and overall increase the value of their dealerships offering Brunswick products. At the end of the day, the dealers are the key part of the Brunswick family and this new vision and structure is designed to help our dealers provide the ultimate products and experiences to their customers."

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Should Your Customers **GET AN AED?**

BY JENNIFER HARKER

Innovations in marinas strive to meet customers' changing needs whether it's lifestyle amenities like pools and playgrounds, stocking environmentally friendly products in the chandlery or offering easy on-line services. But what about safety?

According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation, 35,000 Canadian lives are lost each year due to cardiac arrest; with an aging population those numbers will likely increase. The probability of surviving a sudden cardiac arrest declines by 7-10% per minute. Even with an admirably speedy emergency response



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Hindson Marine owner Kelly Hindson (left) and general manager Linda Ellery showcase the newly installed Automated External Defibrillator (AED) which is centrally located in a highly visible and easily accessible area right outside the chandlery door by the gas dock. Ellery said, "Hindson's will always be a family friendly place and we want to ensure that our customers, guests and employers are in a safe environment. This really sends a strong message out to our community here."

time of six to 12 minutes, that's too late for many victims.

The good news is cardiac arrest is treatable with an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and one needn't be a doctor to use one successfully. AEDs deliver a shock, returning a lifeless heart to normal rhythm.

Al Donaldson, executive director of the Ontario Marine Operators Association, called AEDs an ounce of prevention. He said, "They've become very popular in hockey arenas. They can make a big difference." As they become commonplace in rinks and other public gathering places, Donaldson said it only makes sense to include defibrillators at marinas. "It's a good choice and some of our members have already installed them."

At Hindson Marine in Penetanguishene on Georgian Bay, general manager Linda Ellery said marina owner Kelly Hindson purchased an AED last fall in response to customers' requests. "It was a customer request but it's the right thing to do." The AED is now installed in a central, highly visible and accessible location. "It's right at the fuel dock, the main focal point of our harbour," Ellery said.

A bold backdrop and bulletin boards throughout the marina alert the public to the AED's location. The information was also included in a recent boater newsletter.

Currently staff is being trained and Ellery said they expect to offer open sessions to their boaters in early June to ensure no one is intimidated by this life-saving piece of equipment. "It's user-

friendly. The AED is relatively easy to use and set up and it walks you through the steps. In the event of an emergency, we don't want people to be intimidated."

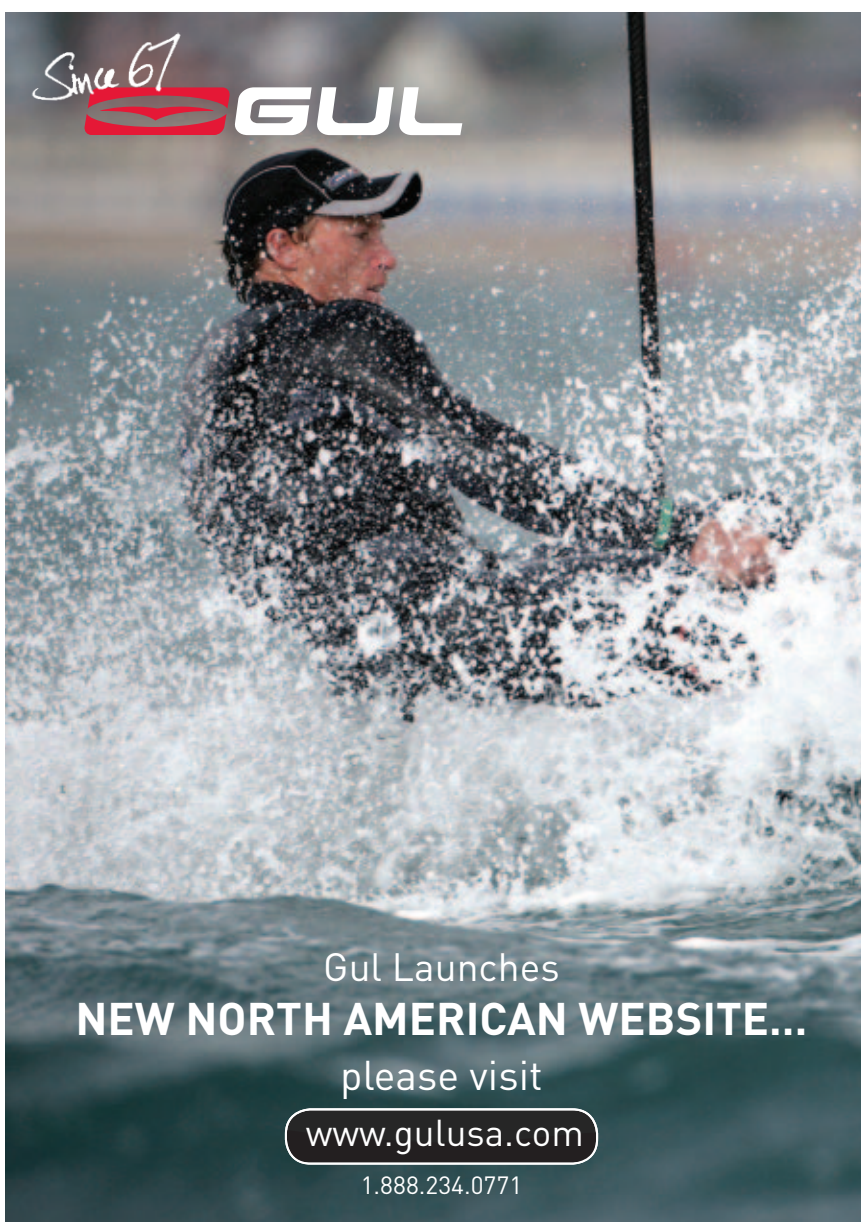
She said purchasing a defibrillator is something everyone should consider for home, boat or office. "Having a defibrillator on site sends a message we care about our customers. I strongly believe every marina and business should be equipped with one."

Ron Waxman of Techwaxy, a Windsor-based Canadian distributor of AEDs, said price is no longer prohibitive and the technology has improved significantly. Once a complicated, expensive

piece of medical equipment, today's compact, portable AED devices can be used with minimal or even in a worst-case scenario no training to administer a lifesaving shock to restart a stopped heart.

"Our unit retails for \$1,495 Canadian," Waxman said. It's a fairly heavy duty, sturdy unit able to withstand the military shock and drop test as well as helicopter vibrations; it is also designed to be dustproof and water-resistant making it a good choice for a marina environment.

Along with technology and cost, Waxman said recent legislation removes



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the liability concerns which may have previously prevented some locations from installing public AEDs. "Last June the Chase MacEachern Act in Ontario put AEDs under the Good Samaritan protocol." Waxman said that protects people and organizations who act in good faith to try to save a life. He expects other provinces without such legislation to soon follow suit.

The machines are self-explanatory, audibly talking the user through the process and will not mistakenly administer a shock. Defibrillator awareness is now part of standard first aid training while additional, in-depth training is also available.

Waxman said AEDs are very low maintenance. A green active indicator light flashes every seven seconds indicating it is functioning normally. A red light means something is wrong. "Once a month you do a manually initiated self test, holding the button for five seconds. The pads have a two-year shelf life and



every five years you need to replace the battery." He noted one set of adult replacement pads costs \$44 while the five year battery costs \$185. In between replacements, it does not need to be charged or plugged in.

While some marinas have already made the move, others expect to install AEDs in the near future.

Jeremy Delaney, store manager at Shining Waters Marina just outside Halifax, Nova Scotia, said although they have yet to install an AED, it is on their

priority list. "It's definitely something that we should have. There are always accidents around the water and it's never a bad thing to have equipment and trained people who can help."

He said marinas should also actively promote safety for their boaters. Shining Waters recently acted as host site for St. John's Ambulance advanced marine first aid training and Delaney said they would certainly host an information session for boaters interested in learning more about AEDs. "I believe an AED to be a necessity for anyone who boats past where you can swim to shore. I believe it to be a necessity here and it's something that I'm pursuing."

For more information on selecting an AED, log on to www.heartand-stroke.com to download the document Automated External Defibrillation: Whose life will you need to save? which discusses education and training, selecting a suitable unit, placement of units, legislation and funding. ●

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INDUSTRY NEWS

Industry Mourns the Loss of Tom Heighington

Canada's marine industry is saddened to learn that 45-year-old Tom Heighington died Sunday, May 18th after his ATV "tipped" over on a muddy snowmobile trail near Orillia.

Articles in the Orillia Packet reported that police said Tom Heighington of Simcoe, Ontario was riding with his son and father northwest of Orillia at about noon when the accident happened. Heighington, who was a partner with his brothers in the Proctor Marine store on Queensway West in Simcoe, was pronounced dead at the scene.



"The accident happened some distance from the nearest road and paramedics had difficulty reaching the crash site", said Const. Sally Stewart, media relations officer for the OPP's central region. "We've had a bit of rain," she explained. Heighington's son, Nick, landed in water after the crash. He was in shock but was not seriously hurt.

Firefighters attended as well and "extricated" Heighington from the crash. Police continue to investigate, she added, and traffic reconstructionists are involved. Heighington was wearing a helmet at the time.

He leaves behind his wife Carrie, two daughters, Holly, 19,



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and Abby, 14, and son, Nick, 17. "They don't come any better than Tom," said family friend Diane Vrooman of Simcoe. "He was just a wonderful person, father, and friend." Nick is disabled and uses a wheelchair, but "Tom made sure he did all the things boys his age do," said Vrooman, a board member with South Coast Special Needs Kids. "They did everything together."

Heighington, whose family business sold boats, recently took up speedboat racing and last year the Toronto Outdoor Racing Club named him rookie-of-the-year. Vrooman said Heighington will be remembered for "his love of family, sports, and special needs sports."

The visitation and services were held at Jason Smith Funeral Home in Simcoe on Thursday, May 22nd. Memorial donations payable to the Canadian Cancer Society or the Who Did It Club would be gratefully acknowledged by the family. Personal online condolences at www.smithfuneralchapel.com.

Walker Financial Appoints Kelly Doney in Atlantic Canada

Kelly Doney has joined Walker Financial Services as manager of its new Atlantic Canada Office. Kelly was born and raised in the Annapolis Valley in Nova Scotia. For the last seven years Kelly has been working as an off-site business manager for dealers of all types of recreational products primarily in Nova Scotia. Kelly's strong background in customer service as well as finance and her personal love for the outdoors makes her a perfect fit.



Kelly is excited about traveling the four Atlantic provinces more in an effort to build her portfolio of affiliated dealers. She can be reached at 1-877-406-4420 or Kelly@toyloan.com

Textron Financial Announces New Exec VP/Chief Credit Officer

Textron Financial Corporation, a Textron Inc. company, names Angelo Butera to the position of Executive Vice President and Chief Credit Officer effective June 1, 2008. As chief credit officer, Butera will oversee ongoing portfolio quality management for all of Textron Financial. He succeeds Rod Weaver, who is retiring from this position after 31 years of service with Textron. Butera will report to President and Chief Operating Officer Jay Carter and serve as a member of the company's Management Committee.

"Angelo brings a wealth of experience to our leading credit position," said Carter. "His exceptional qualifications – in addition to his long history with the company and knowledge of the industries we serve – will help us navigate through today's challenging credit environment and maintain our track record of low non-performing assets and delinquency and outstanding portfolio quality well into the future."

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Butera joined Textron Financial in 1987 as a Credit Analyst with the company's former Real Estate Finance Division. Since that time, he has served in roles of increasing responsibility in the areas of underwriting, investment control, credit and operations, and risk management. Most recently, as Senior Vice President – Credit and Special Assets for the company's Resort Finance Division, Butera oversaw both the underwriting and workout functions for the division.

Butera earned a BS in Industrial Engineering from the University of Pittsburgh and received his MBA from Carnegie Mellon University's Tepper School of Business. He has also attended Textron's Executive Leadership Program at the Thunderbird School of Global Management and the company's Global Leadership Forum at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

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We Do Have a Crystal Ball

WE INVITED some of Canada's Marine industry leaders to comment on the way the summer of 2008 was starting off. We have several wise observations to share with you and one 'crystal ball' insight.

Al Donaldson at the OMOA seemed like a great place to start.

"The season, going all the way back to the boat shows was good, in fact, very good," said Al Donaldson.

"Due to the weather in Ontario being a bit cool and rainy, since we have an early start to the season," Al began, "we're now seeing some caution. We have issues like rising gasoline prices, inflation in food prices and at an industry level, I think there's some tightening of inventory and floor plan exposure. I would say that overall, we are not expecting a buoyant year at this point."

The word 'caution' seems appropriate. It seems reasonable to anticipate that the market conditions in the United States will affect us here in Canada. On the other hand, one of the big concerns in Ontario was that automobile manufacturing jobs were widely expected to be lost and there was apprehension and uncertainty because the Canadian Auto Workers Union was negotiating new contracts with Ford, General Motors and Chrysler. While those contracts were settled, and fairly quickly too, some of that job-security vanished again when GM decided to close four North American assembly plants, including the Oshawa facility, over the next 16 months. For the 2,600 Canadian workers and their hard-hit community this is a serious blow, and will be at least until the US market starts to pick up speed. That's not expected to happen soon though. Speculation seems to be that recovery will take hold in 6 to 18 months as the crisis in the US housing market sorts itself out and average Americans begin feeling like borrowing money for new cars again.

Québec is another large boating market and Yves Paquette at AMQ commented, "So far, so good this year, but the rising price of gasoline will have an impact. It's not clear how that

might affect the industry but we assume it will take some of the money out of the market. This may not affect boat sales as much as the way people use their boats. We are concerned about a decline in tourism. That could be more significant than the direct decline in boat sales for the marinas." Yves continued, "I will say though, sales so far seem to be holding out."

Pat Nelder at the Atlantic Marine Trade Association was upbeat. She said to us, "It won't be the same this year; gas, food and a variety of other items will all be up in cost but the dealers here are all pluralists – they are used to hard times and they adapt quickly."

Pat went on to say, "We're better off here in the East because we are used to adapting to change. The US markets may be depressed but we're hoping for wonderful weather this summer and we are adaptable."

Then we spoke to Carly Poole who's in charge of marketing for Buckeye Marine in Bobcaygeon, Ontario, Canada's first five-star certified dealer and a successful third-generation family business. She began by saying, "We were experiencing record sales back at the boat show but recently the business has slowed... but it always does at this time of year. We're really busy launching boats, getting everything set up for the season and we don't have a strong focus on sales right now anyway."

"Something I'd like to mention is that it's important to stay positive. Don't be your own worst enemy. My father (Gary Poole) was asked to make a speech recently on basically this topic and what he said was to 'think ahead'. Stay ahead by taking appropriate steps now, to anticipate the market conditions that other people are concerned about," Carly said.

In other words, Gary Poole wisely realizes that we don't have to worry about a downturn. We have the 'crystal ball' simply by looking at the US market and judging ourselves accordingly. We are getting plenty of warning. Now, if things are down, we are ready and if things are better than hoped for, we'll have yet another great year.

It's all in what you make of it. Good luck! ●



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