

# Boating

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BY ANDY ADAMS

# Marina Revolution

## – Daunting Research!

**THE MORE** we consider recent research results, the more frightening the future looks for Canada's marina owners...but first, let's start with some good news!

Beginning in this issue of *Boating Industry Canada*, we will bring you regular contributions of editorial for 'The Boat Shop' column from ABYC. For anyone not familiar with ABYC, it is the American Boat and Yacht Council and its mission statement declares:

*"The Council's mission is to develop quality technical practices and engineering standards for the design, construction, maintenance and repair of small craft with reference to their safety. The Council shall also disseminate these standards and be the principal source of related technical information and education for the marine industry."*

Both the Transport Canada construction standards and the NMMMA's Certification standards are based on ABYC. ABYC members receive a regular publication called Reference Point; it is from this source that *Boating Industry Canada* will receive selected editorial. This means that *Boating Industry Canada's* readers will now have access to a growing library of best practices and how-to information from ABYC – one of the industry's most authoritative sources.

Now it's even more important that your technicians subscribe to *Boating Industry Canada*. After all, it's free to qualified respondents and includes a weekly e-newsletter, and access to the website and digital versions of every issue of *Boating Industry Canada* published to date. Now it will be an even more useful reference for repair and maintenance issues. Subscribe today at [www.boatingindustry.ca](http://www.boatingindustry.ca).

Of course, we recognize that your dealer agreements with engine and boat manufacturers require your technicians to maintain their skills through ongoing training. So far, so good...but, here is where our industry is sadly heading for disaster.

In online surveys we conducted through Newsweek, *Boating Industry Canada's* online weekly newsletter, we learned that 25% of Canada's marine technicians are expected to retire in the next 5 years.

25% is a shocking number. It is huge.

For over a year now, we have provided the industry free "Help Wanted" ads in Newsweek. It is a rare week that there are fewer than 10 job openings. If you have been reading these, you will know they are good jobs – many are great jobs. They are often in fabulous places, too.

Yet, they go unfilled.

Some postings have gone unfilled for months. Why? Because everyone wants top technicians with great training, and right now there is an acute shortage of top people. It seems most marinas want great people today, but not great apprentices to groom. And it is going to get worse.

Why? Because those top people will have the means to retire. We will be losing the cream in the next 5 years – the top 25%.

Like it or not, to keep up with your customer's rising expectations for great service (like they get for their car), marinas and yards will need to take on more junior people and they will need to train them. What we are saying is that you will have to "make your own top guys" and pay enough to keep them.

In another recent *Boating Industry*

*Canada* survey about technician training, we asked, who should pay? And more importantly, what skills are actually needed out there?

- 83% of respondents believed that it was the employer who should pay
- 77% of respondents listed business management skills as their number 1,2 or 3 priority
- 58% of respondents ranked gelcoat and composite repair as their number 1,2 or 3 choice
- 53% of respondents ranked electronics installation and service as their 1,2 or 3 choice
- Sales training came in as the fourth choice
- Electrical systems installation and service was in 5th place
- Service writer training was mostly ranked at the low end of the scale
- At the bottom of the list was training in customer service – ouch!

Finally, we again asked whether or not they laid technicians off in the off-season. For the second time, nearly half the respondents said that they lay-off technicians in the off-season.

This issue of *Boating Industry Canada* is dedicated to selling winter work and how to employ technicians (and other key staff) on a 12-month basis. Without 12 months of solid cash flow, the industry can't pay wages that compete with other work that the people we want can easily perform.

Watch upcoming editions of Newsweek for more on important issues affecting our marine industry. ●

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On the Cover: Lloyd Crate and his daughter Lynn celebrate the 80th Anniversary of their family marina this summer. Read about how steady growth and long term relationships have made this Canadian family business the 4th largest Regal Boats dealer in the world, Carver Yachts #1 dealer in the world and Cruisers Yachts #1 dealer in the world.

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# Rosborough Boats

## Adapt, Innovate, and Thrive



By GLEN CAIRNS

Credit: Rosborough Boats

When James D. (Doug) Rosborough began his boat building business 55 years ago, he identified a niche in the yacht market that he was in a position to fill. There were potential customers with romantic dreams of sailing a traditional schooner to exotic locations. Doug knew there were still a few Newfoundland fishing schooners knocking around and he decided he could rebuild them for recreational use. This plan was successful enough that when the supply of old schooners dried up (or rotted away) he turned to designing and building traditional styled wooden yachts in Nova Scotia. By the late 1970s, Rosborough Boats had sold over 70 of Doug's "Privateer" ketches, schooners and brigantines. As the 1980s began, inflation made the continued building of the wooden boats uneconomic and Rosborough made the transition to fiberglass construction. The company developed a successful line of small cruisers

based on fishing boat style hulls. The most famous of these was the RF246 which is still in production today with over 470 hulls built to date.

About the time the company turned to fiberglass construction, Doug's son Bob came to work in the business. Bob oversaw the company's expansion in fiberglass manufacturing and also diversified their customer base by developing a commercial version of the RF246, which attracted orders from the Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) as well as the Coast Guard. The heady days of the late 1990s saw production of over 40 boats per year. As the recreational boat market began to change in the early 2000s, Bob knew that Rosborough Boats needed to diversify its product line. After the terrorist attacks on 9/11, governments here and abroad were putting a new emphasis on coastal and harbour security. Numerous companies in the US and Canada were going after this work

The 22' Hammerhead is the newest boat in the Rough Water™ line. Several have been ordered by the Surete du Quebec.

and the competition was stiff. With an eye on this expanding market, Bob initiated the development of a new line of RIBs the company calls their Rough Water™ series.

As a new decade begins, the Rough Water™ series has become Rosborough Boats' main product line. First introduced in 2002, these high-performance deep-vee RIBs are now built in 4 basic models: 6.70, 7.90, 8.50 and the 9.11. Both the 7.90 and the 9.11 are currently in use with the Canadian Coast Guard and DFO, as well as various police and environmental protection services. Rosborough Boats is currently busy with a Canadian government contract to build 15 of these RIBs (with options for 4 more). These boats will go to DFO and



Credit: Rosborough Boats

This Rough Water™ 7.9 is fitted with a fully enclosed pilothouse.

Coast Guard units in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Quebec.

The fiberglass hulls and pilothouses for the Rough Water™ boats are built at the company's lamination and assembly shop in Murphy's Cove, northeast of Halifax. The tubes are made mostly in Quebec and the boats are assembled and outfitted at Rosborough's Halifax facility. Heaton Rosborough (Bob's son and the third generation Rosborough at the company) explained that for the current contract, the boat's engines are supplied to them by the various government agencies based on standing offers the outboard manufacturers already have in place. The particular outboard brand used depends on what can best be serviced in the area where the boats will be operating. Both the 9.11s and 7.9s are being equipped with an up-to-date electronics package supplied and installed by Rosborough. The 9.11s are getting Garmin 4212 units with depth,



A Rough Water™ 7.9 undergoing sea trials in Halifax harbour.

Credit: Rosborough Boats

radar and GPS plotting. The VHF's are Icom 604's. The 7.9s have Garmin 3006c units and Standard Horizon VHF's. Considering the sort of conditions in which these boats are expected to operate, crew safety and comfort are major considerations. Both the helm and passenger seats are rugged looking units from Bentley Manufacturing, with heavy

duty suspensions to handle any hard landings. Heaton also points out that with an increasing number of women serving aboard, all the boats have "female-friendly facilities".

The newest addition to Rosborough's Rough Water™ fleet is the 22' RFV-22 Hammerhead, a fiberglass boat with a distinctive squared bow. Several of these

## [MANUFACTURING & FABRICATION]



Credit: Rosborough Boats

The Rough Water 9.11 seen here with a full pilothouse was the first model in the series.

This Rough Water™ 9.11 is operated by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

are now in production for the Sûreté du Québec (SQ), who already have 7 Rough Water™ RIBs in service. Each boat is outfitted to the particular needs of the customer and this boat, like the others, can be customized in a wide range of configurations, including centre consol, T-top, and pilothouse. A 25' version of the Hammerhead is now available and the company has 28' and 30' versions in development.



A Hammerhead with a couple of Evinrude E-TECs



Credit: Rosborough Boats

Not wanting to be overly dependant on Canadian government contracts, Rosborough Boats is looking abroad for more sales opportunities. In addition to the US, Rosborough have already sold Rough Waters to the UK and Heaton says they are actively looking at the market in developing nations. Based on their experience last year, Heaton and Bob will be going to SEAWORK 2010, a commercial marine and workboat exhibition being held in Southampton, UK this June. This is the largest workboat show in Europe and attracts not only European buyers, but also a large contingent of African and Asian customers. This year Rosborough will be part of a group of 4 companies from Nova Scotia.

It is a long way from wooden schooners to high performance RIBs, but it is this ability to adapt to change and to seek out new markets that has kept Rosborough Boats in business for all this time. It will be interesting to see where the next 50 years takes this innovative company. ●



A pair of Verados on a 7.9

[www.rosboroughboats.com](http://www.rosboroughboats.com)

# Marine Technicians

## What's Happening in 2010?

BY BOB EATON



In the August 2007 issue of *Boating Industry Canada*, an article by Andy Adams described some disturbing trends. Of over 100 Ontario-based marinas surveyed at that time, more than half reported they have had difficulty finding and hiring technicians. In the same survey, almost half said they did not employ their technicians on a year-round basis.

Why were we 'laying off' the most difficult staff to find for part of the year? And, why would anyone have the expectation that these technicians would show up again when we call them back to work next spring? Industries competing with the marine industry for skilled technical staff were finding ways to give their people meaningful full-time year-round work. If marinas were expecting to attract dedicated employees, full-time careers and wages comparable to other careers had to be part of the package.

What has happened since 2007? Recognizing the need for action, many of Ontario's marinas, engine builders, parts and equipment suppliers donated almost \$500,000. This was topped up with twice that much from the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities to

build a state-of-the-art training centre. The Midland campus of Georgian College became the "Recreational Boating Centre of Excellence."

A recruitment campaign led by the Ontario Marine Operators Association has been ongoing, a couple of hundred marine technician students have graduated, apprenticeship training has been happening there for 2 years and scholarship money has been raised and distributed to some students. Two more colleges are investigating the possibility of re-entering the marine training arena. Things have been looking much more positive from the perspective of training technicians. Or, so many who are working to solve this marine technician shortage thought!

### DISTURBING SURVEY RESULTS

In the past few months, in *Boating Industry Canada* Newsweek, Adams has again been surveying marina operators to get a better handle on how many marine technicians are actually employed across Canada, the ages of these people, how many are expected to retire and when, as well as other infor-

Getting things apart on the bench is a lot easier without the pressure of high season. You can offer valuable work to the techs, keep your team intact and deliver better repair value to your best customers too.

mation needed to address the training issues and to determine how to proceed from here.

Low and behold, the survey results especially in Ontario, reveal that a disturbing number of marine businesses are still laying off technicians in the winter. If the new techs are graduating, getting placed and then laid off in November at the outset, we will surely be facing a shortage of skilled marine technicians forever!

And, in this electronic age, if they spread the word about the lack of meaningful year-round work, the marine industry won't even be able to attract young people to invest a year of their life to take the training.

No one expects a marina operator to pay technicians to stay home all winter, so the question has to be: how do we get enough work to keep them not only employed but also generating some

## [WINTER WORK]

additional profit as well?

The following suggestions are not some idyllic dream, but have been proven to work by many marina operators.

In the past, many seasonal businesses took on new product lines that carried them through the winter season. It did work and still does work for some, but we're not suggesting marinas should necessarily consider this route as a solution. The better solution is to find enough work from your own customers when their boats are being laid up in the fall.

Every boat in your marina is in need of some repairs, maintenance and upgrading or new electronic toys. If your policy has been to have winter lay-offs, meet with your staff and get their buy-in for a new 12-month plan. If they want to work all winter they have to be part of the solution and so they must be responsible for finding the necessary work and helping to sell it.

If you already have a repair shop, it will be much easier. It doesn't have to be fancy. If you have two technicians, a two-bay shop will suffice. If you don't have a shop, obviously a business plan will be necessary before taking that leap. Five years ago, two marina operators from the Rideau system in the Ottawa Valley area planned and built new facilities to perform winter work. These guys are close together and their shops are as busy now in the winter as in the summer, so that shoots down the theory that there is not enough work for everyone to succeed. Contacted last week, Doug Horsfall, one of those operators commented, "It was a great move for us and we continue to attract so much winter work that is difficult to get it completed." Doug added, "We continue to make money and the technicians love it!" And, Doug goes to Florida.

One reason used by many operators for closing up shop in winter is, "I work too hard in the summer and don't want to work at all during the winter." One Ontario marina operator who I couldn't contact in time to use his name in this story, spends winters cruising around the Caribbean in his motor yacht, while his service staff is busy making enough money for him to do so. Again, his shop

### HOW DOES YOUR BUSINESS CHECK-OUT?

Try *Boating Industry Canada's* customer checklist. If you want to see more cheques coming in this winter, try some of the ideas in the *Boating Industry Canada* Customer Checklist. If you are one of the marinas in Canada already doing this, we'd love to see your checklist.

Ask the customer if they experienced any mechanical trouble through the summer:  difficulty starting  difficulty idling  difficulty shifting gears  tightness in the steering  other complaints

If you are able to drive the boat, check off the following items:

difficulty starting  difficulty idling  difficulty shifting gears  tightness in the steering  power trim working  excessive steering torque to either side  reach maximum rpm  any smell of fuel  excessive exhaust or fumes

#### At the Helm

bilge blower functioning  all instruments functioning  running lights functioning  any evidence of loose or hanging wires

#### Interior

all seats secure  upholstery damaged or wet  any evidence of sponginess or rot in the floor

#### Exterior

does the boat have a boarding ladder  functional spotlight  all cleats secure  is the boat properly equipped with fenders  mooring lines in good condition  condition of paint, fiberglass delamination and/or osmosis  does there appear to have been any collision damage  are all pieces of the canvas present and in good condition

List any personal items left on board. Note the inventory, or ask the customer to remove the items personally to ensure that they don't suspect you or your staff of taking items off the boat during the winter.

#### Engine

check the water impeller  check engine alignment  pressure check gear case or drive unit  oil and filter change  engine fogged  has fuel stabilizer been run in the engine

#### Propeller

will this boat benefit from propeller repair or replacement

#### Batteries

condition of the batteries on board  will they be strong enough for next season

#### Safety Equipment

are all the safety items required by the Canadian Coast Guard  fresh flares  fire extinguisher  sound signaling device  bailing bucket, etc.

Is there an opportunity to sell and install new, or upgraded electrics and electronics such as:  power windlass  electronic and/or solar chargers or inverters  navigation aids  autopilot  for oily bilges; hydrocarbon separating bilge pump hose discharge filter  TV

is just as busy in winter as in summer.

If you really refuse to have a winter work program in your business plan there are at least two more alternatives to keep technicians employed through the winter. One is to offer to sublet your shop to your staff in the off-season, then resume your operations in the spring. They can arrange and schedule the work, do the billing and pay you rent, or

a percentage of the gross. Most of your fixed expenses carry on all winter whether you're open or not, so some income has to be preferable to none. Either way, both parties win.

Another alternative is to totally divest yourself of the service business and sublet the business to another individual, service company or another marina. Several Ontario marinas are using this

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## [WINTER WORK]

alternative and are quite satisfied with their arrangements. You still collect a portion of the service revenue, without being in the service business.

### GO FOR THE WINTER WORK

You should already have a winterization checklist to be signed by your customers authorizing you to ready their boat for storage. To find enough work to keep your technicians busy all winter will require an additional, more extensive checklist. *Boating Industry Canada* published such a list in 2007 and we're including an updated version with this article. You may use it as a template or guide to produce your own checklist that is better suited to the types and size of boats you store in the winter.

You might also want a shorter list that concentrates on specific items. As an example, you might focus on drive units checking bellows, shift cables, props, anodes, belts and fiberglass buffing or restoration, the things that can really slow up your spring launch. You might even change focus items from year to year. The danger with a list that is too extensive is that the tech won't do it all anyway, when he is under time constraints to get all your boats winterized in the fall.

If the boat does come into your shop for some winter work, you can do a more extensive check and call the customer if you discover additional items. Items that are found to be in need of attention should be itemized and an estimate prepared to rectify the problems.

When you call your customer with a list of items you discovered and your repair estimate, also list the benefits of having these attended to over the winter. If this is a new service offering for you and them, make them aware over the summer in newsletters, or just in conversation what you are offering.

### MAKE A LIST

- [✓] The boat will be ready to use at launch time with all maintenance done.
- [✓] If owners wait until spring, it is often difficult to schedule all the work everyone wishes to have done



Use the computer diagnostic systems to tell you what needs to be done. The ECU will have all the details you need even in the off season.

at the busiest time of year so work may be delayed.

- [✓] The boat will perform better and operate more economically next summer.
- [✓] Fewer chances of breakdowns or downtime in the precious summer season.
- [✓] Have the desired new electronics or other toys installed for spring.

Add to this list if you like: consider offering some sort of small discount for winter work.

When you have convinced the customer of the benefits of doing this work over the winter, some additional planning will be required. If the boat is to be shrinkwrapped, can this work be done after the wrap is installed? If you have a canvas shop, can you sell a permanent cover instead of shrinkwrap? (We realize some won't want to give up the shrinkwrap profits.) Arrange placement of the boats in your yard to allow moving them into your service area. This will require some planning, forethought and organizing.

This endeavor will require some work to make it happen. It will however, help dispel the image that our industry can't offer full-time careers to the well-trained technicians that it so badly needs. It should also make an improvement in your bottom line and bring additional revenue into your business during a normally slow period. ●

# NMMA Canada and What It Does For You

BY SARA ANGHEL

**YOUR MEMBERSHIP** in NMMA Canada supports our collective efforts to protect the recreational boating industry and your business! Over the years, NMMA has been proactive in supporting legislation and reasonable regulation that has helped our industry prosper. Perhaps even more important to your business and our industry are the many ill-conceived pieces of legislation that NMMA has prevented from happening.

Before you think this does not apply to you because you are not a member of NMMA and cannot be a member as in the case of dealers or marinas, there are still many direct benefits to your business and opportunities to participate.

These are challenging times for the recreational boating industry. But, that doesn't stop legislators and regulators from proposing things that will impact our industry negatively and make matters worse for local communities supported by boating businesses as well as boaters. Today, NMMA is working with you, and on your behalf to address a number of key issues.

## FLOOR PLAN FINANCING

The availability of credit has affected the industry in the last year. NMMA has been working to improve the situation for marine dealers and small businesses. Earlier this spring, the federal government announced \$500 million toward a new Vehicle and Equipment Financing Partnership (to be run by Business Development Bank of Canada). This program will expand financing options for small- and medium-sized finance and leasing companies, increasing the availability of credit at market rates for dealers and users of vehicles and equipment. Over the last year, NMMA Canada has worked diligently to bring the issue of dealer floor plan financing to the government's attention and the budget announcement is very encouraging.

## EMISSIONS REGULATIONS

NMMA is also working closely with engine manufacturers in Canada and the United States in an effort to align engine emission regulations across North America in the interest of a fair business environment for manufacturers and dealers. Draft regulations are weeks away from being finalized by Environment Canada. NMMA member companies will have an opportunity to review the wording and provide comment and input towards the final regulations.

## SMALL VESSEL REGULATIONS

According to Transport Canada, the new, improved Small Vessel Regulations will be finalized soon. These regulations will be important for boat construction across North America. The government has streamlined requirements and has made it easier to comply. Over the last couple of years, NMMA has worked with government to improve the regulations

## BOAT REGISTRATION AND LICENSING

Earlier this spring, Transport Canada announced the details of a program NMMA has been working with them on for several months, along with the provincial marine trade associations. After significant input from our group, a

dealer e-licensing pilot project will begin in the next couple of weeks which will allow dealers and their customers to more quickly and efficiently register/license new boats. The pilot will run all summer and on November 1, 2010, the entire boat registration process will move to Transport Canada from Service Canada. The program is not yet perfect, but NMMA Canada continues to work closely with senior staff at Transport Canada to ensure the program is developed well and allows for additional opportunities for the industry.

NMMA Canada is active on many fronts when it comes to working with Transport Canada. Last year, I was appointed to the National Recreational Boating Advisory Council. The Council meets twice a year to discuss and introduce policy. NMMA Canada also attends the bi-annual Canadian Marine Advisory Council (CMAC) meetings in Ottawa and vice-chairs the Ontario Recreational Boating Advisory Council. All these positions help the industry advance as NMMA brings your issues to the table for discussion and resolution.

Outside of our government work, NMMA works closely with other industry partners to bring new opportunities to Canada's entire recreational boating



Left to Right: Sara Anghel, NMMA Canada; Mike Wallace, MP & Chair of Federal Boating Caucus; Rick Layzell, Yamaha Canada; Thom Dammrich, NMMA

## [NMMA REVIEW]

community. The Association recently sold the Toronto International Boat Show and to Canadian Boat Shows Inc. (CBSI). While NMMA no longer controls the show, your membership in NMMA has never been more important. The terms of the sale continue to provide NMMA members the same member rate on exhibit space while also securing their existing show points. The relationship with CBSI is a strong and positive one for our members.

NMMA's support for the industry extends beyond what has been mentioned above. In 2007, as many will remember, the marine technician program at Georgian College in Ontario was slated for closure. NMMA along with OMOA members and several engine manufacturers became major contributors toward the creation of a much needed new program, including the Recreational Boating Centre of Excellence in Midland. NMMA's financial commitment to support Georgian College and its marine technician program totals \$100,000 over five years. We are proud to

participate in this excellent program.

While a border does exist between Canada and the US, it is important for our industry to remember that the core to our success is the strong relationship with the US. Thom Dammrich, President of NMMA is committed to our Canadian manufacturers and works closely with me and the NMMA Canada Board to support our members on the many issues affecting the industry.

NMMA recently hosted its annual American Boating Congress (ABC) Legislative Conference in Washington, DC. The event drew close to 150 participants. The topics included a review of the economy and its outlook; ethanol levels; and dealer floor plan financing. In addition, several senators and representatives from Louisiana, Maryland, Florida and Arizona attended and spoke to the group. The topics discussed impact both US and Canadian industry participants.

Following the conference, members of NMMA had the opportunity to meet with their elected senators or congress

representatives. I was pleased to provide support to the DC government relations group by accompanying a couple of NMMA members to meetings.

NMMA is your advocate with government, and remains the leader in successfully promoting the positive benefits of the boating lifestyle to the North American public. In addition to our legislative work, we also oversee the national Discover Boating marketing campaign throughout all of Canada. The campaign is year-round and includes aggressive online advertising, social media efforts, public relations and interactive marketing. Our team engages with top media to share the benefits of the boating lifestyle and to encourage participation through a robust public relations program. DiscoverBoating.ca is one of our industry's best consumer resources, helping them get started in boating and creating prospective sales. Targeted online advertising efforts keep boating top of mind for consumers and relay positive messaging about boat ownership and the boating lifestyle. And, social media helps us engage the consumer in new ways on such platforms as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Bottom line: it is the member's needs that drive the programs and resource allocation at NMMA. Many members underutilize the resources available to them through their membership in NMMA. We want you to share your ideas, suggestions, and requests for assistance. I can't promise we can do everything requested however I promise you that we will listen and be responsive to your needs as our resources allow. ●

*National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) is the leading association representing the recreational boating industry. NMMA member companies produce more than 80 percent of the boats, engines, trailers, accessories and gear used by boaters. The association is dedicated to industry growth through programs in public policy, market research and data, product quality assurance and marketing communications.*

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# A Matter of Policy

BY ANDY ADAMS

**IN OUR LAST ISSUE,** *Boating Industry Canada* introduced a new feature series called “Insurance Corner – A Matter of Policy” as a means of stimulating dialogue about insurance, business management issues and to help our readers avoid costly problems.

This continues our series and Example Number One involves “Mechanics and Service Contractors Tools and Equipment”. We chose this topic because of the lack of certainty and awareness surrounding this area of insurance coverage. Contractors/technicians often have much of their life savings invested in their tools. Without them, many could find themselves in a desperate situation.

We have intentionally picked a loss scenario that involves the loss of tools for three different technicians due to a fire at the marina where they have been working. Each one of these scenarios will play out differently according to their coverage, documentation and insurer representation.

Technician #1 is a young man who has no insurance of his own. He thought the Marina Operator’s insurance policy would cover him. After the fire, not only is he out of work but he has no tools to gain employment elsewhere. He might come back to the Marina Operator and ask for new tools, but there is no obligation for the Marina Operator to comply with this request. Therefore, a serious conflict takes place between employer and employee that could destroy years of good faith and their relationship. It could even find its way into the courts.

**Bottom Line:** Technician 1 should have had his own insurance and the Marina Operator should advise the technician of this fact at the beginning of his contractual employment. This can be purchased either as a standalone commercial policy, potentially endorsed on a personal lines



Believe it or not, this really was a marina shop. An overloaded circuit, a piece of equipment accidentally left on – it doesn’t take much to reduce the shop to rubble and your tools could have been inside.

policy depending on the insurance company, or the technician could ask his or her employer for coverage subject to acceptance from them or the insurance company.

Technician #2 is a more experienced technician who knew that he needed his own insurance policy and was clearly covered by his insurance company for this exposure. After the fire, he put in a claim for all lost tools and then found himself saddled with a big problem. The insurance company required that he “prove his loss” meaning that they wanted a listing of all the tools he lost in the fire and confirmation that they were in fact, his tools. This could be confirmed through a tool listing document agreed to when coverage was incepted. Failing that, pictures or receipts of the tools purchased by him matching the ones lost in the fire could be presented.

Unfortunately, the problem of proving his loss begins to eat away precious time and revenue not to mention the lost relationship between his broker and his insurance company. The claim eventually gets settled, but no one is really all that satisfied.

**Bottom Line:** Take an inventory of your tools with receipts if possible and take pictures of them. It will save time and money should a loss take place...”Big Time”.

Technician #3 knew that he needed to have his own insurance policy and at home, he kept a file with a record of the tools he owned by serial number, receipts to prove that he had purchased them and even photographs to prove his ownership. This technician is in the best position but unfortunately, he did not have a replacement cost policy that gave him new tools for old.

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**IF NOT, you have missed at least 20 of the latest hot stories that broke since the April issue of Boating Industry Canada!**

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- FLIR Buys Raymarine
- NMEA Announces 2010 International Marine Electronics Conference & Expo
- Champion Expands From Coast To Coast
- Buckeye Marine Helps To Clean Up Waterways In The Bobcaygeon Community For Earth Week.
- Join the 3rd Annual David De Eyre Classic Golf Tournament
- 90% of Stands Sold For METS 2010
- Gary Jobson to Speak At Sailing Industry Conference
- Nova Scotia In-Water Boat Show - More Than Maritime-Built Boats
- Harbercraft Sets August 4 & 5 for 2011 Dealer Conference
- Cruising Boaters Could Find Tax Bills Under The Welcome Mat
- Attention: All Clean Marine Eco-Rated Marinas Who Have Earned 4 Or 5-Anchor Ratings!!
- Inflatable Life Jacket World Record Inflation Day Starts National Safe Boating Week
- Champion Marine Inc. Announces 2011 Model Introductions
- OMOA Announces Clean Marine 2010 Spills Recovery Workshops
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## [INSURANCE CORNER]



The best efforts of a top fire department still won't be able to save much if a fire gets going in the dead of night.

Technician #3 will receive the "Actual Cash Value" for his tools some of which might be 10 years old. This will be paid in the form of a lump sum and represent what the insurance company believes the values of the tools are, given how old they are. Hence, he might only get perhaps 50% of what the same tools would cost new today. It could be more or less, depending on the tool and the insurance companies position on repayment.

**Bottom Line:** If you want replacement cost for your tools then you have to specifically ask for it. Most insurers will only write this coverage on an ACV (Actual Cash Value) basis because of the expense and loss frequency of tools. Sadly, tools are an attractive theft target. So, don't be surprised if you can't get replacement cost coverage.

### SUMMARY

Marine Operator's tools are essential to the well-being of any contractor working at the majority of marina operations across the country. Tools are very expensive, sometimes hard to find and need to be looked after. Insurance can help give a contractor peace of mind, but good tool management practise is essential, both on and off the worksite. If you or your technicians are not insured, it's important for you to get a quotation and weigh the benefits of having the proper insurance coverage.

*We would like to thank Robert Reid of Martin, Merry & Reid Insurance Brokers and to McLaren's Canada, Loss Adjusters, Third-Party Administrators and Marine Surveyors.*

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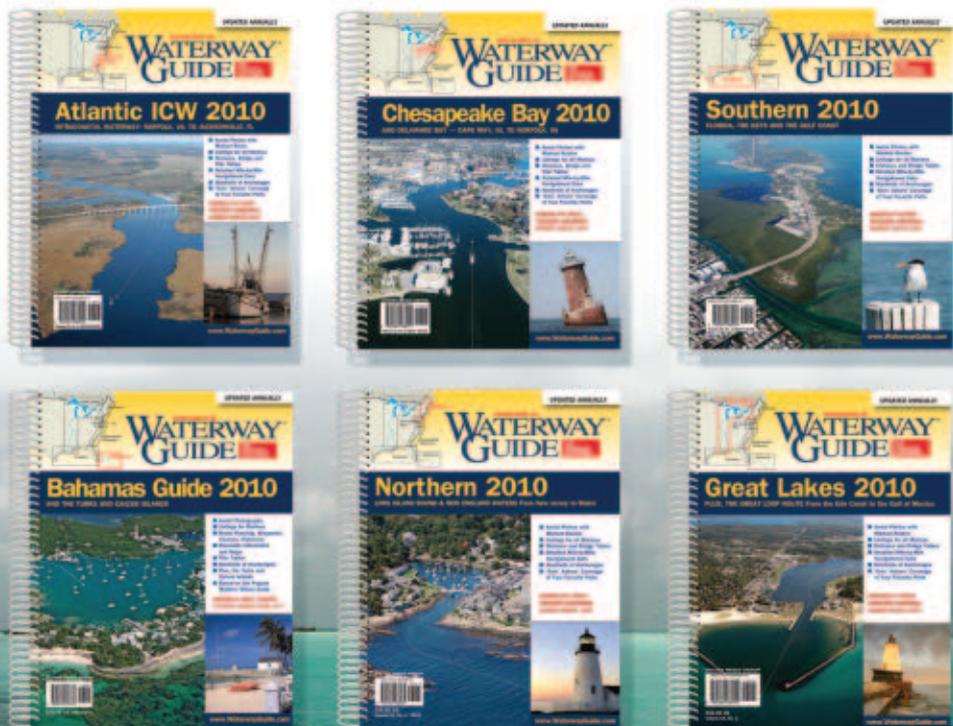
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# Crate's 80th Anniversary

FOUNDED IN THE DEPRESSION, POWERING THROUGH THE RECESSION

By ANDY ADAMS

PHOTOS SUPPLIED BY THE CRATE FAMILY



**THIS YEAR MARKS** the 80th Anniversary of Crate Marine Sales, Keswick. Few businesses of any type survive 80 years, but Crate's has not just survived, they have powered through all sorts of events, economic down-cycles and the recession of 2009, the worst year in North America's marine industry since the Depression. Despite the economic climate, Crate's has managed the choppy waters and has continued to grow their business successfully.

Lloyd Crate, now 85, is still there every day and his family has all joined the organization, steadily branching out to be one of the marine industry's powerhouse businesses.

Greg Crate told us that in 2009, Crate's was rated #1 worldwide for sales and service by Carver, Marquis and Cruisers Yachts, as well as the 4th largest Regal Boats dealer in the world. Despite their success today, they had a humble start.

In the Depression, Fred S. Crate, Lloyd's father was a boat builder with Toronto's J.J. Taylor. He had worked with other legendary builders too; Herb Ditchburn and Tom Greavette. He plainly knew his trade, but the ravages of the Depression hit the boat business hard.

In early 1930, Fred ended up selling his house in East Toronto and moving to the southeast shores of Lake Simcoe to begin a new life. He opened a fishing boat rental operation, building his own

rowboats.

"You had to scratch to make a living," Lloyd said. There were nine children in the family. "We used to skate to school on the frozen roads. It was gravel then. You'd never see a pair of headlights. People used horses and cutters."

In a previous interview a few years ago, we asked Lloyd what he thought had helped his business to achieve such enduring success. He answered, "Well...I guess working seven days a week, 15 or 16 hours a day probably did it." He laughed. It was a funny answer but probably true.

With nine children, food and shelter was certainly a major pressure to Fred Crate but it wasn't the only one. Trying to build a boat each year in their small shop, Fred also had to find a way to keep the kids out of the way. "They used to send me up to the house to get a bucket of steam." Lloyd said with a huge smile.

His father built a 'Crate Craft' per year for about a dozen years. As the men worked on the boats in the shop, screwing the boards onto the frames, they would trim off the mahogany plugs. Lloyd gathered up a pocket full and took them to school with an elastic band. Breaking up and barely able to continue the story, Lloyd said, "I got the strap. I hit the teacher in the ass."

You have to believe that the sense of humour came from Fred Crate himself, but there's an easy-going attitude there too and a willingness to not take things too seriously. Lloyd may have worked 7 days a week, 16 hours a day most of his life, but you feel that he really loved it.

The family built their own boats (up to 35 feet) but there was no financing back then for customers. Buyers had to have cash and often, when the Crates found a customer, they had to go out a find a boat for them. It was pretty tough, but once they got the Chris Craft line they became Chris Craft's largest Canadian dealer.

Each year, the Crate family ploughed as much of their money back into the business as they could. Their first boat slip had been dug out of the mud by hand. By the 1960s with Lloyd at the helm, the family took advantage of the



The Crates 80th Anniversary Party was well attended by friends and customers. Seen here from left to right are Greg Crate, Lloyd Crate, Lynn Marko (nee Crate) and Steve Crate enjoying the celebrations just before the big cake came out.

opportunity to expand by buying the former York Marina to the north of their land and later, bought Dawson's Marine to the south, another long-standing family marine business, also with several slips.

They had all been competitors, but friends too. The Crate family was friends with Bob Buchanan who built Buchanan Marine engines and also with a young man whose family kept a boat at Crate's. That young man became their gas boy and later went on to own Skyline Marine - Cameron Wardlaw is a long-standing personal friend. The Crates are friends with most of the marine industry.

The Crate's relationship with Chris Craft was rock solid for 35 years until Chris Craft failed; they were a victim of the transition to fiberglass. Luckily, Crate's were able to get the Carver boat line and that relationship has long been mutually beneficial, even through Genmar's decent into Chapter 11 last year.

"We have always been the ones to plough through," Lloyd told us and when we asked him what was the biggest change since the depression, he quickly answered, "It's my kids...I was smart enough to say 'take it over' more than 20 years ago and putting them in charge of the business has always paid off."

Lloyd's daughter Lynn, company business manager commented on the Genmar changes: "We have always sup-

ported Irwin Jacobs of Genmar with the belief that the company would rebound, and we were right."

Family and friends have always been important. Customers have always been treated as friends and those friendships run deep. In 1972, the marina suffered a devastating fire and they lost 33 boats. Lloyd and the staff worked tirelessly to get all the boats replaced for their insurance coverage and during that summer, even the wealthiest at the marina took their turn doing construction work to get the marina rebuilt.

There are second and even third generation customers still making Crate's in Keswick their home port. Knowing those families and those people so well, the Crate's knew they could count on the support of their loyal clientele, even through the 2009 recession.

Crate's once modest property has grown with various acquisitions to feature 500 slips (all full) and the 52-acre land and water marina is home to between 400 and 800 customers on a summer weekend. There are two swimming pools, a whirlpool, fitness studio, playground, a yacht club and more.

Five years ago, they took on the management and operations of Lagoon City Marina with another 277 slips and a wide range of facilities. This summer Crate's will expand again with a new

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## IMPACT



This is an historic photo of the original boat dock and building in Keswick.



The Crate Marine Sales sign in Keswick in the early 1980's with a few of the last fiberglass Chris-Craft's in view.

facility at Port McNicoll on Georgian Bay. That is expected to reach another 500 slips in 3 to 5 years.

Of course, there are hundreds of cottagers on Lake Simcoe, so to better serve the many smaller boat buyers, Crate's bought out a marina a few miles north of Keswick. That is now Crate's - Willow Beach.

And, let's not forget the new Boston Pizza restaurant they opened last year on the water in Keswick! Apparently, the family formula for business success works outside the marine industry too!

The family tree is now four generations deep in the marine industry. Lloyd's eldest is Brian who now owns Crate's Lake Country Boats in Orillia and Midland with his sons Jason and Dan. Lloyd's daughter Lynn, is the business manager for Crate Marine Sales in Keswick, where she works alongside her daughters Melissa and Stephanie in administration. Greg Crate is the Service Manager and can often be found in the yard helping to haul a boat, or at his desk taking care of the many service customers. Greg's sons Ryan and Brandon are also active in the business. Steve Crate is the Sales Manager and Lloyd's youngest son, who sold his first boat when he was 13 and hasn't looked back since. So far, Steve's children are too young to join the business.

Altogether Lloyd Crate's family numbers 31, including his 18 grand children and 6 great grand children. That should facilitate plenty of future expansion!

We extend the Crate family and their many friends our best wishes and congratulations on their 80th Anniversary! ●



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# Think Winter this Summer!

By JOHN MORRIS



**IN THIS ISSUE**, Bob Eaton writes about the many salient reasons to keep your technicians and shop busy through the winter months. As you well know, this is definitely not Florida and winter seems to mean just one thing to boaters – store your boat and forget about it. Then in the spring, they suddenly emerge from hibernation and have a list of items that they desperately need done prior to launch. Our goal is to change that mindset and show owners that there are a number of good reasons to do so.

Although the boat shop mentality has long included dormant winters, this is not so in all aspects of the marine industry. Consider sailmaking; sailmakers have long offered ‘fall discounts’ and ‘boat show discounts’ in order to keep their business demand up over the off season.

Everyone agrees on two things: 1) there are good reasons for marine operators to perform work over the winter; and, 2) boat owners always appear shocked that their service provider is busy in the spring and cannot immediately leap to complete the project they deem as being vital.

Ad Nauseam proposes a multi-pronged approach including Education, Awareness and Incentive.

**Education** should begin now. You’re customers have just launched and they are (perhaps painfully) aware that their TO DO list was a challenge to get done. More importantly, you have them all in one place. This is the time to circulate the new ‘Why Wait for Spring?’ brochure, video and web site that explains the advantages of winter as a time to do boat repairs. Remind them that their list of upgrades can be accumulated over the summer, then point out that their boats will not be out of service during the winter months since they are in storage anyhow and underline the logic of having work completed well before the inevitable spring rush in 2011.

**Awareness** is not always what you think it is. You may have signs up and so forth, but do your customers really know that you have an electronics specialist, an engine flush machine or an upholstery designer? Signage is a fine way to communicate. Consider a display of recently completed work, or create a page on your web site. My informal surfing survey showed that many marinas offer storage specials for the winter, but I couldn’t find any indication of the wonderful services that are

available while those boats are stored. Sure, many list their capabilities, but emphasizing the special opportunities during the unrushed off-season should be front and centre.

Keep your employees in the loop; they stand to benefit from additional employment in the winter when things are often slow. In the course of conversation with customers, convert ‘sorry, we’re too busy now’ to ‘why not plan to do that this winter – you may even be able to swing a saving.’

Pump it up! Showcase the service team, those expert contract decorators, entertainment centre specialists, gelcoat restoration technicians and so on. Make your service advisors into the boater’s buddy – a local hero who can bring your boat to life over the winter. Support that with a summer showcase. It’s Christmas in July and here are some gifts you can give your boat. This is an opportunity both to promote winter work and to show the fun side of your operation. Engage your team by giving them an opportunity to be the stars of the day by giving out ice cream or coupons.

**Incentives** can mesh with education and awareness. That educational brochure can have a coupon attached, or

even a series of purchase incentives: Save 10% on upholstery before New Year's, Special off-season engine tune-up package; accessory specials after September; or a simple multi-point check up for some drastically reduced fee before February. That's standard fare in the service departments of the automotive world and should be in the marine business too.

For you, as a marina operator, there are so many benefits to a winter program: retaining key staff; turning the off-season into a revenue source; and, minimizing the headaches that accompany spring launch – just three great benefits. You may even develop profit centres that you have never exploited before, just because your people were too busy servicing boats with urgent needs caused by breakdowns or imminent, customer-imposed deadlines.

SO think winter this summer. Promote the concept and look forward to having a productive season while the snow flies. ●

## Checklist: Thinking Winter this Summer

### Education

- Send out a newsletter or flyer to boaters via store/shop/dock walk.
- E-mail to customers and prospective customers educating them on winter projects.
- Conduct some internal training. Explain to employees about how they benefit by creating winter work so they bring it up to potential customers.

### Awareness

- Post signage to enumerate services available: electronics, interior design, accessories from flat screen to davits, etc.
- Emphasize seasonal requirements: flare expiry, extinguisher check, engine flush, etc.
- Display reminder posters: Think Ahead – Plan Your Winter To-Do List Now
- Hang in-shop photographs. They'll help in a variety of ways.
- Make your people into stars: personality photos, great business cards, lots of contact with boaters, etc.
- Run special events to help: Summer Snowball Festival, ice cream day, Santa visit, etc.
- Feature your winter capabilities on your web site year round.

### Incentives

- Offer winter special offers.
- Provide online downloadable coupons.
- Have in-store balloon pop or scratch and save.
- Hand out specials that emphasize capabilities: You've won a free consultation from Cynthia, our upholstery designer.
- Hand out 'Santa bucks' or other gimmicks.

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## A Pre-launch Checklist

BY ED SHERMAN, ABYC CURRICULUM DEVELOPER AND SENIOR INSTRUCTOR



Stuffing boxes should be checked for excessive leakage. A slight drip is normal. Excessive dripping indicates either adjustment or repacking of the unit. A "normal" drip rate is often considered about 4-5 drops per minute. This should be checked as part of a sea trial.

**BY THE TIME** you read this, the launch season will be in full swing. It's a busy time of year and everyone at a boat yard is facing a series of tight deadlines to keep the launch cycle running as smoothly as possible.

The truth is, the checklist I'll present here is one that should have been delivered to your customers over the winter months, possibly with a financial incentive built in to entice customers to respond early so that billable work can be completed before the frenzy that usually goes along with the spring launch cycle. So, if your yard is not presenting your customer base with a list like this in January, it's something you really should consider for the future. It can go a long way toward enhancing cash flow during the slower winter months because many of the tasks outlined here can actually be done over the winter and are billable as completed.

We can break the tasks down into four broad categories: Mechanical; Rigging; Hull (Cosmetic); and Hull (Mechanical). Under the mechanical category, we will of course have slightly different regimens depending upon whether the boat is powered by gas or diesel engines. Power vs. sailboats will have different lists as well.

It's important to remember whenever you are inspecting a customer's boat to approach whatever task you are involved in with wide peripheral vision. Make note of any obvious flaws, ABYC Standards, non-compliance or potential problems. That's how you sell honest work and maintain good customer satisfaction. Let's look at the lists:

### MECHANICAL

**Commission Diesel Engine:** Start engine, check for proper water/cooling

raw water flow, check for fluid leaks, check for exhaust leaks and check belts, hoses and clamps. Inspect fuel system from deck fill to point of connection on engine(s). Inspect for engine paint chipping, neutralize rust and repaint as needed. Ensure engine pre-heat is operational if equipped.

**Commission Gasoline Engine:** All of the above PLUS run engine diagnostic test sequence if computer controlled; sea trial for performance, proper running temperature, excessive vibration.

**Gas and Diesel:** Oil and filter changed (should be part of de-commissioning), fuel filters replaced, water pump impeller(s) checked/replaced as needed. All engine and cooling system anodes replaced. Test engine coolant, replace as needed. Test batteries, top up electrolyte if applicable, ensure posts are covered and primary connection at starter motor



All steering quadrant cables should be adjusted and checked for any excessive wear.



For seacocks with double clamps, it's important to check for free movement and handle orientation to ensure full travel from opened to closed. Regarding double clamps, remember that the ABYC does not require this in H-27. In fact, if the barb on the thru-hull is not long enough to accommodate the full band width of the clamps, double clamping can cause more harm than good.



Engine cooling system anodes are often hard to locate and therefore neglected. Failure to replace these in a timely fashion can cause serious damage to engine heat exchangers.



Alternator and starter motor terminals should be protected with insulating boots NOT as shown here. Remember that the starter motor circuit is the only circuit on a boat that is not required to have a fuse installed. If a metal object contacts the terminal and the engine block simultaneously, a serious short circuit will occur, possibly causing an engine room fire.

and alternator are properly booted.

**AC Generator:** All of the above for either gas or diesel, whichever is applicable.

**General Mechanical/Electrical:** Check bilge pump operation, commission potable water system, commission heads, commission refrigeration system(s), commission air conditioning systems, service all seacocks, install running gear anodes. Install outdrive(s) if applicable. Change drive oil. Change transmission oil. Clean, prep, outdrives as needed. Check and lubricate steering, throttle and shift controls. Test operation of all main panel board AC and DC circuits.

### RIGGING

Prepare mast for stepping which includes: check lights, install spreaders and boots, and inspect all standing rig fittings. Inspect windex and or masthead sensors. Wash and wax mast, step mast, and rig tune. Inspect all running rigging. Clean and lubricate all winches, test all line stoppers and turning blocks. Install sails.

### HULL (COSMETIC)

Paint bottom, clean and wax hull, wash and clean topsides, remove shrink wrap and install canvas as needed. Paint boot top. Varnish or treat exterior wood. Clean, inflate, launch dinghy.

### HULL MECHANICAL

Align engine(s). Replace cutlass bearing. Repack stuffing box.

It's important to note that all of the above work will generally have either fixed pricing, or in some cases will be described as time and materials. A policy needs to be established and outlined on any service contract form that limits the extent of repairs a customer is responsible for without additional written authorization.

Also, remember that yard coordination is of paramount importance during this busy time. Make sure the whole team is working in harmony. There have been more than one boat launched over the years with hoses removed and seacocks open as the crew went to lunch. ●

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### About Ontario Sailing

Ontario Sailing is a not-for-profit, volunteer organization committed to the promotion and development of all aspects of boating and sailing from grassroots up to Olympians and off shore adventurers. Founded in 1970, it is an association of over 200 organizations and 100,000 individual members.

### The Hans Fogh Fund

The Hans Fogh Fund was created in December of 2009 (as a fund in the Ontario Sailing Endowment) to help continue the growth of high performance programming in Ontario.

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# A Breath of Fresh Air

By GLEN CAIRNS



The red moulds are on the left while the moulds on the right have now been sprayed with white gelcoat which is setting up to begin the laminating process. They are curing beside the ventilating system that runs right down the middle.



The Maco Marine offshore fishing boats are made in this facility. A Frees system clears the air as these deck moulds are curing.



This shows how the Frees system is positioned in the Maco Marine boats manufacturing facility. Here the finished hulls are curing just below the ventilation system.

**IN A RECENT SURVEY** in *Boating Industry Canada's* Newsweek, we learned that there was considerable interest in training technicians in fiberglass and gel coat repair. It ranked second highest out of 7 different topics. Doing this type of work during the off-season makes the best sense but what

about the energy issues of shop heating and the danger of fumes and VOCs?

Controlling the amount of styrene (we all know the smell) in the work area is a priority for any fiberglass reinforced plastic (RFP) manufacturer and this includes just about all boat builders and boat repair shops. The push for improved air quality comes from government regulations on the acceptable level of styrene (usually 50 ppm) and the need to create a safe and productive working environment.

The traditional solution to air contamination is via an HVAC system designed, hopefully, to move out the bad air and bring in sufficient new air to reduce fumes to an acceptable level. This is known as dilution ventilation and requires large volumes of air.

This new air must be heated and during a Canadian winter that can be a very expensive proposition. It is also difficult to get the fresh air to the correct part of the shop where emissions may be most concentrated.

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## DIRECTED AIR FLOW

An alternative to traditional HVAC ventilation is a directed air flow system designed to ventilate the specific breathing zone of the worker, rather than the entire building. Frees Inc. of Shreveport, LA, has spent years developing and perfecting their proprietary, directed air flow technology. The Frees Directed Air Flow system focuses air in a controlled envelope that moves across the breathing zone and then stops (to prevent roll back and recontamination), the air is then captured and removed from the area. The contaminated air is vented and dispersed or routed through an end of stack (EOS) control depending on what is permitted at the location.

Frees Inc. owner Ronnie Free explains that allowing the air to flow exactly as needed demands precise calculations based

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NMMA Canada and its advocacy efforts are exactly what the industry needs in good and bad economic times. The government relations advocacy effort put forward on behalf of dealers and manufacturers on the floor plan issue is much appreciated and making sure our voice is heard in Ottawa where the decisions are made.

*Brock Elliott, Champion Boats*

We can try and contact government officials at Environment Canada on engine manufacturer issues on our own, however, the strength and power of a group of industry members lead by NMMA Canada has proven to gain us access to the key players and get our questions answered faster and better.

*Christopher Goulder, Volvo Penta Canada*

Having access to statistical data on sales is crucial to our business' strategic planning.

*Rick Layzell, Yamaha Motor Canada*



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## [THE BOAT SHOP II]

on the experience they have accumulated over the past 30 years. Frees Inc. began working with large firms like Brunswick Corporation during the period of rapid fiberglass boat building expansion in the 80s and this allowed them to continually evolve their system. While most of the early users were large volume builders, Ronnie says the system is completely scalable for smaller operations that may have just one mould area and one grinding area.

### AUTOMATIC CONTROLS AND MONITORING

Using digital controls, the Frees Directed Air Flow system can be programmed to sense the level of styrene being produced and provide the appropriate level of ventilation. This is particularly useful in a shop where more than one activity is taking place and can result in significant savings on energy costs. The system monitoring can be accomplished in a number of ways, included using motion detectors or monitoring resin flow. Each system is customized for the particular location.

### DUST

For smaller boat shops it is usually dust, not styrene emissions, which present the greatest challenge. Grinding fiberglass or sanding wood both produce dust which not only creates an unpleasant work environment, but is potentially harmful. A great deal of time can be spent in covering and masking, or even worse, in cleaning up. For dust management the issue is how to get the dust to the collectors. With the Frees Dust Free system the air is controlled at the work site so there is no contamination of the rest of the shop. Utilizing a directed air flow system the dust can be kept to the grinding area with a dust control system where the particles are collected for disposal and the clean air is re-circulated to the work area.

### TEMPERATURE CONTROL

Temperature variation is not friendly to the FRP manufacturing process.

Using heat exchangers, the Frees Inc. heat recovery system captures heat from the warm shop air as it leaves the building so the cost of heating the outside air is greatly reduced. One of Frees' customers located in Manitoba uses the ventilation system to capture heat from the 21°C shop air as it leaves the building through heat exchangers and warm the (often) -29°C outside air to approximately 5°C at zero cost. The energy required to further heat the air to shop temperature is greatly reduced.

Canadian and US regulators are currently developing ever more stringent air quality standards and this will put greater pressure on builders to improve their ventilation systems. But it is not just regulations which should motivate companies to act, as the economy improves and competition for workers increases, the ability to provide a pleasant and healthy work environment will be crucial for future growth. ●

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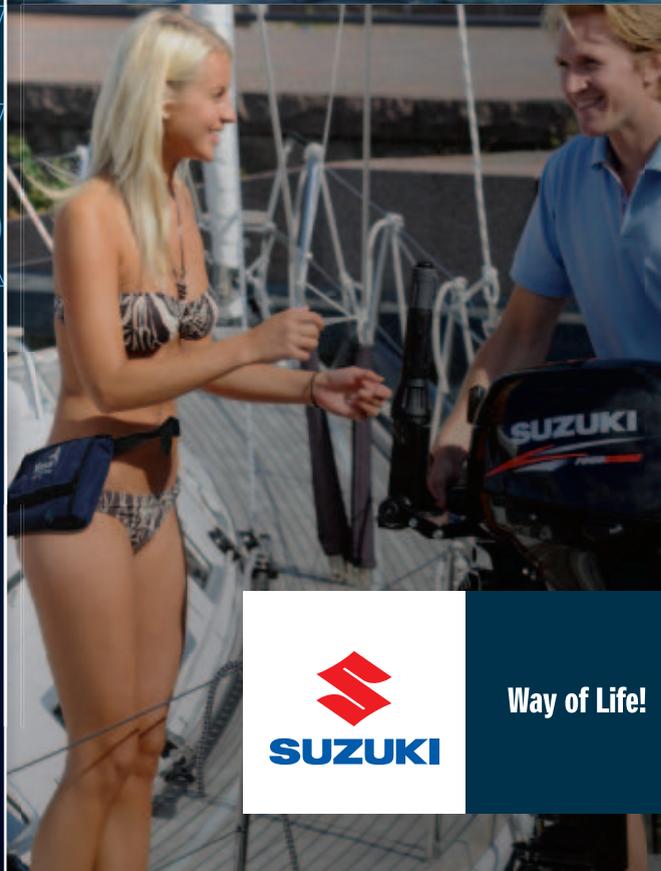
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