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imagination at work

BY ANDY ADAMS

Will You Be Ready if the EI Rules Change?

THE THEME OF THIS AUGUST ISSUE of Boating Industry Canada magazine is "Winter Work". This is certainly not a new discussion, but it may have a far greater sense of urgency this year than it has ever had before.

Employment Insurance coverage may soon be denied to marine industry seasonal workers who are regularly laid-off during the winter months.

In June, the Harper Government passed their 400-page Omnibus Budget Bill into law. This included major changes to the Employment Insurance program, some of which targets seasonal workers in various industries.

Benefits could be denied. People may be forced to accept lower paying jobs, or employment that is much further from where they live.

Canada's marine industry already has a severe shortage of skilled workers.

This industry must manage the business to provide 12-month employment to be competitive with other industries; that means Winter Work. In this issue of Boating Industry Canada starting on page 18, we offer up some ideas and input from marine operators who are doing a great job of running 12-months a year and who keep their key people on.

Also, look at the great Top Tech Grand Prix program that Yamaha just held, to celebrate their techs and recognize their great contribution to the industry's success.

In the Winter Work article, several of the people we interviewed noted that they were always selling service work, repair and refit. Sales—real relationship-building good old-fashioned salesmanship seems to be a lost art that we need to re-discover. See the Ad Nauseam article on page 6 for some inspiration.

Any marina, dealer or yard that was thinking of laying people off this winter is going to need a new business plan to help guide them to a new level of financial success.

The best research and data in the industry is generated by GE Capital and their Commercial Distribution Finance field staff. Have a close read of the Marketing article on page 14 for valuable information. The bigger dealers usually avail themselves of GE's offer of support to join the Spader groups. These are a fabulous resource for running your business better and more profitably.

Another resource is Chris Brown at Lifeline Business Solutions. He's a consultant you can hire directly. We called Chris about Winter Work and he added another key dimension to the Winter Work discussion.

He said that one of the biggest concerns for Marine Dealers is salaries. This only makes sense since salaries are probably the biggest expense on your Profit & Loss Statement. He recognizes that as a seasonal marine business you have probably had to rely on laying people off during the off season to balance your salary expense to your revenue stream.

The concern is always getting these people back in the Spring, but if new EI rules force them to get work elsewhere through the winter, they may not return to you in 2013.

Chris says that it is imperative that you focus on your business plan now, to sell Winter Work.

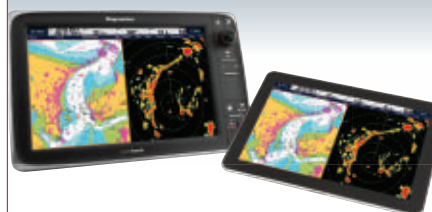
And, with a solid business plan, you might be able to keep them going this winter with a marina upgrade project like the Port of Orillia one on page 22.

Winter Work and year-round employment will generate the positive attitudes, employment security and long-term commitment the industry needs to succeed.

Andy Adams - Editor

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Photographed at Ashbridge's Bay Yacht Club while preparing to run the committee boat for their Wednesday night club races, Drew Robertson is the third generation to lead Robertson & Robertson Skippers' Plan Insurance, now part of the CG&B Group and to continue to offer support to our industry. Read this exemplary story on pg. 26.

The Value of You

BY JOHN MORRIS



Scott Hanson at Rossiter Boats works his sales magic on a potential customer at the 2012 Toronto International Boat Show.

Like us on Facebook. Follow us on Twitter. These are words that have suddenly become a cliché right up there with “your call is important to us” and maybe soon to have the same impact on customers. Our recent Boating Industry Canada survey indicates that marketing dollars in the boat industry are moving toward the internet, but the internet itself is changing and as the recent disappointing results for the Facebook IPO indicate, there are no guarantees.

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disappointing results for the Facebook IPO indicate, there are no guarantees.

Everything old isn't quite new again, but the role of the individual is once more gaining visibility. Even during the glitteriest new days of the web, the salesperson still retained importance, even though it was somewhat obscured.

Although the world of communications has undergone a total revolution, and one that is still very much in progress, our guest expert, Brad Marsh, feels that the name of the game is still relationship

building. It's just that the way you do it has some radically changed elements. The essence of sales nonetheless, is still 'you' and your ability to connect with the boater. Period.

All of a sudden it was easy, or so we thought. We may well have been swept away in the tide, seeing the latest tech idea as the must-do marketing approach. When the web was new there was a huge crush to get everything online and why not – suddenly the choices were all right there in front of the consumer and he ▶

ANDY ADAMS



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or she didn't need a noisy sales person trying to influence them.

Today the web is everywhere and some days it seems there's just too much information. Consumers are bombarded with emails and important updates, many (most?) of which just find their way to the Junk folder. Social media is in flux; Facebook was setting the world on fire, but is it still? We hear that young surfers are going elsewhere (Tumblr, Pinterest) for their online fix, possibly because their parents are on Facebook. Have a look at "Social Media: Is the Romance Over?" It's not absolutely geared to our industry but it is from a Canadian company and worth the read at www.inboundsales.net. The article reinforces the point that you really need to review your web activity and understand its impact on your customers.

The internet has not been positive in its transformation of some industries. Consider newspapers—they were completely blindsided by the internet, then suddenly befriended it as a means to reduce printing costs while retaining paying customers. But, the customers wouldn't pay. Now the Globe and Mail's publisher, Phillip Crawley, indicates they will put up a 'paywall' like the New York Times has. There are very mixed reviews as to whether that will work or not and these guys are in the media business. If they can't figure out what works, can we?

So what should you do? We spoke with Brad Marsh a top sales pro in real estate, to get an outside look at how you and your dealership/brokerage can incorporate all these media changes into your game plan while retaining the most important aspect of your offering—the personal connection.

In 2008 Brad was the ReMax Network's International Broker of the Year and in that capacity has been called upon to train and speak. He also addresses Okanagan College students and other groups.

As for boating, Brad is a scuba diver

and worked as an underwater marine maintenance guy in Texas. He is an ardent boater; he keeps his 26-foot Maxxum weekender at the Vernon Yacht Club and races Wednesdays on Okanagan Lake aboard a Beneteau 31.5.

Not long ago, sales tools included newspaper ads, personal outreach and community involvement. Today there are websites (Brad suggests that increasingly in the real estate business,

"A relationship can only occur with another human being," says Marsh. You can try to use social media and internet marketing to create that relationship but, people will not make a big-ticket purchase online.

individual sales people have their own sites), e-blasts, social media, YouTube and more. But Brad feels that while the tools may be different, the goals of communication are to instill trust and especially to build personal relationships. That means that you are back in fashion as the pivotal factor in sales (although our feeling is that it never really was otherwise, internet or no.)

"A relationship can only occur with another human being," says Marsh. You can try to use social media and internet marketing to create that relationship but, people will not make a big-ticket purchase online; it is impersonal. "Sales is a full contact sport."

In the end, your success cannot be left in the hands of your website, or Facebook page, or LinkedIn listing although these tools certainly have merits. Here is Brad Marsh's eight-point list on where to put your efforts in the communications environment of 2012.

Establish Priorities. Your time is a limited resource. Every marketing action must pass the test; does this build relationships or referrals?

Evaluate all media old- and new-school. Websites, signs on boats, email newsletters, boat shows, Facebook or Twitter are important candidates but you must know how to use them and what constitutes appropriate etiquette

Ask for referrals. Build your reputation and don't be shy about asking your customers to recommend you.

Look forward—make every transaction into five. One satisfied customer leads to four referrals, or one boat now and four more in years to come.

You can't be what Marsh terms 'a secret agent.' Be prominent on your website, community, fish with the fishermen, race with the racers and add to their blogs and so on.

Budget your time. Allocate a specific amount of time for online communication. Set that time and do it regularly but do not disappear into the black hole that is the internet. Find a tool

that allows you to post on several sites at once, set up your site to forward inquiries to your regular email.

Ask your customers what they prefer. You may prefer email but they only 'txt' with their friends. Would they prefer a phone call to an emailed newsletter?

Keep your communication on a professional level. No matter what you do, the purposes remain the same as they always have. LinkedIn is a great way to illustrate your connections and hence that you are trustworthy. Your Facebook page has to be professional; as great a swing dancer as you may be, your customers want to learn about your boating knowledge and expertise.

Ads, internet, social media—our survey indicates you're moving in the online direction. That may be the right move, but no matter where you are making your contacts, the individuals who answer the phone, respond to emails and tweets are the same people who shake hands at the boat shows. It certainly seems that the skills, tools and capabilities required are the same regardless of the media—it's all 'you'. ■

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METS, the biggest and best attended leisure marine trade show in the world, celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2012. The show has come through boom years and lean times but every year for a quarter of a century METS has continued to build international recognition as the undisputed number one trade show of its kind.

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METS works

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METS is held in the Amsterdam RAI exhibition halls just 15 minutes from Amsterdam's International Airport and 10 minutes from the historic city centre. Professionals can attend for free if you pre-register and show organiser Amsterdam RAI can also book hotel rooms for you and assist with other travel requirements. Find all the details on metstrade.com



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Reusable winter covers may offer winter work opportunities



Nat Genco and his son Jonathan operate a very busy and fairly large shop with 2 locations in the greater Toronto area.

BY ANDY ADAMS

OVER THE LAST few years we've had a number of conversations with Nat Genco. The topic that particularly caught our interest was the fact that he produces high-quality reusable winter boat covers that can offer an alternative to shrink wrapping.

Reusable covers can facilitate access to do winter work projects where a shrink wrapped boat is often inaccessible until spring.

The marine industry has done extremely well with shrink wrap, establishing it as the solution most boat owners expect from their marinas, offering excellent protection to the boats and in the process, delivering outstanding profitability to the marinas.

Shrink wrap can also be recycled quite effectively and some of the shrink wrap suppliers have created programs to gather used shrink wrap to ensure that it's recycled and not put into a landfill site.

Unfortunately, not every shrink wrap user is aware of that recycling opportunity. We saw a large quantity of it being stuffed into the back of a garbage truck in a yacht club this spring.

On larger boats, it's possible to install a zipper so you have access to the inside of the boat, but that is a significant cost factor when shrink wrapping a cottage size boat and we rarely see one with the zipper access. That means the boat is probably not accessible for winter work projects once it's wrapped and put away.

Nat Genco thinks he has an idea that at least some customers would buy into,

and it might offer even greater profits than shrink wrap.

But before we share that idea, let's get some background.

Genco Marine has been around for 45 years now and has two locations in the Greater Toronto Area as well as an online store. They have several product lines and winter covers is an important part of the product mix.

Genco Marine can produce custom covers for virtually any boat, power or sail and whether you store your boat mast up, mast down, with or without a frame; they can make you a winter boat cover.

They can also create a standard size cover and make a large number of them at a very attractive price. Again, more on that in a moment.



This big keelboat is securely covered over for the winter using its spar as part of the framework and surprise—there are people living aboard this boat all winter under the cover!



Using their reusable frame [like the one on page 12] and the custom fitted, vented cover, this 28 foot Sea Ray is protected and snug for the winter.

On their web site, Genco Marine describes their re-usable covers as an eco-friendly and cost-friendly alternative to shrink wrap, particularly because their covers are designed to last up to 10 or even 12 years.

Nat explained that all their covers are made in 3 pieces, from a lightweight coated polyester material that's waterproof.

On custom covers, they create an aluminum frame system, usually out of 1" anodized aluminum with heavy duty aluminum fittings. These often clamp to the stern and bow pulpit, pass over the stanchions and on sailboats, the mast is often used as part of the frame, giving the mast protection and storing it with the boat.

For powerboat owners Genco Marine recommends custom winter covers fabricated for a framework that

the owner of marina can build and re-use. So, they provide frame building guidelines and they have a modular framing system for quick and easy frame building using 2X4's.

For individual boat owners at yacht clubs, Genco offers a removal-inspection-storage and installation service. Simply, the boat owner can hire Genco's people to create the cover and frame, cover the boat in the fall, uncover it in the spring, take the cover and frame away and store it until next fall - super easy!

Here is where Nat's idea comes in.

First, they offer a nice commission on sales, so any marina in the area can earn a healthy profit by selling these Genco covers.

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Nat Genco shows a model of a very effective and simple to build, reusable frame that they've developed for their covers.

customers and offer an alternative to shrink wrapping; their own re-usable cover and frame. Price it above shrink.

Some people will gladly pay a little more to be environmentally responsible. Give them that opportunity. Let's say your shrink wrapping price for their boat was \$600.

Offer the re-usable cover at \$665.

Also, offer to store the cover and the frame for next year and again, price it at \$665. Nat says that in about season 3, the cover is fully paid for, the customer is happy and from then on, the re-usable cover is extremely profitable. If the boat owner uses it for 6 or 8 years, the marina is really doing well.

Let's expand on the idea a bit more.

Take a hypothetical cottage country marina storing 100 boats. With a similar environmentally responsible sales pitch, let's say you can sell 10 boat owners on a re-usable cover at \$665 instead of \$600. Buy a series of 10 re-usable covers with high-quality (and standardized) frames with good hardware.

For example, a standardized 21 foot

cover and frame could work well for boats from 15 to 21 feet. Being the same and fitted to the frame, your staff can build all 10 frames faster than they can custom shrink covers to each of 10 boats. The identical light gray covers look special in your yard and best of all, they are easily removed or even worked under.

As Nat told us, "It's an easy job to untie the cover, peel it back and replace it later. We generally supply loops every 3 feet and webbing or line to tie it tight. To keep it tight, we hang sand bags or water bottles, 6 pounds each."

He continued, "The tension keeps the cover from moving. And, the material we use is a coated polyester that is light, strong and very durable."

"There are some other things to consider too," Nat explained "Because shrink is often white, we use the light gray for our covers. People notice that and ask for it. For a marina, the payback should be about 3 years. We can make a cover for a Catalina 47 for \$2,900 when the marina asks \$2,500 to shrink it. We sell to dealers at a 20% discount but marinas

can probably sell these for more."

He went on to demonstrate a very clever wooden frame. They offer hardware to make the frame quickly and easily, using just a drill and saw.

Then, they have vents that are sewn in and you can specify custom features like places for lines to pass through, special shapes to go over superstructure and more.

On all bigger boats, Genco uses 7 vents and a door but even smaller boats can have a door. And, it's a big enough door for a man to bring in tools and work there.

The frame work can facilitate more air circulation to reduce the effects of condensation. He also pointed out that marinas using inexperienced help can safely use these covers. There's no skill needed the way there is using tape and a torch to get the right tension without burning the gel coat.

But the main reason for this is of course, getting easy and no-cost access to customer's boats after fall storage, to do winter work projects. ■

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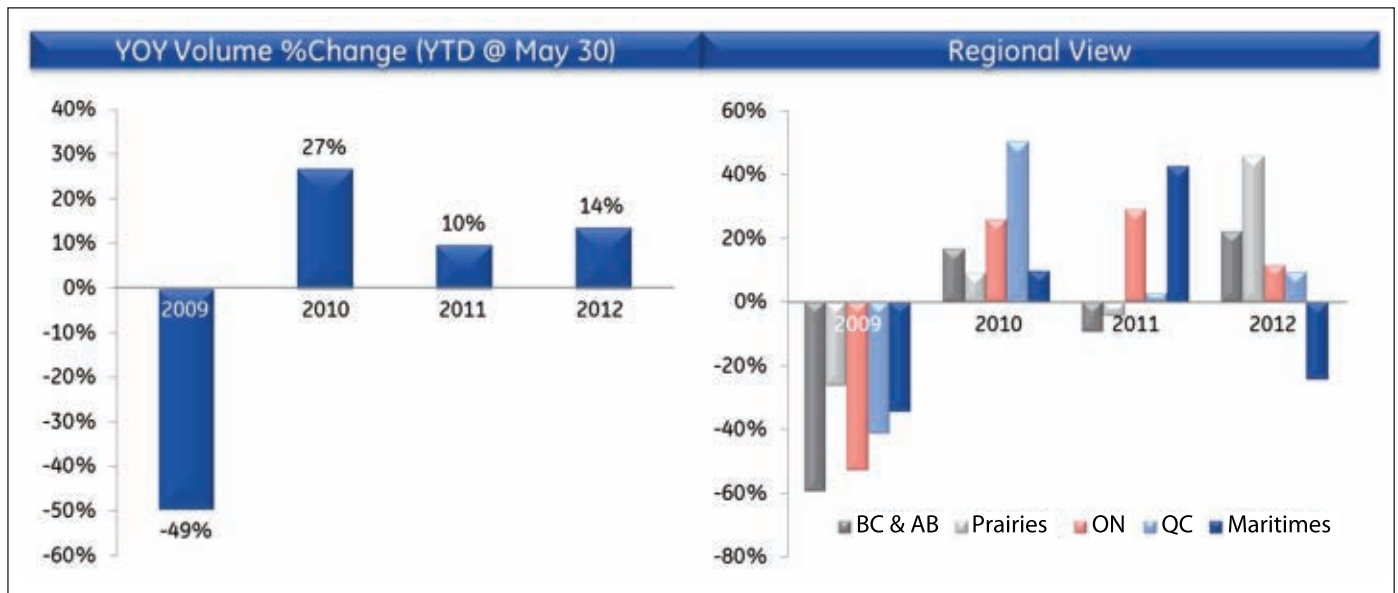
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Spotlight on Canadian Marine Industry

2012 Mid-season update



GE CAPITAL, Commercial Distribution Finance Canada (CDF) is pleased to provide you with the new installment in its series of industry reviews. As a lender committed to serving the Canadian Marine Industry, CDF aims to continue to share the developments it observes in the global and Canadian economies and their impact on the Marine industry.

- The national level of inventory aged over one year old or more has increased to 17% from last year's very low 13%.
- This is considered an acceptable level of aged inventory and CDF continues to work collaboratively with its customers to monitor any situations where the levels become more concerning.
- Regionally, inventory aged over one year remains slightly more concentrated in the western part of the country, but has not increased year-over-year, thanks to dealers' thoughtful ordering patterns in 2011.

- There has been a positive increase in orders by Canadian marine dealers. A 14% increase over last year's volumes are yielding results that are within striking distance of predownturn levels at the national level.
- While growth in western Canada over the last few years has been slow or, in some cases, negative, a 2012 regional breakdown shows that growth in Canada is now being driven by those provinces
- A correction in the Maritimes is being evidenced, which is occurring as a result of higher purchases in Q4 of 2011.

As a result of its longstanding and unique position as the leading provider of financial services to the Canadian Marine industry, CDF benefits from access to relevant information on the state of that industry. CDF imparts this information as a means to engage collaboratively with its manufacturer and dealer customers to foster a strong Canadian marine industry.

There is no doubt that the global economic environment remains uncertain, and while the Canadian dollar seems to be settling down just below parity with the US dollar, short-term volatility remains a concern. The Bank of Canada monitors household debt levels closely, and Canadian consumers hear warnings against letting those levels creep too high. While the CDF team remains close to these concerning macro trends, its view of the Canadian marine industry remains positive.

We are observing a 14% increase in Canadian Marine wholesale shipments through to the end of the month of May over the same period in 2011. Across the country, the increase in ordering is driven largely by the West, with Alberta and BC up 22% over the same period in 2011, and Saskatchewan and Manitoba up 46%. Ontario and Quebec are seeing more modest growth with 12% and 10% respectively. Finally the Maritimes are down 24% after increasing 43% in 2011 over 2010. ▶

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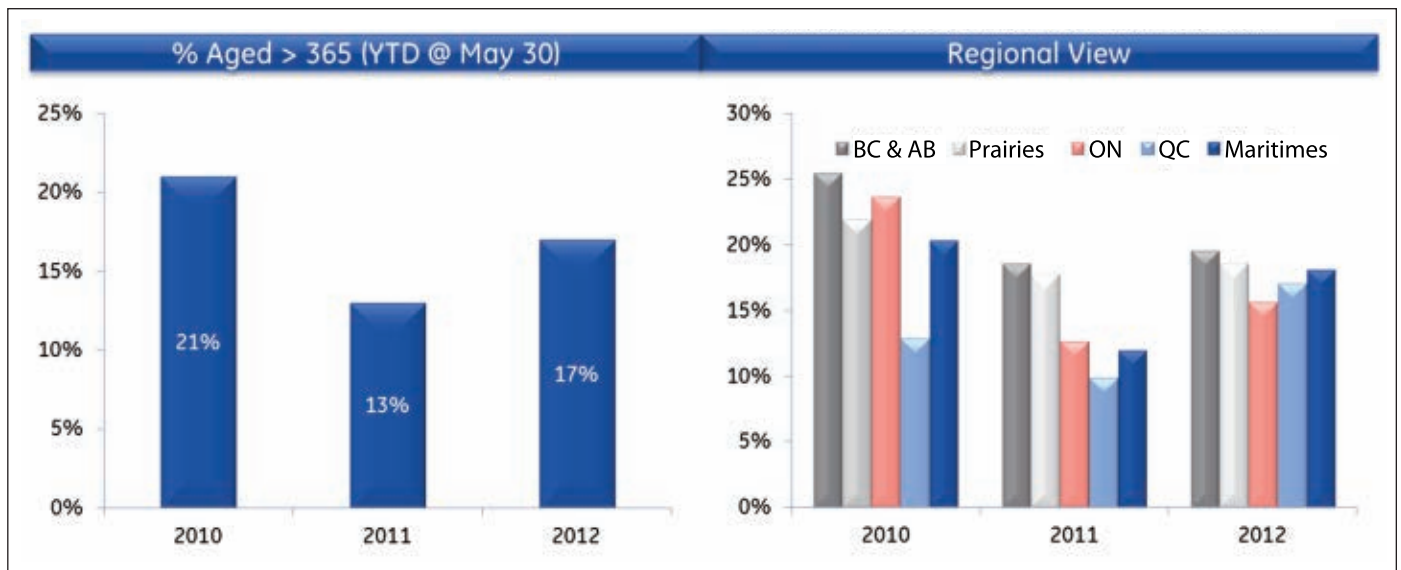
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Although the levels of aged inventory have increased over last year, they remain relatively healthy as we enter into the full swing of the short Canadian selling season. The regional breakdown is fairly homogenous, although BC and Alberta will need to clear out the channel this selling season to avoid levels above 20% aged over a year old. Most markets are experiencing sales similar to or slightly better than

thoughtfulness that goes into forecasting the inventory requirements and timing to sell and deliver within Canada's short season while ensuring that the aging levels of the inventory remain healthy. And CDF continues to work closely and proactively with its customers to provide enough credit capacity to match their needs.

CDF continues to work with many dealers on cash flow forecasting to

industry throughout all economic cycles means that CDF will continue to work with its manufacturer and dealer customers to help build a strong and secure Canadian Marine Industry and position all of its customers to take advantage of the eventual return of consumer confidence and economic growth. CDF is investing in its resources in Canada, and is focused on smart growth and welcomes your feedback.

a 14% increase in Canadian Marine wholesale shipments through to the end of the month of May over the same period in 2011...the increase in ordering is driven largely by the West, with Alberta and BC up 22%

2011 to date, and CDF expects to see some of the inventory build-up caused by last year's poorer weather liquidated in Alberta in particular. Aged levels in Ontario are the healthiest at 16%.

Inventory of Aluminum and Fiberglass units have reached three year highs. Aluminum inventory surpassed 2008 levels, while Fiberglass inventory remained somewhat shy of the 2008 high watermark level. Strong Aluminum sales this season will help clear the channel.

CDF understands very well the balancing act dealers aim to strike when it comes to stocking levels. The industry is well served by the dealers'

anticipate potential periods of cash constraint. Even as the economy continues to strengthen this is an important aspect of business management particularly in a seasonal industry such as the Canadian marine industry. We are also working with the experts at Spader Business Management® to share dealer performance benchmarks and strategies on budget management, and CDF's program to subsidize some of the cost of Spader's seminars has been well received by our customers.

You can be confident that CDF's proven and ongoing commitment to collaborative engagement with your

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Vow to have no empty workspaces—fill the shop with workers and work this winter!

Winter Work Alert

If You Layoff Seasonal Workers This Year, You May Not get Them Back...Ever

BY Andy Adams

Employment Insurance coverage may soon be denied to marine industry seasonal workers who are regularly laid-off during the winter months.

The new Harper Government Federal Omnibus Budget Bill that was passed into law in June, includes sweeping changes to the Employment Insurance program, some of which targets seasonal workers in various industries.

Benefits could be denied. People may be forced to accept lower paying jobs, or employment that is much further from where they live.

Large numbers of seasonal workers have been a planned component of the marine industry in the past. But, there is already a severe shortage of skilled workers. The Boating Industry Canada Newsweek electronic newsletter publishes a Career Opportunities section and at the beginning of July in high season,

there were still 35 positions open.

August and September are the time to sell Winter Work to your customers. Use this opportunity to bring your business up to provide full 12 month employment.

Your customers are around now. They are using their boats and they are tuned into the things that need attention or repair.

That makes the selling process much easier.

It's "salesmanship" that will bring in the new projects to pay your people over the coming winter...and you'll be increasing satisfaction levels for your customers as well.

At the Boating Ontario Conference last December, Sue Warren from Ed Huck Marine in the Thousand Islands chaired a series of sessions on Winter Work. We asked her comments on the potential Employment Insurance changes.

"It will affect some of our staff members for sure and we may end up

having to change our systems/business model a little to keep our staff from going elsewhere during the off season. That being said, our area is driven by the tourist industry so other jobs will be hard to come by," Sue commented. "I believe business models may need to be changed to keep staff employed all year long..."

The 12-month payroll may seem tough for little marinas to manage, but consider a place like Bay Port Yachting Centre in Midland with their large staff. We called Ken MacDonald who is Director of Marina Operations for the Parkbridge Marinas.

"We're no longer a seasonal business," Ken explained "if you can't make money in the winter, you shouldn't be in this business."

On staffing issues in general, Ken said, "Our biggest challenge is finding good people. Recruiting should never stop. We seeing lots of competition for our top tech guys. The auto industry

leads us in compensation and benefits. Honestly, so does government where a guy can push a broom for \$28/hr."

On selling the customers, Ken told us, "We use three different checklists; different versions for different times of year and we have a full-colour Parkbridge Maintenance Checklist as part of our company literature—it's like an owner's manual for our customers. Also, we can finance big jobs like re-powering and that makes it easier to sell, but we don't discount for winter work."

Frank Farnsworth, General Manager at Skyline Marina in Orillia, Ontario said, "We never stop selling. You have to establish a footprint that lets you keep your best people on. We book lots of winter work; doing winterizing and storage into December, doing PDI for boat show boats, washing the trucks even. Sometimes we have had to cut back to 37 hours but we still go all year."

Frank added, "Anyone can heat their shop, too. Skyline just couldn't survive on 8 months a year."

Drew Irwin who operates Philbrooks Shipyard in Sidney, BC was recently interviewed by writer Robert Buller in Canadian Yachting West magazine, talking about this same topic. In the article Buller shared that, "Maintaining a full-service capability is not easy these days, given the uncertain economic times and the retirement of so many experienced marine tradesmen. Recruiting and training technical staff is always a challenge..."

Ken MacDonald makes training and skills development a regular winter activity. Ken's people are lucky. Bay Port Yachting Centre is close to the Georgian College Midland, Ontario campus. Rob Davidson runs Georgian's Marine and Small Engine program there and we were keen to talk to Rob about the EI changes and Winter Work.

"Knowing there is a shortage of skilled people, the potential impact of these EI changes could curtail marine enrollment," Rob mused "because the skilled people will gravitate to the small engine or auto side and that will make the shortage of marine techs that much worse."

Rob has worked in marine for many years and he commented that he always could sell lots of work through the winter, barely finishing by March. He added that April to November is chaos and letting people 'bank' overtime could be part of the solution. For those investing in training younger techs, (and everyone should be) consider a training allowance and contract to help retain the employee.

This is an industry-wide challenge and we asked Sara Anghel, Executive Director/Vice President Government Relations at NMMA Canada for her thoughts.

She explained that, "NMMA Canada has established a skilled trades working group made up of representatives from marinas and manufacturers. We are aware of the skills shortage in Canada and are striving to develop together, a national standard for marine technicians which will allow the industry to train students to eventually be gainfully employed in the industry and ensuring boaters will receive quality service."

Tim Martin is the Chair of the National Technicians Standards Working Group Sara talked about. He has gotten a lot of assistance from Rob Davidson in gathering the standards from across Canada with the goal of having recognized, national standards in place to raise the skill and knowledge levels as well as the recognized value of a marine tech in the marketplace.

That in turn will help justify higher shop rates and those higher rates will attract a higher calibre of technician—one who can perform high quality work and help build customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Boaters are generally smart, successful people who are themselves, well compensated. That's how they can afford a boat! As an industry, we need to remember that our customers have high expectations and can afford to pay a fair rate for the pleasure of boat ownership.

Let's really dedicate ourselves to selling high-value Winter Work this season, keep the businesses running 12-months and keep the top quality people we need, to succeed in the business. The only way to the future is forward. ■



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YAMAHA TOP TECH

Here is the eventual winner, Darrin Ostapowich from Schultz Motorsports in action doing a top-end teardown.



Yamaha's Technician Grand Prix

Raising The Profile of Marine Technicians

BY ANDY ADAMS

A LITTLE PRAISE can go a long way. We all appreciate a bit of recognition for our efforts and sometimes that encouragement can make up for long hours, time pressures and more.

Service work in the marine industry is highly challenging. Boats vary widely in equipment, power systems and design. Our marine technicians have to deal with both 12 volt DC and in larger boats, 110 volt AC electrical, power generation onboard, complex electronics suites, computerized electronic engine systems and more.

From the smallest outboards to the largest yachts, our techs face the widest range of skills challenges that I can think of.

Customer satisfaction often is a direct result of the technician's skills, knowledge and experience yet we know, in a seasonal business, paying out compensation appropriate to the skills levels may just not be possible.

Our hat is off to the Yamaha organization, world-wide, for creating their Technician Grand Prix program. This is a very well organized, global competition carefully designed to recognize both the wide range of skills a top technician needs to help build the business they work in and also excellence to deliver the customer satisfaction levels boat owners expect.

So, it was with great anticipation that Boating Industry Canada travelled to the Yamaha Motor Canada offices in Toronto to view the Canadian Technician Grand Prix competition on June 12th, 2012.

Every Yamaha technician can work toward someday being involved in this prestigious competition. The 2012 competitors had gone through months of arduous tests and interviews, to qualify in the top 10 Yamaha technicians. These finalists from across Canada arrived at Yamaha Motor Canada Ltd. headquarters in Toronto for the 2012 Technician Grand Prix. ▶



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The pressure during the competition was heightened by the fact that the competitors were being graded by Yamaha tech observers at all time as well as having an audience of other people looking on.



Competitors were put through ten skill-testing labs that included troubleshooting mechanical issues, precision measurement and customer service interviews.

By the end of the competition, Darrin Ostapowich of Schultz Motorsports in Kamloops, BC was awarded the title of Tech GP Champion. Yamaha has a video so that you can watch the highlights here.

The bigger picture is that the Tech GP is a contest that pits the very best technicians from countries the world over to promote Yamaha's worldwide service network. So, the journey doesn't end

here for Mr. Ostapowich. In October, he will fly to Japan to represent Canada in the Yamaha Motor Technician World Championships.

To prepare for the World Finals, Darrin said "The studying won't stop until October. I'll try to replicate the challenges we had here in Toronto while re-discovering the old fundamentals, making sure they're good and strong, and coming forth to the new technologies we now see."

For all Canadian dealers and their technicians, the Tech GP is a very

prestigious incentive rewarding their on-going training (Yamaha Technical Academy) as well as a level of excellence and commitment.

Finishing in second place was Nick King from Vernon Motorsports Ltd. in Vernon, British Columbia. Rounding out the top three was Mathieu Talbot from R.P.M. Rive Sud in Lévis, Québec.

Yamaha Motor Canada Ltd. would like to thank all competitors and wish Darrin Ostapowich the best of luck in his quest for the title of Yamaha's Technician Grand Prix World Champion. ■



TOP: This is the full group of the ten Yamaha Top Techs from all across Canada. Our congratulations to each of you!

BOTTOM: Schultz Motorsport's Darrin Ostapowich Crowned Yamaha Tech GP Canadian Champion!



N-Marina Upgrade

New Docks and Power Systems



As the "jewel of the Trent", the appearance of the new docks and power systems were key aspect of keeping the Port of Orillia Marina appealing to boaters.

BY ALLEN D. FORGET
FIELD SALES ENGINEER
EATON CORPORATION

AS MARINAS GO the Port of Orillia is billed as the "Jewel of the Trent". So when the City of Orillia planned a replacement project for their aging dock system they wanted to ensure that they continued to achieve that expectation.

As marinas go, the Port of Orillia is billed as the "Jewel of the Trent". So when the City of Orillia planned a replacement project for their aging dock system they wanted to ensure that they continued to achieve that expectation.

Beginning about 3 years ago, the project started to evolve. As the City of Orillia made decisions, and specific details were collected with regards to dock arrangement, architectural and visual matters and the subsequent services to feed the new system, design criteria was sent out to the consulting

engineer, Runge and Associates, and the development of the project began.

Early in this cycle Eaton was attending the International Boat Show in Toronto where representatives from the City of Orillia had the opportunity to view our Marina Power Pedestal products and they were struck by the visual impact of the Lighthouse Marina Power Pedestal and all of its functionality. This was the look and feel that they wanted to have on the new system and that information started a chain of events that has led Eaton to work with the end user, the consulting engineer, the dock manufacturer and the electrical contractor collectively, to design and deliver an electrical power system that met both the power system requirements as well as the delicate balance of visual esthetics and limited installation space and access.

The Lighthouse Power Pedestal was provided for this project with an LED light system which is highly efficient,

has long lamp life requiring less maintenance and has the added benefit of attracting less bugs since the LED lamps create less heat than a compact fluorescent light.

Powering a dock system is much more difficult than powering a building as such since there is limited space to run cables and the distances are significant in many cases and the voltage drop becomes an issue. The use of the Lighthouse Marina Pedestal with its ability to be loop fed meant that larger cables were to be run and this reduced voltage loss. The other solution to the voltage issue came in the form of Eaton's Marina Power Substations which put the main power sources close to the dock access points and consolidated the power transformers along with an integrated distribution panel within an esthetically pleasing and environmentally appropriate enclosure.

With that issue resolved Eaton then went to work on developing a Marina

RACHELLE FORGET

Distribution Panel that would allow a large amperage panel to be mounted out on the dock system but would have outstanding visual characteristics as well as ease of installation and access. The result was a low profile product conceived by understanding the requirements of the marinas and the installation limitations for floating dock systems. The product concept was then developed and manufactured at our Satellite Manufacturing Plant in Oshawa Ontario in consultation with plant manager John Wood and marketing and manufacturing specialist Fidel DeGuzman. Once these panels were developed we worked with the project contractor, Kropf Industrial, who incorporated solid and integrated mounting locations for the panels into the dock system while also considering the cable access requirements and installation challenges.

In their role, Kropf Industrial replaced the existing dock system with a new steel tube dock system. The system was built to a new layout to allow the Port to accommodate 220 boats, with fingers ranging from 24' to 40'. The docks used heavy-wall steel floatation tubes coated with an advanced epoxy coating, resulting in a service life of over 40 years. The docks also utilized Moistureshield composite decking, which is an advanced composite deck board product made from 95% recycled materials. Aluminum access ramps with ADA approved ThruFlow decking panels provide barrier-free access to the docks. These new docks are anchored in place with 3 ton concrete blocks and galvanized chain, allowing the docks to stay in place year around with very little maintenance.

Kropf Industrial realized that part of the project was to install all-new on-dock services, with upgraded power available to each slip. New Eaton pedestals, panels, and transformers were installed

on-site by electrical sub-contractors. Five distribution panels were installed on the docks utilizing integrated steel frames supplied by Kropf Industrial. Pedestals were easily through-bolted to the decking. The power cables to the panels and pedestals were installed in



These panels were developed in a design process that took more than a year and resulted in very compact and unobtrusive electrical distribution panels.

raceways located just below the deck boards, measuring 5.5" deep x 15" wide. These raceways are secure and hidden during normal service, but are easily accessible through quickly removing several deck boards. The number of raceways required and the details for the panel mounts was determined through close coordination with Eaton and the electrical sub-contractor.

In order to provide complete solutions for marina electrical power requirements all aspects of a project must be considered together and not as individual components. In the case of the Port of Orillia project all the involved parties had to achieve their needs. The City of Orillia wanted functionality with high expectations placed on visual impact since the marina is the center piece of their waterfront. The consulting engineer needs to provide a system that can deliver the power within the limitations of the environment and the requirements

of the Canadian electrical code. The dock manufacturer has to provide functionality of the docks along with provisions for the electrical and water services in the limited space they have on the docks. The electrical contractor must have equipment to allow access and flexibility

since the installation of a power system on a dock is difficult and limiting.

During the entire process of this marina project, design through to completion, Eaton was able to work with all the parties involved to provide solutions to the needs of the project and finishing with what is a show piece for the efficient, safe and visually non-obtrusive way to deliver power on a marina dock system. Eaton's strength is our ability to provide complete power system solutions to the marina market which allows seamless integration of equipment right from

the main power distribution all the way through to the power pedestals that the boats connect too.

We at Eaton were proud to be a part of this project and to keep the "Jewel of the Trent" living up to its name.

Eaton Corporation is a diversified power management company ranked among the largest Fortune 500 companies. The electrical group is Eaton's largest division and is a global leader in electrical control, power distribution, power quality, automation and monitoring products and services.

Eaton is dedicated to ensuring that reliable, efficient and safe power is available when it's needed most. With unparalleled knowledge of electrical power management across industries, experts at Eaton deliver customized, integrated solutions to solve our customer's most critical challenges. Our focus is on delivering the right solution for the application. ■

DREW ROBERTSON

of Skippers' Plan Insurance

3 Generations of Leadership

BY ANDY ADAMS



FUTURE GENERATIONS in the marine industry will look back on the last few years as a time of great change, driven largely by changing demographics and their far-reaching effects. To keep a business running through these challenging times takes leadership. In turn, leadership

requires both courage and conviction.

Andrew (Drew) Robertson who is now at the helm of Robertson & Robertson, Skippers' Plan Insurance is the third generation to lead this 62-year old company and he is both upholding the family traditions of leadership and dedication to

the industry while he changes and adapts to the new realities of changing demographics that impact all our businesses.

He did not simply follow in his father's footsteps though. First, Drew pursued a career in the military and put in a decade as a helicopter pilot. Feeling that he had

accomplished what could be accomplished in that field, Drew left the military to join his father at Robertson & Robertson, Skippers' Plan Insurance in 1993.

That was far from Drew's start in boating however. The Robertsons have cottaged at Thunder Beach on Georgian Bay for 4 generations. This was where Drew developed his love of boating, first at the helm of his own little dingy with a 3 hp Johnson. He recalls many fabulous summers on Georgian Bay.

Growing up, he did a brief stint in 1979 at Norse Boats and began working with fiberglass at the age of 16. There were no environmental concerns back then. It was a simple time. Joe Trudeau and Larry O'Rourke were his supervisors at Norse Boat works and remain friends and associates.

But much earlier, Drew's grandfather had literally launched the family into recreational boating by building his own boat in their driveway from Chris-Craft plans. It was a twenty-five footer he called "The Bee".

At that time, W.J. Robertson had a general insurance agency in Toronto and in particular, did farm and commercial insurance. Looking for coverage for his own boat, his grandfather was not satisfied with the insurance available. Back then in the early 1950s, he saw an opportunity to lead the development of his own insurance program that he called "The Skippers' Plan". His advertising slogan was "talk to the skipper" to get insurance for your boat.

By this time, Drew's grandfather had a boat called "Skippin" on Lake Ontario and this was the start of Skippers' Plan insurance. The boat was a former Toronto Harbor Commission launch and had also served during the Marilyn Bell swim across Lake Ontario.

Drew's family used to spend weeknights and weekends on board "Skippin" and Drew remarked on how different boating was in Toronto Harbor compared to Georgian Bay.

Incidentally, "Skippin" a 1939 Gordon 32 Commuter, has been fully restored Peter Breen under her original name "THC No. 1". It was the third Robertson family boat.

It is important to the story that his grandfather also became involved with

the early days of the Canadian Boating Federation and the Canadian Power Squadron through his dedication to improving boating safety and regulations.

Another important demonstration of Robertson family leadership arose when W.J. Robertson learned about Provincial regulations around holding tanks and blackwater.

In those early days, marinas felt they were in competition with each other but Drew's grandfather got fifteen key industry people together in a room by Toronto Harbor to discuss the blackwater issue and this meeting became the start of the Ontario Marine Operator's Association.

A remarkable piece of leadership was when W.J. Robertson became the OMOA's first executive director serving from 1967 to 1981 yet he never took a nickel from the organization. He did it for service to the industry.

As modest as he is dedicated, it was not until Drew joined the OMOA board many years later that he heard other people talk at length about what a great man his grandfather had been.

Drew's father, Bruce Robertson was also in insurance and worked as a claims adjuster. Business-wise though, he realized there was more future on the brokerage side and in 1971 Bruce Robertson joined with Drew's grandfather to form Robertson & Robertson.

That was a golden year for the sailboat industry. They saw the impact of the gas prices and the OPEC oil crisis as well as the evolution of fiberglass boats and they staked out sail as the segment to go after. Now, 62 years later [2010 was the 60th anniversary] they still look at ways to grow and expand and have a "book" of clients with boats of all types.

They've gone from a small regional business to develop into a national insurance provider, but it wasn't all smooth sailing.

Although Drew had joined the business in 1993, nothing could have fully prepared him for 2002. It was the worst year personally and professionally that Drew ever experienced, except for the fact that was the year his daughter was born!

Only four days after that happy event, Drew's father Bruce Robertson passed away. With a newborn at home, Drew was suddenly at the helm of a company he ▶

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was not even sure he could run and shortly after, they suffered their two biggest insurance losses ever, as well as being hit with an errors and omissions lawsuit.

Drew successfully got over one hurdle after another, but the lawsuit took two years to clear. The firm was eventually exonerated and the lawsuit was dismissed with costs.

It was a trial by fire and must have truly tested Drew's ability to lead the business through such challenges, but from 2002 to 2010, he continued to operate independently and saw their "Skippers' Plan" book of business almost double during that time.

It would be wonderful to be able to sit back and enjoy your success, but life rarely works like that!

As a bit of insurance business background, brokers are licensed provincially and are regulated in 10 different juris-

Drew had to find a way to help Robertson & Robertson stay competitive. But, selling the family business is a huge leadership decision.

In 2010 a decision was made to make Skippers' Plan part of The CG&B Group Inc, one of Canada's foremost brokerages. It was a friendly takeover that allowed Skippers' Plan to go national and gain access to all of the best carriers.

There is another hurdle to success in marine insurance.

There is no common wording. Marine policies can vary widely in the wording, the elements covered and how coverage is applied. Unfortunately, the public generally does not realize this and therefore they shop on price alone. Drew explains that this is not the best move; consumers have to rely on their broker to decipher what the coverage is and what is available. It's very hard to do.

of difference for his policies.

It takes leadership to develop something new. The insurance industry is very conservative and there is no actuarial data on the boat business to draw on. That means they have to price their coverage before they know what it would cost to settle a claim.

Towing as part of the policy might require a simple, short tow, or a full salvage operation yet, they have to be price competitive in the marketplace without regard to the quality and coverage of other brokers.

Drew also realizes that doing a great job will make someone a client for life. They still have clients that W.J. Robertson first signed.

A dramatic example of leadership and innovation that Bruce Robertson showed was when the Royal Canadian Yacht Club suffered a mast shed fire.

Back then in the early 1950s, W.J. Robertson saw an opportunity to lead the development of his own insurance program that he called "The Skippers' Plan". His advertising slogan was "talk to the skipper" to get insurance for your boat. Now, 62 years later, grandson Drew Robertson leads the business.

dictions across Canada. Being a small broker operating in one province has its challenges and the regulations make it onerous to operate across Canada. Drew commented that he couldn't name one national small broker – they just have to be larger to compete.

So, the challenge Drew realized he was facing, was how to take Robertson & Robertson, Skippers' Plan Insurance to the next level.

It's an exponential jump to go national because you need more people, more resources and more space. That means you need a new building. Drew commented that you have to decide not just what's best for the family, but for the business. These are big responsibilities. Plus, there are marketplace challenges such as more competitors and independent brokers were being gobbled up by larger organizations.

He feels that their challenge is to educate the consumer and to innovate with benefits and coverage that provide real value.

An example is that the Canadian Yachting Association wanted something unique for their members before the association would endorse any one insurance broker.

Drew applied his own experience as a sailor to come up with a valuable innovation. Some time before, Drew had been registered to participate in a regatta but the yacht club had a mysterious chemical spill and a containment boom had been set up, trapping Drew's boat at the dock. He was not allowed to move the boat and risk disrupting the boom, but he had paid a \$500 regatta fee, bought meal tickets and more, that he was forced to sacrifice.

Drew created coverage for this type of disruption and therefore a valuable point

Before his father even went down to the club, he called every mast shop he could locate and bought all of the masts sight unseen in order to get his clients back on the water ASAP.

The RCYC members who were with other insurance companies, in some cases waited for months to get their mast replaced.

Another example is replacement stern drives. Previously, when a client hit a rock and destroyed their stern drive lower unit, replacements had to be ordered. To deliver immediate response, Robertson & Robertson bought ten new drives and stored them at marinas in their inventory, in order to be able to settle a claim very quickly.

Fast claim settlement is a big part of their service. Also, marinas can't wait 60 to 90 days for reimbursement. Therefore, fast insurance settlements gets Robertson & ▸

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Robertson clients back on the water fast. Marinas know they will be paid quickly.

In fact, Drew says that in the case of a total catastrophic loss, like a marina fire, their adjuster is there with a cheque book as soon as the Fire Marshall says it's all right to go in.

Because this issue of Boating Industry Canada is themed for "Winter Work", we asked Drew about their position on that.

Again taking a leadership role, the important training of qualified technicians was a big issue when Drew served on the board at the OMOA, (now called Boating Ontario).

Drew told us that Robertson & Robertson was one of seven major contributors of funding to support Georgian College in training more qualified technicians. His father was an instructor at the Orillia Campus for 10 years lecturing on insurance. Drew's brother Cameron did a three-year course there when he started his career.

In terms of creating more 12-month employment for marine industry workers, Drew felt we might see changes such as having no technicians at smaller marinas in the future,

but going to a depot level repair approach.

In terms of winter layoffs, Drew said it's a huge issue that affects both quality of repairs and labor costs, and therefore affects insurance costs.

In terms of selling Winter Work, Drew pointed out that haul out is the best opportunity to educate boaters about preventative maintenance and generate signed work orders to keep technicians employed year-round. Many boaters don't know what work should be done and look to their marina for guidance. As an example, a customer may ask to have their boat winterized but that may, or may not involve a check of the rubber bellows. If this is missed by the technician then there's a risk of the boat sinking next spring. Drew sees this type of claim every spring and notes that alerting boaters of potential problems is good customer service and a source of revenue for the marinas.

Perhaps there should be standards to check running lights, engine emissions or standing rigging for sailboats. Our industry should ask, who's helping the boater?

Preventive maintenance is very important. Some of the better marinas provide a checklist and give their clients advice. Drew feels it is a mistake to ask boaters to fill in a form on their own indicating what work should be done. They probably don't have the knowledge.

We need to not only keep our existing boaters happy and out boating, we need to attract many new people into

especially in the sail area.

He also observed that when people start boating as a child, it becomes a life-long love affair but it's rare to see adults start into boating. It's essential that we collectively do a better job of making boating attractive to immigrant families coming to Canada.

Drew says that there are two things that he does as a family-boating and skiing. Almost everything else are individual activities. The strength of boating is the family aspect and we need to get that message out to new Canadian families.

He also notes that 'family' transcends ethnic borders. First and most important, is for people to see themselves in the boating lifestyle. How we portray this is very important. Think about how we look on the newsstand.

He feels magazine covers especially, need a collaborative industry effort to paint the right picture.

Drew says it's a journey of many steps not just a switch that we can flip. However, Asian fishing has happened organically and now you see

more Asian media talking about fishing.

Canada's marine trade associations can help promote this thinking. Robertson & Robertson has always been a huge supporter—his grandfather was the Executive Director at the OMOA for over 13 years. W.J. Robertson was the first Toronto International Boat Show 'Hall of Fame' award inductee and his father Bruce was inducted posthumously making the Robertson family the only two-time Hall of Fame inductees to date. They also created the OMOA/Boating Ontario W.J. Robertson Award for outstanding contribution to the Association. His father was named on that award that and 20 years later, Drew was added to the list of recipients.

Yet, he does not seek recognition. Drew simply said we live our lives for the boating industry and boaters and he feels we all need to give back when we can. Perhaps his example will inspire others in this time of change. ■



Again demonstrating industry leadership, Drew Robertson has used this image of an important new demographic in his recent Skippers' Plan advertisements.

boating and Robertson & Robertson is taking a very important leadership role there as well.

Their very attractive advertising carefully and deliberately includes visible minority people in their ads. His business reaches out to potential new boaters and the advertisements set a great example that many more marine businesses should follow.

It will take a lot to change the demographic profile of the industry, but research clearly identifies that our core of Anglo-Saxon boaters is on the decline in numbers and economic influence.

Fortunately, this year Drew is hearing lots of good news. The industry may be having one of its best years in the last decade if his book of business is an indication. They are seeing mid-level boats and large boats coming back. The number of boats in their book of business has increased over the last 20 years,

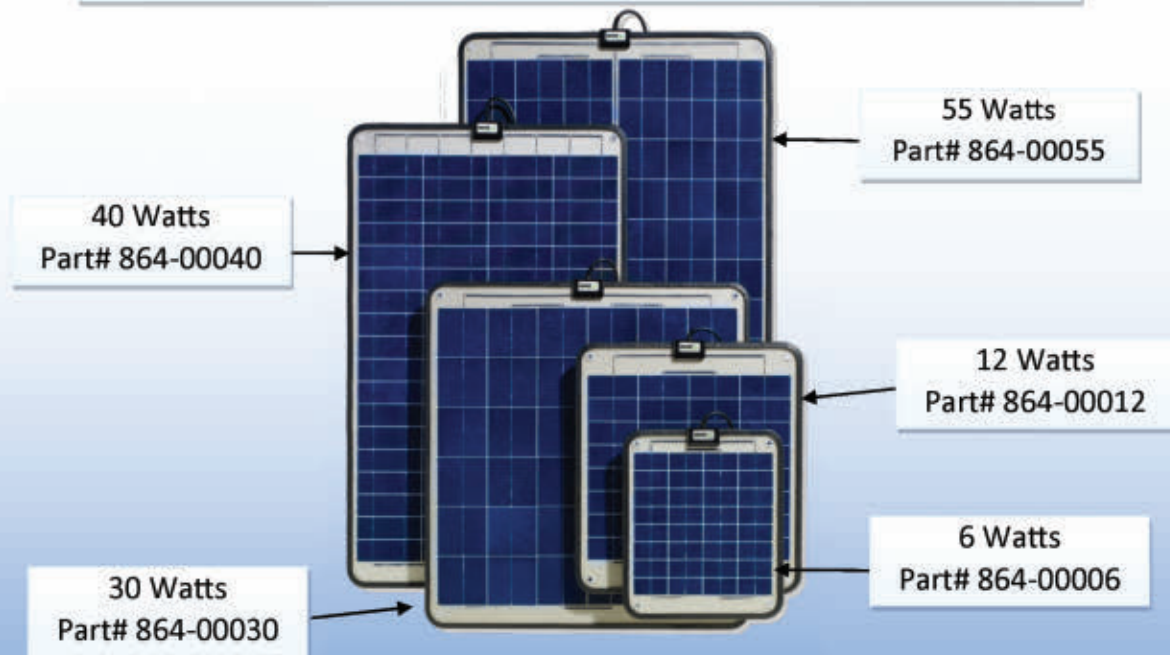


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