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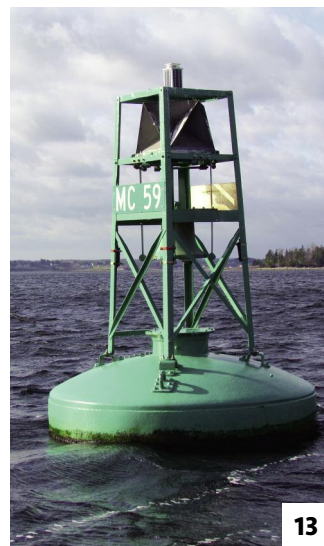
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A British Columbia Boating Legend, known to many as 'the grand-father' of B.C.'s boatbuilding industry, Forbes Cooper blazed a set of trails that overlapped most corners of our industry.

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What's Ahead for Marine Electronics? At the latest NMEA Convention, leaders of three multi-national corporations that help make the marine electronics industry tick gave their take on the future of the market, new technology in the wings, challenges ahead and a host of other topics. – By NMEA from their member publication, *The Marine Electronics Journal*

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On the Cover:
Forbes Cooper.

Photo by Samantha Jackson

Is “Politically Correct” Wrong For Business?

THIS IS WHERE I reveal that I am secretly a right-winger and a cowboy – in my thinking and in my emotions, I’m not really politically correct. I like to see a woman in a bikini, I enjoy a drink at the cottage and I am a social animal. I want to party with friends and cut loose a bit. I still feel that’s what weekends are for.

I think a lot of other people are still that way too. A few decades of being told to be politically correct, to follow the rules and all the safety steps, may be taking the fun out of boating. You can change the rules overnight – you can’t change what people like nearly so fast.

Do you agree?

Again this year it was my great pleasure as editor of Boating Industry Canada magazine, to be on the podium at the Toronto International Boat Show, hosting the NMMA Canada Industry Breakfast sponsored by GE Capital and Boating Industry Canada magazine. My role was to open the show and to introduce the main speakers but I got a few minutes to have some fun and to give the audience something to think about.

The main event was John Peak from GE Capital with his presentation of data and information on the marine industry followed by Thom Dammrich, president of the NMMA to present the latest NMMA Canada Statistical Abstract of valuable Canadian data and guidance for the coming year. The Industry Breakfast had real informational value, but I started out my little presentation by asking if the audience thought things had changed.

I put up the slide (shown here), from the press clippings for the very first Toronto boat show in early 1959. Back then, the show was modestly called the Canadian Boat Show and Miss Boating, Lorna Anderson was described in the Toronto Globe & Mail newspaper as being a boater, water skiing expert and that she was 35-24-35!

Things certainly have changed! Imagine running a woman’s measurements in the newspaper today. The audience laughed out loud but I left them with one thought; boats, beverages and bikinis.

Has boating lost too much excitement? While the boat used to mean party time, there seems to be less and less emphasis on the fun you get from owning a boat and more and more emphasis on safety and serious regulation.

Recently, I heard from a woman who’s family operates a houseboat rental business and her comment was that even though they brief their customers in detail and do a thorough run-down on all the rules and regulations before sending them



out on the water, the police boat is often nearby and stops them to do another detailed and sometimes time-consuming inspection before they can get on with their vacation.

Is that an isolated incident?

Just yesterday, I heard from a real estate agent who works in Muskoka and is a life-long boater on those waters. He commented that enforcement has become quite rigorous there and that in his opinion, if you have had anything to drink, you simply cannot take the boat out. Fair enough, but he takes it a step further and says the level of enforcement has become a disincentive to using the boat at all.

While I respect the law and certainly support boating safety, zero tolerance can become zero fun.

*Do you have an opinion? Feel free to share it
– email aadams@kerrwil.com.*

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Boating BC

Big Weather Drives Serious Buyers To The Vancouver Boat Show



The 53rd annual Vancouver International Boat Show closed on Sunday, January 25, with many exhibitors generating strong onsite sales and leads over the course of the five-day Show. Continued, historically low interest rates, and the sharp decline in the price of fuel, have resulted in a positive start to the year's sales and have positioned Western Canada's boating industry for an optimistic 2015.

With BC Place hosting the indoor venue, and Granville Island providing a historic maritime setting for the Floating Show, the 2015 Boat Show offered exhibitors an opportunity to kick-start the coming boating season, and showcase new model year products, accessories and services to consumers.

While the rainy weather was a



deterrent for attendance at the Floating Show, the exhibitors at Granville Island were also pleased with the quality of visitors.

The incorporation of new and exciting features, including National Geographic's Wicked Tuna star Captain Dave Carraro, the UBC SailBot team, and Prop Formula1 racer Mike McLellan were all big draws for the public and media. The expanded seminar series, offering more than 100 seminars spanning across three seminar rooms, was, once again, a highlight for Show goers. Visitors to the Floating Show at Granville Island also took advantage of Discover Boating's free boat rides and the new Hands On Skills Training clinics.

29,293 people visited the two venues during the five-day event, a 7% decrease from the previous year.

The Show continues to see increasing attendance from the Asian community as a result of marketing efforts tar-



geting this demographic's interest in boating. Wilson Kao's What a beautiful BC boating life! Let's buy a boat seminar in Mandarin was a big draw for Chinese Show goers, and his knowledge on boating trends specific to the Asian market continues to garner media interest. A certified boating

instructor and local yacht salesman, Kao offers years of experience and a wealth of knowledge about BC's boating market.

Dates for the 54th Vancouver International Boat Show are scheduled for January 20 - 24, 2016 at BC Place and Granville Island.

You too can become an Environmental Leader!

Marinas in Ontario continue to lead the way in protecting our waterways by participating in the clean marine environmental program.

Why not get involved?

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NMMA Canada

NMMA Canada Recreational Boating Statistical Abstract

It is hard to believe that January and another Toronto boat show has already come and gone. Once again, NMMA Canada announced data from the NMMA Canada Recreational Boating Statistical Abstract, this year highlighting key 2014 data. More than 200 boating executives attended the breakfast, creating a successful event for our industry.

The Abstract reveals that while new and pre-owned boat sales were down in 2014, 46% of adult Canadians participated in recreational boating. This corresponds to 13.2 million Canadians aged 18 and older. This is the highest percentage of participation on record since NMMA began collecting the data in 2011.

New boat and engine retail dollar sales totaled \$2 billion in 2014, down 2.3% from the prior year while total retail unit sales fell 7.2%. Unit sales were down in nearly all categories with significant volume except personal watercraft, which increased 3.9%.

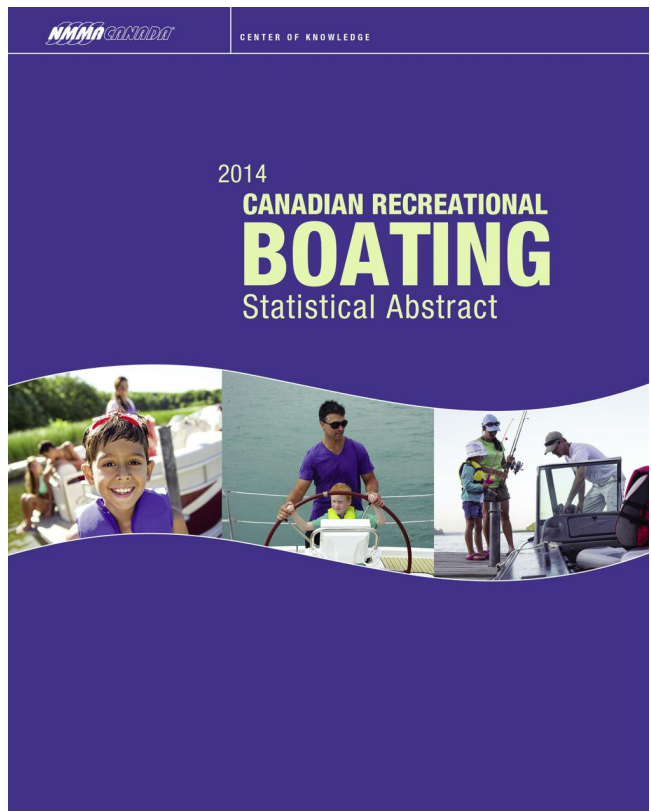
New boat and engine sales declined in nearly all provinces in 2014, except British Columbia, where retail unit sales were up 3% year-over-year, buoyed by 7.5% growth in new outboard engine sales in that region. In 2014, 14.2% of total new boat and engine retail unit sales took

place in British Columbia.

Pre-owned boat sales in Canada totaled 60,085 units in 2014, down 3.5% from the prior year, with unit declines spread across all segments. Corresponding dollars totaled \$985.2 million, down 6.9% for the year. The average cost of a pre-owned boat ranged from \$2,533 to \$110,194 depending on boat type.

Pre-owned boat sales in Alberta and Saskatchewan were up 3.3% and 3.5% respectively, in 2014, offsetting declines in other provinces.

The Statistical Abstract is the most comprehensive data



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we have available for Canada, and we encourage the industry to use the data to benefit their business. Many NMMA members have commented that they use the data for meetings with their banks, market analysis, and business opportunities. NMMA members can access the Abstract free of charge at www.nmma.ca.

And, as spring slowly approaches, NMMA and a group of Canadian manufacturers are headed to the Dubai International Boat show. For the first time, the show, which is heavily focused on luxury yachts, will have a fishing section displaying smaller boats. The trade mission is made possible by the Federal government's funding contribution to NMMA to expose Canadian manufacturers to the international market. The group hopes to establish distributor connections in the region.

View Andy Adams' interview with NMMA's Sara Anghel at TIBS at <http://youtu.be/3wR65-CouwY>.

Boating Ontario Association

Boating Ontario Association Late Winter Meetings

Boating Ontario

Late winter is always a busy time for the Boating Ontario association. Regional Meetings are in the planning stages now, to be held during March and April and the Association encourages its members to come out and voice their opinions, talk about their needs and to help guide the future of recreational boating in Ontario.

In particular, members are encouraged to bring the owners and managers of any non-member marinas in their area because this is a good opportunity to learn first-hand what the Boating Ontario association does and how they can benefit from membership.

Boating Ontario is also trying to organize representation from the Canada Border Services agency at the meetings in southern Ontario so members can voice their concerns directly to the authorities.

Student Marine Safety Training – Anyone hiring a young worker must ensure they receive basic health and safety training in addition to proper job specific training. The Boating Ontario Student Marine Safety training course provides that basic Health and Safety training in addition to also providing basic training in Customer Service, Workplace

Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), Violence in the Workplace and Workplace Harassment Awareness, Emergency Response – Fire and Gas Dock Awareness Training. Warren Howes will be leading this interactive training session and students that successfully complete the session will receive a certificate to show their Ministry of Labour compliance.

The Boating Ontario Association is celebrating its 48th year this year and the industry-leading Clean Marine Programme is still going strong with 263 marinas taking part in safeguarding our environment. For more information, contact any of the Five Anchor or higher rated marinas for advice and guidance on getting involved. All participating marinas continue to strive to do better for the environment, but our whole industry would benefit from even more marinas taking part in this programme

Learn more about the Clean Marine program in Andy Adams' interview at TIBS with Al Donaldson at <http://youtu.be/K5N6PULaSEA>

Discover Boating

Discover Boating Hands-On Skills Training (HOST) Launched at Toronto and Vancouver Shows

The Discover Boating Hands-on Skills Training (HOST) program launched at the Toronto International Boat Show and Vancouver International Boat Show in January 2015.

HOST officially launched in Canada with great success at the Montreal In-Water Boat Show and the Toronto and Vancouver Shows were similarly successful with registration for HOST power boating sessions exceeding capacity before the opening of the show. Discover Boating utilized social media, PR and consumer newsletters to drive registrations.

Discover Boating's HOST program provides both new and experienced boaters the opportunity to get behind the helm and receive on-water training on safe boat handling to become more confident boaters. On-water skills training is important and the most effective way to ensure that becoming a boater is fun, safe and accessible. Boaters also find on-water training very valuable—80% of boaters who



have participated in HOST in the U.S. have continued to take more training to improve their skills. Also, we know from the U.S. HOST program that there is a 41% greater likelihood of purchase if individuals get behind the wheel of the boat.

Discover Boating Canada surveyed all HOST participants at the Montreal In-Water Boat Show and found all participants were very pleased with the overall experience and would recom-

mend HOST to others

Discover Boating worked with several training partners, as well as the Toronto and Vancouver shows, to cross-promote and encourage pre-show registration. For more information about the HOST program please visit www.DiscoverBoating.ca/HOST.

For more information about HOST, please contact Tracey Hart, Director of Marketing for Discover Boating Canada at thart@nmma.org.

Boating Ontario Dealer

Boating Ontario Dealer Association

The Boating Ontario Dealer Association is planning its second annual 'Best Practices Workshop' that will provide dealers and brokers with valuable information that will benefit their business. This event will be held at Nottawasaga Inn & Resort in Alliston, ON April 8, 2015. Keynote speaker Glenn Roller of the Roller Institute will be speaking on professional sales techniques and tips. Glenn is very well known for his ability to provide dealers comprehensive sales training that takes any salesperson from a basic to an advanced level of sales competency. Other topics that will be presented include: Do's and Don'ts of Importing and Exporting Boats, Foreign Exchange and more. Interactive sessions will offer an open forum for discussion of such issues as taxation, market trends and more. This event is open to all dealers and brokers and for those that are CPYB certified, points will be allocated.

Dealer Certification Opportunities

In conjunction to the Best Practices Workshop, on April 7, 2015, the Boating Ontario Dealers Association will be holding two sessions for dealers and brokers interested in getting their Georgian Sales Professional Certification or their CPYB Certification.

For more information on any of the programs Boating Ontario or the Boating Ontario Dealers offer, please contact the Boating Ontario office at 705-549-1667 or email info@boatingontario.ca



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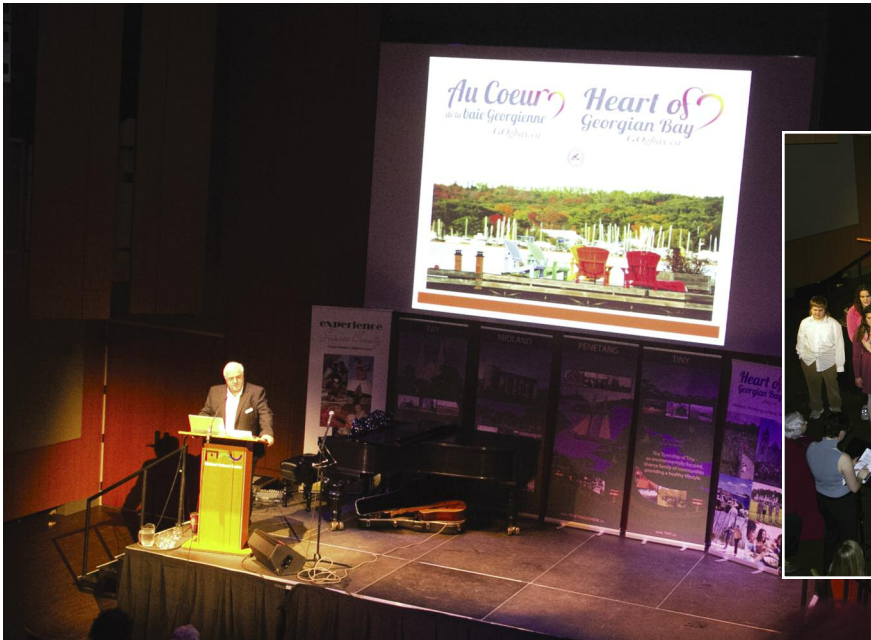
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Heart of Georgian Bay Rebrands Area with One Strong Voice



The newly minted Heart of Georgian Bay brand was unveiled on Jan 22, 2015 at a presentation at the Midland Cultural Centre in Midland, Ontario.

Mayors and representatives from all four areas of Southern Georgian Bay, Midland, Penetanguishene, Tay and Tiny were on hand to proudly introduce their new brand, all speaking with one voice.

For the past several months, the Tourism Action Plan committee of the Economic Development Committee of North Simcoe, comprised of tourism stakeholders from Midland, Penetanguishene, Tiny and Tay, have been working hard to create a tourism brand for our area. The result of these efforts is the Heart of Georgian Bay, a brand that points to the region's greatest tourism asset, while simultaneously establishing North Simcoe as the hub of Georgian Bay tourism.

Central to the philosophy behind North Simcoe Tourism and the Heart of Georgian Bay is that this is a grass roots effort, intended to be inclusive of any

and all tourism related business, large or small. Their aim is to raise the profile of the region's tourism assets, and to support tourism related business.

The well-organized presentation featured overviews of the strategy from all four mayors involved as well as a moving performance of an original composition by Nonie together with the St. Louis French choir.

Organizers are asking area residents and businesses to show their support by utilizing one of the Heart of Georgian Bay stickers (email: info@gbay.ca) and branding marketing materials with the tag line 'Your business, in the Heart of Georgian Bay'.

www.GoGBay.ca

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Quebec Marine Association (QMA)

16th Annual Montreal Boats and Water Sports' Show

The Quebec Marine Association (QMA) invites boating enthusiasts on February 5th-8th, 2015 at the 16th edition of the Montreal Boats and Water Sports' Show. This year is once again marked by a most festive atmosphere, with an event that is expected to be more impressive in all aspects. The figures are enough to make your head spin: 275 exhibitors, more than 450 boats spread over an exhibition area of over 275,000 square feet which is 17 times the Bell Centre ice!

Each year, 30,000 visitors walk the 4 floors of the Place Bonaventure to discover the trends of the next boating season. According to a survey conducted by the QMA in 2013, 52% of boaters between 26 and 50 years old, visit the Montreal Boat Show in order to buy a boat. Note that many exhibitors will offer significant discounts, which partly explains the popularity of the event. Another reason for this enthusiasm, all the major brands of boats and marine accessories return each year to the delight of shoppers. This year, twenty nautical activities will thus be presented to the public including: motor boats, sailboats, personal watercraft, fishing, marinas, water stations, sailing schools, etc.

One of the event's highlights this year is the Virtual Trainer Boating skills. Presented by the Canadian Power and Sail Squadron (CPS), this driving simulator allows visitors to test their skills in a variety of weather conditions. Equipped with the latest technology and its three screens, the simulator displays a panoramic vision, which allows you to be at the heart of the action and adopt the right moves in every situation. Those wishing to try it will go directly to the ECP booth (# 75, level 300).

As usual, the Montreal Boat Show will also host conferences focused on boating topics. Among the big names expected, Patrick Campeau, George Leblanc and Damian Foxall (winner of the 2012 Volvo Ocean race) will present to the public their experience and also give advices on boating.

Also, for the first time, the students from the École de Technologie Supérieure (ETS) will unveil their Class-C catamaran project which is scheduled to participate in the next World Cup in September 2015 in Geneva.

For information: <http://www.salondubateau.com>



Atlantic Marine Trades Association

Recreational Boaters Surprised By Proposed Removal Of Navigational Aids

In 2013, members of the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG), providers of Aids to Navigation for Fisheries and Oceans Canada, held community meetings in Mahone Bay to conduct a review of the Navigation Aids in the Bay. The CCG said that they had to; keep up with a changing environment such as increased traffic volume and type of traffic, take advantage of new aid types and new technology and as there was a new chart coming out and they had new design methods, it was an ideal time to conduct the review. They asked attendees about why Mariners were on the Bay, about what types of activities were taking place, the routes that Mariners were travelling and their destinations. In August of 2014, they returned to Mahone Bay with the results of the review and a design and further explained that Aids to Navigation only support navigation in areas that are safe, where there is adequate depth of water for safe operation, where there is adequate charting and that they design aids to navigation systems on the route most followed. They said that their new design is safer, efficient, and nationally consistent, meets International Standards, eliminates areas of confusion and acknowledges evolving technologies.



The new design was met with shock by the recreational boating community of Mahone Bay. The design showed where aids were available for divestiture, and the only routes that would have aids. The new design replaced all bell and whistle buoys either with cardinal markers or with soundless red or green cans. Routes to marinas and anchorages not used commercially would have aids to navigation divested as

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would individual hazards outside the CCG designed routes. Boaters in Mahone Bay were concerned that as the majority of the traffic on the Bay is Recreational, with a lot of out of the Bay visitors, Canadian and Foreign and although CCG did a good job of capturing routes used by Mariners, the routes in the Design do not include many routes identified by recreational boaters as much of the traffic in the Bay is across the Bay on scenic routes and not direct from Sea to Port and Port to Port. The boaters said that Navigation Aids are important for reference at night and in reduced visibility (fog), that the Cardinal Buoy system proposed by CCG is designed for 'highways' and not the most appropriate system for marking hazards. They also worry that the small plastic Cardinal Buoys are too small to be fully interpreted in comparison to lateral aids (green and red buoys). They were surprised by the CCG assumption that all boaters are now using GPS navigation with up-to-date digital charts installed.

With the work of concerned Mahone Bay communities, yacht clubs, boaters, and the local Member of Parliament, Gerald Keddy, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and their aids to Navigation provider, CCG, has taken to the decision to maintain their current navigation aids system in Mahone Bay for the 2015 boating season. Following the season, the Department will re-engage local mariners and stakeholders to develop a new model for the navigation system.

New searchable dealer database on DiscoverBoating.ca



Discover Boating is pleased to announce a new searchable dealer database is available on the English and French DiscoverBoating.ca websites. This tool gives potential new boaters—who are looking for ways to get started in boating—a user-friendly way to find a nearby dealer to shop for a boat. The tool allows site visitors to simply type in their city, province and/or postal code in order to find a list of dealers nearby. The results generated for these potential boat owners also indicate whether the dealers listed are a member of Boating BC, Mid-Canada Marine Dealers Association, Boating Ontario, Association Maritime du Quebec, Atlantic Marine Trade Association and/or NMMA Canada. Further, the results show which members are Certified dealers.

This dealer database can be found on DiscoverBoating.ca under the 'Buying a Boat' section or by typing in www.DiscoverBoating.ca/findadealer.

View Andy Adams' interview with Tracey Hart at TIBS and learn more about the Dealer Database by visiting <http://youtu.be/8XrG6MeB3qo>



Kids today!?!

Where will your customers come from? **Part 1**

BY JOHN MORRIS

THERE IS A LINE as thin as a new plastic \$20 between the optimism we in the marine business express and the terror we secretly feel. Will the economy thrive, or bust and will that create, or crush business. Boomers are getting older; does this mean they will buy that boat they've always dreamed of (as I recently did) or will they stuff those dollars in the bank so they can afford to live in their post working days (as I likely should have.)

What about the next generation? We are currently dealing with the customer tranche of 30-55s, the people who are building families and enjoying their prime earning years. But, what about the generation that follows them?

The news tells us that current students and recent graduates – let's call them 'young adults' although I have heard them referred to as Gen Screwed because they are facing tuition debt and a dearth of job opportunities - are indeed finding that jobs are few, wages are low and those 'peak earning years' laggards just won't get out of the way, so that new teaching positions (etc.) can open up.

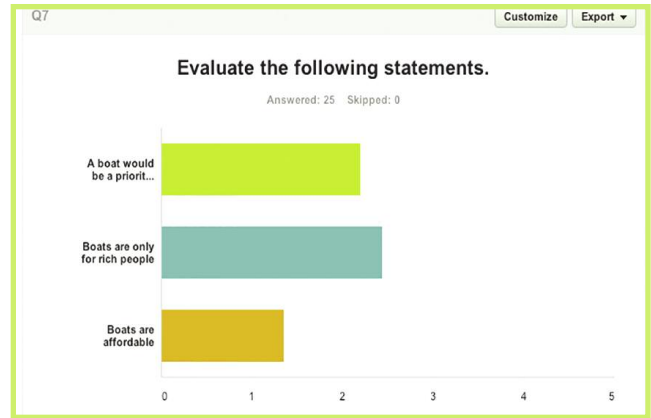
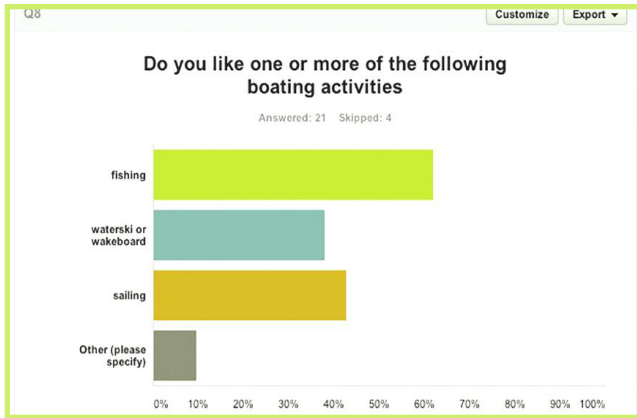
If we look into our hopes for our businesses, like it or not, we will need the customers those young adults had better

become. Rather than look into my crystal ball, I devised a survey to find out if boating is currently on the radar for those 18-30 years who we need to eventually evolve into people with wallets who will come into our stores in the years ahead. The results are starting to trickle in and in this first part of my report, I hope to shed some light on this critical issue – will the young adults of today embrace boating?

The survey isn't complete, but based on the initial 25 or so responses my Survey Monkey harvested some very useful patterns are emerging. There are problems, but we can probably solve them if we get to work soon.

First the good news – there's a lot of enthusiasm for boating and boats among the (admittedly small) sample I have heard from. BTW, here's the methodology – my own kids and those of a few associates gave me a batch of emails and some of those friends added more names, so not too random. Of the 25 respondents 5 are 18-20; 20 19-29. Ten are female.

The survey asked if the respondents had a family history that included boating to understand their background and then looked into their likelihood of becoming boaters themselves. Of the 25, 21 indicated that owning a boat is some-



thing they'd like to do whether they had a heritage of boating or not. As you likely would guess there are a lot of hurdles (which we will discuss) on the way to that goal. Surprising to me (but not to my son) was the number who look forward to fishing – 13. Nine saw themselves sailing and 8 ski/wakeboarding. One mentioned tubing and one swimming.

Summarizing the comments we have received so far, the findings are surprisingly consistent. Almost all the respondents cited economics as a serious constraint but equally prevalent was the lack of time available to them for leisure. There's a lesson in this somewhere - we viewed the generation ahead of

them as slackers but the 18-30s we surveyed are taking things much more seriously. That involved part time work, putting in the hours at school and I assume, allocating some portion of their time to social media and partying. They still wanted a boat but some answers to the question What is the obstacle to

Almost all the respondents cited economics as a serious constraint but equally prevalent was the lack of time available to them for leisure.

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you going boating? tell the tale pretty concisely: here's one- 'Money to buy a boat. Having the time visit the boat to make it worth the cost.'

We are going to push ahead to gather enough answers then we report some final conclusions next issue, but in the meantime there are some early trends to consider. Money is paramount; affordability will be a huge positive to get the kids who want to go boating out on the water. Certainly entry-level boats will attract attention. Perhaps taking a leaf from the car deal pages – 'pay as little as \$50 a week' packages to fulfill the dreams of new customers who are trying to fit a boat into the budget.

Time is the other significant consideration. Young Canadians finishing school and entering the workforce sense that they will be expected to burn many vats of midnight oil if they hope to be successful. The spoiled boomers and yuppies who celebrated their success with toys and time off are being replaced by generations who see their future differently. We will have to convince them that time on the water will be a worthwhile contribution to a balanced lifestyle.

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REDEFINING Retirement



Known to many as 'the grandfather' of BC's boatbuilding industry, Forbes Cooper blazed a set of trails that overlapped most corners of our industry.

Having the benefit of my whole working life (après-papier route) in a business that bears his name, I took some time recently to join this great character and look back over four decades in our industry and help get some of the stories correct. It's only a taste, but here are a few highlights of a very playful man who had a great time turning buckets of goo into some 8,500+ boats power & sail in all the sizes you could imagine.

While the story starts in Winnipeg, Forbes was smart enough to leave when he was five. (So did I, but that's a different story and a lot later). His father was with the railroad, so he got around this great country, but the story gets really interesting in the 1960's in Edmonton. His natural curiosity made for a quick study with some very successful people in the construction and engineering world, ultimately leading to his own successful concrete business in Edmonton. Jump forward to recent day and he'd often claim to have put the curb in front of a yacht client's house. Whether that was true or not, he has an uncanny ability to find a connection to people very quickly - and his time owning everything from trucking businesses to a motel aided that uncanny ability to find something in common.

This brings me to the first conclusion about Forbes' success in the boat business: He knew business before he knew boats.

Having moved from Edmonton to the coast, he found an advertisement for an auction sale for the local extension of Columbia Boats, whose local representative had faltered. Knowing very little about boats and even less about building them, he reached out to the parent company in California and, in very short order, convinced them that he was the logical next operator for their local building operation. He attended the auction, and placed what turned out to be the lowest bid. Thankfully, the higher-ups at Columbia had been convinced they had heard from someone with the business acumen they needed up north. Instructions had been given to only accept Mr. Cooper's bid, so he walked out the successful bidder, despite having placed the lowest bid.

Next stops included trips to the library to gain a basic understanding of fibreglass construction and to assemble the old crew and work to make something out of this decision. After a few weeks his four-man crew almost got a 25% reduction when his lead fibreglasser announced he was leaving.

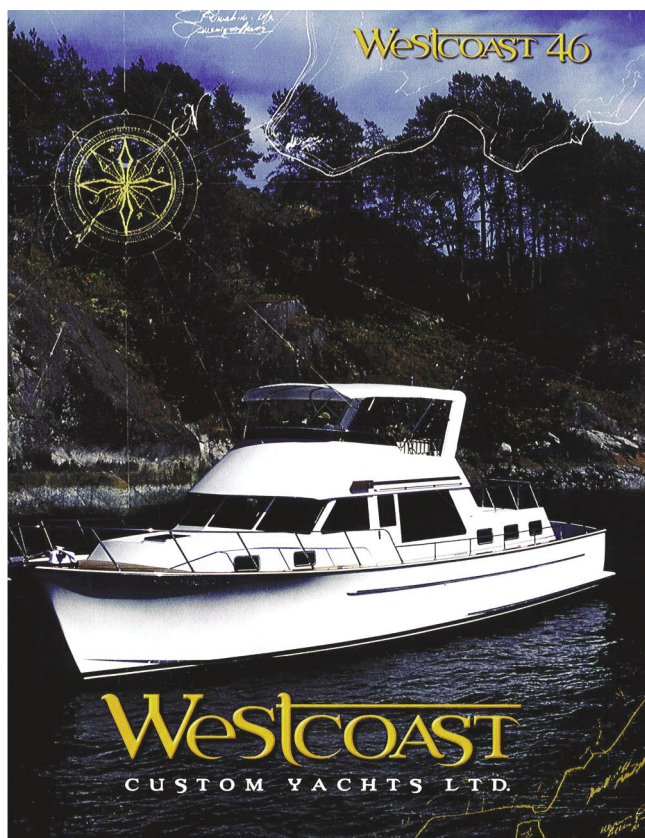
"Look, you can do this as well as I can. I am going to quit before I get fired".

"I just want to understand how you do this so we can find better ways together and grow this thing. I don't want to do what you are doing, but I certainly need to understand so we can make things bigger and better"

That sort of thinking also exemplifies the second conclusion I've come to about Forbes Cooper in the boat business: Lead from beside the crew and big things can and will follow.

When you meet some of the many people who've worked for Forbes and with Forbes, there's invariably a great story and so many have received a start or a helping hand along the way.

When budding designer Don Martin showed up with a drawing for a new sailboat, Forbes explained that he needed



Molds come out of retirement: the Tolly 43 becomes the Westcoast 46.

and a name didn't seem like much for someone to pay for, but that's what our family picked up and it was ultimately a big piece of a new puzzle.

There were other businesses as well. Impressed with Dennis Fieldwalker of and his continual follow up that reliably lead to boat sales, Forbes and Dennis partnered with ForDen Hauling, specializing in moving boats around. Pacific Spar, the namesake for Granville Island's Mast Tower Road, saw raw aluminum enter at one end and finished spars stepped at the other. It has been heard in some accounts that if you didn't buy one of Forbes' boats, you may have seen your boat on one of his trucks. If that weren't true, you may have ended up with one of his masts.

One special sailboat was built specifically for the charter market and "Island Roamer" was captained by Dan Culver, the fifth Canadian to make the summit of Everest. Before we knew what the word "eco-tourism" meant, 16 guests would be exploring the Haida Gwaii (formerly Queen Charlottes) aboard the biggest sailboat model Forbes produced. While Canadians lost Dan Culver on K2 as he descended from the first Canadian summit of the same, Randy Burke continues the tradition through Bluewater Adventures and these same boats. The first carried the name "Island Roamer." Culver's estate was used to purchase Jedediah Island marine park by the way. Know that when you see a boat registered with the name "Island Roamer", it probably belonged to Mr. Cooper himself.

The sailboat lineup was impressive, but Bill Faulk of Western Marine commented recently how Forbes could also spot trends, and he tooled up the complete line of Prowler powerboats while his competitors were working vigorously on how to divide up a shrinking sailboat market pie.

There are great stories of sales people walking past the crane operator in the yard, even getting directions to the office, only to walk back out and sheepishly say "We understand you are Mr. Cooper". True to form, another pillar of success is a lean administrative structure with as much focus as possible on making sure the dollars were actually going into the hard costs of labour and materials, never too much on accounting or advertising. He was able to build an impressive dealer network and the dealers knew that he was always fair and rewarded their efforts to support his factory.

Passing on the Billionaire's Offer

Cooper Yachts building the Prowler line grew to 225 men and shipped nearly 900 boats in a single year. Forbes thought he might try his hand at retirement and had two offers to buy the factory. One was for the asking price but came with the simple conditions that Forbes stay aboard for ten years and that the business be one of the top three boat builders at the end of that tenure. The offer came from west coast billionaire Jim Pattison and while there were assurances that any resources required to

some commitments to build a boat. Don took the drawing and came back with a deposit cheque attached. Forbes further explained that he couldn't build tooling for a boat with just one order, so the young Mr. Martin headed back out and returned with more cheques. Forbes was so impressed by this fellow who could sell the concept from basic drawings that Don Martin was brought in as a partner in Cooper Yachts. Together, they built a number of different models and remain friends today.

Then came the Catalina 27, built under license from the California factory. Stories of lineups to buy Catalina 27's became legendary. Times were different, but the \$9,999 starting price hit a sweet spot back then - and she became a true keelboat success story. Interestingly enough, it's amazing how close to that original price tag some of those boats still trade.

To bridge the economic downturn around 1983, Forbes gathered the team together and discussed the finished inventory that was now starting to hang around the plant far too long. Discussions turned to rentals and lessons, and true to form, a prompt decision to make an entrance to that market was made with the units that didn't sell shifted to Cooper Yacht Charters - born out of necessity.

Some five years later, the man whose shop ran like a precision watch found it a little disconcerting that 'work' could occur at any hour in the rental business. Clients would arrive late or early and often need help in remote locations. Forbes, not having kids who wanted to work for nothing to solve the issue, sold that business to my father, who had two such sons at the time (my brother smart enough to take a leap to aviation a few years after that). At the time, Forbes was mildly puzzled by someone paying real money for nothing real. A list of clients



achieve the goal would be available, Forbes passed. That ten year commitment just deferred his retirement thoughts too long. He accepted the other offer and in time, watched his creation stumble and ultimately close. That choice would ultimately be one of his few regrets, not that he couldn't work for someone like Jim Pattison - he garnered his great business start by working for the most successful, but, at that time, he thought it was appropriate to slow down.

Custom Yachts

While good at many things, we won't credit Forbes Cooper at being very good at all at retirement. Projects like the 'Mary J' at a whopping 115 feet came his way and FC Custom Yachts was born bearing his initials. Boats were built for various successful people like Moray Keith of the Dueck car dealerships around Vancouver. A few people seemed to be a little like Forbes, actually enjoying the build process even more than using their new boats. Forbes had to write up a limit on the amount of time a few clients could be on the shop floor. The concept is akin to that sign at your mechanic that posts a rate, along with a rate that is double that if you help and three times that if you tried to fix it before and insist on helping this time as well.

Successful boat dealer Ron Rayburn took over FC Yachts, reworking the FC into Rayburn Fine Custom Yachts. Some of the Rayburn boats can be held up as some of the finest builds on the planet, a mark that Forbes didn't often shoot for. Ask what he set out to build and the term Buick comes up with different people. The boats always boast some nice features, but never to be priced out of the 'main' marketplace. Forbes had a wife and a son and a daughter, each with their own two kids. His was a typical family and that put him in touch with the real purpose of a boat - to bring families together as they explore together.

Another attempt at retirement stopped abruptly when he said to his wife Helen - "I'm bored. I'd better start building again or I'll have to kill myself". With collaboration from veteran broker Al Hicks (former Tollycraft expert for BC), the molds for the Monk designed Tolly 43 were about to enjoy a new life as the Westcoast Custom Yachts 46. This project was nothing short of a stay of execution for the veteran builder, now in his 70's (although we can't confirm this because we caught him being 77 years old for three years in a row). Twenty boats from 46-64' came out of the custom shop over the next five years. It has been said that Forbes is one of those rare people who needs only three to four hours sleep per night (although if watching carefully, you can see very long 'blinks' during the day). I pride myself on being in early and getting things rolling, but hard to keep up with someone who needs so few winks. An odd game played from time to time where he'd call at 0630 to see if I was

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<p>6M BOW RIDER Length on deck 19' 8" Beam 7'10" Draft Drive-Up 1' 4" Fuel capacity 33 imp. gals. Engines 130-260 HP I/O Dry Weight (lbs.) w/130 HP 2300 lbs.</p>	<p>6M CLOSED BOW Length on deck 19' 8" Beam 7'10" Draft Drive-Up 1' 4" Fuel capacity 33 imp. gals. Engines 130-260 HP I/O Dry Weight (lbs.) w/130 HP 2300 lbs.</p>	<p>6.6M SUNBRIDGE Length overall 21' 8" Beam 8' 0" Draft Drive-Up 1' 4" Fuel capacity 42 imp. gals. Water Capacity 18 imp. gals. Engines 130-260 HP I/O Dry Weight (lbs.) w/130 HP 3080 lbs.</p>
<p>6.6M CUDDY CABIN Length on deck 21' 8" Beam 8' 0" Draft Drive-Up 1' 4" Fuel capacity 38 imp. gals. Engines 130-260 HP I/O Dry Weight (lbs.) w/130 HP 2800 lbs.</p>	<p>8.8M SPORT Length on deck 28' 0" Beam 8' 4" Draft Drive-Up 1' 4" Fuel capacity 100 imp. gals. Engines Twin 270 HP - 365 HP Dry Weight (lbs.) w/Twin 270 HP 5800 lbs.</p>	<p>8M SUNBRIDGE Length overall 27'2" Length on deck 25'8" Beam 9'3" Draft 2'6" Fuel capacity 70 imp. gals. Water capacity 20 imp. gals. Engines Single 260 HP I/O Twin 165-205 HP I/O Dry Weight (lbs.) w/130 HP 5750 lbs.</p>
<p>8M COMMAND BRIDGE Length overall 27'2" Length on deck 25'8" Beam 9'3" Draft 2'6" Fuel capacity 70 imp. gals. Water capacity 20 imp. gals. Engines Single 260 HP I/O Twin 165-205 HP I/O Dry Weight (lbs.) w/260 HP 6000 lbs.</p>	<p>9M SUNBRIDGE Length overall 31'6" Length on deck 29'8" Beam 12'0" Draft 2'4" Fuel capacity 100 imp. gals. Water capacity 40 imp. gals. Engines Twin 165-205 HP I/O Dry Weight (lbs.) w/165 HP 9500 lbs.</p>	<p>9M SEDAN Length overall 31'6" Length on deck 29'8" Beam 12'0" Draft I/O 2'4" Fuel capacity 100 imp. gals. Water capacity 40 imp. gals. Engines Twin 165-205 HP I/O or inboard Dry Weight (lbs.) w/165 HP 10,400 lbs. Diesel Optional</p>

PROWLER



getting out of bed or already hard at work downtown.

In the late fall of 2006 we heard from a client that Forbes had lost his grandson in a tragic accident. Stoic as ever, he never shared this news as we worked together. Then, in a December reception, where few clients braved the Vancouver downpour, a few of us witnessed Forbes finally sharing this horrible news. He had been very close to Connor, and a drunk driver had run a stop sign in Calgary, killing Connor, who had been driving, and injuring others. A decision had been made and Forbes explained to us that the boats on the shop floor would be completed. That would be the end of this project. The last boat was launched as 'Island Roamer CRS', to honour his grandson by including his initials, whose service had over 800 attendees.

We watched as Forbes and Helen worked to take long trips on this boat and explore the coast that he had helped so many others enjoy before. It was clear to us that he'd rather be building than cruising.

As wounds heal and families get past the tragedies and learn to cope with their loss, Forbes was not needed to help out. I believe he was actually encouraged to get back to work by the family.

With a restless soul, I believe his definition of retirement can be a lesson for many: Working when you feel like it.

He assembled the old band and got back to work. An eager dealer seemed to predict the upturn a little quicker than actu-

ally occurred, and the boats did not clear the market quickly, some ultimately landing back in our rental program as boats had done 30 years before.

The Last Boat?

Borrowing on an old concept that the ideal boat would accommodate 'cocktails for 6, dinner for 4 and sleep 2' the last boat in this round was "Island Roamer 6-4-2."

If anyone needs a 64 foot yacht with one stateroom, Forbes would be happy to hear from you. Don't try and email, he tried that and found it too impersonal a form of communication. I can still hear him demonstrating the "HI ... HOW... ARE... YOU" side of computer based communication. If it needs to be said, just pick up the phone.

Forbes and Helen, now somewhere in their 80's, share time between their place in West Vancouver and another home in Palm Desert. He's explained to me that there's an important name on our business, and based on what I've come to know about this fascinating man, I'd tend to agree.

It could be a little dangerous to use the title "Last Boat" and Forbes Cooper in the same sentence. While he's had a few health setbacks lately, I know that if you have an idea that involves building something that floats, don't count him out just yet.

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Here Are Three Canadian Marine Suppliers You Should Do Business With

Atkins & Hoyle

While there are legions of people at the shows trying to sell metal parts and accessories that are made off shore, there is a well-established Canadian supplier ready to design, manufacture and service their Canadian products. Atkins & Hoyle has become known for manufacturing well engineered, attractive and exceptionally durable cast hatches and ports. Their products have provided years of trouble-free offshore use here in Canada and recently the company has expanded their product line to include davits and cranes.

For the past 35 years Atkins & Hoyle has applied their expertise to the development of lifting systems for raising and storing small vessels, from dinghies to sport boats on both yachts and docks, always to meet the needs and conditions their Canadian clients go boating in.

And, the company is right here in Canada to back up their products. That's huge.

Arriving from England to Canada in the early 1920s, Wilfred Atkins and Joseph Hoyle established a small foundry and machine shop in Toronto in 1921. Producing bronze and aluminum castings for the general market, Atkins and Hoyle Limited was instrumental in the development of infrastructure for the growing City of Toronto.

As the plant grew in reputation and size, the company acquired several commercial contracts to produce brass pumps and other fittings. This general foundry and machine shop work carried the plant through the Great Depression and World War II, employing many people at a time of job scarcity.

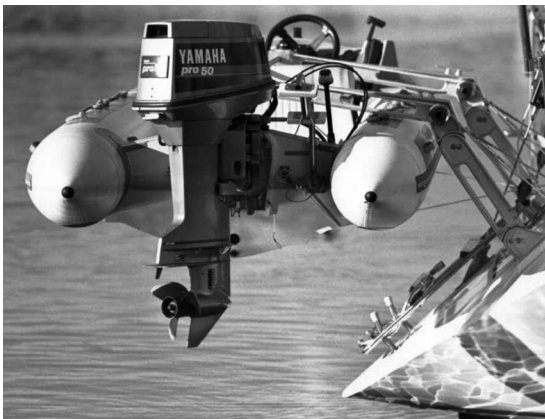
When the Atkins and Hoyle business was passed down to the next generation in 1967, a love of boating, and especially sailing, inspired Wilfred Atkins' son, Eric to begin the design and development of a high quality cast aluminum hatch.

Unparalleled by international standards, these hatches became highly popular with North American boat builders and today can be found on many different types of boats.

To withstand the intense marine environment, new alloys were utilized and new casting techniques were acquired. Almag 35, an aluminum magnesium alloy that is lighter, stronger and more resistant to corrosion than previous aluminum alloys, was chosen for its superior qualities. However, the difficulty of casting the Almag 35 alloy meant that new foundry techniques had to be developed for this product to become a viable material for the marine industry.

From the early years of casting and machining many different products for many different people, to when they began to specialize in advanced alloys for their own products, Atkins and Hoyle Ltd. has been the leader in the manufacturing of cast goods. Today, their specialization in the marine industry has created a strong reputation for the highest quality, advanced alloy production. Their many years of expertise, experience and ingenuity can be put to work to find the solutions that you are looking for.

For more information, visit Atkins & Hoyle Ltd at www.AtkinsHoyle.com



Rolls Battery Engineering

Surette Battery Company Ltd. is located in the Maritime province of Nova Scotia on the East Coast of Canada. Established in 1935, with a production facility in Salem, Massachusetts, Surette relocated to Canada in 1959 and is the Nation's only remaining independent battery manufacturer. With product lines branded under Rolls Battery Engineering, these high quality deep cycle batteries have been manufactured in their Springhill, NS plant for over 50 years.

Rolls-branded premium deep cycle batteries have earned a reputation of reliability and dependability in the railroad, marine, motive power and renewable energy markets. In addition to their traditional 2V, 4V, 6V, 8V & 12V flooded lead acid models, an AGM product line has been added to provide customers with a selection of sealed, maintenance-free deep cycle 2V, 6V & 12V alternatives.

Lead acid batteries boast the highest recycling rating of any consumer product making them a clear choice for the green-conscious consumer. The company is also focused on reducing their environmental footprint as well as helping customers to reduce theirs through a lead recycling and repurposing program. Over 75 years experience and a focus on what's to come have made the Rolls brand of batteries internationally recognized.

The premium Series 5000 models offer durable, dual container construction, high-density polyethylene materials and unique "resistox" plate design provide a life expectancy that is among the longest in the battery industry. The broad range of flooded and AGM models offer amp hour capacities to meet the requirements of any installation and include several models specifically designed with coast guard approved cases for marine applications.

Rolls brand continues to be the choice for those who look for dependable, long lasting deep cycle marine batteries. Backed by an industry-leading warranty, their products have provided many years of service and maintained a loyal customer following for decades.

To view the full line of Rolls flooded Marine and sealed, maintenance-free AGM batteries, visit www.rollsbattery.com



Aqua-Tek

Aqua-Tek brand cleaners and treatments were created from the passion, creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of Raivo (Rai) Remmel who grew up in Toronto, ON. Cottageing at a young age opened his eyes to the boating experience and gave him an appreciation of taking care of what you have and how to do it properly. Many years after earning his Professional Chemical Engineering degree, and following a successful career with Suncor, he saw an opportunity to bring a new level of quality and performance to cleaners and treatments in the marine, RV and cottage industries. To do this, he spent hundreds of hours studying the current product offering, applying newer technology and testing, testing, testing. Wherever the technology allowed, Rai embraced an environmentally friendly offering as long as it could outperform traditional chemical cleaners and treatments in the same category. Safety to the user, at a reasonable cost with the least impact on the environment is what guided his formulations but don't be misled, not all products offered carry the "Happy Fish" certification.

Not long after Rai launched the Aqua-Tek line of products, Peter Bristow, a Toronto-raised cottager and long-time boater from the food broker industry, joined with Rai to provide product development, branding, marketing and sales solutions.

Each and every cleaner and treatment offered provides a significant uniqueness within its category that sets it well apart from the competition. However, the most unique is Bug-Tek. This odourless insecticide is non-flammable, leaves no sticky residue and will not stain water-safe surfaces which means that you can apply this product inside the cabin of your boat and be spider-free!

Aqua-Tek is a very proud Canadian company, dedicated to supporting independent marine and RV outlets without relying on major chain stores for volume. Their plan is located in Concord, ON. Their success and significant growth can be attributed to the performance of what's inside the bottle and the support from retailers who are listening to their customer's demands on what they prefer.



ABYC Leads Boatbuilders to Join the Fight Against Aquatic Invaders

OF COURSE BOATS TRAVEL. The problem is that there can be a wide range of aquatic invasive species that hitch a ride on any boat. The bilge water or cooling water in a cruiser, pooled water inside a trailer rail, or in the ballast water in the fat sacks of a wakeboard boat; these are all places where invasive species can hitch a ride to another body of water.

We are not just speaking of live fish species but also of tiny eggs, plants and even micro organisms that can enter new waters and displace the native species.

Throughout both Canada and the United States, resource managers are fighting invasive species: they've put up electronic barriers to prevent Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes; they've promoted lionfish as a new cuisine along the Gulf of Mexico to encourage commercial fishing; and they've injected waterways in Virginia, Texas, and Minnesota with potassium chloride, also called liquid potash, which kills motor-clogging zebra mussels by cutting off their oxygen while leaving fish intact.

Canada has an entire Aquatic Invasive Species department devoted to heading off significant threats from dozens of different plant and animal species.

In America, more states are requiring boats with standing water be decontaminated to prevent the spread of invasive species. But those high-temperature washdowns could be harmful to engines and other systems.

Now resource managers are looking to the boat industry to join their fight. For the first time, the American Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC) hosted an Aquatic Invasive Species Summit on January 27–28 at the South Point Hotel in Las Vegas. The event focused on what the recreational boating industry can do to address this growing problem.

Zebra mussels, for instance, are native to freshwater lakes in Western Russia and Eastern Europe. In 1988 it was discovered that they were brought to the Great Lakes in the ballast water

of freighters and quickly spread. Within one year, clusters had attached themselves to every solid object in Lake Erie. Their destructive qualities include crowding out native species—almost all native Great Lakes bivalves are gone—clogging public water systems, and jamming boat motors, cooling systems, and steering equipment.

Invasive zebra mussels jump from one lake to another by attaching to boats and trailers. They were first detected in the Great Lakes in 1988. Within a year, they covered all solid surfaces in Lake Erie.

Today, many of Canada's freshwater lakes have been dramatically altered as a crust of zebra muscles ringed these lakes and filtered out the tiny nutrients that supported the starting levels of the food chain. Fishing boats easily can carry a load of zebra muscle eggs in the engine cooling water, in the trailer



This is an example of what it takes to clear a boat of aquatic invasive species. How many people can do this properly and what damage might be caused by the very hot temperatures required? All questions addressed at the Las Vegas sessions.



The ABYC sessions on Aquatic Invasive Species attracted a good audience to take a proactive stance on this critical issue.

ABYC President John Adey addresses the AIS audience in Las Vegas.

rails and in the bilges and live wells.

They continue to infest additional bodies of water and that has led to new laws and access problems for boaters. Last year, for example, Texas began requiring that all boaters drain their boats before launching them into and after hauling them from a lake, and the city of Baltimore shut down all boating in its reservoirs.

Canada lags the United States in trying to control the spread of aquatic invasive species and that poses a significant threat to our boating environment. To protect the environment, Canada should also impose more controls on boaters to guard against the spread of aquatic invasive species. But, that will be a problem for boat owners.

A problem for boat owners is a problem for our industry. "The first reason a boatbuilder should care about this is because it's a growing issue that's affecting more and more of their consumers," said ABYC technical director Brian Goodwin. "It creates access issues. It creates delays in terms of getting their boats on the water. It's a bigger issue for towboats, but the reality is all of these inconveniences add up, and the boater might say, 'I don't want to use my boat. I want to play golf.'"

One of the goals of the January ABYC summit, said Goodwin, is exploring whether the problem can be addressed in boat design. "Can the boats drain better? With towboats and wakeboard boats, you can't even access the ballast tanks; they're sealed. Automatically those boats are going into the decontamination process."

And that high-temperature washdown could also harm the boats, he explained: "If they have standing water, they have to be decontaminated. You're taking an engine that's used to getting at most 90°F (32°C) water from cooling, and it's suddenly getting 140°F (60°C) water. You take a nice, new outboard and

you could destroy it. That's a big issue."

ABYC worked hard to encourage boat designers and builders, systems designers and installers to attend the summit. The two-day event combined small working groups with expanded group sessions, hopefully to come up with plans to move forward. The four small groups will focus on boat and personal-watercraft design and construction, engine and propulsion systems, trailer design and construction, and component/systems design and installation.

Goodwin said this first collaboration will help bring the issue of invasive species, usually fought on a state level, to a national scale in America and will hopefully, attract greater awareness and support in Canada.

It may also lead ABYC to produce technical reports for consumers and industry professionals. "There'll be some things we won't be able to solve," said Goodwin, "but there will probably be some low-hanging fruit we'll be able to capture."

To find out more about the Aquatic Invasive Species Summit, contact Brian Goodwin at bgoodwin@abycinc.org.

Since 1954, the non-profit American Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC) has developed safety standards for boat design, construction, equipage, repair and maintenance. The essential global source of marine industry technical information, ABYC's product safety standards, credentialing, education, training, and other tools help members make boating safer.

For more information, contact the American Boat & Yacht Council at 410-990-4460, or visit www.abycinc.org.

This article was compiled from information supplied by the American Boat & Yacht Council and from Pro Boatbuilder Online and is published in Boating Industry Canada with permission.

What's Ahead for Marine Electronics?

At the latest NMEA Convention, leaders of three multi-national corporations that help make the marine electronics industry tick gave their take on the future of the market, new technology in the wings, challenges ahead and a host of other topics.

On the panel were Andrew Teich, President & CEO of FLIR; Leif Ottosson, President & CEO of Navico Holding AS; and Martin Kits van Heyningen, President, CEO & Chairman of the Board of KVH Industries.

The CEOs responded to a dozen questions prepared by the NMEA Convention Committee and to queries from the audience. Below are their responses to four questions. We'll publish the rest of the Q&A in subsequent issues of Boating Industry Canada. These articles have been provided to our Canadian readers by the NMEA and first appeared in their member publication, Marine Electronics Journal.



Andrew Teich

Martin Kits van Heyningen

Leif Ottosson

1) What are the major factors and trends currently driving marine electronics sales and what might we see in coming years?

Kits van Heyningen: What we see is that people want to bring their lifestyles with them. Whatever they do at home they want to be able to do on the water. That's what we see driving sales, especially with younger boaters. How this will evolve relates to the new technology that will be developed.

Teich: I see two other things as well. First is the need for more information and the second is the availability of new technology that's capable of providing that information in new ways. We provide the equipment that answers the questions that boaters have and will always have—such as, where am I, how fast am I going, how deep is the water, where are the fish, what's the status of the systems on the boat? It's exciting to be involved with a team that's developing the technology that answers those questions—advancements in display technology, processor technology and sensor technology

are driving faster, easier to use and less expensive answers to those questions.

Many of the developments in smartphone technology are finding their way into the recreational boating world at much lower costs. Our ability as marine electronics manufacturers to utilize and customize this technology will ultimately benefit the boater to make his or her experience safer and more fun.

Ottosson: We're seeing a lot of integration, which is very important. People see it as a way to get a safer boat and have more control on board. We want to make it easier for them to own and operate boats and to enhance security when they're not on board.

Telematics is coming, just look at cars and smartphones—that technology is happening today. Look for developments in cars and smart homes being applied to boats, but beyond just the utility—the housekeeping functions—offered by such solutions to enhancing the enjoyment and lifestyle. Boating should be fun.

People want to make sure they can access the boat from home—plan their trip from there so they can use the four or so hours that they may be on the boat appropriately. They want to get information about things like fuel and battery conditions before they get on the boat. Esthetics is becoming more and more important also.

2) What new products and technologies are we likely to experience in the near future?

Teich: For boaters it's all about situational awareness—more control and better confidence. Today, we have multiple sensors on the boat providing data and images; radar, sonar, depth sounders, engine control systems and so forth. In the future I see forms of sensor fusion bringing these together. Putting all of these types of information together on one screen so the boater can understand what is going on around them.

Another area will be the use of image analytics to look at these data streams intelligently. Many of the sensors on a boat today can be thought of as “imagers”—down vision, side vision, radar, these are all forms of imaging that can have intelligent analytics applied to them to make them more useful and easier to understand.

Today, the user is fundamentally the “signal processor” that determines what a radar image means. With advances in technology we'll see a lot more image processing analytics in the system. Some people call it artificial intelligence, but fundamentally it's a processor that has high-level analytics for pattern recognition that can, for example, alert the user to pre-defined conditions.

Some cars have analytics that alert the driver if pedestrians or animals are vectoring into the path of the vehicle. That technology will be carried over into the boating world, automatically alerting boaters to obstacles whether detected by radar, sonar or thermal imaging. Whether its identifying fish, obstacles or for security, there is an opportunity for advanced ana-

lytics to help a boater understand what's going on around their boat and alerting them to certain conditions.

Ottosson: More processing power at lower cost is driving change. More and more powerful processors is a trend we've seen for some time and it will continue. It allows us to do put a lot more functions at lower cost into sonar, radar and other devices. Recreational marine electronics is about taking expensive technology and making it accessible at lower cost. In the future we'll see expanded connectivity within and off the boat—Bluetooth, WiFi and so forth, along with additional capabilities for MFDs, chartplotters and browsers.

Kits van Heyningen: A lot of the new technologies that we'll see will involve data sharing. Look at the protestors in Hong Kong using Apple FireChat. The government shut down all the social networking—Facebook and Twitter—but couldn't shut down FireChat because information was shared from one phone to another.

How this will work in the marine world is that each vessel can share information. If I'm 20 miles ahead of another vessel I can report wind speed and direction and wave height, weather radar—all this data can be shared on an interactive network where everything becomes a global network of sharing. We may find interesting ways to make products that are more like social media.



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3) Now and in the years ahead, what impact do you see portable devices having on installed/dedicated electronics?

Ottosson: There's a lot of boats out there that don't have marine electronics on board. People are used to their portable devices and I see this as an entry portal for them to purchase marine electronics for their boats and a way to enhance the boating experience.

It's possible that portable devices could replace some of our current technologies but I don't see it happening for the next five years even though the technology is moving rapidly. What we see today is that people want bigger and bigger displays. Portable devices aren't attuned to that. Instead they will augment devices that we have on boats.

Teich: As an industry we should embrace portable devices. After all, pretty much everyone has one. As Leif said, portable devices are a way to get people into marine electronics as an entry point.

Our company recently came out with a device that gives an iPhone thermal imaging capability – the FLIR ONE. We don't see it as a huge market but it's a great way to get people to understand the technology and ultimately go for a larger system on board.

The second thing—portable devices are a great feeder of technology. Displays, processors and battery technology have all advanced significantly as a result of mobile technology and that is rolling back into our industry by lowering prices and improving performance.

Kits van Heyningen: Just about all boaters have electronics but they carry them in their pockets when they come aboard—they have GPS and chart functions. There's no way to stand in front of that landslide and live.

Probably 100% of every single device you have on the vessel will be available on your iPad or next-generation portable device—from lights and radar to control systems. Everything will migrate to portable devices, but some will be complimentary. For instance, big displays are better.

4) As product distribution channels continue to evolve how do you see the role of traditional dealers changing?

Kits van Heyningen: As our industry evolves, the NMEA dealer has to evolve along with it. The big opportunity for technical dealers is to focus on what they can do that no one else can, which is providing technical support and knowledge of things like equipment integration. That needs to be the big emphasis going forward because those are benefits that manufacturers can't get anywhere else. Dealers have a strong role that will increase as the complexity of products increases and onboard electronics become more integrated.

It's going to be less about selling, discounts and markups and more about servicing and training the customer.

Teich: The good news is that the increasing complexity of marine electronics will require support. The servicing dealer will absolutely not go away.

Looking at the future, I see two things. One is a lot more IT activity on boats—networks and connectivity that will require someone to go out and work on the vessel, and that's not likely to be the IT professional working in the backroom of a company. There are unique characteristics associated with working in the marine industry.

The second thing is training—it's an area the industry should strongly embrace. Training is a great way to create a bond with customers and a successful product experience with them. It's a great way to create a customer for life. The industry should embrace this, both at the NMEA level through sessions like this one and at the dealer level, directly engaging with customers.

Ottosson: There will always be a need for quality installations both in new boats and retrofit situations. The ease of use and installations don't negate quality installs. The manufacturers can't solve this without the installing dealer channel. In addition, there is a need to have a holistic view of the boat and boat ownership. This means assisting the owner with choosing a complete—call it lifestyle—experience on the boat, to customize the owner experience. You get to meet the customer and can help him customize his installation.

We did an exercise that identified 750 things a boater needs to do before, during and after a trip. There's a lot of opportunities in this process for dealers to broaden his boating experience to help him get the most out of it—and for the customer to feel “these guys” have the knowledge to improve my boating experience.

By understanding boaters' lifestyles and needs you can make boat ownership easier and more enjoyable. You play an incredibly important role in bringing all these technologies that we've been talking about together in a way that they wouldn't get buying on the Internet or retailers. You have a unique role.

We talked about portable devices and apps—we need to stay on top of that. For instance, what's happening with other sports activities? Dealers need to move with the times like we all do and maybe move away from some of the traditional things we enjoyed in the past.

The digital world is going boating. We're going to harvest more and more data and know more about how people use their boats—how long they're out there, what activities they're doing—that's incredibly important information to have and we can harvest it from the onboard sensors.

Closing

Part 2 will appear in the April issue of Boating Industry Canada.

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