



30-Second Credit Decision*
24 Hour Online Access
see important terms & conditions

Apply Now

0% Intro APR for purchases!

VISA

ENQUIRER LOCAL NEWS COVERAGE

Saturday, May 27, 2000

- NEWS
- Front Page
- Local
- Sports
 - ▶ Bengals
 - ▶ Reds
 - ▶ Bearcats
 - ▶ Xavier
- Business
- Health
- Technology
- Weather
- Traffic
- Back Issues
- Photographs
- AP Wire
 - ▶ World
 - ▶ Nation
 - ▶ Sports
 - ▶ Business
 - ▶ Arts
 - ▶ Health
- CLASSIFIEDS
- Jobs
- Autos
- General
- Obits
- Homes
- FREETIME!
- Movies
- Dining
- Calendars
- Weekend
- OPINION
- Columns
- Borgman
- HELPOESK
- HelpDesk
- Feedback
- Circulation
- Subscribe
- Phone #'s
- Search

Boats become crowd scene

Many owners are new and careless

By Michael D. Clark
The Cincinnati Enquirer

The summer boating season has been launched — which means more rookie boaters are plying already-crowded Tristate waterways.

“Unfortunately, most people put gas in their new boat, turn the key and get crazy,” said veteran boater Jim Kanir. He had just taken lessons at Rivertowne Marina on handling his new 39-foot Chris Craft cruiser on the Ohio River.



A SPEEDBOAT IS DWARFED BY A BB RIVERBOATS ON THE OHIO RIVER.

(Michael E. Keating photo)
[| ZOOM |](#)

Despite the proliferation of local boating instruction classes and a national safety campaign — May 22-28 is Safe Boating Week — local officials expect problems this summer on the Ohio and other waterways.

Last year, there were more than 47,000 registered boats in Southwest Ohio and Northern Kentucky and local boat dealers say a robust economy has helped increase boat sales. Local dealers say business is up around 25 percent, mainly with first-time buyers.

Fred Click, manager of Lodder's Marine in Fairfield, said sales in recent years are some of the highest he has seen during his 25 years in boat sales.

George Groene, operations officer for the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary in Cincinnati, said: “The sheer numbers make me worry.”

“We have a lot of traffic out there,” he said of the Ohio River stretch from Coney Island to Rising Sun, Ind., that three Coast Guard vessels patrol under his direction.

Water quality on the Ohio River between California and Saylor Park is rated as “moderate,” according to the Cincinnati Health Department. And if the weather cooperates this Memorial Day, weekend river rescue officials expect a crowd.

“We are busier and busier each year,” said Capt. Dale Appel of the Boone County Water Rescue Unit. “More boats brings more problems.”

And, Mr. Click added, Lodder's and other area dealers share the concern over increased boating accidents and deaths in recent years.

More than 8,100 boating accidents occurred on U.S. waters in 1998 — more than any year before. More than 4,600 people were hurt and 815 were killed.

About 40 to 50 percent of the accidents involved alcohol, officials estimate. Waterways are second only to highways in accidental deaths linked to alcohol.

In response, local U.S. Coast Guard officials, river rescue teams, marinas and boat dealers have expanded classes designed to get the first-time boater safely on, around, and off the water. But many novice boaters skip the lessons, officials say.

The growing death and accident statistics are especially painful to Jim Barnes of Butler County's Union Township. Mr. Barnes is president of the Ohio River chapter of Boaters Against Drunk Driving (BADD).

Mr. Barnes and other boating safety experts worry about the growing incidence of alcohol-related accidents.

Last summer Mr. Barnes' daughter, Pam Barnes Martini, her husband, Scott Martini, and their friend Ken Middendorf, were killed while boating on the Ohio River.

Their Stingray Rally Sport sat in an idle zone near the Water town Marina in Dayton, Ky., when a speedboat hit it, spun it around, and hit it again. The driver of the speedboat, Brian Brunen of Cincinnati, faces manslaughter, assault and drunken-driving charges.

Besides alcohol-related accidents, boating is also made more dangerous because of the relative lack of training and licensing, he said.

"The problem is that boating is the last vehicle you can operate without any license," said Mr. Barnes.

Effective this year, any Ohioan born after Jan. 1, 1982, must take a safe-boating course and earn a certificate to operate any boat, including personal watercraft, such as JetSkis. No one under 16 is allowed to operate a personal watercraft alone. Operators from 12-15 must be accompanied by someone 18 or older.

In Kentucky, operators 12-17 must have a safe-boating certificate or be accompanied by an adult.

In Indiana, operators must be at least 15 and earn a safe-boating certificate. Those 16 and older must have a driver's license to operate a boat. Mr. Barnes calls these new laws "a start," but adds that too many others will be hurt and killed on waterways before tougher laws are considered.

Bob Blom of Ripley now confines his boating to the Ohio River stretch around his Brown County home.

Mr. Blom has spent 40 years boating on the Ohio, but the growing numbers of boaters crowding the river near downtown Cincinnati has frightened him away to calmer waters.

"It's crazy out there," he said. "And the more people you have, the more drinking that is going on."

C. Don White continues to boat the Ohio near Cincinnati but does so in a 47-foot cruiser, whose girth affords him greater security.

Mr. White, a retired executive from Montgomery, has cruised the Ohio River since 1965, but now says "it has changed a lot because of the smaller boats."

The solution, he said, is more training, but not more boating laws. And a large dose of boating manners would go far.

"The problem is about courtesy more than anything," he said.

[River unsafe on Ky. side](#)

[Drivers dig deep to pay for fuel](#)

► [Boats become crowd scene](#)

[Eraser caper sends lawyer to slammer](#)

[County, city face riverfront deadline](#)

[Day of emotion: Vets recall friends lost](#)

[Donated stone marks tiny grave](#)

[RAMSEY: Education](#)

[4th district GOP chairman to step down](#)

[Blue Ash dedicates city tower](#)

[Bring appetite, umbrella](#)

[Buses to cut fares during smog season](#)

[Dayton man sought in gas station holdup](#)

[Dog taken, owner cited after attack on girl, 5](#)

[Fairy tale gets contemporary spin](#)

[Get to it](#)

[Job fair comes to Lincoln Heights](#)

[Ky. horse country to hold Bush fund-raiser](#)

[Lockland chief defends officers](#)

[Massie student dies on senior-class outing](#)

[Police focus on seat-belt use](#)

[Police officer not guilty in jogger's death](#)

[Prison nursery a step closer](#)

[Songs spice up soup kitchen](#)

[Queen City's moments to shine reflected in book](#)

[Search](#) | [Questions/help](#) | [News tips](#) | [Letters to the editors](#)
[Web advertising](#) | [Place a classified](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Circulation](#)

[Copyright](#) 1995-2000. [The Cincinnati Enquirer](#), a [Gannett Co. Inc.](#) newspaper.
Use of this site signifies agreement to [terms of service](#) updated 4/5/2000.

