

The **Breeze**

Serving the
Twin Lakes
area



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Make the most of a day at the *lake*



Water becomes the center of attention when the temperature climbs because of the cooling relief it can provide. Making a day of splashing through sprinklers, swimming laps in a pool or horsing around with friends at a waterpark is part of the summertime experience.

Even though most people equate summer fun with ocean escapes, those who do not live close to the coast often turn to other bodies of water to cool off and chill out. Lakes can be great places to spend summer afternoons and evenings. Discover how to make time at the lake even more fun with these ideas.

FISHING

Cast your line right into the lake and

take a shot at catching some fish. Bass, trout, perch, and pike may be interested in the bait hanging off of your hook. Be sure to check local fish and game ordinances to see if you need a license for fishing for the season, as well as the recreational size limits, possession limits and fishing seasons if you plan on keeping your catch.

TUBING

Although tubing is often enjoyed on rivers where the rapids carry people along from a starting point to the end, those who desire a more relaxing day may opt for tubing on a lake. Tie several tubes together and create a fleet of friends or family floating leisurely under the sun. With the

addition of a floating cooler full of drinks and snacks, you can stay out on the lake for hours.

WATER SPORTS

Water sports and lakes often go hand-in-hand. Certain water activities are easier on the calm waters of a lake than in the waves and swells of an ocean and particularly for beginners. Canoes and kayaks are one- or two-passenger vessels that can be launched from just about anywhere. They make areas of the lake explorable that may not be accessible to large boats. Plus they require no fuel other than the power of rowing. If you prefer more speed, personal water craft like jet skis may be used on lakes in certain areas. Waterskiing or wakeboarding behind

powerboats are some additional options for thrill-seekers.

LAKESIDE CUISINE

If you're lucky to have a lodge or restaurant dockside, you can enjoy a delicious meal overlooking a sunset on the lake. Time in or on the water can build up an appetite, which can be satiated by a meal while you listen to the water lap against the shoreline.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Days at the lake can be memorable ways to spend summer vacations.

STOCK PHOTO *The Breeze*

Chain O'Lakes offers cool times during hot weather

by **Sandra Landen Machaj**
CORRESPONDENT

It is that time of year again when the piers have all been replaced along the shores of the area lakes and the boats that have been in storage throughout the winter are now back at home, being polished up by their owners anxious to return to activities on the water.

The opening of the Chain O'Lakes for boat traffic is always the sign that spring is here and summer is not far behind. The Chain extends from the Wisconsin Illinois border where the Fox River meanders through 10 of the 15 lakes and channels that make up the Chain O'Lakes.

The Chain O'Lakes begins at the Wisconsin border where the Fox River enters into the most northerly lake of the chain, Lake Catherine in Antioch and meanders down ending at Pistakee Lake near Johnsburg where the Fox River exits the Chain O'Lakes and continues south through McHenry.

Because of the length of the Chain O'Lakes, and the flow of water through the chain, it is known for attracting more boats than any other inland waterway in the United States during the warm summer months. The boats seen on the chain are both those owned by local residents and visitors from both the Chicago and the Milwaukee Area, who make their way to the Chain to enjoy boating on this gorgeous inland waterway.

"Prior to the 2008 financial crash, we attracted about 28,000 boats to the area each season," said Joe Keller, executive director of the Fox Waterway Agency. "After the crash the number diminished to approximately 22,000 each season."

Keeping the entire Chain O'Lakes clean and navigable has been the job of the Fox Waterway Agency since it was created in 1984. Their purpose is to improve and maintain the Fox River and the Chain O'Lakes public waterway for recreational use, and to restore environmental quality, manage flooding, promote tourism, and enhance the quality of life along the waterway for both residents and tourists alike, a job they have successfully accomplished over the years.

During the pandemic, many families returned to the water, as a good way for outdoor activity for their family. Fishing, boat rides through the chain, and water skiing became favorite activities that families could enjoy and still maintain their distance from others. After spending so much time indoors during the pandemic, family members were



Summer on the water

even more ready to be out of doors than they normally are after a long cold winter.

Many families that sold their boats during the financial crash, feeling they could no longer afford the cost of the boat, insurance, licenses and gasoline, have since repurchased boats or have chosen to lease them to get the family out of the house and back on the water.

No matter what type of boat that you are placing in the water, they must have a State of Illinois registration. It can be purchased at www.dnrillinois.gov. In addition, any boat that is planning to enter the Chain O'Lakes, must display a Fox Waterway Agency sticker. These can be purchased on line at www.foxwaterway.com or at the Waterway

office, 45 S. Pistakee Lake Road, Fox Lake. Contact them by phone at 847-587-8540 for more information.

FISHING

Fishing is one of the most popular activities on the Chain O'Lakes. With so many different lakes, and each one so different from the others, there is a variety of habitats to attract different fish.

Some of the lakes such as Grass Lake, which was once the home of the lotus beds, is a very shallow lake, forcing the boats to stay toward the middle to avoid hitting the ground. This allows for more quiet spots

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The Breeze

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A local angler heads for his special fishing spot on the Chain O'Lakes, where he will enjoy a quiet time on the water. Fishermen can be protective of their "hot spots" and don't often share their favorite locations.



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Hook a kid on fishing

15 quick tips to make their day

As the weather warms, the desire to go fishing is undeniable. And if you love fishing, there's only one thing more enjoyable than catching a big fish – watching a kid catch a fish.

This fishing season, the folks at Rapala fishing lures encourage adults to take a kid fishing. Why? Because kids represent the future of fishing. According to the American Sportfishing Association, kids who are introduced to fishing at an early age by a trusted adult are more likely to fish as an adult.

Here are 15 quick tips from the folks at Rapala on how you can introduce a kid to fishing this year:

GET THEM ON GOOD BITES

The number one thing you can do to hook a kid on fishing, says legendary angler Al Lindner, is to get lots of bites for your child. "Taking kids fishing between the ages of 8 and 12 years old is a critical time. Try to get them on good bites. Their attention span is short. You will quickly know if fishing will be a part of their life in the future. They are either going to like it or not. But they have to get bites. I can't say how important that is. You gotta get 'em on a bite."

START THEM ON BLUEGILLS AND SUNNIES

The easiest bites tend to be panfish - bluegills, sunfish and bream. As your kids watch you catch bass, walleye and other gamefish, they'll want new challenges. Keep a panfish pliers handy to remove hooks from small panfish.

A SMALL FISH CAN BE A MONSTER FISH!

To a child, a small sunny can be a trophy. Don't downplay a small fish. Every fish caught is a huge accomplishment.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Start your kid fishing with a single hook. They're much easier to remove from fish. It could be a hook and a bobber or a



Teach kids to fish to build a life-long love of the sport and water activities.

STOCK PHOTO *The Breeze*

single hook soft bait, such as the Storm 360GT Searchbait. As your kids get more experience, let them graduate to a lure such as an Original Floating Rapala.

BRING THE SNACKS

Whatever your kids like for snacks, such as chips, cookies or fruit chewies, bring them! You're sure to work up an appetite catching all those fish. And don't forget the wipes for sticky, slimy little hands.

CREATE TRADITIONS

One of the best things about fishing with a kid is creating little traditions to which they can look forward in the future. For example, stopping for a donut on the way to the lake, or giving fish pins whenever your kid catches a new species.

BRING A FRIEND

If your child has a good friend, invite them along on the fun, too. That kid may turn into a lifetime fishing buddy for your kid.

TAKE PICTURES

Don't limit yourself to just fish photos! Take photos of the entire experience - stopping for donuts on the way to the water, eating snacks, collecting rocks or seashells, feeding the ducks. Turn your photos

into a photo book or create a slide show with music that the kids can watch later. When fish are caught make sure the most important people in your kid's life see their fish photos.

KEEP IT SHORT

With younger kids, especially, avoid overdoing it. Start out with short trips - a couple hours at most, and if the fish just don't seem to be cooperating, cut it short and go have an ice cream cone. Gradually increase your time out on the water and trying different types of fishing approaches, such as fishing with soft baits or trolling with crankbaits.

WATCH THE WEATHER

Sometimes the weather doesn't always cooperate. You may think the fishing is best on an overcast, windy day, but that may not be the case for kids. Instead, watch the weather and choose a warm, clear day and get out early when the fish are most likely to bite.

BRING A LIFE JACKET

It only takes a second and you may find a kid in the water. When on a boat, kids should always wear a life jacket that fits properly (in many states, it's the law). Use caution when fishing from docks, piers and

shorelines, too.

AVOID SUNBURN

Make sure your kid is wearing a comfortable fishing cap and together, apply your sunscreen to ears, noses and other exposed skin.

HANDLE FISH GENTLY

Fish are slimy, prickly and wiggly. With young kids, adults should handle fish at first and let kids gently "pet" them before they're released. As they become more experienced, show kids how to carefully land, hold and release their catches.

FISH WITH TOPWATER

Watching a fish explode on the surface for a lure gives young anglers an exciting visual that will keep them coming back for more. An X-Rap Pop or Skitter Pop are amazing baits to throw from shore or the dock for heart-stopping topwater action.

KEEP A FEW

If your kids want to try eating fish, keep a few fish and cook them up. Don't make an entire meal out of it though, as eating fish is an acquired taste. Use a trusty batter recipe and serve with French fries.

SUMMER ON THE WATER • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

closer to the shore for fish to gather and attracts those fishing. Some of the other lakes such as Pistakee is now much deeper than it was before the installation of the dam in McHenry. Their depth is also somewhat controlled by the Waterway Commission who decides when to open or close the dam.

The Indigenous peoples who made their home in this area found this to be the perfect place for fishing and hunting. With the large numbers of fish and water fowl available, there was always food for all the member of the tribes. Today's residents and visitors continue to enjoy fishing in the chain

People of all ages, from young children who experience the thrill of catching their first little sunfish to the professional sport fisherman, landing fish weighing hundreds of pounds, enjoy the sport of fishing.

Fishing is a sport that helps teaches patience and perseverance as one sits back and waits for the fish to nibble. It is the fish that leads as the fisherman awaits that nibble before the fisherman has to use his skills to

land the fish. It is a sport that can be enjoyed alone or with friends or family.

Located on Grass Lake Road in Antioch, Triangle Sports and Marine is the place to go for both the new fisherman or the experienced one.

Triangle Sports and Marine was opened in 1948 by Robert and Toni Dickson as a place that provided fresh bait and other products needed by the local fisherman. Today the shop continues to be the favorite of both local and visiting fisherman. It is still family run with Greg Dickson, Son of Robert and Toni, owning the store since 1977 and sharing the fishing knowledge he gained from growing up in the store and on the lake. The next generation, his daughter Chelsea, is also involved in the business.

"The Chain is the perfect place to fish," Greg Dickson said. "There is a great variety of fish found here, from varieties of the small pan fish such as croppies, blue gills, and perch to larger fish such as muskies, Northern pike, catfish, both large and small



Triangle Sports and Marine is at 23480 W. Grass Lake Road, Antioch. It has been the place for all things fishing since 1948. Current owners Kit and Greg Dickson are pictured here.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *The Breeze*

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mouth bass, and even walleye. All the species are found in all the lakes of the chain but where to find them is dependent on time of year and weather as they move around."

The bait the fish are willing to nibble on, changes throughout the season Dickson said.

"It all depends what the fish want to eat," he explained.

Because the staff at Triangle Sports and Marine spend time each day with avid fishermen and are often out fishing themselves, they are aware of where the different species of fish are biting and what their choice of bait is at the time. They are always ready to help visitors find an area where they will hopefully be successful.

For those just beginning to fish here is some advice on how to begin:

- Seek out a store where you are comfortable asking questions about where to look for fish, and what materials to use including rods, bait, and flies until you are sure you know what to do.
- Purchase your fishing license. Many bait stores carry them such as Triangle Sports.
- If you are unfamiliar with the area, get a map to help you on your way.
- Decide if you are fishing to catch and release or are you looking for fish that you can take home for dinner.
- Fish with someone for safety.

"Even though our customers confide in us about fishing spots they have found, there is a code of ethics about sharing specific favorite fishing spots," Dickson said. "While we are always willing to direct customers to the areas where the fish they are looking for are found and biting, but we do not give out their special spots but rather t lead you to where the fish are currently found and biting, so you can locate your own favorite fishing spot."

Walking into Triangle Sports and Marine,

you will be overwhelmed by the amount of fishing equipment that is on display and the knowledge of the staff. They are the largest independent bait and tackle store on the chain. If you are new to fishing on the chain, they will steer you to the correct poles, bait, lures, and other equipment that may be needed for the type of fish you plan to pursue. If you are knowledgeable fisherman, they will help you upgrade any equipment that you may need.

Frequently, they are asked when is the best time to fish. The simplest answer, Dickson said, is whenever the fish are biting. Early morning and evening are often considered the best time to fish but fish can be caught throughout the day. In the hot summer, mid-day is often too hot to sit in a boat and fish. Be sure to wear sun screen and a hat if out in the blazing sun.

While many consider fishing as a warm-weather sport, it is usually a year round activity in the Chain O'Lakes region. In the winter ice fishing brings out the fishermen.

This has been a strange winter. Relatively mild with less snow than usual, Dickson said this has not been a good winter for ice fishing as the constant freeze and thaw periods did not allow a thick solid ice to form.

"There were only five days that we felt the ice was solid enough for ice fisherman to safely head out to fish," Dickson said. "In a normal winter there are usually about 45 days of safe ice fishing. When ice fishing, always go with someone for safety and fish in areas where there are others around."

Triangle Sports and Marine is l at 23480 W. Grass Lake Road, Antioch. The store is open every day except Christmas. Summer hours are from 6:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekends.

Making waves

Aquanuts return to the water

by **Sandra Landen Machaj**

CORRESPONDENT

The Southern Lakes Area comes by its moniker for good reason. The multitude of lakes and rivers provide residents and visitors the chance to enjoy fishing, boating and watersports during the summer months.

For many, sitting along the shore to watch the local, award-winning waterski team exhibitions are a favorite activity. From the Burlington Aquaducks to the Twin Lakes Aquanuts to the Southern Wakes United Water Ski Team in Walworth County, there's no shortage of performances on area lakes.

Waterskiing was invented by Ralph Willard Samuelson of Lake City, Minnesota, in 1922. One-hundred years ago, Samuelson strapped wooden boards to the bottom of his feet, used a clothesline as a towrope attached to a boat, and attempted to travel across the water on Lake Pepin. He experimented with various sizes of boards and tried many different positions on the "skis" before successfully navigating Lake Pepin's waters and inventing a new sport.

Since then waterskiing has grown from a fledgling activity to a top-line competitive sport with worldwide competitions. Individual waterskiing teams compete in local, state and national levels. Sometimes, as they progress, they even compete in international competitions.

Local teams, including the Aquanuts, Aquaducks and the Southern Wakes United, have been very successful in competition at all levels.

Check the schedule of the team close by, gather family or friends, a folding chair or a blanket and make head out to the waterfront to take in a show. The whole group will enjoy watching the skill and gracefulness of the skiers.

The local teams present shows at their home venues weekly during the summer for the enjoyment of the community. They do not charge to view their performances but



Five-high pyramids impress the crowds at local waterski shows. The Aquaducks created this pyramid in an earlier nationals competition. Skiing expertise and balance of all participants are needed for success.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AQUANUTS *The Breeze*

all do accept donations to help them with the cost of producing the performance.

HISTORY OF THE AQUANUTS

Fifty-one years ago, in the small town of Twin Lakes, a group of water skiers gathered and formed the Aquanuts. Little did they know that this tightly knit group would band together and become one of the premier waterskiing groups, competing in a variety of competitions and winning more than 100 awards for first-, second- and third-place finishes over the years.

In 2021, the team won the Wisconsin state title for the first time in 35 years and finished second in national competition. Last year, the Aquanuts, of Twin Lakes, finished off its 50th anniversary season by winning the 47th annual Indmar Marine Ski Show National Championship last August

A banner year

Aquanuts capture state, national titles in 2022

The Aquanuts, of Twin Lakes, finished off its 50th anniversary season by winning the 47th annual Indmar Marine Ski Show National Championship held last August in Loves Park, Illinois.

It is the Aquanuts first National Title since 2015 and the first time since 1984 that the team won both the Wisconsin State Title and the National Title in the same year.

The tournament featured 14 teams and more than 1,500 athletes.

In competitive show skiing, each club has one hour to present a theatrical performance on water skis. Judges score acts by awarding points based on originality, presentation, and execution. Elaborate costumes and staging intermixed with music and fast action on the water as an announcer leads the audience through the show.

The Aquanuts were the second team to ski on Saturday, Aug. 13 arriving at 6:30 a.m. for safety meetings followed by skiing about three hours later.

Results were not announced to the anxious crowd until Sunday evening around 8:00 p.m.

The nearly 36-hour wait for results was 'exhausting' said co-show directors Justin and Lisa Mushel from Burlington.

"The Aquanuts persevered against not only the 13 other teams but also the

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• CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



in Loves Park, Illinois.

The Aquanuts are known for their daring stunts, ballet lines and innovative show themes. Each year more difficult and daring stunts are added to their routines. The clowns were introduced in the early days and have remained a symbol of the Aquaducks, even earning a place on their logo.

While the skiers are the showpiece, they alone are not responsible for the success of the team. The boat drivers, spotters, equipment managers, marketing managers and the local businesses, especially the marinas, which help support them are as necessary as the skiers for success.

The Aquanuts say they are extremely thankful for their partnership with the Village of Twin Lakes, which allows for

The Aquanuts perform at Lance Park on Lake Mary in Twin Lakes on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 6 p.m.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AQUANUTS *The Breeze*



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BANNER YEAR • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Kailey Koehler works on a swivel ski routine in the summer Aquanut Water Ski show in Twin Lakes.

JASON ARNDT *The Breeze*

Lance Park to be their home.

Practice begins each year before the skiers are ready to hit the water. They work on the exciting three-, four- or even five-high pyramids on dry ground before ever trying to build one on the water.

The Aquanuts have two separate teams – a Junior Team and a Senior Team – but at times they overlap. The younger skiers, who range in age from 8 to 14 years old, are on the Junior Team as they train to learn the more intricate moves and formations. Sometimes a younger skier may advance to the Senior Team if they have particularly good skills.

“The Senior Team members range from 15 years to in their 50s,” said Mark Gurda, who is the announcer for the team’s shows.

Every two years there is a World Championship Competition where Team USA picks from the best skiers to represent the United States as members of Team USA. This year Aquanuts, Cody Coffey, Kalia Coffey, Kailey Koehler, Bob Koehler and Ethan Shulda have been chosen for Team USA for 2022.

Last year, in celebration of 100 years of waterskiing and 50 years of waterskiing for the Aquanuts, there were multiple celebrations and special programs.

The weekly programs, which are open to the public, begin on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend, May 27, at Lance Park at 6 p.m. Shows are presented

Aquanuts 2023 schedule

The Aquanuts in Twin Lakes perform at Lance Park, 55 Lance Drive. All shows are at 6 p.m. and free of charge. For more information, call 866-SKI-SHOW or email admin@aquanutwatershows.com.

Performance dates

Saturday, May 27
 Wednesday, May 31
 Saturday, June 3
 Wednesday, June 7
 Saturday, June 10
 Wednesday, June 14
 Wednesday, June 21
 Saturday, June 24
 Wednesday, June 28
 Saturday, July 1
 Wednesday, July 5
 Saturday, July 8
 Wednesday, July 12
 Saturday, July 15
 Wednesday, July 19
 Wednesday, July 26
 Saturday, July 29
 Wednesday, Aug. 2
 Saturday, Aug. 5
 Wednesday, Aug. 9
 Wednesday, Aug. 16
 Saturday, Aug. 19
 Wednesday, Aug. 23
 Saturday, Aug. 26
 Wednesday, Aug. 30
 Saturday, Sept. 2

elements and conditions”, said Justin. This was Mushel’s second National Title as he was show director back in 2015 with Ken Meyer.

A fast current from the north and winds of 15, gusting to over 20 mph, from the south made the show execution not only difficult but intimidating for even the most experienced skier.

Co-Announcer Mark Gurda referenced that the Aquanuts theme this year was Mary Poppins and featured ‘gusts of winds’ as part of their theme.

“Maybe Mary Poppins herself sent us some good luck” with the conditions,” said Gurda.

Within the team victory was the highest scoring Jump Team act as well as the Most Valuable Male Skier, Cody Coffey.

Coffey, a former Tommy Bartlett Show skier, and multi-time Team USA member is a crowd favorite and performed in more than half the ski acts.

The margin of victory was razor thin as the top three teams were separated by only a few points.

Team President and Boat Driver Bob Koehler said ‘that this is one of the rare circumstances where every member of the team, on and off the water, can take pride in knowing that what they did right made the difference in winning’.

The national title came a month after the Aquanuts captured its second consecutive Wisconsin State Water Ski Show Championship at Lake Wazeecha in Wisconsin Rapids.

Many of the Aquanuts did not get to immediately celebrate, however, since some Team USA members from the squad needed to practice for the World Ski Show Competition.

The World Ski Show Competition was held last October in Winter Haven, Florida and will be the first time the United States has served as host country since 2016.

The Aquanut team has six Team USA members.

For more information, including celebration details, visit aquanutwatershows.com or call 866-754-7469.



Aquanuts show directors Lisa and Justin Mushel showcase the Division 1 National Championship trophy following competition in Loves Park, Illinois last year.

SUBMITTED PHOTO *The Breeze*



Saturdays and Wednesdays each week through Labor Day.

A special Fourth of July weekend celebration at Lance Park on July 1 with festivities beginning around 6 p.m. The Aquanuts will present a special ski show, which will end with the traditional Independence Day fireworks.

As always there is free admission and parking. Food and beer will be available for sale.

Along with providing shows for the public, each year the team supports an adaptive skiing program to bring the sport to those with disabilities.

For more information visit www.aquanutswatershows.com.

The Aquanuts form a ballet line in brightly colored costumes and ski in synch across the water.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AQUANUTS *The Breeze*

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Great summertime leisure activities

A warm breeze on a summer day embodies the spirit of this beloved season for millions of people. Seen by many as a season to relax and recharge, summer, not coincidentally, goes hand in hand with leisure.

With more time on their hands due to vacations from school and work and less hectic activity schedules, particularly for families that include school-aged children, individuals often find summer affords more time for leisure. With that in mind, people from all walks of life can consider these summertime leisure activities.

RELAX BY THE WATER

Whether it's a pool, lake or even the ocean, the water beckons each summer. Simply sitting on a beach or beside a lake or pool is a great way to pass the time without much stress. Nothing needs to be scheduled when relaxing poolside,

lakeside or on a beach; simply enjoy some time to relax by the water.

PADDLEBOARDING

Paddleboarding is another leisurely way to spend a summer day. Paddleboarding requires physical exertion, so this might not be the ideal activity for those looking to relax without lifting a finger. However, paddleboarders typically take to the water when it's at its most calm, making this a great activity for those who want to capitalize on peaceful, serene summer vibes.

FISHING

Few activities may be more relaxing than fishing. Though there are many different ways to fish, some of which require considerable physical effort, casting a line and waiting for a fish to bite is a relaxing way to spend a day in nature.

That might not seem like much to novices, but spending time in nature has been found to reduce stress and lower heart rates, which the U.S. Forest Service notes are both risk factors for cardiovascular disease.

READ

Books make for great companions on warm summer afternoons. Reading is such a popular summer pastime that many bookstores set up displays featuring books that make for great beach reads, providing inspiration for individuals who aren't sure which book or books to dive into this summer. And much like other summertime leisure activities, reading has been linked to reducing stress.

A 2009 study from researchers at the University of Sussex in England found that reading can reduce stress by as much as 68%.

VISIT A MUSEUM

On summer afternoons when it's raining or too hot outside or individuals simply want to spend some time indoors, a museum makes for the perfect place to visit. Museums do not typically draw crowds in summer, making this an ideal season to visit. Many offer discounted prices to individuals like seniors and students, so this is a great way to relax without breaking the bank.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Summer is a season of leisure, and there are many activities that align with that spirit of relaxation.

STOCK PHOTO *The Breeze*



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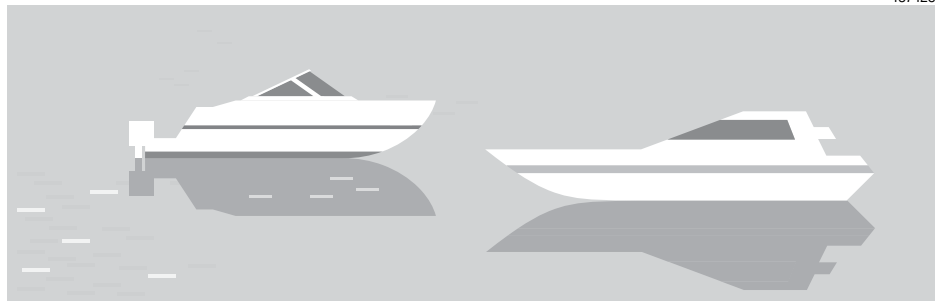
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LAKES AREA CLASSIFIEDS

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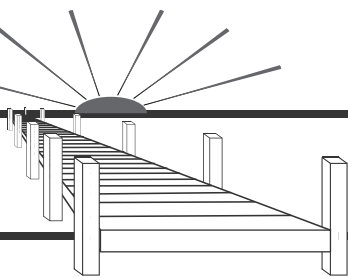
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Life jackets, vests and PFDs – How to choose the right fit

Life jackets, life vests, ski vests...they're all common names for PFDs, or personal flotation devices. Their job, as the names imply, is to keep the wearer alive and afloat should they unexpectedly end up in the water or elect to participate in watersports such as skiing or wake surfing. Although the goal might be simple, life jacket styles, fit and method of use can all affect whether your PFD does the job it's intended for.

Here's a guide to selecting,

fitting and using various life jackets, vests and PFDs.

- Select the proper type based on activity or boating conditions.
- Check for a proper fit.
- Examine the outlined size and weight requirements.
- Ensure the life jacket is in good condition—look for holes and tears.
- Don't forget to wear it!

LIFE JACKET TYPES

Personal flotation devices come in various types, and ideally should be chosen to best match your activity or boating conditions.

- Type I jackets offer the greatest buoyancy (more than 20 pounds) and are designed primarily for offshore use. They're bulky to wear but have the distinct advantage of turning an unconscious person face up in the water.

- Type II jackets are likewise designed to turn an unconscious person face up in the water. They offer a minimum 15.5 pounds of buoyancy and are typically chosen for nearshore boating excursions.

Though not exactly fashionable, their inexpensive price and often simple construction make Type II life jackets a longstanding favorite for boaters looking to satisfy U.S. Coast Guard safety requirements.

- Type III jackets likewise offer 15.5 pounds of buoyancy. Often referred to as "ski vests," their comfortable, formfitting style makes them an excellent choice for watersports as well as general passenger use. Type III jackets typically feature a front entry and buckle, or buckle-and-zipper closure. The catch with Type III jackets is that they are designed for conscious wearers with an imminent chance of rescue; a Type III jacket is not guaranteed to turn an unconscious wearer face up in the water. Type IV personal flotation devices are designated as "throwables," and typically take the shape of a ring or flat cushion that can be thrown to a person who lands unexpectedly in the water.

- Type IV PFDs are designed to be held onto, rather than worn,

by the user. They offer a minimum 16.5 pounds of buoyancy. Tip? Though some might look the part, don't use a designated throwable as a seat cushion. Over time, the practice will degrade the foam and reduce the amount of flotation.

- Type V jackets are special-use PFDs, often combined into flotation coats, whitewater rafting vests, even sailboard harnesses. They should be used only for their intended purpose.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



Different types of personal flotation devices exist for every water activity need.

STOCK PHOTO The Breeze

above: Life jackets only work when you wear them. Everyone on the boat needs their own life jacket and the boat shouldn't leave the dock before all boaters have donned their personal flotation device.

STOCK PHOTO The Breeze

PONTOON BOATS VERSUS DECK BOATS –



Which is right for you?

Pontoon boats are incredibly popular all across the nation, as are deck boats. In fact, these two boat types share many of the same features and advantages, and if you're in the market for a new boat it can be incredibly hard to choose between the two.

So, which will be best for you and your family? Will you pick a pontoon boat, or do you think a deck boat would be delightful? Truth be told, in many regards you can't go wrong either way – both types of boats are loads of fun. But as you try to determine which would be ideal for you and yours, Discover Boating encourages you to consider the following:

VERSATILITY AND CUSTOMIZATION

One of the great things about pontoon

boats is that they're available in virtually countless different deck layouts, shapes, and sizes. In many cases you can pick and choose between where you want a lounge, versus a sofa, versus a pair of fishing chairs. You can also choose to add activity-specific features, like a tow pylon for watersports or integrated cooler compartments for day cruising. So, you can make a pontoon boat just as versatile – or specialized – as you'd like.

Deck boats, on the other hand, are generally fiberglass boats with rigid hulls and decks. As a result, many of the features are molded in and the floorplans usually aren't as customizable. This may seem to put deck boats at a bit of a disadvantage, but there's also an up-side. With the fiberglass construction the builder can

mold in things like steering consoles, ski lockers, and seat bases. That can give the boat a very clean look and a solid feel.

PERFORMANCE AND SEAKEEPING ABILITIES

There was a time when deck boats would have been the hands-down winner in this category. Generally speaking, a single fiberglass hull can accept more horsepower and ride through the waves better than a pair of aluminum "logs" can. These days, however, triple-log pontoon boats, often called "tri-toons" are quite common. And having that third log makes a huge difference in a pontoon boat's performance and sea keeping abilities. Today, it's not unusual to see tri-toons with huge outboards or even

twin outboard engines, which go fast enough to whip the hat right off of your head. And they do quite well in choppy waters, as compared to the pontoons of yesteryear.

That said, all other factors (like size and weight) being equal, most people would still say that the monohull deck boats have a bit of an advantage when it comes to handling rough seas. Most also benefit from having less windage, so they may be easier to dock or load on a trailer in a stiff breeze.

COST OF THE BOATS

No matter what your boating budget may be, cost is a consideration most people

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

When considering between a pontoon boat and deck boat consider the available versatility and customization options, performance and sea-keeping abilities and the cost before making a purchase.

PONTOON • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

will take into account when comparing pontoons and deck boats.

In smaller, less expensive size ranges, pontoons usually win out in this regard. There are plenty of relatively small pontoons with low-power outboards, which are very inexpensive. There are some small and inexpensive deck boats, too, but there are far fewer are on the market and foot for foot, the pontoons generally cost less.

When it comes to larger model boats, however, this advantage usually evaporates. Many of today's pontoon boats are exceptionally well equipped with luxury features, accessories, and powerful engines, and they can get every bit as expensive as a comparable deck boat – sometimes even more so.

THE BOTTOM LINE

So, what's the bottom line? That will depend on how you prioritize the above factors, personally. In some cases the pontoon boat will prove to be the better pick, while in others a deck boat will be the right move. And this is a call that only you can make. We do know one thing for sure, though – choosing either will be a major lifestyle upgrade. Make your final call and then get ready for endless fun out on the water.

For more information, visit discoverboating.com.

LIFE JACKETS • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

CHECK FOR A PROPER FIT

Once you select the proper type of PFD for your conditions and/or activity, make sure it is in good condition, with no holes or tears, and fits properly. A jacket that is too large can slip off the wearer. One that is too small might not offer sufficient buoyancy to keep the wearer afloat.

- Look for the manufacturer's labeling that details the size and weight the jacket is intended to fit.

- Once you have the proper size, put on the jacket, fasten any closures (buckles, zippers, etc.), then lift your arms up straight over your head and ask a friend grab the top of the jacket above the arm openings and pull upward.

- Ideally, the jacket should not rise any higher than the wearer's chin. If it rides up as high as the ears, it's too large and could slip

off in the water; size down to get the proper fit.

- Don't overlook the crotch strap found on life jackets designed for young children. This additional strap runs between the legs from the back of the jacket to the front and offers added assurance the jacket will not ride up or slip over a child's head.

DON'T FORGET TO WEAR IT

Don't make the all-too common mistake of having a life jacket available for every passenger aboard, but having those jackets stowed in a difficult-to-reach location. Accidents might be rare, but they happen – and when they do, they typically happen quickly. In the majority of cases, they happen too quickly to find and don a life jacket.

According to the U.S. Coast Guard, drowning is the cause of death in the vast majority of recreational-boating accidents. Of those fatalities, more than 80% of the victims were found not wearing a life jacket.

That's why the best life jacket available just might be the one you're willing to wear...every time you're out on the water.

Worried that a life jacket will feel constricting and hot on a warm summer day? Try the comfort and freedom provided by a suspender-style inflatable PFD. In their non-inflated state, bulk is minimal. At the opposite end of the spectrum, "float coat" jackets combine flotation with the insulation of a jacket when it's cool. They're a favorite of fishing enthusiasts.

Source: discoverboating.com.



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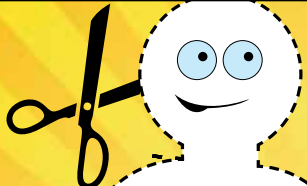
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