# The 'General Williams' patrols Georgian Bay daily

by Terri Howell MIDLAND-Did you ever wonder why

Midland's OPP officers keep their hair so short? If you were whizzing along on Georgian Bay on the open deck of a 36-foot launch doing close to 40 miles per hour trying to hail a passing speedboat, you'd want short hair too.

While the majority of Midland's OPP officers are cruising the highways looking for infractions of the Criminal Code and Highway Traffic Act, most days police con-

stables Greg Chinn and Dave Brophy are gliding along the crystal clear waters of Georgian Bay on the General Williams boat, a smaller one, is watching for infractions of the Small Vessels Act and the Criminal Code.

way to spend the working hours of the day. However, according to Constable Brophy it takes a great deal of tact and by twin 330 horsepower diplomacy to deal with Chrysler marine people on holidays since engines.' no one wants a ticket because they forgot to months big "General" is bring a life jacket along. out patrolling the waters

It sounds like a nice

'General' is the 'showboat'. It is powered During the summer

is one of two police boats

used by Midland's OPP

detachment. The other

used to run the rivers and

manoeuvre into places

the 36-foot General

Williams could never

reach. In the words of

Greg Chinn "The

Williams who was the

The General Williams of Georgian Bay daily.

Commissioner of Police for Ontario from May 1, 1922 to September 1, 1939. It was launched at Killarney after being built there by the L.R. Lowe Boat builders in 1967. Constable Brophy explained it was built for the Ontario police. Before it came to Midland it was used in security patrols at the 1976 Olympic yacht races at Kingston and escorted the Royal Brittania from Montreal to Kingston that same

According to Constable

Brophy the boat covers an

area stretching as far as

Twelve-Mile Bay north of

Honey Harbour and

meets another detach-

between Midland and

name from V.A.S.

tawasaga Bay.

and her crew perform a varied task on their daily rounds. Since there is no road access to many of the cottages and homes in the 30,000 Islands, the boat cruises by them at least once a week.

for anything they just have to wave us down,' Constable Brophy says. He added they check for the boat operator is given cottages that have been broken into as they pass. registration. However, if

If the General Williams doesn't make the rounds at least once a week thieves on the mainland or in the area might take the opportunity to strike, the police officers ex-

ment's boat halfway When there are break ins the OPP station in Wasaga Beach in Not-Midland is notified. The message is given to the The boat received it's General Williams by radio or handed to the police officers before they leave the dock. Each complaint is investigated. Both Constable Chinn and Constable Brophy say they have seen some pretty nice summer homes while investigating break-ins and accidents

The officers do more than just investigate complaints, Constable Brophy perches himself on a revolving chair in the centre of General William's cabin floor with a pair of binoculars. The General Williams Although he gets teased

about looking for bathing beauties, he is actually checking for registration numbers on passing boats with engines over 10 horsepower.

Not everyone without a registration is charged even though as Constable Brophy says, "There is no excuse, since registration is free." In a lot of cases to obtain a

again, the driver will be charged.

As the General Williams cruises the islands, boats are also randomly selected for safety checks. Those that are pulled over are asked whether there is a life jacket for each person in the craft, a bailing device and oars or paddles. People without the mandatory equipment can be charged. However, the officers say they "play it by ear". In a lot of cases Americans visiting Canada are

pulled over and are

depth finder apparatus they manoeuvered into it only to discover a young couple spread out in the bottom of the boat sun-

The General Williams is well equipped to deal with almost any situation. Four different radios keep the police officers in General Williams was

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laws. People are often detachment office, the given a warning before Citizen Band emergency channel and the coast Suspicious boats are guard. One depth finder

tells them how many feet of water they are travelling in allowing them to get as close as they can to people or boats in trouble. A second depth finder gauge actually draws a pattern of the bottom of the lake or channel which they are travelling over helping them to spot high spots or in the case of a drowning,

Two weeks ago the

cident north of Honey Harbour near Cognashene. Two injured people were transported back to Midland in the boat. One used the bed in the cabin, according to Mr. Brophy, and the other one was set on the deck on a stretcher for the return

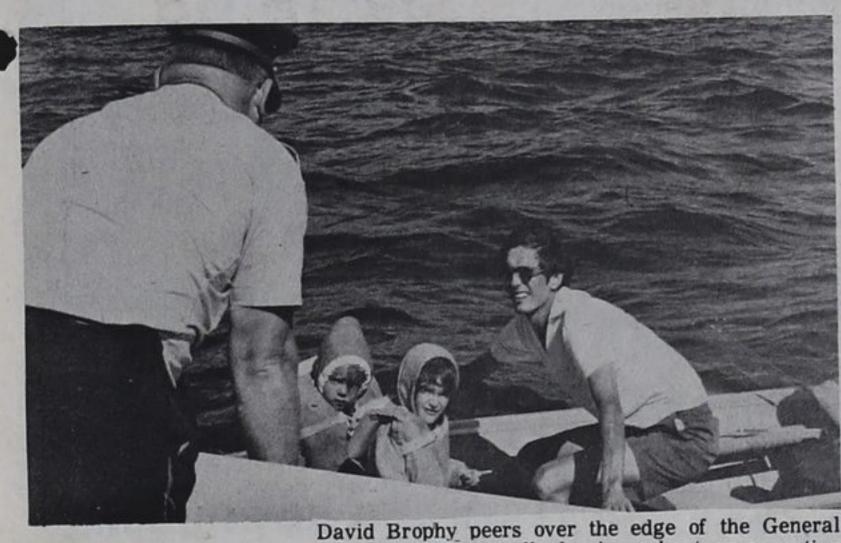
days work. patrols near Beausoleil regattas and boating events to patrol and help

trip. For the General

Williams it was all in a

travels about 40 - 45 miles on its regular route and investigating complaints, according to Mr.

Constables Brophy and Chinn aren't the only police officers who operate the General Williams. Other police officers are trained to drive and operate the equipment. Officers Brophy and Chinn claim their day is as busy as it would be if they were out in a patrol car on the roads. After seeing them in action, most would agree they're right.



Checking

LDWARDS

Williams into a small aluminum boat on a routine

check for life jackets, oars or paddles and a bailing

device. The General Williams patrols the waters of

Georgian Bay daily, investigating complaints and

checking to make sure the rules of waterways are

"We're better all around"

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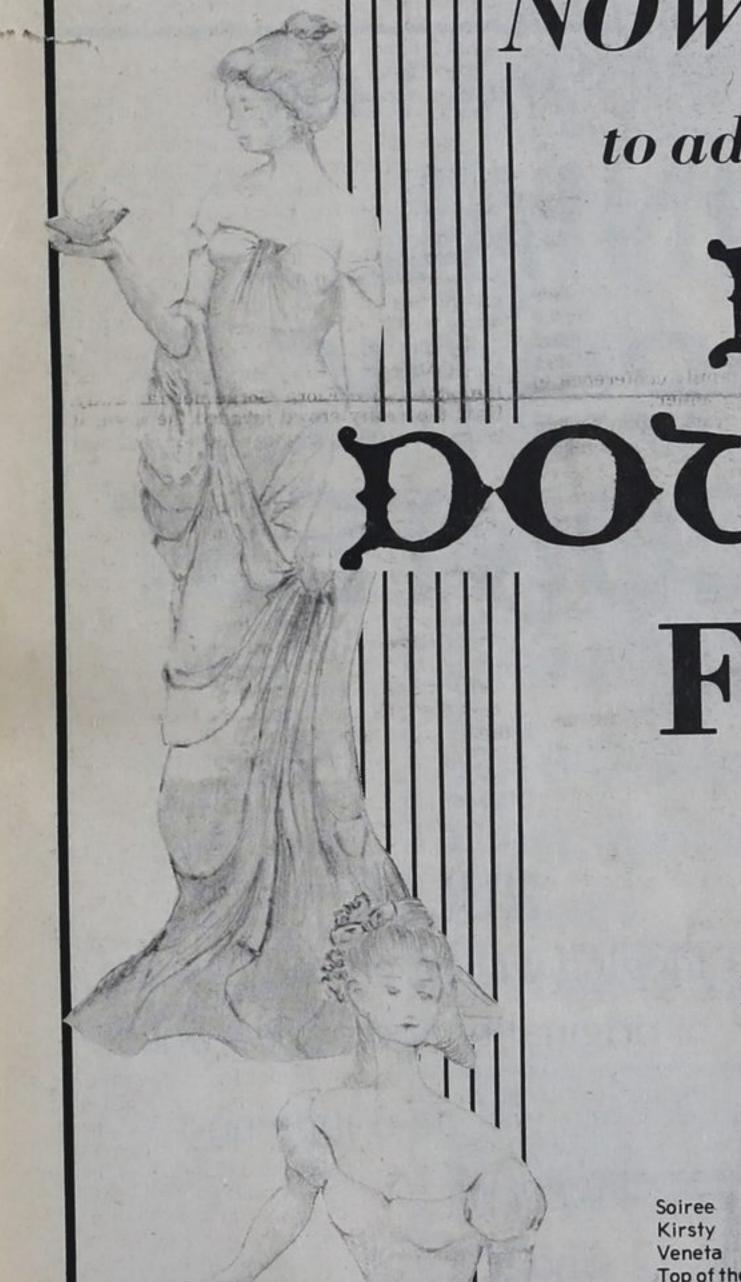
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