

Rushing the season is a bad idea

It's an understatement to say that Michigan weather is fickle. "If you don't like the weather here, wait a day or two" has been trite expression in our state since Moses was in third grade. But the sentiment especially applies in the spring.

After an interminable winter of gray and gloom sprinkled with warm teases, we at last get to the real thing, albeit temporarily. The week past Easter was a classic example this year (2023). We were treated to day-after-day of temperatures in the high 70s to low 80s.

Such warmth elicits temptations, the ones that feature putting the dock and boat in early.

Don't.

On Sunday, April 16th, the warm fan in the atmosphere hit a cold one. The temperature went from 66 in the morning to 49 in the afternoon. Plus rain and wind. The next morning, we awoke to snow on the ground. More snow the following day.

Years ago, I succumbed. Early April was so pleasant that my wife and I put in the dock. Those were the days when we were young enough and strong enough to do it ourselves. The only thing our increasing frailty couldn't achieve was the cross-piece end-piece which has two sections bolted together and too heavy for us to manage. It is the piece that lies perpendicular to the rest of the seven-section dock and stabilizes it.



Then we had All Marine Service put the boat in. We enjoyed blissful trips around the lake amidst comfortable temperatures while we dreamed of warm days to come.

After a particularly special Sunday night cruise, I tied my pontoon up to the end of the dock and went to bed. I awoke the next morning and looked out to find the dock tilted over and the boat gone.

Back to fickle Michigan weather. When warm atmospheric air meets cold atmospheric air, bad things can happen. It was so windy that night that the wind plus the weight of the boat plus the lack of a cross-piece at the end of the dock tipped the dock over and the pontoon drifted away.

As it turns out, the boat drifted neatly into David Behnke's dock. Back in those days, he was infamous for being the first to put in his dock. I marveled at his good will. He must have retrieved my boat.

Not. The boat wasn't tied up to anything. He simply nestled in my accident.

It took several neighbors to get my seven-piece dock upright. After all, the pieces were bolted together.

The lesson. Don't count your summers days until.....