

## Move over, Mae West, there's a new PFD in town

**The Gear Gal: Barbara Baird**

If you've ever watched movie classics, you know the amply endowed actress Mae West, whose famous line, "Come up and see me sometime," has inspired a comical line or two. West also inspired the nickname of the inflatable life preserver, invented by Andrew Toti, which the War Department bought the rights to in 1936.

Personal Flotation Devices



(PFDs) are nothing to joke about, as they can save your life. And, in most cases, it's the law. Women and children no longer have to endure bulky life preservers built for men. Even dogs get their own PFDs these days.

These "must-haves" for various water sports and activities have improved recently. Where life jackets are built to flip you face up, PFDs have a limited to no turning ability and are designed to help you float. The advantage of a PFD is comfort and that people will keep them on while on the water.

Some women's PFDs even sport built-in foam cups with jog bra style neoprene tops for paddling and sailing. A PFD should fit snugly; a loose-fitting PFD is about as bad as not wearing one in the first place. And remember, in order for your PFD to work, you have to wear it!

### Gear Gal tips for choosing the perfect PFD

- ▶ Make sure the PFD has a United States Coast Guard approval number.
- ▶ Understand regulations and requirements in your state.
- ▶ Do the math regarding buoyancy. According to the National Marine Manufacturers Association, most adults need 7 to 12 pounds of buoyancy to keep his or her head above water. More buoyancy equals more lift. How much lift you need depends on your body weight and fat, lung size, clothing and water conditions. The more physically fit you are, the more buoyancy you need.
- ▶ Find the PFD appropriate for your activity on the water.

Some are better for paddling or fishing than others. Talk to sales associates and read the manufacturer's information.

- ▶ Try on a PFD before buying. Be sure to zip it, buckle it and adjust the straps.
- ▶ Make sure it will fit comfortably over the type of clothes you'll wear under it—whether it's a bikini or parka.
- ▶ Try out paddling motions or casting motions to make sure your armpits and shoulders won't become chaffed.
- ▶ Finally, kneel or sit down and raise your arms. Ask someone else to raise the PFD by its shoulder area as high as it will go. If the neck goes to your chin, it's too big.

#### [quick fact]

According to the Personal Flotation Device Manufacturers Association, 9 out of 10 drownings occur in inland waters, most within a few feet of safety and involving boats less than 20 feet long. Most drowning victims had access to a PFD but did not wear it.



## Hailey Long makes the call

Hailey Long of York, Ala., placed second at the NWTF's 2008 Grand National Intermediate Calling Championships held Feb. 21 to Feb. 24 in Atlanta, Ga.

Long competed in the Intermediate Division of the calling championships, for callers 16 to 20 years old, during the NWTF's annual Convention and Sport Show.

She started competing at 13, after watching her brother call competitively. "I heard [turkey calling] so much that it just stuck with me," she said. "I think it's really important to get the idea out that competition calling is not just for boys."

The Grand National contests, judged by professional turkey callers from around the country, require each junior and intermediate contestant to reproduce various sounds of a wild turkey in a realistic manner using either their natural voice or a caller. Winners in the Intermediate Division were awarded a trophy and a savings bond.

Finishing in the top 5 in the 2008 Grand National was Long's goal and placing second was something she'll never forget.

## Tips on buying fishing boat insurance

BoatU.S. Angler, the nation's largest association of recreational boaters, recommends anglers ask these five questions when shopping for fishing boat insurance:

### Do you need an "actual cash value" or "agreed value" policy?

If you have a claim, actual cash value policies take depreciation into account when reimbursing for a loss. Reimbursement for a totaled craft would be for the current market value. Agreed value policies are more expensive than actual cash value policies, but repairs or replacement is based on the value stated on the policy—except for a few specified items—regardless of the age or condition of the boat or equipment.

### Is my fishing gear covered?

Any fishing boat insurance policy should automatically include some type of coverage for expensive tackle.

### What is the fine print on using towing services?

Some policies include

on-the-water or roadside assistance services. However, often these non-emergency services, such as an on-the-water gas delivery, towing or roadside tow vehicle jumpstart, count against you as an insurance claim. Find an insurance company that offers them but doesn't penalize you for taking advantage of these valuable services.

**Where can I go?** Most boat insurance policies have "cruising areas" that limit where the policy is in force. Trailer your fishing boat outside those areas and you'll need an "extension" to ensure coverage remains in effect.

**What about tournament coverage?** If you fish tournaments, make sure you have the liability coverage required. Some policies offer reimbursement for your entry fee if trailering troubles or other covered losses prevent you from competing.

Learn more at [www.BoatUSAngler.com](http://www.BoatUSAngler.com).

## Safe in the sun

Summertime means days spent fishing, swimming, gardening, picnicking and more time outside. But being out in the sun for hours at a time can cause sunburn and skin damage. Dr. Patty Agin of the Coppertone Solar Research Center offers these safe sun tips:

1. **See a dermatologist once a year for a skin check.** No matter your age! If detected early, melanoma can be treated. (Survival rates for patients with early detection are about 99 percent, yet decrease depending on how far the melanoma has spread.)
2. **Apply. Apply. Apply.** Because the sun may cause damage immediately, don't forget to apply sunscreen before



going out in the sun. Remember to reapply every 80 minutes—even if the sunscreen is waterproof and sweatproof.

3. **Follow the shadow rule.** If your shadow is shorter than you are, the sun's rays are at their strongest. Cover up with protective clothing, such as a hat and sunglasses, and head for the shade.

4. **Choose a sunscreen that you'll actually use.** If it feels good on your skin and is easy to use, you're more likely to reapply. 🍃