

A day on the ice with Red



Photo by Tom Hicken

Red McGillivray's ice boat, the Red Baron, races over the frozen Bay of Quinte near Trenton Tuesday. At 84, McGillivray is still an avid ice boater who says he has reached speeds of 170 km/h over his 75 years of boating.



Ice boating...

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McGillivray and his wife Sheila have lived in Carrying Place near Trenton since 1976. The ice is good there, and on a good day, a sail to the Bay Bridge that spans Belleville and Prince Edward County can take a blistering seven minutes. McGillivray points towards the east. The bridge is a mere speck from the launch point.

The bay is a way of life for the couple of 58 years. In the summer, the pair's 29-foot sailboat becomes home. Their bungalow becomes their summer cottage: it has air conditioning.

It's solidified friendships too. "He started me off," says Jim Stanley, a friend of 28 years and ice boating partner for five. "He won't go without me."

The two men ice boat in the winter, sail on the water during the summer and work on projects together in between seasons.

It's brought them close – too close

for comfort a few times.

"We've had some fun," Stanley says with a laugh, thinking about the collision he had with McGillivray last year. "Things happen and they happen with such a fast pace. You've got to be on top of your game every time you go ice boating. A puff of wind or a shift of wind and you never know what's going to happen."

The thrill is one that McGillivray wishes more young people would share.

Like his grandfather did nearly 75 years ago, McGillivray is taking his own grandson, now 12, out on the ice.

"I asked him, is this fast enough?" McGillivray recalls of their first outing.

The grin on the boy's face told McGillivray all he needed to know.

"He said, 'No, no, go faster!' We just sheeted in and we put it to the bottom. And we roared."

McGillivray is convinced others will be hooked if they just get a chance to try.

But there's one rule, he says: "Your first ride can be in my boat but your next ride is in your own."



Photo by Justin Tang

McGillivray ice sails on the Bay of Quinte on his ice boat, the Red Baron. He also enjoys summer sailing.



Photo by Marta Iwanek

McGillivray, 84, has loved the sport and the speed since he was seven years old.



Photo by Marta Iwanek

Ice sailor McGillivray prepares to set sail across the Bay of Quinte during ideal conditions Tuesday.



Photo by Justin Tang

Ice sailers set up their boats on the Bay of Quinte. The ice was seven inches thick during the Tuesday adventure.



Photo by Tom Hicken

McGillivray suits up before launching his ice boat, the Red Baron on the frozen Bay of Quinte near Trenton