



MAMMAL MIX-UP: A woman telephoned the Platypus office the other day and said: "May I please speak to the editor of Wombat?"

QUOTE OF THE MONTH: "He's a bigger criminal than me, the only reason he's in the Police force is to stay out of prison". Defendant heard talking to solicitor outside Canberra courtroom.

WATT'S IN A NAME: A Sydney radio operator could not determine who was giving a Canberra call-sign from an Eastern Division vehicle. After three transmissions to the vehicle, seeking the occupants name, and only receiving 'What?' in reply each time, the despatcher demanded the rank and name of the occupant. Reply: "Assistant Commissioner WATT!" Ooops!!

SMILE PLEASE: Possibly the most photographed Police in Australia are the members on duty at the main entrance to Parliament House. One is supposed to pose for the tourists with a grim, determined look, but it is difficult to keep a straight face when photographers take aim and step back to focus, only to disappear down the steps.

FISHY STORY: That well known computer whiz, Chief Superintendent Wal Williams, is said to be working so hard these days on AFP's new computer system that he not only takes home oodles of work, but even dines on the job. The menu? Why, microfische and silicon chips of course!

FUZZ APPROVAL: Now that beards are in, subject

to certain criteria, many members will no doubt be striving to promote a good cover during their rec. leave periods. As they say: if you get picked up by the fuzz . . . it hurts!

COOL IT: AFP vehicles in the more humid regions may soon be fitted with air-conditioning. Let's keep our fingers crossed.

SHADES OF EUREKA: AFP may also soon get its own flag. Approval has been granted by the Prime Minister's Department to proceed with the manufacture of the flag. But just where shall we hoist it . . . on our radio aerials?

THE WRITTEN WORD: To help PLATYPUS thrive as your journal we appeal to members to contribute in various ways. Contributions need not be literary masterpieces, in fact quite often an idea or suggestion is just as helpful. Articles may be short or long, serious or humorous. Perhaps a letter to the editor on a relevant topic. Photographs should be either clear good quality black and white prints, preferably glossy, or black and white or colour negatives. Colour transparencies are able to be used only if they are of high quality. Contributions should be addressed to The Editor, Platypus, P.O. Box 401, Canberra City. Contributions forwarded by internal mail should be addressed to The Editor, Platypus, AFP Headquarters, Third Floor, National Mutual Building, Canberra City.

BE BOATWISE!

by Sergeant Alan Holland (OIC) ACT Water Police

Boating in all forms has become a popular past-time in recent years with many real 'land-lubbers' trying their hand at the tiller of various water craft. The thrill of slicing through the water appears relatively easy, but many an intricate manoeuvre has to take place if one wants to return to their launching site. Manoeuvring sailcraft can present many problems to the unskilled sailor. Even experienced sailors come unstuck due to wind changes. When a craft capsizes, regardless of

how strong the crew are as swimmers, the dangers of drowning are manifold. Often the crew are thrown into the water injured, or without adequate inflatable life preservers. Often help is miles away or slow in coming. If help is in the form of another boat rescue may be too late to save your life.

A recent survey conducted amongst sail-craft owners plying the lakes of Canberra revealed that only one in twenty understood the wind warning devices located at

intervals on both lakes. Only one in ten thought to listen to the daily weather forecast of wind strengths predicted for the lakes. On the day of the survey 32 craft in distress were assisted by water police. All had capsized. The majority of crews were in an exhausted state when rescued, possibly due to low water temperatures and buffeting by strong winds. Power-boats present additional problems. Regulations governing the use, control and speed of power-boats varies from state to

state. Most States require boats to be registered with the Maritime Services Board. Regardless of MSB regulations, the prime factor is safety, particularly so if boats are being used in close proximity to bathers who are indistinguishable to boats travelling at speed. Always a hazard to power-boats is the chance of explosions due to petrol fumes building up in the engine compartments. Extreme caution should be exercised and frequent servicing and inspection of fuel lines, unions and electrical wiring should be carried out.

Water ski-ing is another area where consideration should be given to water safety. Fouling of propellers with tow ropes is a common occurrence. Many swimmers and skiers have been mutilated by boat drivers intent on picking up dropped skiers. Also, many skiers have been rendered unconscious or

suffered broken bones after having fallen from skis. Water can be aligned to concrete on impact when travelling at speed. Power-boat drivers should carefully scrutinise the area they are to use looking for submerged objects and be on the look-out for marker bouys denoting that divers are in the area. The application of common sense, the key-note to enjoying the pleasures of all forms of boating, should be to the fore. Water police cannot be expected to check every boat going into the water to ensure that adequate safety equipment is stowed onboard, not left at the launching site or more often in the car boot. In conclusion, a few tips worth mentioning that may save your life:—

* Always inform someone of where you are boating, giving a precise location and the duration of your stay.

* Alcohol and water do NOT mix when undertaking aquatic sports.

* If boating in the sea make certain your craft is carrying adequate safety and distress signalling equipment and a cannister of fresh water.

* Always wear a life jacket, some activity requires it to be continually inflated.

* Listen to tide and weather forecasts before venturing on a boating trip.

* If your boat is radio equipped make contact with a fishing club or radio monitoring agency.

* Carry sufficient safety equipment for all onboard as well as such items as rope, lights, bucket etc.

*** LEARN TO SWIM!!!**

A word from the waterwise . . .

by *Sergeant Alan HOLLAND*

Nearly a third of drowning victims in NSW last year were children under 5 years. The disturbing fact that the death rate of youngsters in this age group is rapidly increasing each year is undoubtedly caused by the rising popularity of backyard swimming pools. Children have little say about their fate when exposed to the aquatic environment. All children must be carefully watched when playing near water as most youngsters under nine cannot swim confidently.

They should never be left to wander alone near the water's edge. Allowing children to use plastic rings and floats without adequate supervision is also asking for trouble. Quite often the wind may move them out to deeper water. When they let go of the float they sink out of sight. Although floats help lessen a child's fear of water and help them learn to swim, the use of such aids

should always be supervised and restricted to this purpose.

All children should be taught to tread water and to float. Many times this has helped children to save themselves by remaining afloat until help has arrived. A frightened child is more likely to panic and drown. When enjoying weekends at the beach, a safe practice is to appoint an adult, capable of swimming, to supervise the activities of the children. Others in the group may take turns. Most drownings occur when people swim alone or at lonely unpatrolled areas. This is especially so in country districts where safe suitable swimming areas are not always available. A bather, whether swimming in a dam, river or at the beach, is advised never to swim alone and never to swim in lonely areas without first testing the depth of water and the nature of the bottom. Good swimmers only should

venture in water beyond their depth. There are several causes for swimmers becoming exhausted in the water and getting into difficulty. Firstly at the start of the swimming season many of them lack fitness. Secondly, they fail to realise that cold water drains swimmers of energy very quickly, and finally, distances across water are often deceptive and are usually greater than first anticipated.

The Royal Life Saving Society and the St. John's Ambulance Association conduct classes in resuscitation and knowledge of first aid to assist in the treatment of people suffering from respiratory and circulatory failures. Skills learned by attending classes held by both groups can assist in saving lives other than by drowning. Also, they can be applied in cases of heart attack, electric shock, collapse, epileptic fits, poisoning and severe shock.