

Broderick To Teach Daring Feat

Water Ski Flier, 23, Due To 'Step Down'

BY ROBERT HOVING.
(Of the Citizen Patriot Staff.)

Jon Broderick is only 23-years-old. But he's just about ready to retire from water skiing.

The reason is that he can't go any further in the popular sport but straight up. And he's already been 200 feet off the water.

That's as high as a 20-story building and higher than the deck of the Detroit-Canada Ambassador bridge. A fall in the water from that height almost certainly means death.

Broderick, who's been water skiing since he was 15-years-old, and who helped found the Pine Riders Water Ski club at Clark lake, gets "upstairs" with a home-made kite.

He's a water ski flier—one of the few in the dangerous pastime and a pioneer and experimenter in it. He has learned so much about it that he's recognized as an expert in the United States.

Young Broderick holds the national water ski flying endurance

record—more than two miles—set at famed Cypress Gardens, Fla., where he's thrilled thousands of people with his exploits in the air.

WARNS NOVICES.

He now works at Dave's Marine Supply at Clark lake repairing and tuning outboard motors. He soars with his big kite at the lake whenever he gets the urge.

He plans to retire from water flying because he's afraid—not lost his nerve—but afraid that others will become as fascinated with it as he is and try flying without any experience or knowledge.

"Water flying is something nobody should try until they know what it's all about and what can happen," he says. "I learned the hard way and if I can teach what I know to others, I might be able to prevent someone from being hurt or killed.

"Once you get the water flying bug, you get it hard, and I feel that a lot of youths might try it before they're ready," Broderick says.

Broderick, who lives at 6188 North Shore Dr. at Clark lake, built his first soaring kite in the summer of 1958. He had to take off from a water ski jump at the lake to get it in the air and the kite collapsed after only a few seconds of flight.

SEES PICTURE.

He experimented with other kites and became good enough at soaring to take part in water ski shows at Cypress Gardens. He was an attraction there from September, 1958, until last April. Broderick attended night classes at Florida Southern university while doing water ski shows in the daytime.

It was through a magazine picture he saw in the summer of

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1958 that he became obsessed with the sport. "It's really exhilarating, but I never go up without being a little apprehensive. Anything can happen and I've ditched from as high as 85 feet.

"I always plan my flights an hour or two ahead of time and figure limitations set by the wind and other conditions. That way I figure I'm on the safe side."

Broderick builds his kites with an aluminum frame covered with a rubberized nylon fabric. They're about 12 feet long and 11 feet across at the widest part.

Depending upon the size of the kite and velocity of the wind, it takes a boat going about 35 miles an hour to get a water ski flier into the air. There is no harness and no straps. A flyer hangs by his hands from a crossbar in a "chinning" position.

URGE STILL THERE.

Broderick says that a flier has about 60 per cent control of a kite and the rest is up to the boat driver. It takes a pretty strong man to maneuver a kite in wind currents. Broderick has flown one in a stiff wind while his tow boat was standing still.

While this water ski "veteran" is thinking of retiring after eight years of competition, he still has not lost the urge to soar above the water.

Meanwhile, in his spare time, he does mostly exhibition water skiing at Clark lake, including barefoot skiing.

Broderick, who again plans to enter the annual Citizen Patriot Water Ski derby at the lake on the Labor day weekend, is grounded temporarily. He broke an aluminum strut in his kite.

However, if he can find the right piece of aluminum—it has to have an exact temper and strength—he'll be soaring over Devil's lake at 2 p. m. today in a water ski show.