

# TEXAS OUTDOORS

By ZANE CHASTAIN and KEITH OZMORE



Come to Press-Delhomme School

## There's a Lot to Learn About Fiberglass Boats

By ZANE CHASTAIN  
Press Outdoor Editor

The sportsman today still doesn't know as much about the new revolutionary fiberglass boat as he should, says Willis Hudson, a soft-spoken Houstonian who helped introduce the new boats to this area several years ago.

Fact is, Hudson claimed, many of the present-day ideas that the public has concerning fiberglass boats aren't realistic. "Too many potential boat buyers still associate these boats with those fragile plastic toys that were put on the market many years ago," he said.

"That is, they seem to think fiberglass boats will break up just as easily. Which, of course, isn't true."

It's notions like these that the affable boat manufacturer will attempt to dispel at tomorrow night's Press-Delhomme "Water Safety and Outdoor Education" lecture at 2101 Lee-land where he'll be the guest speaker.

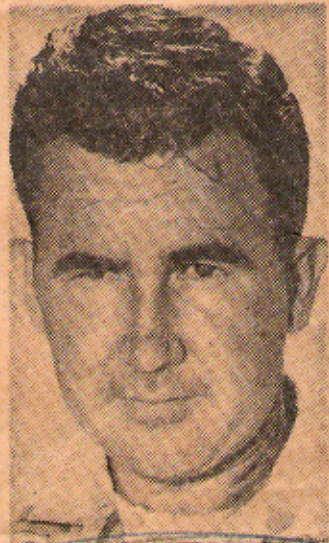
### Some Bugs Then

When the first fiberglass boats were introduced to Texans, Hudson admits that there were certain "bugs" in a few boats that made the task of getting them "started" on the local market a difficult job.

"Inferior materials caused the bugs," he said. "Whenever the more reputable companies began raising their standards, the 'backyards' had to go out of business."

Once this problem was cured, the selling job began.

"First people our salesmen



WILLIS HUDSON  
Gives facts on glass.

look the boat to were the fishing camp operators," Hudson confirmed. "We knew—being he was always looking for a boat that required little maintenance—that the fiberglass boat would be ideal for him."

### Wallon Was First

First person in Houston to buy glass boats for his camp was Bud Wallon, at the foot of the McKay Bridge at Lake Houston. He purchased 45 of the new boats.

"Have to give him credit for helping us get started here," Willis agreed. "Bud's from California and being that's where the fiberglass boat got its start, he knew a little something about them."

When Wallon saturated his premises with boats, the other Lake Houston camp operators followed suit.

"They would thump the boat, like you do a watermelon, kick it, drive it, anything to see if it would fall apart," Willis chuckled.

"And when we convinced them that we were going to stand behind the product, most of 'em agreed to buy a few boats."

All this, both directly and indirectly, contributed to the present fiberglass boat boom.

"People who rented the boats became curious about them, told their friends about the new boats, and before you knew it, the fiberglass boat industry was taking its place alongside the aluminum and wooden boat in the open market."

### Room for All

As for his personal opinion as to how big the fiberglass boat market will become, Hudson approached the subject realistically.

"There will always be a place for all three boats," he commented. "People are too choosy for one type of boat to control the market."

Nevertheless, the part-owner of Hurricane Plastics Corp. does believe that the industry has made a tremendous contribution to boating.

"You asked me what a fiberglass boat was," he stated.

"Actually, it's an improvement on nature. We've taken western cedar (a wood that's not too susceptible to rotting) covered it with inert materials, added a man-made resin, and come up with a boat that's improved 100 per cent."

It's what fiberglass officials will agree is the "ideal" boat. "But, if you want to learn more about fiberglass, just be at this class tomorrow night at 7:30," he added.