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## Big boat party stays calm, pleases cops

### Police: Jobbie Nooner won't be closed down

September 9, 2002

BY NANCY A. YOUSSEF

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Police who monitored Saturday's so-called Jobbie Nooner at Gull Island said they were so pleased with the crowd's behavior that they no longer are considering trying to shut the party down.

The day-long event takes place twice during the summer in Lake St. Clair near Ray Township. Jobbie Nooners began 27 years ago when a small group of automotive employees would take off a Friday afternoon and go boating. In recent years, the crowds have grown into the thousands.

For the last five years, police have complained that participants are out of control, charging party-goers with drunken driving, lewd behavior and assault. And they have said officers could not reach the island during emergency situations, most recently during a Jobbie Nooner in June.

Last week, law enforcement officials threatened to petition the island owners, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to consider closing the 4-acre parcel to the public if the crowds did not cooperate.

But officers said they made only a handful of arrests on Saturday for drunken driving and assault. And, organizers created a 50-foot-wide

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lane to the island for emergency personnel.

"I was very impressed," said Sgt. Bob Wright of the St. Clair County Sheriff's Department marine unit, which helps police the island.

Wright said he believes that one reason the event went more smoothly is that it was smaller. The event usually draws 5,000 people and 800 boats, but there were about 3,000 people and 600 boats at Saturday's party, Wright said.

He also said the party occurred during the end of the summer boating season, when many participants have put their boats back in storage.

"Jet skis were our biggest problem," said Lt. Gary Paolella, of the Macomb County Sheriff's marine division, which helped monitor the event.

Contact *NANCY A. YOUSSEF* at 586-469-8087 or [youssef@freepress.com](mailto:youssef@freepress.com).

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