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## METRO DETROIT

# Cleaner Jobbie Nooner set for today

June 23, 2006

**BY DAN CORTEZ**  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

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Make no mistake -- there will be plenty of beads, booze, boats and bare chests today on and around Gull Island at the Jobbie Nooner, the bacchanal that for many kicks off the summer boating season in a small section of Lake St. Clair.

But those who encourage the debauchery, those who witness it and still others who try to keep the island and lake clean during the daylong festival say the party might be losing some of its edge.

Veterans of the party say the island has been a little less polluted by people who can't find a bathroom, not as many tops are coming off and there may even be a wedding -- though it probably won't be a black-tie affair.

"There's so many different types of people out there," said John Zych, 29, of Harrison Township who has attended the party since he was a teenager and plans to take his 26-foot Powerquest out to the island. "It's not like what they show on the news. It's a good day for everyone who has boats and we just have a good time."

The improved behavior has been noticed. Tom Cleaver, president of the We Are Here Foundation -- a nonprofit environmental group -- said Thursday that as many as 250 garbage bags were needed to clean up after the party in the past. Last year, his team of volunteers needed less than 30 bags.

"That was the first sign that these boaters are starting to come around," said Cleaver, whose group was given the responsibility to maintain Gull Island three weeks ago by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"The island had a bad reputation the last five years. We need people to behave themselves. We have turned the corner on that."

As a reward, Cleaver's group will have six portable toilets and a Dumpster on a barge near the island. That will offer a place -- other than the lake and

island -- to go to the bathroom.

Macomb County Sheriff Mark Hackel -- whose deputies assist St. Clair County and other policing agencies -- said some years are crazier than others. Most people, he said, are just out to relax.

"It's always a small group that makes it more of a problem than it's intended to be," he said.

Pete Arsenault, who might be Jobbie Nooner's biggest booster, said he is finding more women who are ditching their tops. Of course, that's because Arsenault is looking for them. He makes videos -- "Girls Gone Wild" style -- of the parties and sells them on the Internet.

Arsenault, 49, of Waterford said those who object to the nudity and excessive drinking have an easy way to avoid both -- don't go to the island today.

"The moral people can get upset about the" nudity, "but all those things are just somebody's opinions about what is right or wrong," Arsenault said Wednesday. "It's on a deserted island that you have to get a boat ride to. You can't accidentally stumble onto it."

But even he seems to be mellowing. Although he probably won't stop making the videos any time soon, he became an ordained minister and wants to bring a couple together in holy matrimony amid the chaos.

"I actually am a religious guy," he explained.

Pennie Cruce, 31, of Shelby Township spent Thursday preparing coolers and checking weather forecasts to make sure her second trip to a Jobbie Nooner won't be marred with rain. Forecasts call for a partly cloudy day with a high of 78.

Good news for Cruce, who enjoys the event.

"It's actually pretty crazy, like a Mardi Gras on the water," she said.

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