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JOHN OLIVERIO

POWER-POLING

Brandon Inventor Comes Up With Winning Tool For Anglers

By FRANK SARGEANT
fsargeant@tampabay.rr.com

John Oliverio was an avid flats fisherman who recognized one of the basic problems of fishing shallow, clear water: When the boat gets too close to the fish, the fish disappear.

Oliverio figured there needed to be a quick, silent way to stop a drifting boat so wind and current wouldn't push it up on his favorite snook and redfish holes. Conventional anchors were too slow and noisy, and push-poles sometimes failed to stick, particularly in firm sand bottoms.

"I wanted something I could lower from anywhere in the boat without taking my eyes off the fish," Oliverio recalled.

Thus, in 1999, what is now known to thousands of flats anglers around the nation as the Power-Pole was born.

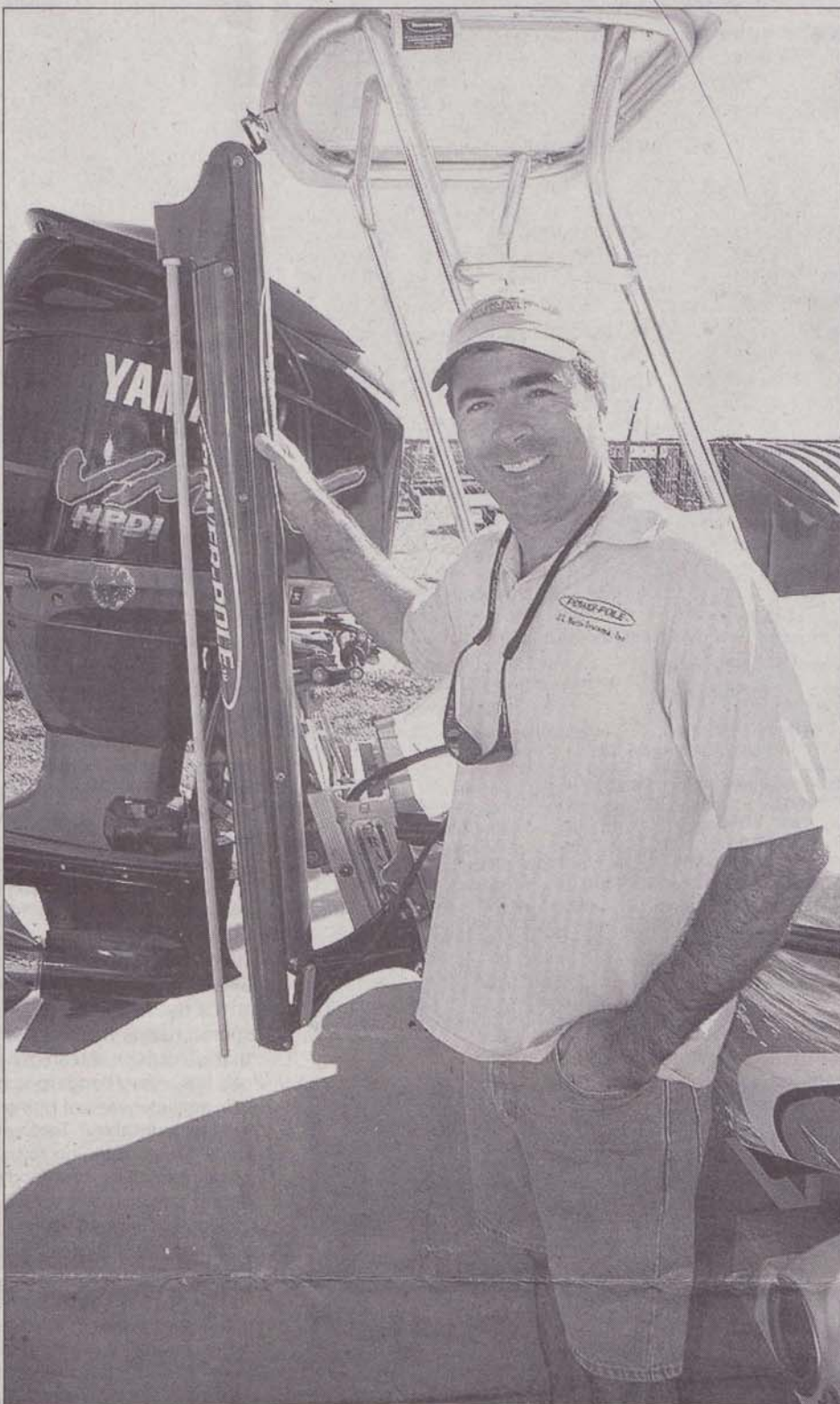
It's a hydraulic arm equipped with a 3-foot-long fiberglass rod about five-eighths of an inch thick. When the angler hits a button, the arm reaches out and pushes the rod deep into the bottom, thus securing the boat.

Time elapsed? Just 8 seconds.

After building his first miniature models with Lego kits, Oliverio hand-built his full-sized prototype. Thanks to a natural aptitude for mechanics plus some college-level engineering classes, it worked. After a little fine-tuning and a patent granted later that first year, he decided to try to turn the device into a business.

He soon found a Bay area investor who loved and understood flats fishing. With some seed money, he began producing the first units in his garage. He sold them out of the back of his car, showing them to boat dealers, tackle shop owners and anglers wherever he traveled.

"I think the breakthrough came when we put them on the boats of several of our customers," Oliverio said.



Tribune photos by FRANK SARGEANT

FISHING

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and redfish up...

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tackle — prod...
Sarasota Bay

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and 30-pound...
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FISHING PIER
Fish the pier...
snook, flound...

MID-PINELLA