

Maye Christenson & The OMC Calendars

By: Ken Kirk

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Maye Christenson was an artist and graphic designer. She was a partner in a company called Associated Advertising in Weston, Ontario. Associated Advertising had a long and successful relationship with Outboard Marine in Peterborough. The relationship began in 1946 and continued for over 30 years.

They designed and produced a wide range of merchandising, sales promotion and display items to be used by OMC dealers to promote their own dealerships and to connect them with their respective OMC outboard brand.

These items included external and internal dealership signs, both lighted and heavy metal or tin tacker signs, In-dealership clocks, wall and window banners, free standing cardboard displays as well as pens, pencils, letterhead, matches and of course calendars, for give away to customers.

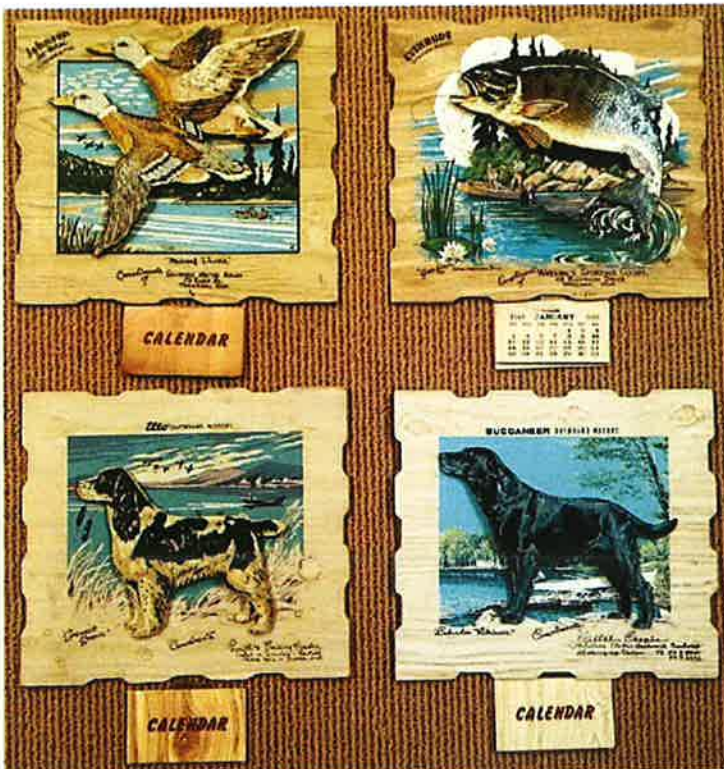


Artist Maye Christenson with one of her many Wildlife creations for OMC. This is a 20" x 17", 3-D Wood Duck, heavy cardboard wall plaque, produced for Johnson Dealers.

All of these items bore the logo and brand identification for Johnson or Evinrude or Elto and later for Gale Buccaneer.

The dealers would order the items and quantities they wanted and Associated Advertising would then produce the items with the Dealer name inscribed in the appropriate place. This type of advertising and sales promotional material is now highly Collectable. The most prolific of all of these sales promotion items were the so-called "3-D" calendars. Dealers would order these to give to their customers. The first of these calendars were produced in 1946 for the year 1947. The Johnson calendars featured game birds. The Evinrude calendars featured fish. Later, about 1951, calendars were produced for Elto dealers and they featured dogs.

Assortment of 9" x 8" OMC 3-D calendars. Clockwise from upper left: 1947 Johnson, 1948 Evinrude, 1959 Buccaneer & 1951 Elto.



Maye Christenson cont 'd

Later still Gale Buccaneer continued the dog series. Calendars were also produced for Pioneer Chain Saw Dealers. They featured big game animals like deer, mouse, elk and cougars. The "3-D" calendar promotion was unique to Canada. It was not available to OMC dealers in the United States.

Maye Christensen was the talented artist who created and painted the original artwork for all of the birds, fish, dogs and big game animals...as well as all of the scenic backgrounds on the earlier calendars. These calendars were 9" wide by 8" high. The early ones have a hunting or fishing scene on the cardboard background with a large illustration of a bird or fish standing out from the background by about a 1/2". A small calendar pad hung down from the main piece attached by a ribbon type material. When you find one of these calendars now...in most cases the "hang down" calendar is missing.

The first Johnson calendar, for 1947, features a pair of Mallard Ducks. The 1947 Evinrude calendar features a Muskie. The first Elto calendar appeared in 1951 with a Springer Spaniel. Later in 1959 the Gale Buccaneer brand continued with the dogs, the first one being a Labrador Retriever.

In 1963 & 64 the calendars had a plain one colour background with an imitation wood frame printed on the cardboard and the fish or bird standing out in 3-D. In 1965 they went to a solid black background with gold type. This format was used for both Johnson & Evinrude until the calendar promotion ended in the mid 1970's. Today you will see these 9" X 8" 3-D calendars on ebay for exorbitant "buy it now" prices.

Don't go there. These were produced by the thousands over many years and are readily available in many Antique Shops in Canada for \$12 to \$20, depending on condition. Older is better. Elto and Gale Buccaneer with the dogs, are the most rare. Having the "hang down" calendar pad is a bonus. Solid black is the newest and least desirable.



Larger real wood plaques were made for display in Johnson & Evinrude Dealerships. The 3-D birds & fish were made of heavy cardboard.



Maye Christenson cont 'd

Associated Advertising also offered Johnson, Evinrude and Elto dealers larger and more elaborate versions of the "3-D" images, (without a calendar), for display in their marina offices and showrooms. There were three additional formats available. There were 20" X 18" heavy cardboard wall plaques for Johnson, Evinrude & Elto dealers that could have their Dealership ID inscribed. These are considerably more rare than the small calendar format. There were also 14" X 16" real wood plaques that had the 3-D cardboard birds for Johnson Dealers.

These had a small brass plate that was inscribed, " Hand processed from the original by Maye Christenson for Johnson Outboard Motors". The Evinrude real wood plaques measured 19" x 12". These real wood plaques are much more rare than the small 9" x 8" calendars. The largest format was a 29" X 25" heavy cardboard wall plaque. Only one Johnson and one Evinrude version were made. The Johnson image was a Speckled Trout...The Evinrude was a Ring Neck Pheasant. These are extremely rare and hard to find in good condition.



The largest 3-D format produced for Johnson & Evinrude Dealers measured 29" x 25". (Evinrude version on the left) These are extremely rare. A mid-size version 20" X 18" (shown on the right) was also produced & is easier to find.