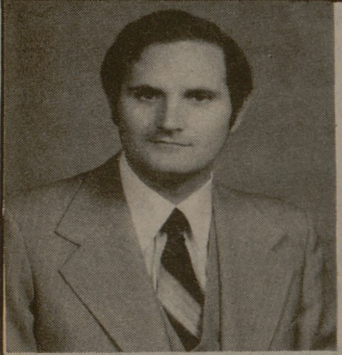


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United Press International
NEW YORK — The hovercraft, hardly more than an inventor's dream as recently as 20 years ago, soon may expand from high-speed

sea-ferry service into containerized freight.

This prediction comes from Roy McLeavy, an editor of the authoritative Jane's maritime yearbooks in London.

Noting in his foreword to Jane's Surface Skimmers 1978 that hovercraft ferries now have carried mil-

lions of passengers and 1.5 million automobiles across the English channel, McLeavy predicted that freight hovercraft of up to 1,000 tons in size will be built in the not distant future.

He said, however, the freight-carrying sea-skimmers may not be fully amphibious as ferries and mili-

tary hovercraft are.

Incidentally, McLeavy used the term hovercraft generically, indicating that England's leading maker of the craft, technically known as either air cushion vehicles or ground effect machines, has about lost its fight to preserve hovercraft as a proprietary name.

Before the hovercraft starts replacing deep draft coastal freighters, McLeavy said he expects a great expansion of its use as a passenger and automobile ferry. He said the world's fleet of conventional ferries is aging and the operators are eager to replace them with hovercraft because of the sea skimmers' high speed, smaller crews, lower first cost and easy maneuverability.

Years ago a wit described the skimmer sarcastically as "a solution looking for a problem." McLeavy cautioned that, while the hovercraft has proved completely reliable, it is no miracle vehicle for all kinds of sea transport.

He implied that the hovercraft is winning out over the hydrofoil for commercial uses. The difference is that, while the hovercraft rides close to the water on a cushion of air and is

driven by air jets, the hydrofoil rides on pontoon legs and is driven by water propellers. Hydrofoils also are being used with great success as ferries.

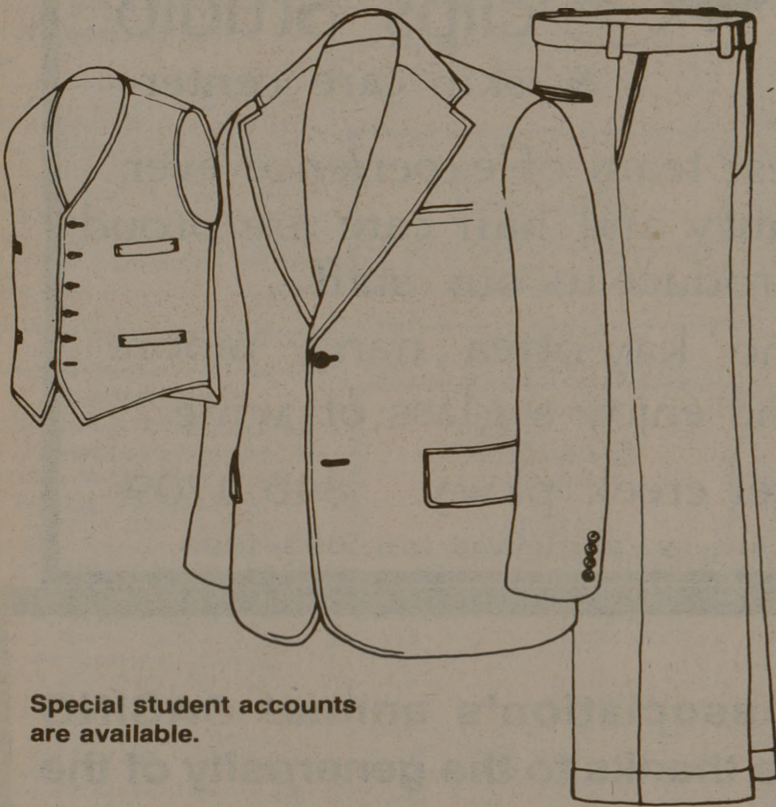
McLeavy sees growing use of both hovercraft and hydrofoil ferries in the Americas and Asia as well as in northern Europe.

In his annual report, the Jane's editor said naval and military uses of both hovercraft and hydrofoil ships are growing fast. He predicted hovercraft will largely replace displacement hull ships for mine-laying, mine-sweeping, most patrol work and for amphibious assault operations.

He also said sales of hydrofoil craft in 1977 were the biggest in the industry's 25-year history, with production in Europe, the United States, the Soviet Union, Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore. China and Israel also likely to get into the business, he said.

The biggest hydrofoils are the U.S. 2,400-ton Grumman ocean-going naval craft, the 250-passenger Soviet Kometa and the Russian clone, a missile attack hydrofoil being tested in the Baltic.

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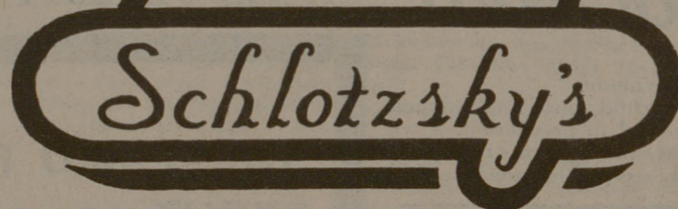
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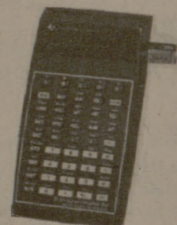
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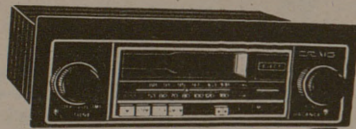
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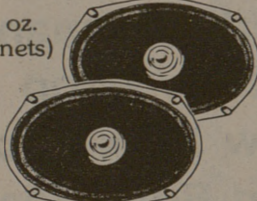
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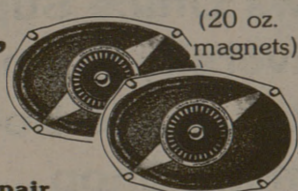
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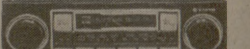
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