



President's Corner

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2004 is now behind us and we look forward to a safe 2005 dive season. The year starts with a few traditional events to let those of us who have not gone South anticipate the coming dive season.

We kick off with the Outdoor Adventure Show at the end of February at the International Centre in Mississauga close to Pearson International Airport. There will be a Council booth as well as booths from some of the stores showcasing the latest in dive equipment and training. There will also be travel booths for those who have not made up their mind where to go for a pre-season week of warm water diving. Stop by the booth and say hello to the board members who will be working there.

After that we have a revived Ice Floe race in Peterborough. While the scale is small the fun is still there, if your club is sending a team good luck. If not why not take a drive and watch teams move ice floes down the river. See our website for details as to exactly where and when or email us.

At the AGM there were no nominations for Director of Finance, this is an important position and while our cash

flow is better than in the past we need an individual who has knowledge of accounting to take over the Finance Director position. If you are a diver who has a financial background and is interested in assisting us please contact me directly or at the office to let us know you are interested.

The board and interested members have been meeting over the last few months formulating the OUC response to the UNESCO proposals that the Federal Government is considering. While there are some valid points in the proposals that we agree with there are some details that could adversely affect our sport and we will be vigilant in protecting our ability to enjoy diving on the variety of excellent wrecks and other sites that Ontario has to offer. An update from our Director of Safety follows in this newsletter.

Let's all try to make 2005 an accident and incident free year. Dive safely and enjoy the variety Ontario has to offer.

Mike Briggs

We would like to hear from you...

Our next newsletter is planned for a May release. If you have any news to share, diving humour, information on recent or upcoming events, info on new or favourite CANADIAN dive sites we might enjoy visiting this summer or an invitation to an activity... please send us a note at ouc@underwatercouncil.com so that we can share it with our membership. We would appreciate input for the May issue by April 27th. We are targeting the following 2005 releases: early September and early December.

Editor's note: unless stated otherwise, articles are written by the editor, Chantal Gagnon, OUC Information Services Director, and based on the most accurate information available at time of writing.

Note to Commercial/Club Members

It appears of late that a number of OUC members have not been receiving their copy of the newsletter along with the inserts. It would seem that in most of the cases, this is because the OUC does not have the most up to date member listing with mailing addresses of club members.... PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOUR CLUB MEMBERSHIP IS SUBMITTED WITHOUT DELAY AND WITH COMPLETE INFORMATION FOR ALL INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS.

It is especially important that we have correct email addresses as we will be using more electronic distribution over the course of 2005. We will be looking to communicate via email more this year. PLEASE ENSURE THAT WE ALSO HAVE THE CORRECT CLUB, CLUB PRESIDENT AND SOCIAL DIRECTOR EMAIL ADDRESSES. We would appreciate current email addresses from all other individual non-club members as well.

Don't forget to check that your info and web links on the OUC website are current...

Top 10 Excuses for Not Fitting into Your Old Wetsuit:



- 10 It's in the dryer.
- 9 I decided to put on some weight to keep me warmer while diving.
- 8 I wear a spare tire for extra buoyancy.
- 7 It's not just my wetsuit: ALL of my clothes have shrunk.
- 6 It fits...in places.
- 5 My wife is pregnant and the doctor says spousal weight gain is normal.
- 4 It's not too tight. I just haven't been pulling hard enough on the damn zipper.
- 3 Winter fitness regimen of rigorously watching "Baywatch" not as effective as planned.
- 2 Darn, looks like I grabbed the wife's suit again.
- 1 It's amazing how much you puff up from a jellyfish sting.

News

UNESCO- Canada Shipping Act Update

By Raimund Krob

The OUC, in co-operation with member clubs, has completed a draft response to Transport Canada's proposed changes to the Canada Shipping Act, with respect to regulations to help protect submerged cultural heritage (also known as "shipwrecks"). The draft response will be submitted to Transport Canada on February 28th, 2005, at the same time as it will be published on the OUC website.

What's this mean to you, as an avid shipwreck diver? It could mean that you might have to have specialized training before you would be allowed to dive on a shipwreck. It could also mean that you might not be able to dive on certain shipwrecks altogether.

Please stay tuned for further developments, and if you have any thoughts on the matter that you'd like to "share or air", please write me and let me know.

Moving on

TAM Dive Peterborough, officially closed their doors at the end of November 2004. A NAUI scuba instruction facility and dive shop since 1996, TAM Dive Peterborough made its mark in our industry. Many of you will also remember John Van de Broek for his contribution to the annual Tam Dive Treasure Hunt weekend in Toby and the safety support he has been providing the OUC Treasure Hunt dive for years now, something he plans to continue doing in the future. We thank Linda and John for their contribution to diving in Ontario, their support of the OUC, and wish them much success in their future endeavors.

UnderwaterINDUSTRY.com

This website is a community news and information site for the Underwater professional. Though the coast to coast content is primarily geared to commercial divers, there are from time to time articles that may interest even the recreational diver... certainly those of us who know commercial divers... This site's blurb on diving emergencies in Québec is featured in our Safety column.

Safety

Dr. Ron Linden recently spoke at a Hart House Underwater Club evening meeting. Rules by Dr. Linden from a presentation at an earlier UHMS Great Lakes Chapter meeting, mentioned at this meeting, are reprinted here with permission.

Dr. Ron Linden's "Eight Golden Rules" for the management of injured SCUBA divers.

- 1** Apply oxygen to the injured diver by rebreather mask if possible.
- 2** Do not leave an injured diver until the diver is in the chamber.
- 3** Call 911 and tell them that the diver may need hyperbaric treatment. Be aware that cell phones often do not work in rural or remote area.
- 4** Call Criti-Call (in Ontario 1-800-668-4357) and tell them that the injured diver needs hyperbaric treatment in a chamber.
- 5** In the emergency department, tell the ED physician that the injured diver needs treatment in a hyperbaric chamber. Do not let them delay you.
- 6** Be assertive, don't let the medical staff intimidate you.
- 7** Call the closest hyperbaric doctor yourself and explain the situation.
- 8** If you do not get satisfaction, call another hyperbaric department or DAN.

Fatality Report

Raimund Krob, our **Safety Director**, advises us that the 2004 fatality report will be published to the OUC website effective 2005-02-28. The information contained therein has already been in the public domain and can therefore be shared without infringing on the privacy rights of the victims or their surviving families. This report is a must-read for Scuba Divers as it contains recommendations to prevent such recurrences in the future.



Medical Assistance for Diving Emergencies in Quebec



The Underwaterindustry.com website has posted a press release from the Hôtel-Dieu Hospital in Lévis, Québec, issued on December 14, 2004, which will be of interest to commercial and recreational divers :

"The necessity for rapid medical intervention in the case of a commercial diving accident has led the Commission for Health and Safety at Work (CSST) and the Ministry of Health and Social Services in Quebec to put in place a medical assistance service which can be provided to a remote site by telecommunications.

The Hôtel-Dieu hospital in Lévis has been designated to provide the service. Other services relating to diving medicine will also be provided by the Center for Diving Medicine of Quebec and the hospital. The center has a hyperbaric chamber with a medical support team which will provide a 24 hour-a-day, seven-days-per-week service. The team is made up of eight Level 2 diving physicians and a coordinator of emergency services."

For further information please visit the following Web site: <http://pages.globetrotter.net/plongee/urgence.htm>

Based on this release, the role of the center is three-fold:

1. coordination of emergency services and evacuation in the event of diving accidents;
2. assisting diving organization with dive planning and emergency plans as well as developing a list of service providers/parties likely to be called upon in the event of a diving incident;
3. advising level 1 dive physicians and chamber operators.

Events & Announcements



R E C E N T E V E N T S

Where Diving and Medicine Meet

Report of the UHMS annual meeting by Raimud Krob

Are you fit to dive? On October 23, 2004, six speakers delivered various answers to this thought-provoking question. They were speaking at the 25th annual meeting of the Great Lakes Chapter of the Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society (UHMS). About 140 to 150 people attended the meeting, making it one of the largest turnouts to the chapter's annual meeting in years. The topic of the day was "Fitness to Dive: It's Not Just the Medical."

Dr. Ron Linden, on staff at the Toronto General Hospital Hyperbaric Medical Unit, opened the proceedings and introduced the topic. He reiterated the idea that fitness to dive is "not just the absence of medical conditions that compromise divers' safety." He also cautioned that diving medicine is not taught in medical schools, so most doctors are ill-equipped to make informed judgments about their patients' fitness for diving.

Dr. Bill Bateman spoke about metabolic syndrome, or pre-diabetic state, a condition caused by insulin resistance. This condition increases a person's risk of coronary arterial disease. Though recreational divers who have this condition are not disqualified from diving, Canadian Forces divers are. Signs and symptoms of the syndrome include a waist circumference greater than 40" in men and greater than 35" in women, high levels of blood fat, and blood pressure greater than 130/85. The condition has a very high prevalence in the over-50 age group. However, it's unsuspected in many people who have it. A healthy lifestyle can go a long way to prevent or reduce the chances of developing this syndrome, and exercise is especially important.

Eilenna Denisoff, a clinical psychologist and specialist in phobias, addressed the issue of phobias related to diving. She distinguished between functional anxiety, which is our inborn fight-or-flight response to an actual threat, and dysfunctional anxiety, which is an avoidance response to a perceived threat. There are hundreds of phobias, of which some are generalized and some are for specific objects or situations. A relatively few specific phobias are related to diving. Among them are bathophobia (sinking), claustrophobia, hydrophobia (water), nyctophobia (darkness), and thanatophobia. Dr. Denisoff described the cognitive behavioural therapy technique she uses to treat specific phobias. With education and proper therapy, she said, specific phobias can be successfully dealt with.

Lou Jankowski, a past visiting scientist at the former DCIEM, has studied various physiological effects of exercise. He talked about a major problem facing Homo sedentarius-obesity. The risks posed by obesity to divers include cardiovascular disease and increases chances of decompression sickness. The best method to lose excess weight is a combination of proper diet and regular, frequent, vigorous exercise. For divers, good exercises include cycling, running, and swimming. For the best results, these cardiovascular activities should be done three times a week for an hour each time. Weight training should be incorporated into the exercise routine to maintain body mass. However, people over 40 shouldn't exercise every day; bodies need down time to rest, recuperate, and grow stronger.

Neal Pollock spoke on "Fitness, Exercise, and Diving Safety." He is a research associate at the Center for Hyperbaric Medicine and Environmental Physiology at the Duke University Medical Center. He described how physical fitness is measured and encouraged divers to increase their fitness levels so they can comfortably meet the energy demands of diving.

Measuring physical fitness involves calculating aerobic capacity, which is the maximum amount of oxygen the body consumes during maximal exercise of large muscle groups per unit time. Though this capacity declines with age, Pollock pointed out that the rate of decline can be slowed by exercise. He talked about METs, or metabolic equivalents. One MET is the amount of energy being burned when a body is at rest; this is approximately 3.5 ml of oxygen consumed per kilogram of body weight per minute. Pollock mentioned that 13 METs is the threshold needed for diving, but that this excludes most divers' capacities. A 10-MET capacity is a more reasonable level he thinks. An experienced diver can do with a 7-MET capacity, but it's better to have 10 because in an emergency the extra capacity can be vital. Also, a high level of fitness lowers the risk of DCS. A disturbing statistic he gave is that cardiovascular disease was a major contributing factor in 26% of diving fatalities involving divers over age 35. If you have an inconsistent history of physical activity, get your fitness level evaluated.

Dan Orr, executive vice-president of Divers Alert Network, provided comic relief with some of his PowerPoint slides, though his topic was far from funny. He gave various statistics about medical diving incidents in his talk, "Diving Safety by the Numbers."

The last speaker, Dr. David Sawatzky, pointed out the detrimental effects of smoking on divers. Up to 35 minutes after smoking one cigarette, he said, breathing resistance (in a diver's respiratory system) increases to three times the normal level. Such resistance must be minimized in diving because it can lead to panic from having to work harder to breathe. He also outlined the pros and cons of exercise before, during, and after diving. Briefly, it's best to do heavy exercise at least 12 hours before a dive. Above-normal exertion on the bottom means you need a prolonged decompression time. During decompression, light exercise

is generally good, but heavy exercise is bad. Finally, after diving, exercise done when you are not bubbling is good, but if done when you are bubbling, it is bad; however, it's not clear to me how you determine if you are bubbling.

According to Neal Pollock, fitness to dive includes medical, psychological, and physical fitness, as well as knowledge and physical skills. The combined knowledge that the presenters shared with the audience had one goal: to encourage divers to take better care of themselves. I was definitely convinced of my need to get serious about improving my fitness level. The one theme repeated throughout the day was that exercise is of vital importance. It was made clear that *Homo sedentarius* has a self-destructive lifestyle.

For our diving safety, taking proper care of equipment that we buy is very important, but these presentations reminded me that for our very existence, taking care of our bodies, the "equipment" that we get free from nature, is beyond important.

Dive Medicine soirée well received !

By Rochelle Allan and Alex Ayers, HHUC

On January 18th, the Hart House Underwater Club (HHUC), in partnership with the Hart House Recreation and Athletics Committee (RAC), hosted a special event, "An Evening with Dr. Ron Linden BSc, MD, CCFP. Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine Specialist". Dr. Linden, who is a well-known and respected physician in the diving community, gave a very informative and humorous talk on the topic of dive fitness. His lecture addressed many health and safety issues relevant to any SCUBA diver - focusing on the physical and mental conditions that help to indicate whether person is fit or unfit for diving. While being useful for the awareness of our own health, the talk was also helpful in paying attention to the health of our dive buddies. After his talk, Dr. Linden addressed questions and chatted with many divers from the audience. The evening was both informative and enjoyable. For more information on upcoming events with the HHUC, please check out the club's web site at www.utoronto.ca/hhuc.

By Chantal Gagnon

About 1/3 of the 25 attendees who were not members of the Club appreciated the opportunity to join in on this informative and pleasant get-together. The opportunity to meet Dr. Linden in person and network with a diverse group of divers was also greatly appreciated. The HUCC members feel that the potential is there to develop other forums for connecting and learning. All who participated will surely agree. Thank you, HUCC, for the invitation... If other clubs would like to join forces and invite Dr. Linden to do a similar information session for their members, you can reach him at 416-223-6600.

SCUBA Swap

The 14th Annual SCUBA swap and sale held at the Etobicoke Olympium by the Ontario Underwater Explorers' Club will soon be here - April 23rd, 2005. Come in and trade-in or trade-up your gear... time to clean out your garage, basement or attic and part with those "treasures" you have not used in years... It's a great opportunity for new divers to start their dive gear collection. For more details, see the enclosed flyer or check out the OUE website at www.ontario-underwater-explorers.org.

Shipwrecks 2005

The Niagara Divers Association will hold its 11th annual symposium on shipwrecks in Welland Ontario on April 2nd. For more information check out the NDA website at www.vaxxine.com/nda/

Scuba World at the Outdoor Adventure Show

This show will once again be held at the International Centre in Mississauga, on February 25 to 27. The diving community is well represented with a number of dive shops, manufacturers, travel providers, associations, the press and other affiliated parties. The scuba demos in the two-person tank are expected to once again draw a lot of interest from divers and non-divers alike. OUC member clubs will be taking turns doing the demos with live commentary... come and support your fellow OUC members and drop by the OUC booth again this year.

OUC Ice Floe Race

Update by Raimund Krob

Several OUC member clubs have already registered for the 2005 Ice Floe Race, which will be held in the Otonabee River in Peterborough on Saturday March 12th starting at 10am. The maximum limit of 10 teams has not been reached yet however, so there is still time to get your registrations in before the deadline of February 28th, 2005! Your team's starting line number is assigned in the order your completed registrations are received in the OUC office, so don't delay; get your Club's in today!

The starting line will be at the base of Lock 23 <http://www.cruising.ca/trent/docs/L-23.html> and the finish line will be just before the next downstream lock. Due to limited resources, registrations will be limited to the first 10 teams only, on a first-paid, first-registered basis. The registration form, included in the December newsletter is available on the OUC website along with all times, accommodation, registration details and more !

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The 2005 Ice Floe Race is being held 2 weeks earlier than usual so as to increase the likelihood of there being ice, however the OUC cannot guarantee that ice will be present.

In the event of “no-ice” conditions, the approved contingency plan is for registered teams to race using “black ice” (also known as inflated inner-tubes lashed together). Registered teams are responsible for bringing and inflating their own inner tubes. Providing the OUC has 8 teams registered by the deadline of February 28th, 2005, arrangements will be made to have “Johnny-on-the-Spot” facilities available at both starting and finish lines. If there are less than 8 teams registered, the closest washroom facilities will be a 5-minute drive away. There are no change-room facilities, so please be prepared to change in your vehicle by the road-side.

Trophies will be awarded at the finish line as soon as possible after the last team exits the water. Fun for all !

Dive In To Earth Day

Spearheaded by The Coral Reef Alliance, Dive In To Earth Day is an international Earth Day celebration offering hundreds of underwater and shore activities at dive sites throughout the world during the week of Earth Day, April 15-22. Dive In To Earth Day events allow participants to celebrate the Earth and have fun while raising awareness and taking action to protect our coral reefs, oceans, lakes, rivers, and beaches. Check out the Alliance’s website at www.coralreefalliance.org/divein for ideas on events big or small, how you can contribute and tools for organizers.

TMA’s 2005 kick-off

The Tobermory Maritime Association will be holding its first annual Treasure Hunt and Spring Fling, in Toby, on Saturday May 21, 2005. TMA is also launching a silent on-line auction with most auctions ending between Labour Day and Thanksgiving 2005. For more info, check out their website at www.tobermorymaritime.com.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

Any other events you know of that would interest members of our diving community, please forward your notice to the OUC for posting on the web and/or in the newsletter.

Invitations



Ice Dive Course

4D Diving will be hosting an Ice Diving course in mid February. It will be on a Saturday depending on the weather. We will keep any interested parties informed as to the date. This is open to all OUC clubs and their members.

Call or email for more information.
info@4diving.com
 or (705) 725-2855.

We will be posting the invitation on the OUC website when the date is finalized.

Fun pool night open to all

4D Diving is pleased once again to invite OUC clubs to send members to join in our fun scuba pool session. It will be on Friday March the 11th from 8 pm until 10 pm at the East Bayfield Centre in Barrie. Call or email for more information. info@4diving.com or (705) 725-2855.

Rest & Relaxation



FUN...opoly

By Chantal Gagnon

Winter is a great time to get together with family and friends, and set yourself up in front of a fire-place with a warm drink to play a board game... Monopoly has always been a Holiday favourite in my house... This year, I got to play with some friends a fun new game called Scuba-Opoly.... This is a great way to go to exotic dive sites without even packing a bag or acquiring your own dive operation. Check out the DAN online catalogue for this one. I also spotted at some hobby and card stores a number of other new interesting board games including Oceanopoly... (info available on the web). All in all, not a bad way to spend a stormy Sunday afternoon... if we can't be diving, we can at least play diving or underwater games.

If you would like to suggest some interesting R & R or submit a short book or movie review for upcoming newsletters, please send your contribution to the Editor at Chantal-ouc@sympatico.ca or the general OUC email with caption: newsletter input. Thanks

Galapagos Islands

— Not “Master & Commander,”
but definitely
“The Far Side of the World.”

Dive Destinations



by Michael Merrithew

The Galapagos Archipelago of thirteen (13) main Islands and numerous islets occupying about 7,500 sq. km of land mass, lays about 600 miles due West of Ecuador, straddling the equator. In a nutshell, it's out there in the Pacific.

When the call came from Wayne Hasson, founder of Aggressor Fleet, with an invitation to join him and a group of underwater photographers, dive travel professionals and dive industry professionals for a week in the Galapagos aboard the Galapagos Aggressor II — I was awestruck — me? What an opportunity — YES, of course I will come, THANKS.

Not only is Wayne one of the preeminent Dive Masters of the world, an inventor and the pioneer live-aboard operator to Costa Rica's Coco Islands, but as the founder of Aggressor Fleet in the Cayman Islands in 1984, he heads a company with a 20 year track record, 12 vessels around the globe accounting for almost 250,000 dives annually. Qualifications abound for this man!



I met up with the group at Miami airport for the next stage of our journey to Quayaguil, Ecuador (Quito is also an option), a quick overnight stay and a flight to Baltra on the Island of Seymour the next morning. The exit from the airport, the mandatory US\$100 National Park & Marine Reserve entry fee (paid in cash and collected efficiently) had us on our way very quickly. The transfer to the ship was only a few minutes.

The Galapagos Aggressor II is a fine dive vessel. Built in 1992; refit and expanded in 2003, this ship carries 14 passengers and 9 crew in air conditioned comfort. Of course all the “standard” Aggressor Fleet amenities and features are the norm onboard.

After the safety briefing and orientation we were away. We were unpacked, equipment set up and ready for some lunch in less than an hour. By 1700hrs we had steamed to the nearby Island of Santa Cruz where the water was a nice 73F and no current. It was a short 35 minutes of bottom time to check weights, equipment and buddies and back on the boat.

The next morning we started diving “for real” and over the next 5 days I would complete fifteen (15) dives and experience some of the most incredible marine life I had ever seen. It was all great, the sea lions, the pods of dolphins, the spotted eagle rays (in squadrons), the marble rays, eels, white tips and turtles daily. And it was when we were diving with the schools of Hammerheads, barracuda and Galapagos sharks that I started to feel this place was exceptional — but nothing prepared me for Darwin Island and the whale sharks. Let me quote from my log book. “August 24th — Darwin Arch (off Darwin Island) — these four dives have been the most incredible dive experiences ever. After 2 minutes in the water we encounter our first of



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several whale sharks of the day. Unbelievable/incredible — we saw more than 10-12 whale sharks today, some up to 45 feet in length PLUS hammerheads, dolphins, turtles and eels on every dive. What a day — WOW!" That just about sums it up.

On the final dive day we “parked” at a dive site called South Plaza in a cove on Santa Cruz for about 40 minutes in the water playing with no fewer than twenty sea lions in about 25-30ft of water; what fun.

The water wasn't crystal clear anywhere because it was so full of nutrients — and we were glad it was; that's what attracted the marine life, but the viz is normally restricted to about 40-60 ft. The water temperature ranged from 67F-75F and most of the diving was in some moderate current; all the diving is from Zodiacs. The depth of most dives ranged from 75 - 85 feet and only one dive to 100ft. Some of the divers were in 5mm, some in 7mm and others in dry suits. Nobody felt cold in their respective gear.

We did spend one day onshore and did a couple of land excursions but most of the islands are totally off-limits and those that are, must be explored with a licensed Park Guide and you must stay on designated footpaths. Remember, this is a UNESCO World Heritage site — The entire Galapagos Archipelago and the 2nd largest Marine Park in the world.

Written January 16, 2005. Michael Merrithew is President & CEO of Merit Vacations and a PADI Rescue Diver.

To view pictures taken by Mike on this trip, please go to the photo gallery on the OUC website under Galapagos.

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OUC Website



Before the onset of the 2005 dive season, now is a great time to sit down and do a revamping of the Ontario Underwater Council web site. Last year we undertook an updating and a slightly new look (more modern but not too radical of a change). Let us take another look at what you the members and the board would like to see. A web site can be a great many different things and offer a multitude of possibilities. The sky is the limit! Of course we need to maintain the professional distinguished image of the OUC but there is so much more that we can do. Please submit your ideas to Chantal Gagnon, our Information Services Director, at chantal-ouc@sympatico.ca or me at webmaster@underwatercouncil.com for integration in the web site plan.

*Yours in fun safe diving,
Bill Doran, OUC Webmaster*

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