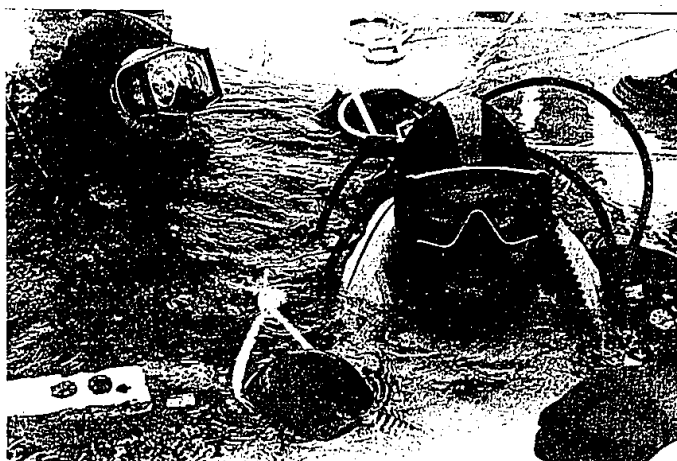


Buddy check

Winter diving can be a harrowing experience unless the necessary precautions are taken. On the left Ken Hughey and Rick Dawson check the diving lines and keep the ice broken up. Freezing cold temperatures cause the water to freeze over very quickly. Without someone to keep a vigil, divers could find themselves without a place to surface. On the right, divers Bob Gambicki and Steve Nelson surface. Their protective diving suits keep them comfortable despite the freezing temperatures.



Photos by Tom Mandelke

Divers take to cold winter deep

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

Imagine staggering out of bed on a winter Sunday morning, donning a wetsuit, boots, mitts, hood and a tank and submerging yourself through a hole in an ice-covered lake before the clock strikes 10.

There are people living in this area who willingly do this. They consider it recreation and call it ice diving.

"In addition to fun, it offers you a challenge and the opportunity to continue training and get further experience in diving," said senior scuba diver Bill King, the Farmington Area YMCA's ice diving instructor.

"People think you're a nut," said diver Ed Welland, 25, of Garden City.

"It's fun to get out there and to walk on the bottom of the ice upside down. You get to see things most people don't get to see."

King and his half-dozen students, all certified divers, met on Orchard Lake for the first icy plunge of the season Sunday morning, equipped with ice tongs and chippers, snow shovels, a tent, rope and woodsaw.

The air temperature was 28 — and after sawing a triangular hole through a foot of ice, the divers recorded a water temperature of 33.

"If you have a properly fitting wetsuit, it's not as cold as people think. In order to stay warm, you let a thin layer of water seep inside the suit. So for the first minute or so it's kind of cold. But after that, your suit warms up, and it's pretty comfortable," said King.

Taking King's word for it, divers slipped two at a time into the grey depths for their allotted 10 minutes.

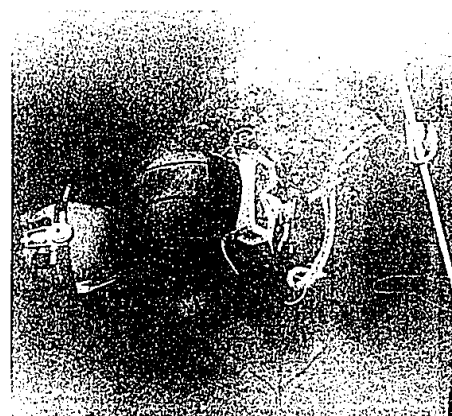
After some practice removing masks and communicating with comrades atop the lake's surface by tugging on a rope, the divers went exploring, mingling with panfish and cripplies, and gazing up at the prisms of light captured in the lake's crystalline ceiling.

"Looking up, it seems more like glass than it does when you're on top (of the ice)," said Welland.

"You could see people walking on the ice, and see their shadows."

What struck King was "that all the plants are lying down — there's no waves, no boats and the plants aren't producing pollen, so it's much calmer. There's not a lot of stuff on the bottom, so visibility is about 25 feet — much better than in the summer," he said.

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Hanging on to one of the life lines, a winter diver finds it's imperative to maintain contact with the surface.

INSIDE ANGLES

CONGRATULATIONS to Detroit Country Day's Day Times, upper school newspaper, for receiving a national second place award for private/parochial schools. The contest was conducted in the 1982 Columbia Scholastic Press Association Competition by Columbia University, New York. Matt Paroly, a student, and Gus Seeger, teacher/advisor, are on the prize-winning staff.

KUDOS to Brian Bowditch, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Bowditch, and Steven Hill, son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hill, both of Farmington Hills, who will be appearing in the drama "Hamel" in Albion College Theater Feb. 23-27. Both are North Farmington graduates.

JUNE OHBA, a student at Sacred Heart Academy and a resident of Farmington Hills, received a Blue Ribbon Finalist Award for her ink drawing in the 1983 Wayne-Oakland County Regional Scholastic Art Exhibition, currently at the Tel-Twelve Mall. June's work will be sent to the Scholastic National Headquarters in New York to be judged for national level awards. The exhibition runs through Feb. 20.

SHOULD THE SEMTA bus stop on the corner of Grace and Grand River in Farmington be called Josephine Fink Memorial Stop? A reader reported that it was Fink's "bugging" of SEMTA officials that resulted in the bus stop.

ALAN ALMOND, WNIC Radio DJ, finds a public thank you to the roller skaters who turned out to Bonaventure last month to "Skate to Beat Diabetes." Almond chaired the fund-raiser for the Michigan Affiliate of American Diabetes Association which raised \$19,000 so far from the 10 participating roller rinks in the metro area. Pledges, he said, are still coming in.

WILLIAMSBURG CONVALESCENT CENTER is flying a new flag these days, a gift from the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 114 in Livonia. Walter Shapiro, past commander of the chapter presented the gift, along with certification that the flag had flown over the U.S. Capitol. Kathryn Rich, director of nursing, accepted the flag in behalf of residents in the home at 21017 Middlebelt Road.

THREE MEMBERS of Michigan Opera Theatre, still glowing from the rave reviews they received for their part in "The Sound of Music" that closed last weekend in Music Hall Center, will be paying a singing visit to residents in Farmington Nursing Home next week. May Arvo, Mrs. Michigan for 1980, who took the role of Frau Zeller, made the arrangements for Connie Cocoyatz and David New to entertain with songs from the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical. Cocoyatz took the part of Louisa von Trapp, and New took the role of Rolf Gruber in the recent production.

"DANCE SO OTHERS CAN EAT" is the theme for a dance to be held at Buddy's Pizza, 31646 Northeastern Highway, 9 p.m. Monday. The proceeds will go to Salvation Army feeding programs. The cost is \$4 per person. Come on out and help the Salvation Army.

HILL AND DALE Garden Club welcomed a new member this month. She's Barbara Noll. The Farmington Hills resident has a background of working in Girl Scouting and is now working with area youngsters who are members of Junior Gardeners, a group sponsored by Hill and Dale.

S.A.G.E., Seniors, Adults Giving To Education, is looking for adults who are willing to give an hour a week of their time to the local elementary schools. A new five-week session is set to begin Feb. 21, with a spring session to begin in May. If you have a skill, craft, or knowledge that you would share with receptive young people, contact Phyllis Cummings at 476-4735.

FARMINGTON CITY COUNCIL has proclaimed the week of Feb. 13-19 as Farmington Area Jaycette Week. The Jaycettes are involved in helping the youth, senior citizens and raising funds for nonprofit organizations.

TASTE TEST SANDERS new ice cream made with Girl Scouts cookies with the experts — the Girl Scouts — at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday at the Fred Sanders Co., 100 Oakman Blvd., Detroit. The ice cream will be available in the Detroit area throughout March, just in time to be enjoyed with a package of Girl Scout cookies which are sold March 4-13. In support of Girl Scout outreach programs, Sanders is donating 25 cents for each gallon of ice cream sold. After taste testing, there will be an opportunity to see the new ice cream being produced and a tour of the Sanders plant.

CANNED GOODS DONATED through the General Motors Corp. and United Auto Workers "Care and Share" Program are available to Oakland County residents. United Foundation has announced. Those who urgently need food can call Community Information Service at 833-3420 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. for assistance in locating an emergency food outlet in their area. United Foundation was asked last month to coordinate the distribution of the food collection program. Working with the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce, New Detroit, and the Torch Drive-supported United Community Services, a community food distribution network has been established. Volunteers work at a central warehouse facility to sort food. Once canned goods are sorted and put into family-portioned packages, boxes are distributed to area churches, community groups and social service agencies throughout Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties. United Foundation is coordinating the distribution efforts for the eight-week food collection program.

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