

Jerry Nelkirk of Farmington Hills has a safety line attached by Bill Dykman of Southfield.



Mary Baghdolian of Redford, exhausted from her dive, flops on the ice as her lifeline is undone. To the right is the tent where the divers change into wetsuits and warm up with hot drinks to fortify them against the cold.

COLD-brr

By Alice Collins
staff writer

THE SCENE IS Orchard Lake. The temperature above the 13-14 inches of lake ice is in the mid 20s. The water below is in the mid 30s.

There are people out there on the lake in diving gear going down through a hole cut through the ice into the black frigid water. They stay under for a while, then climb out.

If you guess that they're engaging in an emergency rescue operation or doing it for money, you're wrong. They're ice diving just for fun.

"Diving under the ice is so much different than what you'd expect," said Bill Dykman, "it's quite a sensation."

Doing the ice diving on Orchard Lake on a Sunday afternoon earlier this month were 14 members of the Great Lake Aquanauts Club. It's one of 15 scuba diving clubs in the Michigan Skin Diving Council.

The club has about 70 members, primarily from Oakland and Wayne counties, and has diving activities "every month of the year," said Dykman, a past president who lives in Southfield.

WHILE THE water may look black through the hole, it's not. "The bottom side of the ice is so smooth and there aren't air pockets like you see in the movies," said Dykman. "If it's a sunny day you can see the shadows of people walking around and snow banks on top. This year the ice is so solid you can actually recognize faces of the people above."

The ice collects the light and reflects it down. They are also able to see the bottom.

The visibility in Orchard Lake under the ice is 50-75 feet because the ice won't let the bottom get stirred up. In the summer it's three to four feet.

More information about the club is available by calling Dykman at 355-1768 or Sharon Hamilton at 567-2467. Its on-land meetings are at 8 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month in the Farmington Hills Public Library.



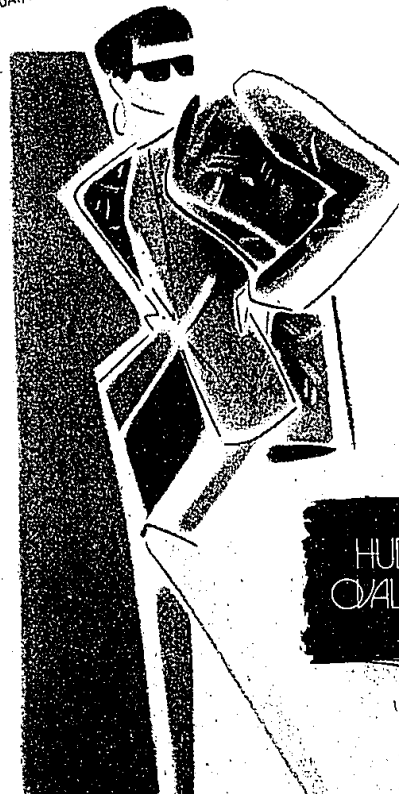
It takes a special something to be among this hardy band of divers who must first etch a hole in the icy waters before taking turns diving and rallying to help someone else do their dive.

Right: Janice Burns of Farmington Hills is bundled up against the cold, waiting for her friend Carter Harnden of Farmington to take his plunge into Orchard Lake. Below: Steve Banoff of Westland takes a rest on the lip of the icy opening to the water.



Staff photos by Gary Caskey

ANNE KLEIN
INTRODUCING THE ANNE KLEIN
SPRING COLLECTION, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, IN THE NORTHLAND OVAL ROOM AND
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, IN THE EASTLAND OVAL ROOM. INFORMAL MODELING FROM 12 TO 6.



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