

DIVERSIONS

Dive into a new hobby – discovering shipwrecks

By **BETH FISCHER**
SPECIAL WRITER

The first time I saw a Jacques Cousteau special on TV I knew I wanted to dive. I couldn't wait to explore the mysteries of the seas, surrounded by hundreds of colorful creatures as I bathed in sapphire water at some exotic location. The reality is that I live in landlocked Michigan, the Great Lakes State, and can't jet off to paradise every weekend. I have to find it here. Actually I found Paradise – in Michigan's upper peninsula – but that's another story.

My first introduction to what the Great Lakes have to offer a scuba diver was on a blustery February day at the Great Lakes Shipwreck Festival sponsored by the Ford Senhorses Scuba Diving Club in Dearborn. This year's festival is Saturday, Feb. 16. Like me, you may be surprised by the discovery of shipwrecks. Michigan's Great Lakes are dotted with thousands of shipwrecks – an underwater museum of maritime architecture and history. In fact, there are people

who search for undiscovered wrecks.

Finding these gems is a very time-consuming activity. It starts during the winter with research. Investments of time and money are also made acquiring and maintaining the equipment necessary to complete the quest. Shipwreck hunters start cruising waterways with sonar as soon as a weather allows, and a target location has been identified. Side scan sonar incorporates a torpedo-shaped sensor, affectionately called a "fish" towed as the boat drives back and forth over the predetermined area. The fish is connected by a cable to a computer onboard the boat which interprets the signal and displays the image on a graphics display.

Hundreds of hours are spent running grid patterns in hopes of detecting a change in the lake bottom that may result from a large unnatural mass, perhaps a ship. The blip on the screen could be a pile of rocks, cargo, or the treasure they are seeking.

The real adventure begins once a potential dive site has been identified. Dive equipment is loaded on the boat, dive plans are made, and the anticipation builds. Extra care must be taken while heading to the predetermined depth since the line is morosely weighed and not really anchored to anything. Therefore, the divers must look down to assure they don't hit something

Great Lakes Shipwreck Festival
When: Saturday, Feb. 16. Seminars start at 9 a.m., exhibits 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Freshwater program featuring music by Lee Murdock, 6:30-9 p.m.
Where: Ford Community and Performing Arts Center on Michigan Ave. at Greenfield in Dearborn
Admission: No charge to view exhibits, fees for programs ranging from \$8-\$15
For information: Call (734) 769-2458 or visit www.ford-senhorses.com

or land inside the wreckage before seeing it (perhaps the weights at the end of the marker line penetrated the wreck). As the divers descend from their boat, more questions are asked than answered. What precautions need to be made that they forgot about while topside. If the marker missed the target, the whole dive could be for nothing; decompression limits would preclude another dive at this time.

If they have found a shipwreck, care needs to be taken to protect the structure while securing the dive boat to something stable. What type of vessel will it be? Is it the ship they've been searching for?

If a wreck has been found, numerous photographs and meticulous notes must be taken about the structure and any artifacts. Unless the ship's name or registration number is located, the photographs and notes must be indispensable in identifying which ship was found.

Now it's back to the books, perhaps at the Institute for Great Lakes Research in Bowling Green, Ohio. What type of ship was it? When were they prevalent in the lakes? The materials it is made of help narrow the list of possible ships. The rigging and wheel design, size, height, construction, cargo, as well as some of the artifacts, narrow it further. By process of elimination, the ship can be identified, though not always. It is one giant puzzle to be solved; a challenging exercise in patience, frustration, disappointment, dedication and discovery.

The Great Lakes Shipwreck Festival premieres newly discovered wrecks and announces the winning entries to the annual Ford Senhorses Underwater Photo Contest. Previous festivals have given attendees the opportunity to meet some Navy Seals, see a miniature two-person submarine and a U.S. Coast Guard rescue helicopter, and hear from such renowned experts as Gary Gentile, Jim Church, Carl Huggins, and Tom Mount. Presentations have included environmental issues, tropical travelogues,

technical diving, maritime history and preservation, underwater photography, World War II relics of Truk Lagoon, underwater treasure hunting, recovery of the bell from the Edmund Fitzgerald and the shipwreck of the Lusitania.

Topics at the 2002 Festival include safety first, wreck diving in the Norwegian Arctic, tropical dive sites, and newly discovered wrecks in Lake Huron. Bernie Chowdhury, author of *The Last Dive*, is the keynote speaker at this year's festival.

For more information about scuba diving, the Great Lakes Shipwreck Festival and the Ford Senhorses Underwater Photo Contest, call (734) 769-2458 or visit www.ford-senhorses.org.

Beth Fischer is a Farmington resident. Tell us about your hobby. Send information for consideration in the Observer & Eccentric Pastimes section to: Susan Stinnmueller, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers Feature Department, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009 or e-mail: stinnmueller@ec.homecomm.net

BOOK IT

Book it lists author signings, and other bookish events. Send e-mail or fax announcements to Kevly.Wygonik_Observer&EccentricNewspapers@36251.Schoolcraft.Livonia.MI.48150.fax.734.591.7279 or e-mail text file only, or copy and paste into e-mail kwygonik@ec.homecomm.net.

LIBRARIES AND UNIVERSITIES

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor – Poetry readings 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 11, Michigan Union Ball Room, reception follows. Lecture The Egrot Fishing Through Its Smoored Reflections: Poetics and the End of Nature, 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 12, Michigan Union Ball Room. Call (734) 615-3710 for details.

Walled Lake City Library: Cat in the Hat Read-along – 6-8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28. Readers may plan to read 15 minutes or more. The public is invited to listen. Refreshments will be served. 1499 E. West Maple, (248) 624-3772. Annual folk dance featuring Michigan Dance Heritage musicians, Glen and Judy Morningstar with caller Steve Gold, 1-3 p.m. Saturday, March 2, Richardson Community Center, 1485 Oakley Park Road, Commerce Township. Call (248) 624-3772 for details.

West Bloomfield Public Library: Review of Tender at the Bone by Ruth Reichl, a restaurant critic for the New York Times. Sandra Sutherland will be reviewing Reichl's book about lessons learned at the hands and kitchen

counters of family members and friends, 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 20 and 10 a.m. Friday, Feb. 22 at the library, 4600 Walnut Lake Road, West Bloomfield Township. Call (248) 363-4181 for information.

BOOKSTORE

Walden Books (30200 Plymouth Road, Livonia): Author book signings 1-3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 16, Anthony Collins, Words of Fire, Stephanie Melton



Take time to enjoy that peaceful retreat you've been dreaming about at an enchanting AA four diamond country inn, where you can unwind at the spa, savor fine cuisine, and enjoy the fresh outdoors.

Packages from \$195.00 US per couple, include overnight accommodation, spa vouchers, breakfast and 3-course candlelight dinner. Rates subject to change with currency fluctuations.

Benmiller Inn & Spa As always. Like never before. 1-800-265-1711 www.benmiller.on.ca Goderich, Ontario, Canada (Only 90 minutes from Port Huron, MI)

noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, March 3, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, March 10, (734) 261-7811.

Bead Bonanza
Sunday February 17, 2002 10 am to 5 pm \$3 admission no strollers please

Over 50 bead merchants from across the globe. Southfield Municipal Complex Pavilion 26000 EVERGREEN SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN

Presented by the Great Lakes Beadworkers Guild P.O. Box 1639 • Royal Oak 586-997-7043 www.glb.org



Crazy Al's Password
Play Crazy Al's Password every Monday between 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. on WPON 1460 AM. Be the correct caller with the password and win a great prize.
Listen to Crazy Al's Radio Party WPON 1460 AM Mon.-Fri. 6:00 A.M. - 9:00 A.M. & 2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.
Call 248-332-1460
"Password" Stylus
Crazy Al's Radio Party Truly the greatest rock and roll show you've ever heard! LISTEN TO THE ROCK AND ROLL ON WPON Radio Oldies 1460 AM Odds You Just Don't Know Any Place Else! Crazy Al's Radio Party Mon.-Fri. 6-9 a.m., afternoons 2-4 p.m. LISTEN ON THE WEB www.wpon.com

Science IMAX DOME THEATRE
THE NEW DETROIT SCIENCE CENTER
Turn your world inside out.
...The Human Body, the most impressive and engaging IMAX film yet!
CHICAGO TRIBUNE
ONLY IN GIANT SCREEN THEATRES www.thehumanbodyfilm.com
BBC IMAX Discovery
FILM TIMES & INFORMATION: 313-577-8400 www.detroitsciencecenter.org

Nagler from page B4

you'll gain at these workshops just can't be beat. All major photo magazines list such programs.

For the real adventurous, traveling workshops are readily available. These can be as diverse as a weekend workshop close to home or a photo safari in Africa. Learning on location is perhaps the best way to sharpen your photographic skills.

Each year, I conduct a traveling workshop. We've been to China, the Canadian Rockies

and many more scenic locations. The resulting photos from the students have been superb.

So whether it's a short course at a local community educational facility or a workshop to one of the world's exotic places, photography classes are beneficial indeed.

Monte Nagler is a fine art photographer based in Farmington Hills. You can leave him a message by dialing (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone. His fax number is (248) 644-1314.

In my family, learning is everything.
Books don't just enlighten. They empower. Our children are growing up knowing this. A good education is one of the most important things we can give them. And we will, with the help of U.S. Savings Bonds. Through the Payroll Savings Plan, we put aside something with every payday. And little by little, it will add up to college for our children.
U.S. Savings Bonds helped my parents put me through college. And next year, it's Michelle's turn. Sure, Savings Bonds have important to our past, but they'll be even more important to our future, that's what makes our investment so valuable.
Ask your employer or banker about saving with U.S. Savings Bonds. For all the right reasons.
Take Stock in America U.S. SAVINGS BONDS
A public service of this newspaper

LONGHORN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROLEO
"Hats Off To America"
Presented by PERSE
Featuring an appearance by Golden Nugget, descendant of Roy Rogers' famous horse Trigger, performing his ancestors' well-known tricks.
See the newly-awarded World Champion Bareback Bronc Heaven Can Wait.
Big, Bad, Bonus Bull Challenge is back!

Palace Theatre
THIS FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15 • 8 PM OPENING NIGHT All seats \$121
THIS SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16 • 8 PM HAT NIGHT First 1,000 kids 12 and under receive a FREE cowboy hat!
NEXT SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17 • 2 PM FAMILY DAY Seniors 62 and older & kids 12 and under get 1/2 off!
TICKETS AVAILABLE AT PalaceTheatre.com, THE PALACE BOX OFFICE AND ALL www.palacetheatre.com LOCATIONS. CHARGE AT 248-645-6666. DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE FOR GROUPS, SENIORS & KIDS. CALL 248-377-0100 FOR INFORMATION.

25% to 40% OFF ALL
MERRI-SEVEN TRAINS, HOBBIES & COLLECTIBLES
19155 Merriman (at 7 Mile) • Livonia • (248) 477-0550 • Fax (248) 477-0770
Buy • Sell • Trade • Repair • All Gauges
Hours: Tue.-Thur. 11-7 • Fri. 11-8 • Sat. 11-6 p.m.
Brio
Sale ends February 19, 2002
BOB THE BUILDER Starter Set