

On Sunday, June 30, 2002, the call of the Lake Siren was heard by Cindy LaRosa and Kevin Magee, and they arose too early in the morning to join Don Blocksom and Martie Truby on a trip out of Rocky River on Don's boat "Bait." After running the 'Gestapo Gauntlet' at the public boat ramp, they arrived at the lake to find beautiful boating conditions. The lake was flat at less than 1' seas, the sky was sunny, and the air was a warm 85 deg F.

Since the "H.G. Cleveland" offered good viz the previous weekend, it was the first dive site. This wreck lies several miles straight out from Lakewood Park and the downtown Lakewood building containing Pacer's restaurant. Don deftly dropped the anchor right on the bow of the wreck, which points NW in 50' of water. It was discovered upon descending that the thermocline has now officially formed off Cleveland at a 45' depth. There is 15' viz / 75 deg F water above it and 5'-7' viz / 55 deg F water below it. The bow is intact and stands 10'-15' off the bottom, making it easy to see during descent. The wooden sides behind the bow quickly collapse outward, revealing a large rock pile about 8' high with cut stone slabs loosely stacked together. The rock pile's sides are sharply sloped to show the former outline of the hull, and the remains of the hull can be seen on the bottom partly buried under the outer edges of the rock pile. On top of this pile at the immediate bow are the jumbled remains of the ship's windlass. The spindle and cradle pieces are dismantled and lying in disarray but are recognizable.

Swimming aft along the top of the pile and above the thermocline, viz was good. The sides of the pile sloped down below the thermocline and into murky water. Many gobies and large mussels were seen above the thermocline, but there were relatively few of either beneath it. At the center of the rock pile are the remains of a long centerboard, which stands about 2'-3' above the rock pile. The possible broken remains of the masts were seen, and occasional pieces of intact sides could be seen standing at various points along the ship's length. Swimming aft, the top of the rock pile sloped downwards until it went below the thermocline about two-thirds of the way back. The amount of rock is also greatly reduced at the rear of the ship, and the outline of the ship is much less pronounced. The stern is broken up but still retains its square shape, and the bottom's boards can still be seen in this area, giving an idea of the shape of the underside of the hull. No rudder post was evident. Seen on the swim back along the port side were the remains of the hull with deck knees pointing upwards, metal fittings, and miscellaneous pieces of wreckage.

Afterwards, it was decided to dive the "Craftsman" barge and crane, but it was discovered that another boat, the "Sunkist," had just put three divers in the water upon arriving at the site. So, it was decided instead to try the "CEI Barge" immediately offshore from the Avon power plant. Martie and Cindy suited up to check out the site while Don and Kevin stayed aboard to watch for the heavy boat traffic in this area. Unfortunately, Martie and Cindy soon returned because

of the extremely low viz encountered. Although some hard pieces of the wreck could be felt, nothing could be seen, and navigation was impossible.

So, it was decided to head for the "Sheldon," a wooden steamer that sank in 15' of water further west along the coast. After arriving and gearing up, a small boat with three guys pulled up and immediately put a diver in the water using a Hookah compressor-driven system while wearing a mask, fins, and T-shirt. That's the first time anyone on Don's boat has ever seen a Hookah being used in the Great Lakes! We also entered the water but never encountered the diver(s) from the other boat. Viz was relatively poor at about 5', so reels were attached to the anchor.

The remains of the wreck are greatly scattered and flattened on a rock bottom with only a few timbers and machinery pieces left. Despite 40 minutes of repeated searches and arcing swings undertaken with our reels, no sign of the capstan and propeller were found, which are the main signature items of the wreck. These are the pieces seen by Don last weekend moved together and apparently ready for recovery by someone, and they now appear to be gone. We wonder if the Hookah divers, who seemed to have a 'treasure' attitude and behavior in their arrival at the site, had something to do with it. A Hookah would be ideal for salvage work. An OH boat registration number was obtained by Martie, who remained on board because of a broken fin strap.

Upon surfacing, it was discovered that the Hookah divers had left, and the "Sunkist" had joined us with two divers in the water nearby. We finished the day with a great tour up close along the coast back to Rocky River. Lots of nice houses, cliffs, waterfalls, and scenery are visible along this route. Along the way the Wachter's boat appears to have passed us going the other direction towards Lorain. We thought we had noticed them anchored off their house earlier in the day.

If anyone happens to notice a capstan and prop being prominently displayed in the front yard of someone who lives in the Avon Lake area, we might just have found where the "Sheldon's" items went to. Either that, or these items were missed in the murky water. In any case, it's a shame that they were not seen, and let's hope they haven't been stolen.