On Friday, July 8, 2005, Mike Holda, Cindy LaRosa, and Kevin Magee took off from work, packed up Mike's truck and 18' boat "Erie Lady," and drove 3 hours to Dunkirk, NY, in eastern Lake Erie. Upon arriving, the sky was clear and sunny, but the weather was questionable with many whitecaps dotting the lake and inner harbor. Asking the many boaters taking out at the launch ramp, they all said it was "rough." One guy even commented there were white caps inside his minnow bucket. However, being firm believers in checking things out for ourselves, we loaded up the boat and poked our nose out into the lake. It was quickly discovered there were 2'-3' seas out of the northeast, but they were large rollers and not uncomfortable at all. A course was set to the nearest wreck 7 miles out, and a speed of 15 mph was easily maintained. By the time we arrived at the wreck, the seas were calming to 2', so everyone geared up and went in.

The wreck was "Schooner B," believed to be the "Washington Irving," which sank with all hands under unknown conditions in 1860, one year before the Civil War. Definite proof of the ship's identity has not to be found, however, beyond general size, type, location, and cargo (coal). It is a small (<100' long) two-masted wooden schooner and lies in 115' of water. The most notable feature of this wreck is both masts are still standing and rise to within approximately 70'-80' of the surface. This is the only known schooner with standing masts at a recreational depth, making it unique. Unfortunately, the ship lists sharply to port by about 30-40 degrees, and the port side is completely buried in the silt. Only the starboard railing is visible along with a small portion of exposed deck. The mooring disappears into the bottom off the starboard side of the bow, which points north. The mooring is tied to the anchor that once graced the bow of the ship but was carelessly knocked off by a grappling attempt and is now completely buried far out of sight underneath the silt.

Besides the masts, the most outstanding feature of this wreck is the bowsprit and attached jib boom, which stretches 20'-30' out in front. Part of the windlass can be seen on the foredeck. On the starboard railing a set of three deadeyes can be seen adjacent to each mast. Part of the stern's transom is visible, and the starboard davit for the yawl boat can be seen at the corner as an extension of the railing. Deck openings can barely be seen peeking out from the silt. It was noticed that this wreck has significantly silted even more in the past couple of years, and only a few minutes of bottom time are necessary to completely see the wreck since it is so small and extensively buried.

Examining the masts, integral fife rails can be seen wrapped around the circumference of each mast where they protrude from the lake bottom. Swimming up the masts reveals two crosstrees at the top of each mast. Visibility was superb with about 50'-70' of visibility and bright ambient lighting, allowing the foremast to be seen from the mainmast and making a direct swim between the mast tops possible. It was on top of the foremast that a regulator free flow was encountered, requiring a quick trip to the surface and a little air sharing from a long hose along the way. Since visibility was so good, the jump from the top of

the foremast to the mooring line was easily done, greatly simplifying the procedure. The thermocline was spread out between 50'-60' with 42-43 deg F below and 75-77 deg F above. Surface visibility was good at 15'-20'.

After surfacing and a quick regulator repair, the seas had calmed to 1'-2', so it was decided to head 8 miles further out to the "Carlingford," a two-masted wooden schooner that sank in 95' of water in 1881 after colliding with the steamer "Brunswick," which also sank a few miles away. By the time we arrived, the seas had again built to 2'-3' with wind ruffles and increasing whitecaps from a thunderstorm visible over Buffalo, but the storm was moving away and posed no real concern. The mooring line was found attached to a concrete block off the starboard side of the bow, which points west. This wreck has 8'-10' of relief off the bottom and is beautifully preserved. The hull, railings, and deck are mostly intact with lots of interesting things to see. The bowsprit is missing, but a large windlass dominates the foredeck with piles of anchor chain on the deck. Anchor chain runs from the port hawse pipe down to the port anchor resting partly buried on the bottom with only its wooden stock visible. Behind the anchor the hull shows a large 8'-10' hole that extends to the bottom and almost to the centerline of the ship. This is the site where the "Brunswick" impacted the "Carlingford," and it can be seen why the "Carlingford" sank within just a few minutes after being struck.

Both fore and aft of the windlass are moderately sized square deck openings, presumably for the chain locker. Aft of the windlass is found a sturdy round fife rail mounted to the deck with a mast hole in the center. Lying on the starboard side along the length of the deck is a boom with its flared end and a half-circle notch cut into it. Moving aft, a cargo deck opening, a capstan, and then another moderately sized deck opening are found. This last opening has the top of the centerboard box running down the middle of it with chain draped over the top and both sides of the box. This apparently served as an additional chain storage area closer to the middle of the ship. Immediately behind this opening is the centerboard winch followed by a square bit for the foremast boom. Another circular fife rail and mast hole follow this. A belaying pin can be seen installed in this fife rail, and the deck in this area has many interesting metal fittings and parts scattered on it.

Further aft are two more cargo openings and then the cabin hole, which covers the width of the ship. The cabin itself is missing, and deck planking is missing along the centerline of the ship between the cargo openings and cabin hole, exposing the deck framing underneath. Visible inside the cabin hole are the curved undersides of the hull leading up to the missing transom. The rudder post stands high at the extreme stern with a steering quadrant balanced on top and the rudder turned to starboard. Because of the large open area at the stern, the cargo hold is easily penetrated here, and the full length of the ship can be swum underneath the deck. The centerboard box divides the hold for part of this

length, and the hold can be entered/exited at several points through the cargo openings or collision hole at the bow.

A burbot was found hiding inside the windlass, and Mike managed to find a way to torment this fish by catching it by the tail and holding onto it. Mike then proceeded to repeat his act a second time with the same fish after it got away, making the poor fish the only one to be caught on the lake that day without a hook…twice. Many burbots are wary of divers, and now we know why. After surfacing the seas were found to be calm again at 1'-2', but a thunderstorm was seen building over Long Point, so it was time to head in. Underwater conditions on the "Carlingford" were the same excellent conditions found on "Schooner B," meaning visibility and lighting conditions should be great for Kevin's eastern basin Osprey trips on the weekend of July 16-17.