

On Saturday, April 29, David VanZandt and Kevin Magee opened the season by doing their first wreck dives in Lake Erie for this year. Cindy LaRosa could not make the trip because of previous commitments and a desire not to freeze to death. They dove at Barcelona, NY, with Osprey Dive Charters, who has been running dive trips since the start of April. The boat was very full with 13 other divers, all eager to hit the lake. Most were dry, some were students, and some hadn't ever dove the lake before, including two wet divers.

The first wreck was the "Brunswick," a wooden steamer. It is in 100' of water, and the mooring is attached to the large boiler at the stern. The wreck lies roughly north-south with the stern to the south. The wreck is unfortunately silted up to the gunwales, resulting in not much to look at except the boilers, the deck, several cargo openings, some sparse deck machinery, and the forward bow structure. Visibility was about 30'-40', allowing a fair portion of the wreck to be seen, but visibility was not as good as is normally encountered later in the season when it can hit 100'. No thermocline was evident, and the water temperature was 36-38 deg. F from top to bottom. Dive time was 36 minutes, including 4 minutes at 15', and maximum depth recorded was 93'.

During the surface interval, the wet divers demonstrated what hypothermia symptoms look like. Fortunately, the "Southwind" is a fully enclosed boat with heaters and hot coffee, and they eventually stopped their uncontrolled shivering and spilling of coffee from shaking hands. The dry divers enjoyed the nice day.

The second dive was on the "Carlingford," a wooden schooner who collided with the "Brunswick," causing both to sink several miles apart. This wreck is in 95' of water, and the mooring is attached to a concrete block near the bow with a jump line leading over to the wreck. The wreck lies roughly east-west with the bow to the west. This wreck has 10'-15' of relief off the bottom and is beautifully preserved. The hull and decking are intact, and there are lots of winches, deadeyes, and interesting machinery. Mast post holes and booms are visible on the deck. Near the stern, the decking is partially collapsed, allowing for easy penetration into the interior of the ship and out the forward hatches. The rudder and bottom hull shape are both easily examined at the stern. A large anchor is evident off the bow on the port side, and the collision damage from the "Brunswick" hitting the "Carlingford" is also visible at this point. Overall, this is a great wreck and highly recommended. Viz was again about 30'-40'. Water temperature was warmer at a balmy 38-40 deg. F. Dive time was 28 minutes, including 4 minutes at 15', and maximum depth recorded was 92'.

The weather throughout the day was beautiful with air temperatures at 50-55 deg. F, a sunny cloudless sky, and perfectly mirror-flat conditions. It was a beautiful day to be out on the lake. Let the dive season begin!