

On Saturday, July 15, Gary Humel, Michelle Foss, Cindy LaRosa, and Kevin Magee went out diving on Nobody's boat while Greg Ondus went in his boat. We all left Lorain around 11:00 and encountered 3'-4' seas. Despite some trepidation, the weather was sunny and the wind moderate, so we decided to proceed on to the western basin's islands. Gary broke the waves, and Ondus followed along behind. As the trip proceeded to the west, the waves calmed to 2'-3' seas.

The first dive was the "Philip Minch," a wooden steamer that sank in the early 1900's east of Pelee Island in 45' of water. It is not to be confused with the steel ship "Philip Minch" that collided with and sank the "Vigor" later in the century. Greg, Cindy, and Kevin entered the water first and found that we were hooked to the boiler and engine at the stern. Viz was decent at 5'-7', and the water was a balmy 60 deg F with no strong thermocline present except a slight cold layer 5' off the bottom. Using Ondus' reel, we explored the area around the boiler, then Cindy and Kevin used Kevin's reel to explore the extensive decking leading away from the boiler. We ran out all 150' of line without reaching the end of the deck. Greg passed by on his reel and proceeded a little further to report that the decking, which is only 1'-2' off the bottom, eventually blends into the silt. Cindy briefly used her reel to explore the area away from the boiler towards the stern, but it did not go far.

The wreck, as with most wrecks less than 50' deep, is highly broken up due to winter ice. It is also covered with a thick layer of zebra mussels, unlike the central basin wrecks which have been almost completely cleared of their zebra mussels by the gobies. There were a large number of gobies present on the "Minch," including many large ones up to 6"-8" in length, but they obviously are not making a dent in the zebra mussel population. Perhaps it's the silty water that keeps the mussels supplied with enough food to keep them vigorous and populating at a rate faster than they are being eaten. Also found were a couple of freshwater sponges.

Gary and Michelle were the next ones to enter the water, and while they were below a large, dark thunderstorm became evident over Pelee Point. It was completely dark on the northern horizon with lightning and thunder, but it passed by going southeast towards Cleveland. The wind kicked up, and so we decided to take shelter at Kelley's Island after Gary came back up. A Lightning Diver certification was earned by everyone aboard.

At Kelley's Island, we anchored on the "F.H. Prince," a wooden steamer that sank off the east coast of the island in 15' of water. The water was flat by the time we reached the island, the sun was shining brightly, and the viz was a spectacular 15'-20'. The wreck was visible from the surface, and the dive seemed like a tropical snorkel trip. Everyone got in the water and spent an hour chasing the bass, gobies, and crayfish which populate the wreck. Afterwards, we explored the bottom around the boats and swam in the 70 deg. F water. Gary

earned an Octopus Diver certification by finding the best way to conserve air - use someone else's and let them carry that heavy tank and equipment while you simply breath off of them.

The trip back to Lorain was delightful and uneventful. A waterspout was briefly sighted forming to the north under a small dark cloud base, but it only got about 1/3 of the way down before pulling back up into the clouds. The seas were calm at 1', making for a fast trip back.