

On Sunday, August 27, Mike Holda, Cindy LaRosa, and Kevin Magee went diving on Holda's 19' boat "Erie Lady" out of the Rocky River boat launch. The weather report was ambiguous about the severity of the weather, but upon exiting the harbor, choppy 2'-3' seas, an overcast sky, and gusty winds were encountered. Because of the rough weather and the clear-looking surface water, it was decided to try some of the closer near-shore wrecks.

The first wreck was the "John Pridgeon," a large wooden steamer that sank in 1909 and is upside down on the bottom in 60' of water off Avon. By the time we arrived at the wreck site, the seas had built to occasional 4' waves with rain and a dark western horizon. After waiting for a while, it was decided that Mike and Kevin would do a quick 10 minute dive to check out the viz while Cindy watched the boat. The viz was discovered to be a respectable 5'-10', which allowed the wreck to be found even though the anchor was slightly off the wreck. After surfacing, it was discovered the weather had improved, so Cindy geared up and joined the dive.

The stern is pointing east, and its large four-bladed propeller could be seen attached to the raised keel. The hull is mostly bare wood, and some metal sheathing was seen running in a strip around the aft portion of the hull near the propeller. A large opening in the wreck is on the south side a short distance forward from the prop, and a boiler can be seen poking through the hull at this point. A surprisingly strong current was noticed to be running from south to north, making it hard to swim on the south side of the ship without being pushed into the hull. Swimming towards the bow, the keel flattens out into a deck-looking structure that is actually the bottom of the ship. The bow itself is at the far end and is sticking up out of the mud with the keel snapped off and lying flat leading up to it.

This was Mike's lucky dive. First, it was his 50th dive, a nice round number. Congratulations, Mike! Second, Kevin found a knife that looked strangely like Mike's knife. It was Mike's knife. Third, during the swim to the bow, Mike became a member of the honorary Anchor Finders Club by finding a nice specimen - his first - which he spent the rest of the dive recovering along with its chain and 65' of rope. Kevin and Cindy had lost him at this point, and Kevin was heard to comment, "What is that clanking sound?" to Cindy.

The second dive was on the "Two Fannies," a wooden bark that sank in 1890 in 55' of water off Bay Village. Visibility proved to be good at 10'-15', allowing the wreck to be thoroughly examined. The sides of the ship have collapsed outward and the deck has fallen down, but the prominent centerboard is still standing along with portions of the hull's ribs and T-shaped deck supports along the centerline. The wooden frames for the cargo hatches are also still hanging from the centerboard but without the surrounding deck or cargo holds underneath. The large rudder is also still standing at the western end of the wreck and towers far above the bottom. A large winch was found at the bow lying on the collapsed

decking on the bottom, and a capstan was seen near the center of the ship lying on the bottom propped up against the centerboard. Many wooden structural pieces of the ship can be seen lying in a jumble around the wreck, allowing close inspection of the individual parts required to build a ship.

The ship's parts were easy to examine not only because of the good viz, but also because a mass die-off of zebra mussels was found to be occurring on the wreck. Whole clumps of gray, open-shelled mussels could be seen hanging in strands or loose bunches from various parts of the wreck, and most of the horizontal surfaces are bare wood with only a thin dark algae covering. This dark coloration can also be seen covering the mud around the wreck. Lots of white "snot," which looked like the insides of zebra mussels, was seen floating around in the water column. No living zebra mussels were seen on the wreck except at the stern on the rudder, where many gobies - including several large 6" ones - were also found. Additionally, two colonies of freshwater sponges were found growing on the very top of the rudder post, which is quite unusual for the central basin.

No current was observed on this dive, the thermocline was observed to be at 47'-50' on both dives with a temperature of 56-58 deg F below it. Despite sunny weather and moderate 1'-3' seas upon surfacing, we were treated to the sight of 3 waterspouts forming in a north-south line to our east off Cleveland, where there was obviously some very bad weather and heavy rain. Two of the waterspouts were seen to actually touch down and persist for 10-15 minutes before disappearing into the rain. A very neat sight!