

On Saturday, August 17, fourteen (14) divers met in Dunkirk, NY, the home of Osprey Charter's new boat, "Horizon," to go diving. The boat was toured by the early arrivals who hadn't seen it before. It is impressively large and spacious and is conveniently located on the city pier with free parking available right next to the boat. It was a LEWD club trip, but there were at least a few divers from two other clubs present as well. There were also three riders along to enjoy the trip and watch the divers fuss with their toys. The divers were Ted Green, Greg Ondus, Pete Deegan, John Pinter, Jerry Carrick, Mark Miller, K.B., Dan McCulbough, Jon Tepas, Ann Stephenson, Georgann and Mike Wachter, Cindy LaRosa, and Kevin Magee. The riders were Rita Montorsi, Pete's wife Jennifer, and Jon's girlfriend Laurie. Captaining the boat was Jim Herbert with Roger's able assistance.

The first wreck was "Schooner B," also commonly called the "Washington Irving." It is a small two-masted schooner that sank in 115' of water, and it is the wreck depicted in the wooden plaque found aboard the "Southwind." The sky was clear and sunny despite the surrounding thunderstorms on land. The seas, however, were rough with 3'-5' waves and a stiff wind. While this would have been marginal for any other dive boat, it was an easy trip for a ship the size of the "Horizon" to make. At least one person is known to have felt a little ill from the ride, but everyone else handled it well. After gearing up and entering the water, it was discovered that there was 30'-40' visibility on the bottom with only a slight dimming of the available light. The thermocline was at 60' with 75 deg F water above and 50 deg F water below. The wreck, which lies resting at an angle to the port side, has only its starboard railing and a small portion of its deck showing. Despite this, there is an intact 20'-25' long bowsprit, a windlass, and two standing masts. The masts rise at 60 deg angles to within 75' of the surface. At the top of each mast are two cross members used to support rigging.

Examining the railing, three deadeyes can be seen for each mast. Part of the stern's transom is visible, and the starboard davit for the yawl boat can be seen at the corner. Part of one cargo hatch can barely be seen peeking out from the silt. It was noticed that this wreck has significantly silted even more than it was a couple of years ago. The base of the bowsprit where it attaches to the bow was once visible, but now it is completely hidden under the silt. Likewise, the anchor that used to lay on the bottom on the starboard side of the bow is no longer visible. It is estimated the whole wreck is now obscured by at least 2' more silt than when it was last visited and may be completely gone from view in 4-6 more years at the current rate.

The second wreck visited was the "Brunswick," a wooden steamer that sank in 95' of water after striking the schooner "Carlingford," which lies several miles away. Despite the fact that it was headed south towards Dunkirk when it sank, the bow now points north. The mooring is tied to the large boiler and engine at the stern. Upon descending it was found that visibility was disappointing at only 10' with subdued light levels due to the lowering sun. The thermocline was at 70'

with the same water temperatures as found previously. Examining the boiler, the fire door can be seen to be open, and the stern's rounded shape can be made out from its raised sides, which stand 5'-8' off the bottom in many places. The decking is a jumble of boards filled with silt.

Heading towards the bow, it was discovered that only the port gunwale is exposed above the lake bottom by about 6". The starboard gunwale was not noticed. The deck, cargo hatches, and other features have all completely disappeared below the lake bottom. Equipment along the centerline of the ship, such as the capstan and winch, could only barely be seen at the limits of visibility. Reaching the bow, the forecastle, or bow deckhouse, is intact and rises 8'-10' off the bottom. The roof is intact, and the rear portion is open, allowing the structure to be easily entered. This wreck, sadly, is also disappearing at a tremendous rate into the silt. A couple of years ago the hatches and some decking could still be seen. It is estimated that the gunwales will disappear in the next year or two, making the bow and stern two separate dives except for the navigationally talented.

In fact, the visibility was so poor that many people ended up being lost off the wreck. The result was a couple of free ascents and lift bags being deployed in the surrounding waters. One person - who shall remain nameless - surfaced after a lengthy but incorrectly directed swim - at least 1000' away from the boat. After a long swim back, he managed to pull his arm out of its socket boarding in heavy seas with lots of gear and an old injury. Ouch! It hurt to look at, but it was later corrected back onshore at the nearby hospital. Meanwhile, back on the deco bar, Cindy and Kevin found entertaining things to do while waiting for their safety stop to be over.

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The next day, Sunday, August 18, was overcast with a strong wind blowing. The wave heights appeared to be similar to the previous day, so the decision was made to try to reach the "Acme," an arched steamer in 130' of water. However, after clearing Dunkirk's harbor, 4'-6' seas were encountered with occasional 7' waves. Therefore, the decision was made to turn around and live another day. While disappointed, no one was displeased to be back on solid ground. Nancy Miller, who had wisely stayed ashore on both days, failed her "diver girlfriend" tests by failing to pick up new sunglasses for Ted Green after Greg Ondus turned them into "Wachter sunglasses," which always have a big crack in one of the lenses. She also failed to untangle Greg's reel to the best of our knowledge. Afterwards, everyone went their separate ways, but at least a few people apparently stopped by Presque Isle off Erie, PA, to view the Perry Monument, see where Perry's ships were built and later scuttled, walk the trails in the woods and marches, and sit on the beaches and watch the BIG waves roll in.