

On Thursday, July 4, Don Blocksom, Cindy LaRosa, and Kevin Magee did their patriotic duty and went diving. They went out of Rocky River on Don's boat "Bait" and were greeted by calm 1' seas, blue skies, and 85 deg F temperatures. Since the day was so nice, it was decided to make the 14-mile run to the "Dundee," a large three-masted schooner/barge that sank after foundering in a storm in 1900. It is lying upright in 70' of water with the bow pointing west. Both the bow and stern are collapsed, but the majority of the hull and decking are intact with large cargo hatches down its length.

After skillfully hooking the extreme stern at the eastern end, the surface viz was seen to be a wonderful 20'-25', and the temperature was a warm 75-78 deg F. Upon descending at 20'-30', the temperature was noticed to decrease with a corresponding decrease in viz. At 50'-60' a sharper decrease in temperature was noticed, and the viz reduced to a brown 8'-13'. Bottom temperature was 48-49 deg F. Upon swimming towards the bow, however, the viz improved to a decent 10'-15', and the water temperature increased slightly to 50-51 deg F. The lighting conditions were somewhat dim, making the viz somewhat less.

Large zebra mussels were noticed to be on the wreck, unlike their complete absence in previous years, but they were also very haphazard in their covering of various portions. Some places are bare wood, some timbers are only covered on the sides, and some objects are completely encrusted. Still distinguishable, however, are the various interesting wreck features, including a standing rudder, broken mast stubs, large winch, square bit posts, sets of four rigging turnbuckles on the gunwales, donkey boiler, large windlass tilted towards the port side, standing bow post, and hawser pipes with chains at the bow. Small details like the individual chain links on the anchor chains and the ribbing on the windlass spindle were not obscured. Notable was the fact that only two small gobies were seen during the dive.

After a nice first dive, it was decided to try the "Duke Luedtke," a tugboat that sank in 1993 after springing a leak, taking one Coast Guard seaman with her. The bow points south, and the wreck lies in 70' of water 13 miles off Avon Point. Once again, Don skillfully managed to hook the wreck. Upon descending, however, it was discovered that viz was much poorer with only 5'-8' of viz on the upper structure and 3'-5' near the bottom. Again, no thermocline was detected, and the water temperatures matched those on the "Dundee." The wreck is heavily encrusted with large zebra mussels except at the extreme bottom near the stern, where a little of the original white trim paint was seen. Encrusted fire hoses are wrapped around the stern area, and tires ring the sides and bow of the wreck. Not much else was seen on the wreck, which has deteriorated dramatically over the past five years. Gone are the radar, light bulbs, fire extinguishers, and other interesting everyday items.

The final dive was on the "Craftsman" barge and crane, which foundered in 45' of water in 1958 one mile off Avon Point. After hooking the wreck, the surface

temperature was found to be a warm 80 deg F with a decent 15' of surface viz. Upon descending, however, a strong thermocline was found at 35' right above the deck with 55 deg F water underneath it. Visibility was once again disappointing with only 5'-8' on the deck and 3'-5' on the bottom. An attempt was made to swim to the crane 100' off the barge, but it was somehow missed in the low viz. After returning to the barge and circling its deck once, everyone decided to head up.

Overall, it was a beautiful day to be on the lake, and the viz on the "Dundee" was decent despite the fact that the other wrecks' visibility was disappointing. But conditions continue to improve from a few weeks earlier, so there's hope that things will be even better as July progresses.