

On Saturday, July 29, Mike Holda and Kevin Magee went out of Rocky River to go diving on Mike's boat "Erie Lady." Unfortunately, Cindy LaRosa couldn't make it because of prior work commitments. The weather report, which called for thunderstorms and 2'-4' seas, apparently chased away all other boaters because the boat ramp, marina, and lake were deserted. Naturally, the weather forecast was deceptive. It was actually a pretty decent day for diving with lightly overcast skies, only occasional light rain, 1'-2' seas for the most part, and occasional 3' seas when a thunderstorm would go by in the distance. The sun even peaked out at times, making for a surprisingly pleasant day overall.

The first wreck dove was the "Duke Luedtke," a tug boat that went down in recent times 14 miles off Cleveland in 68' of water. The anchor missed the wreck, but we tied off with a reel and swam straight to it. It'd been a while since we dove this wreck, and quite a few changes were evident. First, many zebra mussels are now on this wreck, more than on the "Admiral," in fact. The original red and white paint is still visible in spots, but mussels now occupy the railings and most surfaces. The second most obvious thing was the number of missing items. The radar, of course, is long gone, but so are most glass windows, the light bulb, the box of welding rods, etc. that made this wreck neat. It has been picked over and most of the normal, everyday items are missing.

The deck still has fire and garden hoses wrapped around, and the front storage locker was opened recently (no zebra mussels inside yet), but the coiled hoses inside were left intact. We closed the locker again. Mike spotted a hanging fire extinguisher that is still present. Very noticeable at the stern is how sharply the stern is penetrating into the lake bottom. It appears as if the wreck is sinking for a second time stern first. In fact, maximum depth can be 1'-2' more than the lake depth by examining this area closely.

Viz was moderate at 10'-15'. The bottom temperature was 52 deg F, and the thermocline was at 48'. Mike discovered a dive knife on the wreck, only to discover that it not only looked like his knife, it WAS his knife. Easy lost, easy found. Mike also experimented with diving without a hood - by necessity - and discovered that he could withstand 30 minutes before he was cold and it was time to come up.

The second dive was a new wreck to us, the "Bay Coal Schooner," which is in 55' of water 4 miles off Bay Village - thus, the name - and about one mile west of the "Two Fannies" wreck. Despite having only LORAN TD's to the wreck and after several false starts, Mike managed to locate the wreck. We again found the anchor was off the wreck, but the viz was so good that the ship could be seen below the anchor line during the descent. We had a great 20'-30' of viz and could see the full width of the boat.

It's sides are completely intact and stand about 2'-3' out of the silt. The bow is intact and has retained its shape. The stern is square cut and has also retained

its shape, including the curvature of the hull underneath it. The decking, however, is gone, and the cross members are also gone everywhere except amidships where a truncated centerboard is evident for about half its length. At the bow stands a mast post along with three other posts very near the bow that served an unknown purpose. Another mast post is visible near the stern. Despite the wreck's name, it was supposedly a scow, and no coal was evident.

The wreck is small and can be seen in about 5-10 minutes, but we stayed and examined everything closely in detail, then swam into the debris field looking for stuff. With the great viz we were able to range far away without using a reel, but we only found a few beer cans. I guess we are not as lucky as Gary 'Mel Fischer' Humel. The bottom temperature was slightly warmer at 54 deg F, and the thermocline was shallower at 38'.

Upon surfacing, we were treated to the "John Brown," one of the last remaining WWII 'Liberty' transport ships afloat, steaming fast at full speed about 1000 yards away. It was visiting Cleveland as part of a tour of the Great Lakes to raise money and was apparently out for a day cruise for paying customers. Because it came so close, we were able to observe the self-defense guns on its bow and stern, its cargo masts, its center bridge, and people milling about on the deck underneath parade flags. A few minutes later, a WWII Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bomber flew overhead, apparently also part of the tour and a re-creation of a WWII attack. It was a great ending to a great day!