

DIVE LOG

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the United Divers of New Hampshire

**Cover Photos By
Kerry Hurd**

Story Starts on Page 5



INSIDE THIS EDITION

- ◆ **New Hampshire's Hidden Lakes**
- ◆ **From The Editor**
- ◆ **Diving in New England is Great**
- ◆ **Summer Solstice Cruise**

Dive Log is the bi-monthly newsletter of the United Divers of New Hampshire, an organization dedicated to educating divers and expanding the knowledge of diving in the State of New Hampshire and New England

Submissions

We welcome your input. Your stories, photographs, educational information, and other editorial contributions are what make this newsletter tick. Contributions may be e-mailed to Karen at *karen@gryffin-designs.com*. Submissions can also be sent on paper, CD-ROM, or PC floppy to:

Karen Marion
4 Wildwood Lane
Amherst, NH 03031-2107

Please include a brief byline and author contact information with your submission. Submission shall automatically constitute an expressed warranty by the contributor that the material is original and is in no way an infringement on the rights of others. While no compensation is paid for published submissions, a byline indicating the source of an article will always be provided. Authors grant *Dive Log* and United Divers of New Hampshire first print rights to the submission. *Dive Log* and its editors reserve the right to edit all materials as needed. The opinions stated in the articles in *Dive Log* are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the United Divers of New Hampshire or the editors of the *Dive Log*. For further information, please contact Karen at (603) 423-9055.

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Advertising

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Website:

Newsletters and other current info are available at our website: www.udnh.org, graciously hosted by Jake & Linda Richter.

New Hampshire's Hidden Lakes

By Willis Corson

Sometime ago, I asked Willis to provide me with his list of New Hampshire's hidden lakes. Here is an e-mail he sent me.

Ken & I stumble upon these sites by reading remarks in the newspaper. For example, we have read that Merrymeeting Lake, New Durham is listed as one of the five cleanest in the state. So we investigated last year. It has shown the best vis of any fresh water body that we have dove. The boat ramp is state owned and has a portable outhouse and is free. There is no shore diving.

I think few divers know that. Another of the top five cleanest is New Found Lake; it is super clear and has a modern fancy boat ramp and restrooms and is free for launching boats.

There used to be no public access until the state recently bought the land and put in this very impressive launch and restrooms for free to the public.

It would be nice to compile a list of lakes that have free access. I think Winnepesaukee has no free sites; all boat launching is by fee, and the water is not always the clearest, and the boat traffic is bad.

I think the boat traffic is not the best on Merrymeeting Lake in the summer, but in September or October, it is open house to divers.

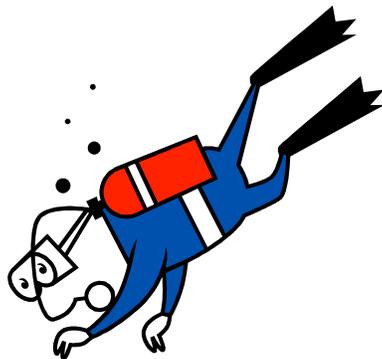
We have read in the paper that NH has around 800 lakes that are 10 acres or larger (state property); 500 of those have no public access, which the state is slowly remedying. And some of those which have "public access," the local property owners have put up no-trespassing signs or taken over the property. And the state wants to reclaim these state-owned beaches and boat launches.

The battle for access is between the property owners on the lakes and the State of NH. There is a big push to open up more of these lakes, but it is a long, slow battle.

Willis

If anyone else knows of hidden lakes as dive sites in New Hampshire, please e-mail me your secrets for a future publication.

Steve/Editor



From The Editor

Hi all,

Greetings, and welcome to my final issue! Yes, that's right, Steve Cantelli is picking up editor position for the Dive Log. Thanks, Steve, and to all the contributors over the last couple of years. My life has taken many turns the last couple of years, and I haven't been diving. :(I'm sure I'll get back in the water, but for now, the road is calling, and I plan to travel for awhile, getting acquainted with this beautiful country of ours! I wish you all well, and if I end up back in New England, I'm sure you'll all hear from me again.

Take care, my friends, and happy diving,

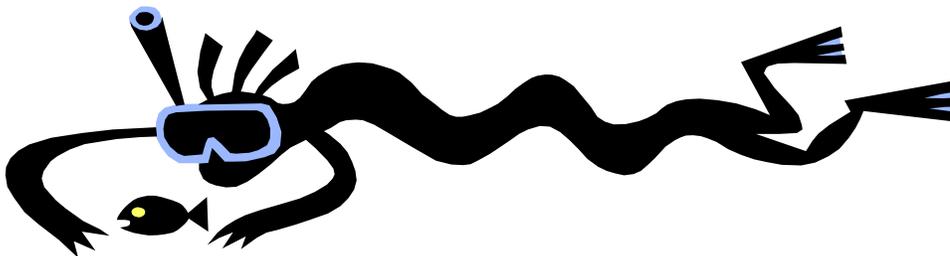
Karen

I would like everyone to wish Karen our best on her future path, wherever it may bring her. I for one will miss her. Her great photos and slides and narration will be missed. I just recently learned that I had more in common with her than I had known. Sometimes you think you know a lot about people but can be wrong. I hope we cross paths again someday to find out more about our commonality. "Everything for a reason".

Hi all,

I want you all to know that when I usually volunteer for something, it is not this difficult. I volunteered to be the Editor thinking what a snap it would be. The software although interesting, is difficult, at least for now. I am getting the hang of it slowly and I have the drive to get there. If this issue seems a little rough, bare with me it will improve. Think of this as fine wine, "It will get better with age".

Thanks
Steve



Diving in New England is Great! by Kerry Hurd

A dive buddy recently said to me that she is looking forward to traveling somewhere that has “great” diving. I was surprised because we had just done two great dives at Folly Cove! Perhaps our definitions of “great” are different or depend on different criteria.

What makes a dive great for me includes the sights seen, the animals encountered, and the sheer experience of being underwater.

I have been on some dives where there doesn't seem to be much around. That is when I remind myself to slow down and look. I make sure that I go slow enough to watch a sea star traveling. I stop to watch a crab and observe the fascinating movement of mouthparts and legs. Sometimes I'm lucky enough to catch a flounder grabbing a few bites of food. Twice I have seen a flounder changing colors and patterns - so amazing! Sometimes a grubby sculpin is revealed to me (often by my sharp-eyed buddy) under swaying seaweed. Even hermit crabs and snails are cool to watch, by comparing the different types, colors, and movements.

It is always a treat for me to see a skate. Is it male or female? Winter or thorny? I examine its eyes, which are one of the most fascinating things to see under the water. I watch how it moves - I really like seeing its little “feet” as it goes across the bottom. Sometimes a skate will take flight flapping its wings gracefully - an incredible sight!

Cunners are common at the sites I dive. Rather than just glancing at them, I take a real look at them. Do they always show the dark spot at the base of the dorsal fin? How big are they? I have seen everything from tiny juveniles to adults about ten inches in length. Are they schooling? Individuals? Aggressive? Passive? Frightened? I always try to notice a fish's reaction to me. I am a visitor in its home and so I try to be as unobtrusive as possible. I want to view behavior as natural as possible. I look at how many fish appear to be indifferent to divers. I also notice how many immediately scoot away!

There are the sculpin family members as well - some of my favorites. I mentioned the grubby sculpin earlier, usually appearing as a miniature version of the shorthorn sculpin. A grubby sculpin usually sports three dark bands on its body. The shorthorn sculpin is tear-dropped shaped with big lips and bulbous eyes - an appearance so attractive my wife and I once used a picture of one for our Christmas card! More streamlined than the shorthorn and also much less common in my experience, the longhorn sculpin is one of the prettiest fish I have seen.

The most flamboyant member of the sculpin family is the sea raven - always a treat to see! Sea ravens are various shades of brown, red, yellow, and orange, and have a large variety of patterning. They have “frills” all over. Often a sea raven will stay still, so I can really look at it. I check how long its “beard” is. I examine its eyes, which may show radiating features. If it does swim away, I watch the pectoral fins sweep out and the large tail as it fans back and forth - so cool!

The creatures I have mentioned so far are fairly common in the Gulf of Maine, especially during the summer months. Every once in a while, something very rare and special can happen when you least expect it.

One such occasion happened during the summer of 2002 while diving at the Nubble Lighthouse. My dive buddy came over quickly, and tugged on my fin. I swam over a bit and saw what I thought was a gray boulder. Only this "boulder" was moving, and coming towards us! It was a torpedo ray - the first and only one I have ever seen (so far). What an amazing and fascinating creature! I was able to swim with him for several minutes, examining the disk-shaped body with a shark's tail as it moved through the water - simply fantastic!

Another occasion happened at the end of September 2003, on a night dive at Back Beach. My buddy and I had done one night dive, and had come up to discuss what we had seen. The large quantity of sea gooseberries was pretty amazing, the sea raven was very nice (and big!), and the lobsters and crabs were out in abundance. All in all, it was a very nice dive. We then did a second dive, and within a couple of minutes, we were with squids! A pair of them graced us with their presence for about ten minutes. They would move away a little, then let us approach, then move away again, and let us approach again. They are such wonderful creatures to watch! When they decided they had had enough of us, they used jet propulsion to vanish from sight. This dive is one of my top dives of all time!

I am compelled to conclude that diving in New England IS great. Sometimes I need to slow down and look for special moments, and other times they are thrust upon me. Occasionally on a dive I will stop and consider what I'm doing. Here I am, an air-breathing mammal, submerged in a liquid environment. I take a look around, and am fascinated by the fact that I am here, able to breathe underwater, look at everything around me, and experience encounters that few people are able to.

At the end of each dive, as I see the surface approaching, I begin to think when will the next dive be? How soon can I get back in the water? What other treasures of the sea await me? I eagerly look forward to my next dive.

Special thanks go to the wonderful friends who contribute so much to my experiences, both under and above water, including Trish, Brandy, Mike, Steve, and, of course, Linda.



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Wednesday Night Fireworks Dives @Hampton Beach!



Club Meetings

Meetings are held the first and third Mondays of each month, January through November. We encourage potential members to attend a meeting or two to experience our club before joining. The meetings are held at the YMCA on 30 Mechanic St. (off of Elm Street) in Manchester. The meetings start at 7:00 PM. Each meeting consists of a short business portion followed by a variety of presentations and discussions. Immediately following the club has an hour of pool time for swimming, trying out gear, and the occasional game of pool volleyball or underwater hockey. Members and guests often meet afterwards at a local restaurant for food and drink.

Extreme Weather

Meetings will be held if the YMCA is open. You can call them at (603) 623-3558. Check close to the meeting time as the front desk often has no advance warning of early closures.

Membership

Annual dues for membership for 2003 in the United Divers of New Hampshire are \$30/individual or \$45/family. Dues are not prorated for members who join later in the year. To join, please contact Don Eva at (603) 672-5608

Get in the Swim

After every meeting, the YMCA pool is open to our dive club for an hour of fun and fitness.

Don't wait for the ice to thaw before trying out that new equipment, the pool is the perfect place. Check out the club calendar for special presentations in the pool like dive knife use or trying out a dry suit. So bring a suit and a towel to every meeting and get into the swim.

United Divers of New Hampshire

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Dive Log editor	Karen Marion	(603) 423-9055

UDNH Summer Solstice Cruise June 2, 2003

Photos by Lea Nichols
Story by Stephen Cantelli

On May 16, 2003 Lea Nichols sent an e-mail to the club:

Summer Solstice Cruise on MV Mt. Washington

June 21 is the longest day of the year and falling on a Saturday it is the perfect date for a Dinner Cruise with the family. The dinner is a sea & beef buffet. There will be music & dancing. The ship leaves the dock at Weirs Beach at 7 PM and returns at 10 PM. Tickets \$39 per person. Additional information available at cruisenh.com.

Well here are some photos of the trip. Good Job Lea.





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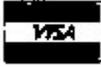
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MORE SUMMER SOLSTICE PHOTOS



Tom with his Birthday Present - DEPENDS!



Kerry & Linda Hurd



Watch for more Summer Solstice Photos in another edition. Lea provided a large volume of GREAT photos.



USEFUL INFORMATION

Weather

Current marine weather for New England can be accessed online at nws.fsu.edu/buoy/

Tides

Tide information for New England can be accessed online at www.maineharbors.com

Club Events

United Divers event calendar can be accessed online at www.udnh.org/calendar.htm



Well Gang, that is my first newsletter in conjunction with Karen. Thanks Karen, again.

**Look out later this month for the next exciting issue January/February 2004.
Steve Cantelli/Editor**