

MEETING MINUTES

April 9th, 2025

Attendees (12): John Ratcliffe (Chair), Dennis Cartwright (Treasurer), Tim Vezina, Melissa Perks, Gerry Carter, Rick Menard, Barry Edgington, Nancy Binnie, Bev Sawchuk, Jim Dunfield, Chris Holloway, Sandy Sutherland.



1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 19:05. This was an in-person meeting at the Clocktower Brew Pub, Westboro (418 Richmond Rd).

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 2 October 2024

A motion to adopt the minutes of the last meeting was proposed by Jim Dunfield, seconded by Gerry Carter, and carried by all.

3. News and Recap of Recent Events

There was death this October on a charter on the Muskie. Jimmy Lockard was 75 years old and had heart issues during a dive.

SOS had a booth at the **Toronto Outdoor Adventure Show** (Feb 21-23).

The Niagara Diver's Association cancelled their **Annual Shipwrecks Symposium** in Welland cancelled this year due to low attendance in the years since the pandemic. This would have been the 30th year.

The SOS Picton Chapter organized a **mooring workshop** with Raimund Krob in Brockville last weekend (Apr 5th). John shared a link to this on the chapter FB page.

There is a new **Quality Inn in Prescott** which is offering a 15% discount for divers, Quality Inn in Kingston offers same discount.

There will be a **military exercise near Cornwall** Apr 25-27, the Long Sault Parkway will be closed during this time.

John attended the **SOS AGM** on Dec 1 (virtually) and provided a quick summary of the meeting. He's sent out his meeting notes by email. The meeting was held in Toronto, with a virtual option.

Upcoming Events:

Tim says Scuba Finatics will be holding a Scuba Garage Sale on June 7th where divers can come and buy and sell used gear; they will also be holding their annual Canada Day Dive and BBQ at Lock 21 on July 1.

4. Treasurer's Report (Dennis)

Cheque for \$49.63 to Barry for extra keys for donation boxes.

Tim provided \$160 in donations from Scuba Finatics for deposit.

Dennis provided an update on financials; current bank balance (excluding \$160 from Finatics) is \$5,542.88.

Dennis and John can approve small expenses; larger expenditures will need approval of chapter members, by a vote.

5. Donation Boxes (Barry + Gerry)

Barry and Gerry plan to do tour of dive shops to collect donations and update material. Barry recently had knee surgery and Gerry had back surgery.

Chris H. to provide more maps of Prescott Scuba Park; he has updated Eng and Fre versions.

New box from Canus Plastics? Tim says Canus doesn't have plans of the old boxes, would need to one of the boxes in as a model. Tim asks if we even need a box to bring to events - John doesn't think its absolutely necessary.

Barry wonders if we should take box back from EPSO if its not really being used – to verify.

6. Buoys (John)

Chapter could use a buoy coordinator, John has been doing this for a while in addition to duties as Chapter Chair. Role of buoy coordinator:

- Make sure partners have the buoys and lines they need
- Email Coast Guard when buoys are deployed/removed
- Update SOS website (new website doesn't have this feature yet)
- Lead new mooring projects (if interested)

Sites to moor:

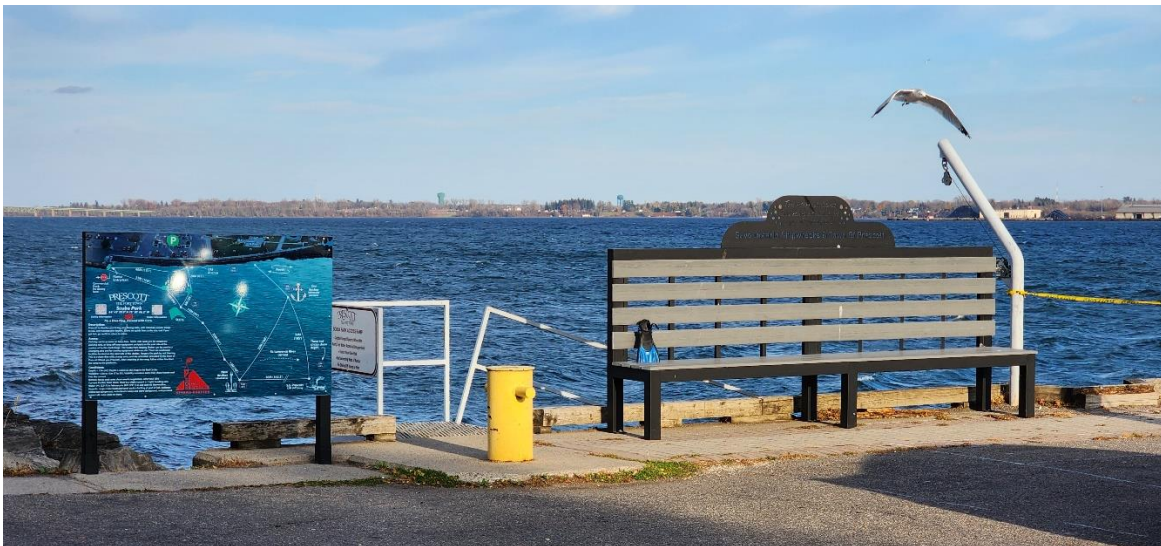
- Fred Mercur
- Power House
- Eastcliffe Hall
- Belly Dumper
- Rothesay
 - o What is the status? Tim thinks Chris Harnett swam to the buoy to shore last fall
 - o Would like to replace with a smaller buoy
 - o Tim asks if it's even worth putting a buoy there? John agrees, doesn't think it's a high priority. Tim to talk to Hubert Chrétien, he's one of the few people to tie up a boat there.

- Lock 21

- o Luc Lafontaine sent an email last fall proposing that we get the Coast Guard to drop concrete mooring blocks at Lock 21
- o John replied to Luc a month or two ago outlining some of the challenges of this idea, but has yet to receive a response from Luc; one issue is that CG wants a minimum water depth of 50' to drop any blocks, would be difficult to get this depth at Lock 21, high current would also be a challenge
- o Gerry – why would people tie up there? Is purpose of buoys to keep boaters away?
- o Mel – doesn't think boaters ever come close to the site.

7. Prescott Scuba Park

The City of Prescott has been very supportive of this Ottawa chapter, installing a new bench for divers at the ramp as well as moving the sign as shown below. There's some discussion about having some sort of privacy barrier in the changing rooms. The town of Prescott is also interested in any suggestions that we might have for improving tourism in Prescott. To that end, the Quality Inns in Prescott and Kingston are offering a diver's discount (I verified this with Prescott, and it is 15%). Hopefully it will be possible to do a presentation or opening in conjunction with Prescott to get some press. Jim will be coordinating with Dana at the city of Prescott.



New diver bench at the Prescott Scuba Park.

8. Lock 21 (John)

- Old gazebo is being torn down, need to replace and update SOS signage
- There was a meeting with Parks of the St. Lawrence on Nov 4 (2024); John wasn't able to attend as there was no virtual option, but Luc Lafontaine and others attended
 - o John provided notes from the meeting for members to review
- John emailed Liam Carson from Parks of the St. Lawrence recently to see if there were any updates; hasn't heard anything back yet
- Tim – would like to see dive tables there, like at Ivy Lea campground
- Moorings, as proposed by Luc:

- Rick – doesn't think this would work well
- Hard to get minimum 50 ft depth required by CG to drop blocks
- Chris H – where to put moorings – upstream?
Rick – how would divers exit upstream?

9. Summerstown Wreck (John)

John provided a quick update on a small wreck off the northwest side of Hogg Island, reported by a local boater, Jason Swerdferger, last summer; Jason wants to learn more about the wreck and wants to make sure it gets reported properly

John just reached out to Andrea Williams at the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (MCM), who coordinates marine archaeology licensing and information in the province, to see what the process is for reporting a historic wreck

At previous meeting Andy said Bob Dumont from Bob's Salvage might know something – Andy not present tonight

10. Chapter Elections

Positions available:

- Chair (incumbent – John)
 - John says he's been in this role since 2016, would be happy to pass it on to someone else
 - No nominations or volunteers
 - John remains in position
- Treasurer (incumbent – Dennis)
 - No nominations or volunteers
 - Dennis remains in position
- Secretary (vacant)
 - Previous secretary (Brennan Massey) stepped back from role due to other commitments
 - Chris Holloway volunteers for position – approved
- Buoy Coordinator (John)
 - Not an elected position, but would be good to have someone take over
 - No nominations or volunteers
 - John will continue as buoy coordinator

Dennis says we should think about transition planning, it's healthy for organization overall to have new leadership, rather than same people doing same jobs for years.

Tim – would be good to send something out to try and promote SOS more; could promote at their Canada Day event.

11. Diving Vintage Helmet (John)

John gave a brief presentation on his experience diving a vintage Siebe Gorman brass helmet from 1946 last fall, while in Labrador. The suit consists of a brass helmet, waxed canvas suit, weighed boots, and chest weights of 35 lbs each. It was extremely heavy on the surface, but surprisingly good in the water, with great visibility out the side windows.

11. Beyond the Edge

Barry Edgington presented some regulators from his collection, as well as an underwater adventure game, in the original box, based on the TV show: "Sea Hunt", which ran for four seasons starting in 1958 and still gets 7.7/10 on IMBD. In this, Lloyd Bridges starred as Mike Nelson, and from what I remember always climaxed with an underwater fight, cut hoses, and lots of bubbles.



12. New Business and Next Meeting Date

Thanks to all that attended, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

The next meeting will be on June 17th @7pm.