

1. Attendees (11): John Ratcliffe (Chair), Jeff Porter (Secretary), Chris Harnett, Frank Vieni, Iryna Volochay, Barry Edgington, Jeanette Rykken, Beverly Sawchuk, Christopher Holloway, Peter Noel, Jules Leduc.

2. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1909 at our usual space on the lower level of the Clocktower Brew Pub, 525 Bank Street.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting – 6 May 2019

Minutes of the 6 May 2019 meeting were reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Jules Leduc and seconded by Frank Vieni – motion carried.

4. News and Events

SOS Annual General Meeting (AGM) – June 1, Belleville.

John attended the SOS AGM in Belleville on June 1. Attendance was a bit low – 14 people total. Elections were held for the SOS Board; we have a new webmaster (John Raso) who will help improve the website. John Ratcliffe has shared the minutes from the AGM with chapter members for those who would like more details.

SOS 1000 Islands Clean Up Dive and BBQ – June 15, Brockville.

The 1000 Islands Chapter held their annual clean up dive and BBQ in Brockville on June 15, which was well-attended. They also installed several new concrete sculptures at Centeen Park.

Seaway Valley Divers Pig Roast – July 13, Crysler Park.

Several chapter members attended the Seaway Valley Divers annual Pig Roast on the weekend and dove on the “Eastcliffe Hall.”

Diving Accident at Lock 21

A very experienced British diver (Andy Phillips) went missing at Lock 21 on June 11; his body was recovered near Cornwall about a week later. No other information has been released yet. Reminder to everyone to be careful out there.

Road Closures at the Conestoga Site

The township of Edwardsburg-Cardinal had closed the road to the Connie site this spring because of the unusually high water levels. Most of the road has now been reopened, up to about 100 m east of the wreck.

Upcoming NAS I Course – August, Brockville

Chris Phinney will be teaching another NAS Level I course in Brockville next month. John asked members present to remind their friends, in case anyone wants to attend. It's a great course.



5. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Debbie Reinhart could not attend tonight but has provided an update.

The Ottawa Chapter's bank balance is \$6,603.14, which includes \$180.18 spent by Murray Hollis for a new decal for one of our large spar buoys, and \$39.66 in donations collected by Barry Edgington from our donation boxes at Sharky's Scuba and Kanata Dive Supply (KDS). Barry gave the \$39.66 in change to John to pass to Debbie for deposit into our account.

6. Donation Boxes

Barry Edgington spoke about our donation boxes at local dive shops, which he monitors. The primary purpose of the boxes is to get our message out to divers via pamphlets and brochures. Barry thinks that most people just aren't carrying as much loose change as they used to, since most people pay by card these days and don't carry cash. Barry thinks it makes most sense to collect the money from the donation boxes at the end of the dive season.

7. Volunteer Awards

John Ratcliffe commended Barry Edgington for his dedication to our Chapter over the years, including his work on the donation boxes, and presented him with a certificate to recognize him as our Volunteer of the Year for 2019.

8. Buoy Update

Buoy maintenance – John reported that he and Murray Hollis did some buoy maintenance on May 11. They drove down to Iroquois to pick up at our remaining buoys from Andy Bennis, as he wishes to step down from the position of Buoy Coordinator. They delivered a large spar buoy and small conical buoy to John Mondoux from the Seaway Valley club in Cornwall, before heading back to Ottawa.

All our buoys are currently stored at the home of Murray and Moira Hollis in Stittsville. Murray and John pressure washed the older buoys and replaced worn and cracked stickers and decals. Murray ordered a large orange decal from SignFX in Stittsville (cost \$180.18) to replace a badly worn one on the large spar buoy we've had out on the Eastcliffe Hall for the last few years. John received a large decal from Provincial Buoy Coordinator Raimund Krob at the SOS AGM on June 1, if we need to replace another one. We have also received a new solar powered light for the top of the large spar buoy, if needed. The one on the top of the former Eastcliffe buoy was damaged.

Our chapter currently has mooring buoys out at the following sites:

- Rothesay (deployed by Tom Scott from the 1000 Islands Chapter on May 11)
- Milles Roches Power House (deployed by the Seaway Valley Club on May 18)
- Fred Mercur (deployed by the Seaway Valley Club on May 18)
- Eastcliffe Hall (deployed by the Seaway Valley Club on June 5)

John has updated the SOS website and emailed the Coast Guard (NAVWARN has replaced NOTSHIPS notification system) to advise them of these deployments.

John was diving the “Fred Mercur” a few weeks ago and noticed that there was an American parachute and flare tangled up beneath one of the deck beams in the bow area. This could pose a hazard to divers and should be removed at some point.

9. Beavers Plaque

The plaque for the defunct Ottawa Beavers (RCMP) scuba club is complete – Gregg Buscombe poured the concrete base last year and has mounted the plaque on it with a piece of Plexiglas on top. Plaque was completed in July 2018 and Beavers notified. John and Murray delivered the completed plaque to former Beaver’s Treasurer Dan Kenny in Ingleside in November 2018.

Next steps – the plaque needs to be installed on the Conestoga. Preferred location is near the stern, by the swim chain (in the hopes that divers might read it). Given the weight of the plaque, at our May 6 meeting Luc Lafontaine suggested that we ask the township of Cardinal to provide a backhoe to lift the plaque into the water, like we did with the radiator plaques in 2014.

Luc has picked up the plaque from Dan Kenny and has it at his property in Cardinal. Luc is getting in touch with the mayor of Cardinal to provide a backhoe. Issue is that the road to the Connie is still partially closed because of high water. Will try and get it in the water next month – more to follow.

10. Nick and Hetty Baets Donation – Old SOS files

Last July the Ottawa Chapter received a donation of files and drawings from Nick and Hetty Baets, former SOS members who prepared many of the SOS Diver’s Guides in the late 1980s and early 1990s. John finished cataloging and scanning this material this spring and uploaded it to Dropbox. John transferred the box of material to SOS President Jen Bush at the June 1 AGM, for storage with other old SOS files Corporate has received over the years.

At our May 6 meeting Nancy Binnie identified the need for a written disposition agreement formally transferring the files and rights to them from the Baets to SOS before we can share this material. John has sent some emails to Nancy about this, to see if she can provide a template or model we can use for the disposition agreement. John to follow up with Nancy.

John invited the Baets to speak to our chapter, but they aren’t interested.

11. Prescott Scuba Park

Helen Cooper from Dive Brockville says that the City of Prescott has finished fabricating a new steel entry ramp, but there is no installation date yet. There is a bit of pushback from some local community members who don’t like divers. It is possible to dive the site now, but the entry is over some uneven rocks.

Jeff Horricks from Kanata Dive Supply (KDS) is interested in installing a training platform there and using the site for courses.

Chris Holloway has been working on a new map of the Scuba Park, it looks great. He made it using Microsoft Visio. John and Harold Walker dove the park in early June to check on the condition of the lines (they are still there) and measured the distance between the various objects, which Chris has incorporated in his map. Chris’s map is still a draft – likely a few more improvements to make. We weren’t sure what image to use on the cover of map/pamphlet, so we used the Prescott town logo temporarily – would likely need to get permission from the town first before using it.

Chris Harnett dove the site recently and one of the lines parted, so they spliced it back together with a bit of rope he had. John, Harold, and Chris Holloway were also diving there recently and

Chris commented that the lines near shore are a bit difficult to follow because they are covered in weeds. He suggests attaching some jugs to the lines to lift it off the bottom (similar to what's found at the Rothesay).

Barry Edgington says that Robin from Diver's Wearhouse has an old cigarette boat we could sink at the Scuba Park, if we're interested. John likes the idea but is concerned about the all of the potential red tape involved, in terms of permits, preparing the boat, and dealing with the Ministry of the Environment etc.

12. Morrisburg - Augusta St. Improvements

In February John received an email from Yan Hurtubise, who is associated with Action Scuba in Pointe-Claire, QC. Yan wants to improve diver facilities in Morrisburg, specifically around the Augusta St pumphouse where divers enter the water to visit the Tin Plate Factory and begin their drift through Lock 23.

Last year residents of Augusta St were complaining about the behaviour of divers who gear up at the pumphouse, specifically about divers urinating and changing in public. Yan Hurtubise wanted to address these concerns by installing change rooms, porta johns, diver benches and signage, and had discussed these ideas with officials from the town of Morrisburg.

On May 30 Yan emailed John and indicated that he would no longer be able to move forward with this project, as he is fully occupied with a new job. Item will be removed from the agenda at future meetings.

13. "Beyond the Edge" with Barry Edgington

Barry brought in another selection from his collection of vintage dive gear – a 1970s turtleback hard shell BCD with a 72 cu ft tank with J-valve, and lined with epoxy. Barry demonstrated the various features of this rig to the group.

14. Next Meeting Date

Next meeting in August, date TBA.

Motion to adjourn at 2015.

John gave away some books:

- *Lost Beneath the Ice: The Story of HMS Investigator* (2013) by Andrew Cohen
- *The Search for the Breadalbane* (1985) by Joe MacInnis
- *Ghost Ships* (1983) by Emily McCain
- *Many a Midnight Ship: True Stories of Great Lakes Shipwrecks* (2005) by Mark Bourrie
- *The Sea Hunters: True Adventures with Famous Shipwrecks* (1996) by Clive Cussler
- *The Last Dive* (2000) by Bernie Chowdhury