

Attendees (9): John Ratcliffe (Chair), Dennis Cartwright (Treasurer), Tim Vezina, Melissa Perks, Gerry Carter, Chris Harnett, Barry Edgington, Paul Whynacht, Dani Lee.

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 – 6 February 2024

A motion to approve the minutes of 6 February 2024 was raised by Dennis and seconded by Barry - motion carried.

3. News and Recap of Recent Events

- The Niagara Divers Association (NDA) annual Shipwrecks Symposium was held in Welland on April 13.
- There are two upcoming photogrammetry workshops: Kayla Martin is organizing a workshop hosted by Scuba 2000 in Toronto on April 27, and Roger Lacasse has organized a three-day photogrammetry workshop in Brockville May 9-12. John previously sent an email to members about Roger's workshop.
- Jill Heinerth has given some presentations recently: in Carleton Place last week, and in Kingston last weekend. Chris H. says she also gave a talk at the Royal Canadian Geographic Society in Ottawa.
- Tim says Scuba Finatics will be holding their annual Canada Day dive at Lock 21 again this year; Dennis suggests we ask SOS Corporate for more SOS merchandise to give away.

4. Membership and New SOS Website

Dennis recently sent out a reminder to 12 expired/inactive chapter members, to encourage them to renew their SOS membership. A personalized message may be more effective than a generic one generated by the website in encouraging members to renew. John says we could include details about chapter activities in the reminder emails.

The new SOS website is online: <https://saveontarioshipwrecks.ca/>

This is a Wordpress site developed by SOS Webmaster John Raso which aims to resolve the issues with the old SOS website. John has provided John Ratcliffe with a user guide so that he can post chapter updates; John Ratcliffe said it would be nice if someone from our chapter was willing to take on the duties of chapter webmaster, to post updates.

There may still be some issues with membership renewal. Gerry had some problems when trying to renew his Family membership and offered some suggestions to John Raso on how the renewal process could be improved.

The new website has a slightly different URL compared to the old one (no "www"), so we will likely need to update our donation boxes and the QR code on the Prescott Scuba Park map.



Melissa says we should add a QR code to the Donation Box to take people directly to the SOS website.

Gerry asks if the SOS store is still active – John to follow up with SOS Corporate.

5. Treasurer's Report

Dennis provided an update on our chapter's finances:

- We recently received \$170.00 in chapter dividends from SOS Corporate.
- Dennis issued a cheque to John for \$65.19 for expenses related to the presentation cheque for the \$2,500.00 our chapter is contributing towards a new diver bench in Prescott, and the cost of thimbles for new mooring lines.
- Tim Vezina provided \$115.00 from the Scuba Finatics donation box for deposit.
- Dennis reported that BMO is now charging a \$2.50 monthly fee for community accounts with a balance of less than \$5,000.00, so this is something we should keep in mind moving forward.

With this activity, our current bank balance is \$5,027.45.

6. Donation Boxes

Barry says he plans to do his semi-annual tour of the local dive shops to check and restock each box before the start of the dive season. We should try and update the insert for the donation box with the new website URL and add a QR code, John will see if he can find the previous version of this document.

Diver's Wearhouse has closed down; apparently they have lost the SOS donation box, which means we now have seven boxes altogether. John asked about the status of the box at EPSO; members say it is still there.

There is a new GUE dive shop called We Go Down on Sheffield Rd, should check and see if they want a donation box.

Tim says he would like to have an extra box to bring to events, and says he knows someone who works at Canus Plastics, he might be able to get a quote to produce new boxes.

At our last meeting our secretary, Brennan, offered to work on a pamphlet highlighting our chapter's activities which could be added to the donation boxes. Brennan wanted to know which format members preferred – members present suggest trifold would be best.

7. Mooring Buoys

John provided an update on the plans for the upcoming dive season.

Seaway Valley Divers indicated that they want new lines for the Eastcliffe Hall and Fred Mercur. Chris Holloway has prepared a new line for the Eastcliffe, this is an 80' length of 1" polysteel line with steel thimbles spliced into each end, with a 20' tagline with a plastic thimble spliced into the end.

Chris will use the leftover Eastcliffe line to prepare a new line for the Fred Mercur. This will be about 20' long, as the block is only in about 10 feet of water.



New mooring line for the Eastcliffe Hall.

Seaway Valley have also requested a new mooring buoy for the Fred Mercur. John contacted provincial buoy coordinator Raimund Krob to see what Corporate has in stock; Raimund said the smallest buoys they have are the 25 cm diameter spar buoys (the same size used on the Rothesay), which are still pretty big. John suggested we give Seaway Valley a 25 cm diameter spar buoy from our spares, which they can use on the Power House, and then use the conical buoy from the Power House on the Fred; Seaway Valley is fine with this. We will need to deliver the new lines and buoy to Seaway Valley Divers.

John will reach out to Sylvain Marcotte, who deployed the buoy on the Belly Dumper last year (and stored the buoy over the winter), to see if he can deploy it again this spring.

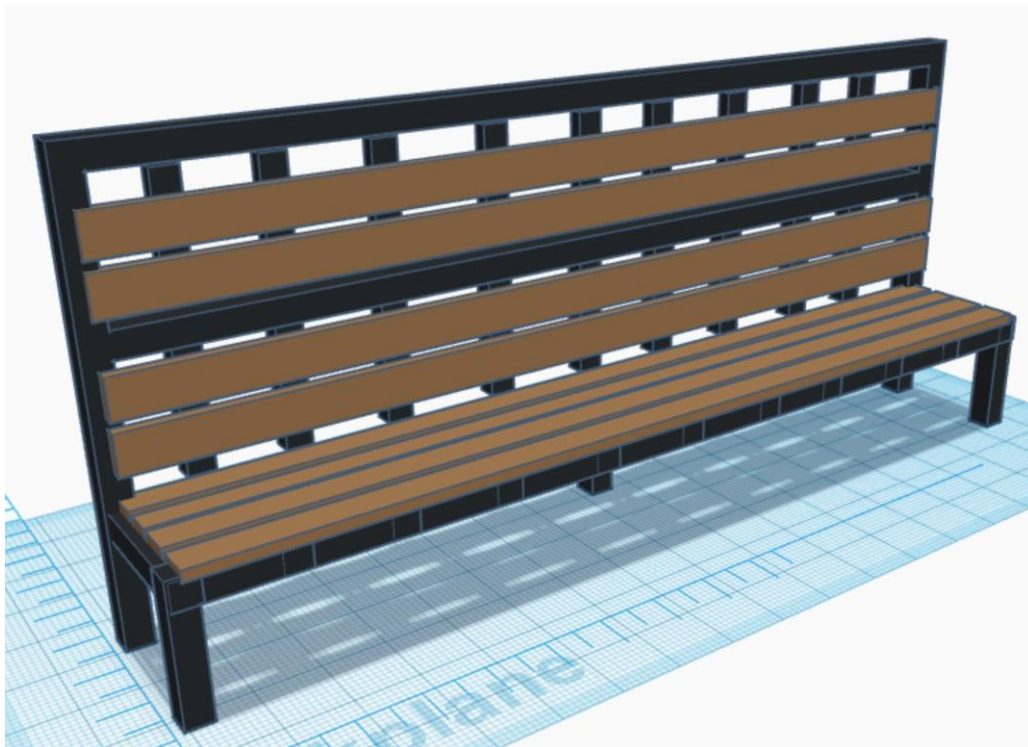
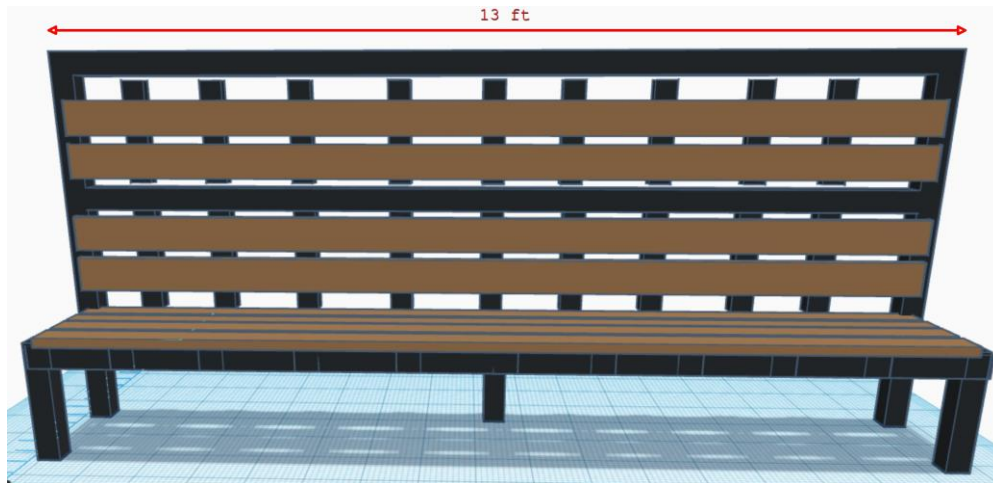
John asked about the status of the Rothesay, Chris Harnett says the jug is on the line. John asks if Luc Martin can help deploy the mooring buoy, Tim says he'll ask if Luc if he's available. Tim says he's pretty busy these days and would prefer if someone else could help Luc with the buoy, Gerry said he might be able to help.

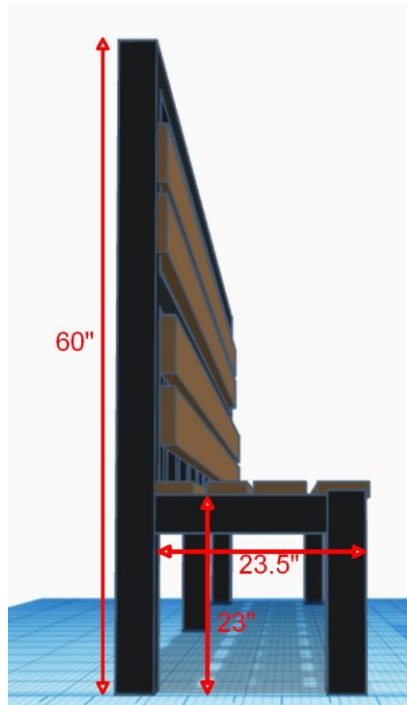
8. Prescott Scuba Park

Jim Dunfield couldn't make it to the meeting tonight but has been providing regular updates via email on the status of the new diver bench in Prescott:

- Dana Valentyne reviewed the proposed bench design with the town's Operations Department on March 8; they recommended the addition of another bar at the front, running the full length of the bench, to provide more support for the slats, and a third cross bar;

- Jim received prices and colour options for plastic lumber from the Prescott Building Centre and passed these on to Dana, who indicated that they'll go with the Clubhouse Ultra decking in the Driftwood colour;
- Jim followed up with the fabricator, Mulder's, to advise on the proposed updates to the design, and let them know that we're still moving forward; billing and installation will be coordinated by the Town of Prescott; fabrication could start within the next couple of weeks.





Different views of the new diver bench for the Prescott Scuba Park.

9. “Beyond the Edge” with Barry Edgington

This month Barry delighted members by bringing in a variety of old underwater camera housings from his incredible collection of vintage dive gear.



Barry Edgington with some of his vintage underwater camera housings.

10. New Business and Next Meeting Date

Tim reported that he was contacted by staff from Parks of the St. Lawrence, who plan to tear down the old pavilion at Lock 21 and replace it with a new structure with a soft top, so we should get in touch with them to see what we can do about updating the SOS signage there. Dedicated diver tables would also be a great addition to the site.

Meeting adjourned at 20:05.

Book Table

The following books were given away:

- *Maritime Archaeology* (1978), by Keith Muckelroy
- *Explorations: My Quest for Adventure and Discovery Under the Sea* (1996), by Robert Ballard
- *Jacques Cousteau: The Sea King* (2009), by Brad Matsen
- *Into the Planet: My Life as a Cave Diver* (2019), by Jill Heinerth
- *Shadow Divers* (2004), by Robert Kurson
- *Legend of the Lake: The 22-Gun Brig-Sloop Ontario 1780* (2009), by Arthur Britton Smith
- *Ghost Ships* (1983), by Emily McCain
- *Dive Ontario!* (1995), by Cris Kohl
- *Sinking of the Mayflower* (1989), by Stephen Weir
- *The Hunt for HMS De Braak: Legend and Legacy* (1993), by Donald Shomette