

Bottomtime:

The Newsletter of the Nova Scotia Underwater Council



Nova Scotia Marine Tourism Study: SCUBA Diving

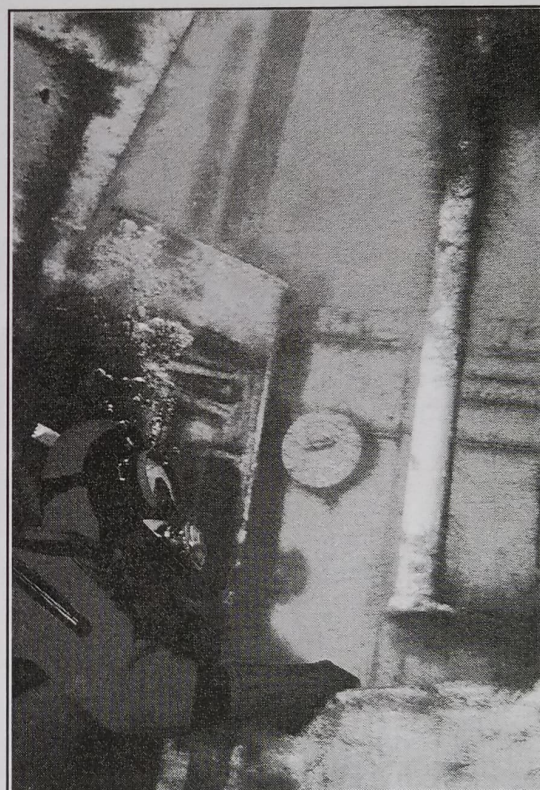
tourism

In 1997, a marine tourism study was completed for the Nova Scotia Department of Economic Renewal (ERA) by the Economic Planning Group of Canada in association with McQuinn and Company Marketing and Corporate Research Associates Inc. The primary goal of the study was to identify those marine tourism opportunities most likely to contribute significantly to the economy of Nova Scotia. Background information and the results of research into similar geographic areas are outlined clearly. The ERA, the provincial department responsible for the development of tourism in Nova Scotia, has not had time to fully analyze nor act on this information. Suggested actions are provided covering a broad range of topics and both government departments and NGOs are suggested as partners in carrying out the study's recommendations.

The following is a brief review of the major references to SCUBA diving and does not present information and recommendations for other recreational activities or those referring to the development of marine tourism products as a group. The study clearly states that Nova Scotia's most outstanding single tourism asset is the province's relationship to the sea. A major recommendation is that provincial agencies emphasize this relationship in all future media advertising. The recreational sport of SCUBA diving is identified as a serious component of new initiative to enhance marine tourism within the province. A recommended priority action item includes the establishment of a SCUBA Diving Product Team defined as either a committee, a formal partnership organization, or a corporation. Funding for the work of the team should be provided from both government and industry.

Research results were included describing other better-known tourist destinations which

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Sue Belford exploring wreck (Photo: John Webber)

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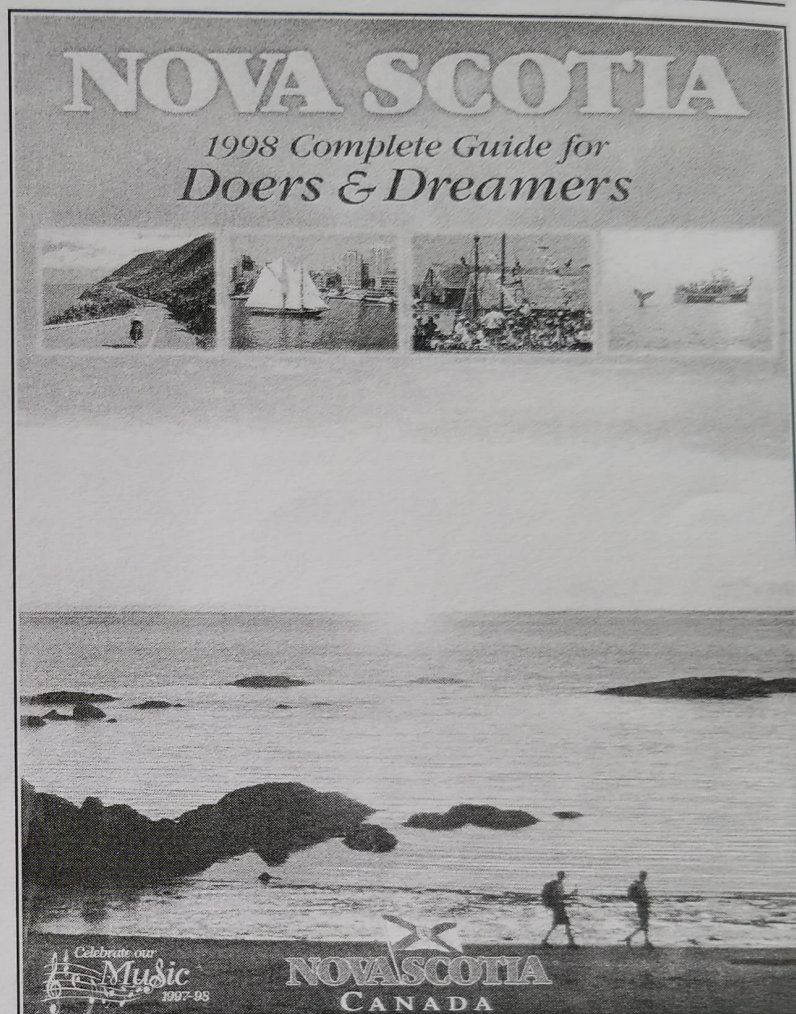
have a strong marine focus, to the types of initiatives they are undertaking as well their product development and marketing approaches. British Columbia is considered to have world class SCUBA diving industry and the economic impact of that sector alone has increased from \$2.3 million in 1986 to \$4 million in 1994. Dive industry interviews reveal that the artificial reef initiative has had a significant positive impact on the dive industry, by providing additional dive sites, by giving profile to the provinces diving opportunities and by enhancing the province's ability to compete with other dive destinations. Marine parks in BC now include 70 with a mandate shifting from boat havens and moorings to protecting and preserving areas for future generations.

In summary, successful SCUBA tourism destinations generally have the following characteristics:

- strong organization within the dive industry;
- use of internet and dive trade show exhibits in marketing;
- are the subject of film documentaries;
- assist with the development of artificial reefs in key locations;
- have spokesmen who have good technical knowledge.

There are 15,000 certified divers in Nova Scotia, with 40% diving at least once a year. There are 265,000 Canadian and 2.8 million U S divers considered active, with 30,000 Canadian and 600,000 American new divers certified annually. Eighty percent are under the age of 40, are high income earners, college graduates and in professional or upper management professions. Non-resident divers visiting Nova Scotia, on average, spent 6.2 nights and 3.5 days actually diving. It was the primary purpose of their visit, and spent \$474 directly on dive related activities and \$1400 overall during trip. The most popular sites were the Lunenburg Marine Park (HMCS Saguenay), Herring Cove and the Sambro area and St. Paul Island at the mouth of the St. Lawrence. Nova Scotia's primary weakness as a dive destination is its weather.

In a product market match analysis, SCUBA diving scored the highest in a group of existing adventure tourism categories including coastal hiking, sea kayaking, bird watching, whale watching, beach/coastal visitation, sailing, boat tours and salt water fishing. To enhance the existing SCUBA tourism industry, the report suggests a development strategy for SCUBA as the highest of five priority products and includes the following as important components:



Doers & Dreamers Guide has always been a helpful source of diving facilities (N.S. Marketing Agency)

- Development of a Comprehensive Information Package and Guide Book;
- Identify the Best Dive Sites and Diving Areas;
- Identify Opportunities for Special Events and Unique Adventure Diving Experiences;
- The Establishment of Additional Artificial Reef Dive Destinations;
- Marketing Key Dive Sites;
- Education of Industry Operators;
- Education of the Local Population;
- Develop Regulations and Operator standards;
- Provide More Resource Management;
- Protection of the Natural Environment.

The report suggests target marketing to the experienced divers promoting world class wrecks and dive sites within a reasonable distance from shore. Marketing should focus on

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Diver Evacuation Workshop

health

As part of a weekend long series held in Lunenburg in June 1995, the NSUC co-sponsored a workshop whose purpose was to clarify the handling and transportation procedures of an injured diver. James Perkins and Austin Baird lead the group of divers, charter boat operators, ambulance workers, physicians and nurses in what became an interesting discussion. The goal was to make sure that all first response organizations had clear instructions as to what should be done and who should be contacted. At the time, it was suggested that the rescue coordination center (RCC) would be the logical first contact in any on the water emergency.

Since that time, Mr. Perkins has called the RCC and chatted with them regarding their involvement in an evacuation of an injured diver from a remote site such as the Lunenburg Marine Park. It was agreed that the type of first response that is needed will depend on the initial assessment by the appropriate persons on scene. RCC realizes

"The concern would be that the addition of any steps that would unnecessarily slow the injured diver's arrival at hospital."

that in the non-complicated situation where communication, on scene care, transportation and required on-shore resources are adequate, there may be little that RCC can actually add to the response. However RCC should be alerted to the situation because they could have personnel and equipment in the vicinity that could be useful. Also, this previous notice would certainly register their attention

and speed a response should the conditions deteriorate to the need for an actual RCC response. Of course, if the initial response required the skills of RCC they should get the first call and then the Hyperbaric Chamber at the Victoria General Hospital would be alerted. In reality, both calls would be made very close together considering the availability of the current telecommunication.

As diving in Nova Scotia becomes more popular and with more and more divers visiting the province, there is a

need to clarify the procedures and contact numbers. It should be straightforward. In early June, it is planned to have another workshop held concurrently with the NSUC AGM.

The direct 24 hour emergency phone number for the Hyperbaric Chamber at the Victoria General Hospital is now (902) 473 2220. Write it down.

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the UK, Ontario, Quebec, Atlantic Canada, East Coast US and Germany. A marketing program would include packaging of dive vacations to include transportation, accommodation, dive boats and equipment, and non-diving activities for bad weather days or non-diving family. Production of a video and brochure, organization of familiarization tours for magazine writers, exhibiting at trade shows, and web site advertising are identified as components to a new program.

Immediate action items given top priority and high priority status are:

- To implement a target marketing strategy;
- Assist existing tourism operators strengthen their business to become market ready;
- Include those which become market ready in a diving product packaging;
- establish a SCUBA Product Team and identify funding for the operations.
- Establish a joint set of actions with the product team and government agencies;

- Additional recommendations for marketing SCUBA diving emphasize the packaging and development of a dedicated SCUBA video and colour brochure, arranging for co-op advertising in diving magazines, and marketing by exhibiting at dive shows and through internet.

The Nova Scotia Underwater Council (NSUC), from time to time, has taken responsibility for promoting SCUBA within the province at the direction of its members. It has been suggested that the Council take the lead in organizing new initiatives to bring diving tourists to Nova Scotia. The Council has the experience and the stability to contribute (since 1971). While some members argue that non-resident divers are not welcome, most agree that more use of provincial diving facilities will generate more stable businesses and perhaps new facilities. The reports recommendation to upgrade facilities, like charter boats, for tourists also means improved facilities for residents. If you feel the NSUC should be more actively involved in the promotion of Nova Scotia diving to tourists, let one of the executive know your feelings. If you would like a copy of the complete tourism study report, contact the tourism department of the NSERA.

1998 NSUC Treasure Hunt

Calling all divers!

The planning for the next Treasure Hunt is underway. Those that offered to assist with this year's event are requested to call our Executive Director today so that you are included in the planning now.

The Treasure Hunt is the longest continuous running event held in the province each year and is one of the important traditions of the NSUC.

NSUC Executive Meeting: March 28

The next meeting will be held at 9:30 a.m., March 28, on the HMCS Fraser, in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia. Members are welcome to attend. Agenda items should be provided to the Secretary or the Executive Director in advance.

The Roger Aggett Award, in recognition of a member of the Council who has made a significant contribution to our sport, is awarded usually at the AGM. Nominations for this award can be made to the Executive Director any time prior to the AGM.

Bottomtime: The Newsletter of the Nova Scotia Underwater Council

This newsletter is provided not only for our members' benefit but also for distribution to those organizations or individuals with an interest in our activities. If your organization would benefit from having a copy sent to them on a regular basis, let the Executive Director know.

Important Dates:

NSUC Under the Sea – Feb. 19-22

Halifax International Boat Show,
Halifax, NS

Underwater Canada – April 3-5

Toronto, ON

NSUC Annual Meeting – June

Sydney, NS

NSUC Treasure Hunt '98 – Sept. 13

Crystal Crescent Beach, NS

NSUC Membership

The Nova Scotia Underwater Council has made several substantial changes to its membership fee structure. This revision comes after a process of reevaluating the goals and mandate of the Council, and attempting to discover how best to serve the diving community in Nova Scotia

Individual Memberships: \$10.

Newly Certified Diver: Free. (Yes, we mean it). If anyone needs to know impartial news about the diving community in Nova Scotia, it is the newly certified diver. We want to assist these people to enjoy their new hobby as much as possible, and we believe that it is vital that they become connected to the greater community. There is no better way to ensure they join than this. We hope you agree. Just enclose a Xeroxed copy of the newly issued basic certification card in place of the \$10 fee.

Family and Commercial Memberships: All persons are members individually.

Questions on the new membership fee structure can be answered by contacting the Executive Director or your Area Director. Join the Council today.

Nova Scotia Underwater Council Under the Sea Exhibit

A reminder that many have volunteered to assist with our exhibit at the Halifax International Boat Show being held on February 19-22 at the exhibition grounds. As part of our program, a prize of a one-week trip to Barbados has been arranged for two Boat Show attendees who correctly identify the meaning of a diver below flag. The prize has been donated by our friends at the Barbados Tourism Authority and Conquest who fly directly between Halifax and Barbados. It is expected that everyone attending the show, and that is as many as 16,000, will enter and go away with a reminder as to what our flag means. Public awareness and diver safety is the primary goal of the Council's present executive.

"The good old days..."

museums

Freddy Watts, a.k.a. Stan Watts, a.k.a. Fred is the well-liked scientific diving officer in the biology department at Dalhousie University. (On Wednesdays, he says his name is now Charlie.) Freddy (let's stick with this name) has had considerable influence on many Nova Scotian divers because many of us completed at least one "tour" at Dal and often were involved in one scientific sampling program or another. Others worked with Freddy when he ran the Fleet Diving Unit prior to coming to Dal. And others knew Freddy when he worked so hard to organize a response to the possible combining of scientific diving regulations with commercial diving regulations in the eighties. From the fifties through to the nineties, Freddy has met most of us at least once somewhere along the seashore, in one dive shop or another or even at Underwater Canada. Always looking out for us, Freddy would be the first to offer up one of his dry suit gloves when we forgot to pack our own.

Freddy reached under his desk this week and pulled out a copy of the June 1979 issue of *Maritime Diving News*

Serving Sport and Commercial Divers in Atlantic Canada.

"You know," he said. "I am going to retire in the next five years and I have to clean up this office soon. I have some of these old NSUC newsletters and other diving magazines. There is no place to send them where the public can see them. Do you want them?" In flipping through the Diving

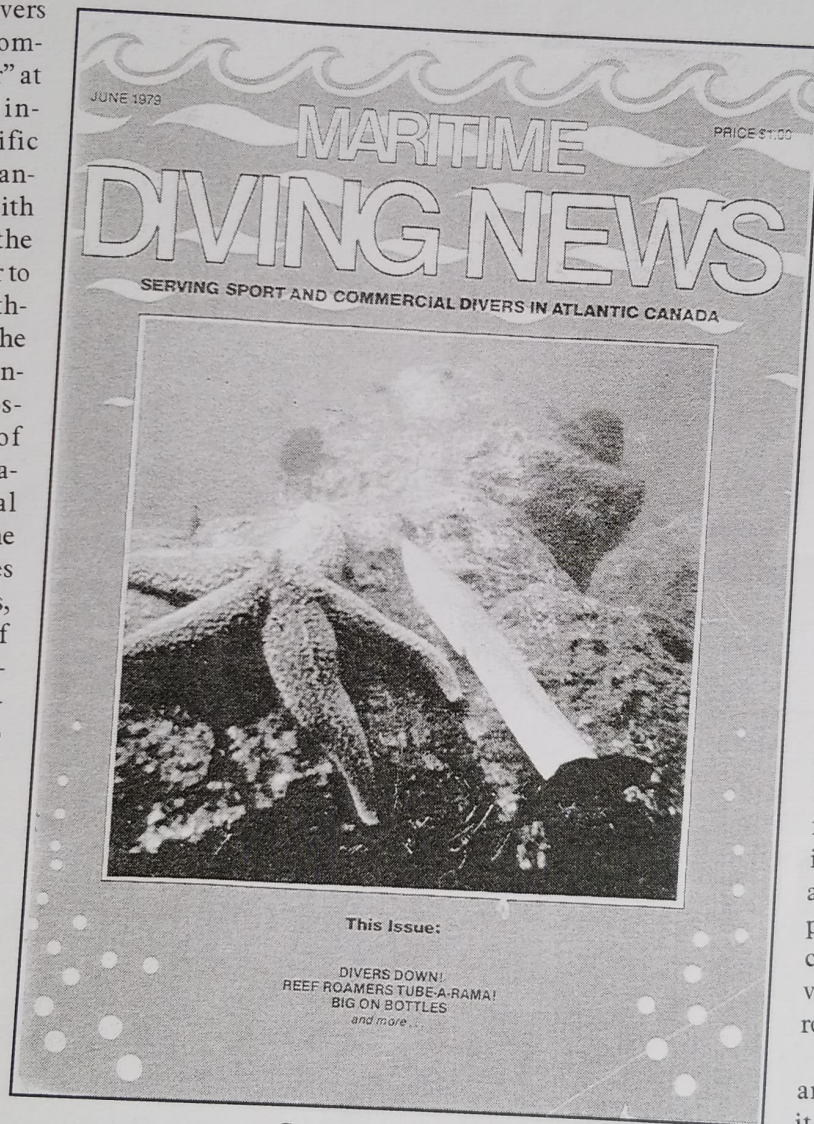
News I came across some of the following information.

The price was only a dollar and inside the front cover was an ad from Newfoundland Metals Ltd., buyers of scrap copper, brass, lead, etc. "ATTENTION DIVERS. Are you finding scrap metal during your dives? Brass, anchors, anchor chain, lead? Turn that into money! Just about everyone is thinking along environmental lines...making sure that every piece of a non-renewable resource is put to good use, and turned into hard cash..."

There is an article about bad air; the trials and tribulations of the Bridgewater Reef Roamers; and a chat with the owner of the Timberlea Dive Shop, Steve Giza. SCUBA safety is a major topic in several articles. Steve Donovan is the editor with assistance from Corrine Hartly-Robinson. Many of the dive shops at the time have advertising and all have gone the way of *Maritime Diving News*. The centre pages are filled with photos of many wet suited divers and inner tubes in the rapids of the LaHave River. It looks like fun. On the last page, there is a letter to the editor from a Mr. T. Kenchington pointing out the technical challenges of metric conversion and pointing to errors in a previous issue.

Reading this magazine and others was fun. Maybe it is time we thought about preserving some of the above water history of mari-

time SCUBA diving while we still easily can. If you are ever driving along the St. Lawrence nearby to Rimouski, drop in into the lighthouse museum adjacent to where the Empress of Ireland sank. It's a great small museum on SCUBA diving and the exploration of the ship up to present days.



Courtesy of S.F. Watts

News from the Clubs

clubs

Cape Bretoners have been described in many ways. For the group known as the NERVOUS WRECKS, the adjectives must include: enthusiastic, fun-loving, and generous. A review of the past year's activities will show what I mean.

The year started, as have the past five, with the Polar Bear Swim on January 1st at Rollie's Wharf in North Sydney. A record number of 68 swimmers, including many Nervous Wrecks, took the plunge into the icy harbour waters. The Club provided the usual safety support in the form of in-water dry suited divers and another t-shirt was added to everyone's collection.

There are 60 members on the official club list and quite a few continued to dive throughout the winter months. However, the season could be said to have really started on March 28th, when a dozen hearty souls slushed through the snow at Brogan's Wharf to experience the clarity of the Bras d'Or Lakes and risk free flow due to frozen regulators.

During the 'active' season, club dives are held every Wednesday night in addition to the weekends. Although the Dive Coordinator, Ken Jardine, puts out a schedule for the next month, a call list is activated before each dive in order to remind divers of events. Six volunteers pass the details on to their respective groups. Club dives are held around the island from Cape North to the causeway. Popular sites include the Bird Islands which may include numerous "close encounters of the friendly nature" with the resident seal population and Louisbourg, where in one two-week period, "some 45 divers used about 120 tanks for some of the best wreck diving in Eastern Canada. Club members were joined by divers from PEI, Halifax, Austria, Alberta, and Ontario. The vis was great, and thank God for the GPS on the foggy mornings." On many occasions we enjoyed the hospitality of Richard Rahey at his cottage in Kempt Head on the Bras d'Or Lakes. The diving here offers depths from 20 feet to well over the 100 foot mark. "Not only do you get to dive, but he (Richie) always seems to have the BBQ going just as you surface." As well, there were some great social dives this past year. A theme night was held at Richie's on Labour Day weekend that included "costumes, ethnic pot luck, corn boil, bonfire, sing song and awards."

A club feature is the Century Diver Award, which is given to divers who log over 100 dives in a 12-month period. There are seven Nervous Wrecks who have received this commemorative certificate. The 1997 winner of the Terry Rose Memorial Award was Pamela Ellsworth. This testimonial is given "to a diver that has supported diving in the traditions exemplified by Terry Rose." Terry was a founding club

member whose service to the club was the epitome of voluntarism — not to mention he was a great dive buddy. A Friendship Dive was initiated on September 29th. For this event, club members were encouraged to buddy up with a 'lapsed' diver in the hope of renewing interest in the sport. About 50 persons showed up at the Long Island site. Boat and shore dives were organized to the car 'wreck.' Later all enjoyed a corn boil and picnic.

"Once again we had a very successful fund raiser for the Children's Wish Foundation. Over 80 divers entered the event which took place at Grove's Point Park on Sunday, July 27th. Not only was it fun, but we raised approximately \$2,700 for their cause. This was the fifth year for the GO-FOR-GOLD and overall we have raised approximately \$15,000. The committee pulled it together with prizes for every participant." This annual event, commemorative t-shirts provided of course, is becoming more popular. Divers from the mainland are encouraged to attend and make it part of a Cape Breton Weekend experience.

A group of Capers made the annual pilgrimage to the NSUC Sea Hunt, and while down the line took the opportunity to visit the Saguenay. Not content with the best diving in Canada, some members went farther afield to get wet. Exotic places visited were Dominican Republic and Cuba. In February of 1998, the club has organized a one-week live-aboard out of Miami. A few places are still available on this all inclusive Blackboard Adventure Cruise.

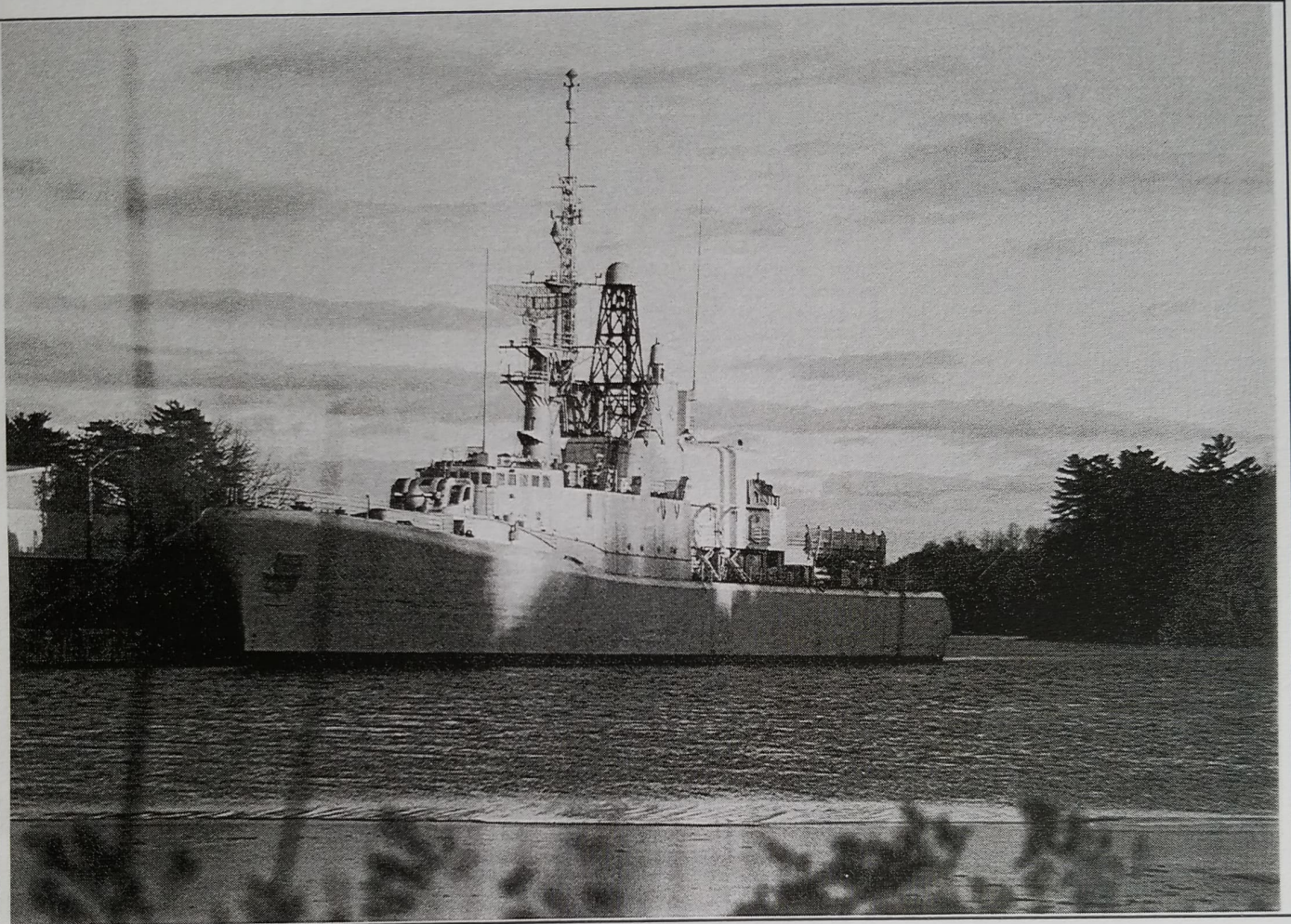
Safety and continuing education are practised and encouraged by club members. To this end, six members qualified as Master divers this year, and one received Instructor status. There were no major incidents on club dives this year although some overly enthusiastic visitors to the area required assistance of the hyperbaric chamber in Halifax. On the down side of life, we learned that... "there were some body searches this year... it should be no surprise that many of the most active fire and police divers are members of the Nervous Wrecks... the personal sacrifices and courage this, often thankless job entails... reflects very well on the diving community."

The quotations in this article are taken from the *Coast Buster* — the Official Newsletter of the Cape Breton Nervous Wrecks, edited by Pamela Ellsworth and published about four times a year. The club meets every second Tuesday of the month at 1800h at the Sydney Curling Rink. All are welcome.

As I write this, 1997 as well as the active season, is drawing to a close. All that is left is to organize the Christmas celebration and to wish everyone a safe and Happy New Year. May all your bubbles be little ones...

**Roland G. Lewis, President
Cape Breton Nervous Wrecks**

HMCS Fraser



*HMCS Fraser has been acquired by the Artificial Reef Society of Nova Scotia and now lives in Bridgewater!
(Photo courtesy of Peter Verner)*

Canadian Power Squadron and
Bedford Institute of Oceanography present...

“Activities of the Artificial Reef Society of Nova Scotia”

by Rick Welsford

**Sunday, March 29 – Bedford Institute of Oceanography
Nominal fee – Reception to follow**

Nova Scotia Underwater Council

Since 1971



OBJECTIVES

- To be a representative body for the SCUBA diving community so as to preserve, support and promote diving and diver safety in the province.
- To ensure training programs are given to a recognized level of quality, to foster and encourage the safe handling and usage of all approved types of equipment used in the sport of SCUBA diving.
- To make available to all members information concerning safety, medical, technical and research data concerning the sport of SCUBA diving and SCUBA diving equipment.
- To cooperate and participate with the government on projects and policies that lead to the recognition of sport diving as a significant recreation activity.

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Bottomtime Newsletter Advertising

The editor of the Bottomtime will consider limited advertising in future issues of the newsletter. At the back of each issue, a special space has been reserved to acknowledge specific private or public support for each Bottomtime issue.

As a service to our membership, commercial brochures or flyers may be enclosed with the mailing of the Newsletter,

for a reasonable fee. For example, equipment sale flyers, certification course announcements, etc. can be inserted without editing by the Council (or responsibility for the content). Inexpensive copying or assistance for this service can be arranged with the Executive Director at the Council's office. Please note the dates of newsletter publication in another section of this issue.

Bottomtime: The Newsletter of the Nova Scotia Underwater Council (ISBN 1100-2050) is published six times annually. Members of the Council are encouraged to submit to the editor photos (including captions) and articles of interest to the general membership. Deadline for submissions is the first day of every other month beginning January.

Submissions, address corrections, comments or general suggestions should be sent in writing to:

The Editor, **Bottomtime: The Newsletter of the Nova Scotia Underwater Council**

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