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Scuba Emporium

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1976 Wreck Diver Program

1976 Why I wrote the Wreck Diver Program?

I remember driving to Racine Quarry when I was 16 and we would dive the walls. After a while those walls were no longer fun. I learned of a wreck off of Evanston, the Morley and started diving that on the way home. WOW, I was hooked a shipwrecks. I had a 16 foot boat with an outboard, so I was off to explore Lake Michigan, where the big ships were. We would head off to places we thought boat traffic at one time was and drag the bottom till I hooked something. Then it was a mad dash to the bottom to see what we had. Of course we were always skeptical of the days finding, who knows when you will find a cement bucket with feet stuck in them. The Gangsters had made their impression on this young boy. Most of the time we found real nice boulders, sometimes we found wood, I guess that was a wreck. Then one day we hooked a ship. I mean a real ship. It was the Material Service Barge. We could swim inside play in the cargo holds and do real exploratory dives. It was 1976, and I realized man you can get in trouble doing this. So I wrote my first Wreck Diver Specialty, telling people how to map the wreck first then look for hazards and then go in. I even suggested they take a line. How we made it I will never know. But I am here and today we map the wrecks, and spend a lot of time with proper line tie offs before we allow anyone to penetrate. I also learned that all those bubbles I was exhaling had to go places. You might think that was no big deal, but it was. You see they could have a tremendous amount of lift. But worse was they allowed all the loose things and silt to fall down, sometimes making it very tuff for us to feel our way out. Now you could see why we like that line. Today we have huge ships we dive. My favorite is the Straits of Macanac. This is a 200 foot long 50 foot wide car ferry. It is intact and you must use a line and be trained to penetrate her haul

With today's technology we no longer drag for the ships. We can use a few tools like side scan and see the ships. It still takes a lot of time research and study before you will ever find a wreck. Also the laws have changed on what you must do once you discover your ship wreck. Wreck diving is fun and a challenge. Be sure to be fully trained before you set off for this Specialty. When you are swimming down a hall of a ship on her side it does not take long for you to get disoriented.

Be careful dive safe