

# Bottomtime:

The Newsletter of the Nova Scotia Underwater Council

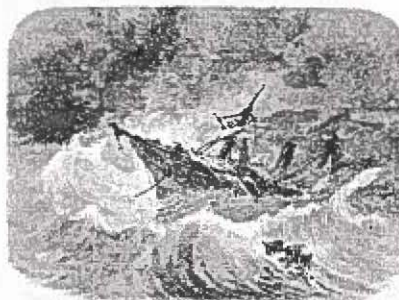


## The Wreck of the "Célèbre"

### *shipwrecks*

July 25th was a beautiful sunny day in Louisbourg harbour on the coast of Cape Breton Island. As my fellow divers and I donned our scuba gear, I contemplated the view from the deck of our boat. Approximately 300 metres away sat the impressive "Fortress of Louisbourg," the reconstructed 18th century French fort which fell to the British in 1758. From our vantage point we could plainly see tourists walking the streets of this living museum, soaking up the historical experience that this site offers. But little did these tourists realize they were not seeing the complete picture. Beneath our feet, in about seven metres of water, sat the wreck of the "Célèbre," a 64 gun French battleship built in 1755. The "Célèbre" was attacked and sunk during the final British siege of the fort.

Descending the mooring line, our group made its way to the wreck site. Since the vessel burned before sinking, the wreck consists mainly of a debris mound about 50 metres in length. The first thing to catch my attention was the sight of the many cannon still intact. Thirty three of the ship's guns remain, some of them perhaps three metres in length. As I approached one, I was amused to see a lobster had made his home in one of the corroded barrels. He raised his claws indignantly at me as I swam on. Some of the deck timbers were still visible, and I was amazed to see how the delicate silt held the pattern of the grain of the wood. Also clearly discernible is the base of the once proud main mast, perhaps more than a metre in diameter. Other artifacts, such as a stone wheel and various pulleys and the like, were scattered throughout the debris. The site itself is in excellent condition. Being within the boundaries of the "Fortress of Louisbourg" National Park, the "Célèbre" has been protected from treasure seekers and is regularly cleaned of kelp by park divers. Every metre of the site has been identified and catalogued by archeologists, and



identifying grid tags can be seen around the site. A detailed site map prepared by Parks Canada can be seen at: <http://www.geocities.com/cbdive1/celebre.html>.

Being so seriously guarded by park staff, dive masters may only visit the site by special written permission from the Park and, according to the guidelines of this permit, may only take up to four divers on a tour of the site at one time. Dive masters instruct their guests to keep a close check on their buoyancy, as absolutely nothing may be touched or disturbed on the site. Permits are regularly awarded to the local dive shops in Sydney, so this is the place to check if you want to arrange a dive to this site.

It was truly a privilege to dive on the wreck of the "Célèbre" and see a historic part of the park that the thousands who visit the "Fortress of Louisbourg" each year never get to see. To think that this ship sank beneath the surface well over 200 years ago in a battle that is certainly noteworthy in the history of, not only Nova Scotia and Canada, but really of the world, makes this a very significant dive indeed.

by Ronald Newcombe

Check out the NSUC website:

**www.nsuc.net**

|                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| The Wreck of the "Celebre"     | page 1 |
| Nova Scotia Underwater Council | page 2 |
| Club Promotion Program         | page 3 |
| The Atlantic Diver Guide       | page 3 |
| NSUC Remembers Two Friends     | page 4 |
| Woody's Story                  | page 5 |
| The Northern Moon Snail        | page 6 |
| Boat Show 2002                 | page 7 |
| NSUC Membership                | page 8 |
| Freediving Across Canada       | page 8 |

In This Issue:



June 2002

# 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 make available to all divers 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.
- To foster and promote marine awareness.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS & EXECUTIVE

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### VALLEY DIRECTOR VACANT



### The Nova Scotia Underwater Council Board of Directors:

Back Row: Chris King, guests Greg Cochkanoff and Michael Gerhartz,  
Peter Verner, Lawrence Taylor, Bill Hearn, Mark McLean  
Front Row: David Williams, Roland Lewis, Rick Welsford

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**NOVA SCOTIA**

Sport and Recreation Commission

*Bottomtime: The Newsletter of the Nova Scotia Underwater Council* (ISBN 1100-2050) is published four times annually. Members of the Council are encouraged to submit to the editor photos (including captions) and articles of interest to the general membership. Contact the office for information on deadline for submissions, as well as advertising opportunities. Submissions, address corrections, comments or general suggestions should be sent in writing to: The Editor, *Bottomtime: The Newsletter of the Nova Scotia Underwater Council*, P.O. Box 3010 South, Halifax, NS B3J 3G6; (902) 425-5606 (fax).  
Newsletter design: Lilli Ju



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# Club Promotion Program

## clubs

Community Clubs for recreational divers are one of the backbones of the activity. Clubs permit new divers to meet others with similar interests, have access to dive buddies if their regular friend is unavailable, and learn from experienced divers.

One of the best ways to meet the diving community is through special mass participation events, such as the Sea Hunt, which the NSUC initiated back in the 1970s. At the time, the Sea Hunt was the only event of its type for divers in this province.

Nowadays, several shops and clubs hold similar events every year. Nova Scotia's divers have more options than ever before to participate in these group activities.

At its last meeting, the Board of Directors recognised the importance of mass participation events and decided to provide some support to the community dive clubs who organise them. It has set aside a fund of \$1,000 each year that is accessible to any community dive club that is organizing events that promote diving. Each club can receive a maximum of \$200 toward the organisational costs associated with their event.

To apply for support, clubs need to contact their NSUC Regional Director and provide a brief written description of their activity. The Board will consider the application and quickly return its decision.

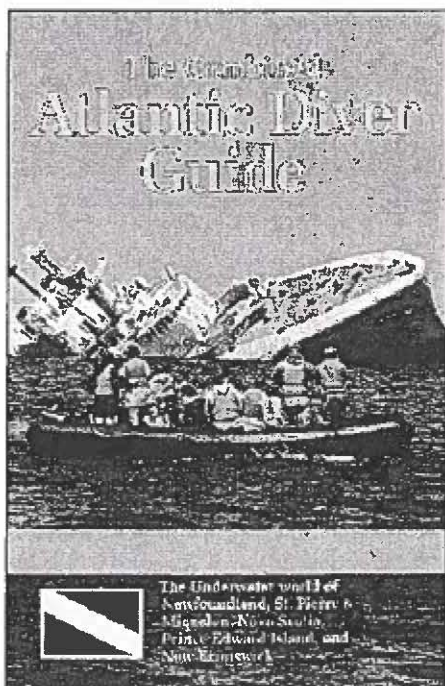
For more information, contact your NSUC Regional Director. Contact information may be found on page 2 of this newsletter or on the webpage: [www.nsuc.net](http://www.nsuc.net)

## Nervous Wrecks Dive Club Website

Who are the Nervous Wrecks? Some think they are crazy; other claim they are just a myth. We say they are one of the most active and fun-loving diving clubs in Nova Scotia. From their home base in Sydney, the Nervous Wrecks dive and party (sometimes in a different order) almost every weekend of Atlantic Canada's glorious summer.

To find out what the latest activity will be, check out their webpage:

<http://www.geocities.com/cbdive1/wrecks.html>



## ATLANTIC DIVER GUIDE

Northern Maritime Research, this spring, released the 432-page *Combined Atlantic Diver Guide* combining the best dives sites to be found in Canada's four Atlantic Provinces.

This is a no-nonsense, no-frills guide, including:

- 414 pages detailing site information,
- 8-page directory of 40+ regional diving services,
- 5-page Table of Contents,
- 2-page introduction, and
- 3 pages for title page, publisher info., and summary page

This is a guide for the adventurous diver, and includes such sites as:

- the 2nd largest whirlpool effect in the world accessible during slack tide,
- the historic remains of the French Man-O-Wars sunk in 1758 when the British attacked the Fortress Louisbourg (now a national park)
- four intact & upright iron-ore carriers sunk at anchor by German U-boats within 2 km of each other.
- a drift dive along a 200-foot vertical wall, and
- some of the warmest waters north of Virginia, plus so much more.

Available for \$32.50 (taxes and shipping included) from the Nova Scotia Underwater Council, PO Box 3010 South, Halifax NS B3J 3G6.



# The NSUC Remembers Two Friends

## *in memoriam*

### Jim Johnson • 2001

A very special award is given to a member who provides a special service to the Nova Scotia SCUBA community. The 2001 Roger Aggett Award was posthumously awarded to Jim Johnson, Goshen, Guysborough County. Jim was well known within the diving community and across Nova Scotia. Before his death in February, 2001, some may have known Jim best for his passion and involvement with "Wilma" the beluga whale in Chedabucto Bay. But, Jim was also a tremendously talented underwater photographer and videographer, speaker and writer. At the time of his death, Jim had just become the Warden for the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's, but his past included being an "extra" in the Tahiti based feature film "Mutiny on the Bounty," assistant lighthouse keeper, Fisheries Officer, farmer, carpenter and one of a few to dive the "shaft" on Oak Island. A presentation will be held this summer, 2002, to present the Roger Aggett Award to Jim's family and the NSUC's new "promo" video has been dedicated to his memory.

by Lawrence Taylor

### Dave McGee • 2001

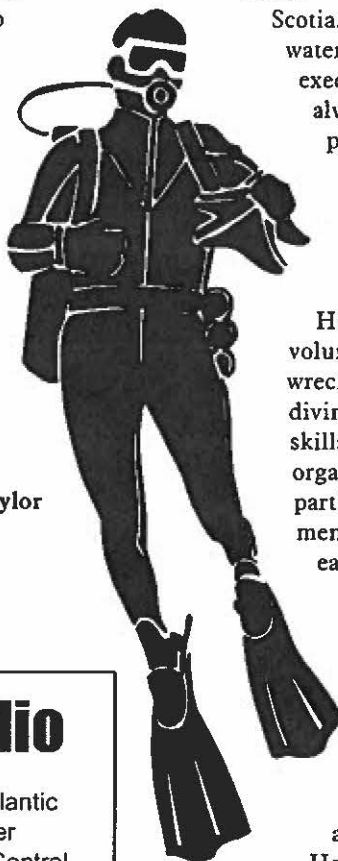
As some of you all know now Dave McGee passed away this past year. What some may not know are some of the things that Dave has done and the contributions he has made to our local diving scene. Like many today, Dave dove with a passion for many years. Although some of us tried, we could never beat his record of 114 dives in one season — very active for our waters here in Nova Scotia.

He was a founding member of the Underwater Adventurers Dive Club, and held several executive positions over the years. He was always up for an adventure and I had the privilege of being his traveling companion for several trips which included diving in Labrador, Newfoundland all over Nova Scotia and several trips to the US. Dave was active with the NSUC and held several executive positions over the years.

He participated in most diving events such as volunteering to help work on the archaeological wreck at Terrance Bay. In his life outside of diving he was a corporate lawyer and he used his skills and knowledge when serving in different organizations. As a true explorer he was quick to participate in new adventures. He was instrumental in locating the wreck of the Portia in the early 80's. He was one of the divers onboard the day the wreck of the Kolkosnik was re-located in 1986. Since his retirement several years ago, Dave focused his energy on building his book business, but he still dove. He was a member of the Aqualantic Dive Club. I believe he wants his ashes spread on the wreck of the SS Atlantic. I can understand this, as this was one of sites that he most enjoyed.

He will always have buddies on this dive because the ashes of some other notable divers are already there, including Dr. Ian MacDonald and Bernard Renault. Dave was a good diver, a good man, and a good friend. He will be missed.

by Greg Cochkanoff



## Underwater Radio

Learn about the Underwater World in Atlantic Canada, or wherever else Underwater Correspondent Lawrence Taylor, NSUC Central region Director, has been travelling and filming.

Join us on the first Monday of every month at approximately 6:45 a.m. on CBC Halifax's Radio One's Information Morning show (90.5 FM).

Next show - August 12th, 2002, 06:45AM AST



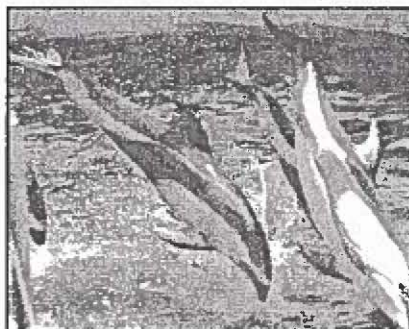
# Woody's Story

## *marine park*

It was a cold wintery Saturday in early December. Frequent snow squalls obscured our visibility, although the surface of the water at McNeil's Cove was relatively calm. Ken Jardine, Bill Hearn, and myself paced about the inflatable, which was still attached to the truck, although our scuba units were all geared up and ready to go. We had been here since 0830 h and it was now getting close to noon. When not peering through the snow over the darkened waters, we had spent the time making 'repairs' to the engine, drinking coffee, and generally waiting. Patience was wearing thin. The object of our anticipation was Paul Hendrickson's Cape boat, out of Big Bras d'Or which was carrying Woody our beloved dolphin, which as members of the Cape Breton Artificial Reef Society, (CBARS), we were intending to move to an underwater site just north of Long Island in St. Andrews Channel, to be a part of our Marine Park for the Bras d'Or Lakes. He was long overdue.

However, the story of Woody begins much earlier. In fact perhaps a hundred years earlier. At the time Woody was part of an mighty hemlock growing peacefully on a mountain top on Boularderie Island. Like many valuable timber wood trees, this one was eventually cut down. However, unlike most, this tree was to have a different future. A twelve foot section of the trunk was purchased by CBARS and under the skillful use of chain saw and hands by Liam Troman, the cylinder of wood was transformed and Woody the dolphin came to life in front of Scuba Tech, on Douglas Street in Sydney. There he remained for over a year, much to the delight of divers and non-divers alike.

While this figure was an attraction for the dive shop, its ultimate purpose was to initiate the building of a Marine Park as part of the CBARS Artificial Reef project. The next step was to arrange for this 500 pounds of hemlock to be secured to the bottom of the lake. This entailed a bit of science and math to determine the required amount of negative buoyancy. The calculation done, Woody was moved by trailer to the waters' edge at Big Bras d'Or, where Glenn Dowling arranged for a steel enclosure to be filled with 1000 pounds of concrete to form a base and anchor. This being done, Ken recruited Paul and his 36 foot 'Gladiator', fitted with a scallop drag to load and ferry Woody to St. Andrews Channel.



The move was to take place today, and this is why we were waiting patiently at Mc Neil's Cove. Actually, it was impatiently. Which was why Ken eventually got on the cell phone and made a call to 'Gladiator'. As we observed the look on his face, and heard the one sided, exclamation filled, conversation, we knew something was horribly wrong.

For those of you unfamiliar with the geography, the harbor of Big Bras d'Or is located in that part of the lakes known as Great Bras d'Or. To get to the Long Island site one can either motor around the northern tip of Boularderie Island, which takes one past Table Head and Point Aconi out into the open ocean, or travel south, under the Seal Island bridge and around Kempt Head, the southern tip of Boularderie Island, which is entirely within the Bras d'Or Lakes system. As fate would have it Paul and his crew of one, decided on the northerly route.

Although they left the government wharf with calm water, on approaching the ocean, the sea picked up and as a result poor seasick Woody was soon wobbling about

dangerously in the stern attached to the scallop winch. It was when 'Gladiator' started shipping water and the crew began to fear for the safety of their boat and their own lives, that Paul decided it was time to 'free Woody'. With a quick slash of a sharp knife, down he went like the proverbial stone and out of sight in the vast ocean. At least we had gotten the math right! "Another gummy adventure", as Glenn would say. One wag was later heard to comment: "Good thing it was not the

(HMCS) Provider". I guess you could say we succeeded, Woody was on the bottom; but exactly where?

But not to despair, this unfortunate event does have a happy ending. Why not make the loss into a search and recovery exercise? This is exactly what was done by Ken several weeks later. I am happy to relate that Woody has been found and relocated to his intended resting place, in the shadow of the mountain where he lived so long. Woody now relaxes some 10 feet proud off the bottom in about 40 feet of water, poised as if to leap free of his 1000 pound hold fast. Through much misadventure and perseverance, our Marine Park has begun to grow. Why not pay us a visit this summer to see how we are doing. Contact the Nervous Wrecks Dive Club. Pictures of Woody can be found on our web site: [www.geocities.com/cbdivel/events.html](http://www.geocities.com/cbdivel/events.html)

by Roland G. Lewis



# The Northern Moon Snail

## critter corner

There is not one, but five moon's in the North Atlantic and the most common in Nova Scotia is *Lunatia heros*, the Northern moon snail. What most people see of snails are garden and periwinkles along the sea shore which all seem to be voracious plant eaters. True, many snails on land and in the ocean are herbivores and you can find no less than three periwinkle species on your seaweed and tidal rock explorations. But of this group we call the gastropods (meaning "stomach foot") some are scavengers, deposit and suspension feeders, and parasites. And if you venture into the "deep" around here, you'll find one hefty meat eater with a keen taste for clam shakes.

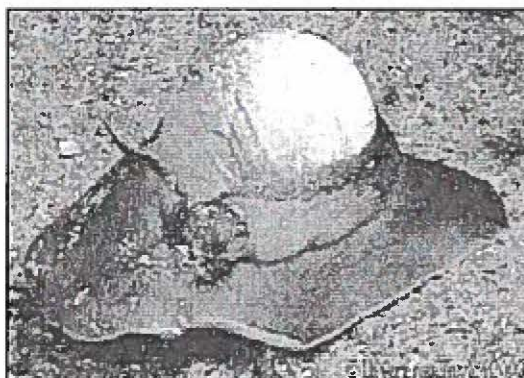
Moon snails regularly nosh on clams buried in the sand or mud. In dining mode, you'll often just see the last traces of their shell topside while the foot does the dirty work below. Out of sight, they extend a straw like proboscis from their foot that connects the mouth to the animal's stomach and commence drilling operations. Acids are secreted from the mouth onto the shell to dissolve it and a group of teeth, called a radula, help remove the softened material. The radula can best be described as a toothy "up" escalator formed step-by-step or row-after-row of teeth. After a neat and tidy hole has been made in the shell. The proboscis enters, the radula gets to work and the snail sucks up its "clam shake". One tropical snail killer, the cone snail, is also armed with poison and regularly stuns prey including fish, before sucking them down whole.

The size of the Northern moon snails easily out-shine their "vegimatic" periwinkle brethren. A "full-moon" can reach tennis ball proportions and their yellowish white shells have a little "dob" of whorls to finish off the spectacularly shell. But as handsome as their shells are, I'm always mesmerized by their ghostly movement over the bottom. They really don't appear to touch the bottom. Being "diggers", their feet, or large foot, have evolved into

two parts. The main foot does all the walking while a forward section, called a propodium, can be used like a plough or anchor to push sediment aside, or pull the body down, respectively. I regularly take close-up shots of the propodium because the dark streaks that cover the grayish flesh look like a road map.

There are also two other features associated with the foot that you don't normally see in a garden snail or periwinkle. Moon snails have a flap behind the tentacles that can be used to protect the head and often cover their shell with another fold that rises up from the base of the shell - the function of which is still unclear to me. And it's not only

clams they eat. It so happens that on one outing I noticed a great deal of activity in the moon snail population. They all seemed to be on the move, heading out for supper. I was about to take another "map" close-up shot when I noticed this odd little creature streaking away from an advancing Goliath. What caught my eye was the size of this creature - lucky to be the size of a pea- and what it was doing to get away from the moon snail. It was like an inch-



worm having a fit. After crossing and uncrossing my eyes several times, I realized I was watching a small snail extend its foot backwards, then spin its shell around the axis of its foot left or right. The result was a very odd looking rolling action, but a very effective way of not becoming snail "breath".

If these little chaps perceive the danger and start to roll, they usually escaped. But, the moon snail has a few tricks up its pant leg. This propodium I mentioned earlier has another roll. I watched one moon snail track down its prey and without startling it, lifted up its propodium and cast it like a net over the "one-bite" morsel. This capture technique not only startled me, but the "lightning bolt" speed, in snail terms, with which it was carried out was stunning. So the next time you are out diving, remember to keep an eye out for these killer snails.

by Lawrence Taylor

*This article originally aired on December 3, 2001 on CBC Radio One's Maritime Noon*

### Diving Fact:

*"In Nova Scotia, there are some 15,000 certified divers with about 40% of them diving at least once or twice a year." (1997 Final Report - Nova Scotia Marine Tourism Study)*



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# Boat Show 2002

## *exhibits/shows/etc.*

### NSUC Members get a FREE year of Diver Magazine

In 1998, the NSUC was asked to be the theme exhibitor at the Atlantic Boat Show. The theme was "Under the Sea" and provided the organization with an entire annex of the show to fill with underwater displays. We enjoyed three years of great events with partners such the Hydrographic Services of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, local dive shops, community groups, marine industries and more. Our adventurous displays ranged from 3-D photos of Halifax Harbour to a 40 foot pool with a ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicle).

With the NSUC discontinuing the annual Treasure Hunt in favour of supporting similar events organized by local dive shops, we were left without an annual event to let people know what we are doing and to gather new members. Well after another successful Boat Show in February it was decided we've found one our best ways to reach the new and seasoned divers, as well as non-divers. This year's modest display focused on underwater video from around Nova Scotia taken by our resident underwater videographer, Lawrence Taylor. The spectacular footage covered everything from the many wrecks found off Nova Scotia to the often overlook diversity of invertebrates found in our local waters.

Another centerpiece to our display was an antique brass diving helmet. Which doesn't seem as antique when you hear stories from people visiting the booth who actually wore these "hard-hats". It seemed as if everyone who dropped by to see us had a great story about diving, marine life or shipwrecks. We also gathered a lot of great ideas for future projects. We also gained some new members who are hopefully reading this now. As a bonus to joining the NSUC during the Boat Show, we gave each new member a subscription to Diver Magazine. Don't discourage if you didn't sign up as a new member at the Boat Show because we are extending this offer to any members who register in the next few months. If you sign up for a one year NSUC Membership (\$10), in addition to our regular services such as this newsletter, you will receive a one year subscription to Diver, Canada's premier diving magazine (valued at more than \$20). There is more information on become a member on page two or you can visit our new website at [www.nsuc.net](http://www.nsuc.net).

Another great way we've discovered to reach out to divers is through our new website. In addition to having updates on NSUC activities is also has information on dive sites, marine life and updates on issues of interest to divers. There is information on diving clubs around the province and we will soon be adding a club information page with updates of events happening in your area of the province. We think the site looks great but we are still building on it, so if you have any ideas please let us know.

Mark McLean

## NSUC Membership 2002

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (H): \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (W): \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ SEX: M ☐ F ☐

CERTIFICATION AGENCY: \_\_\_\_\_

CLUB: \_\_\_\_\_ FEE INCLUDED: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Member: \$10.

Newly Certified Diver: Free. If anyone needs to know impartial news about the diving community in Nova Scotia, it is the newly certified diver. Just enclose a Xeroxed copy of the newly issued basic certification card.

Memberships are valid to December 31st.



# Freediving across Canada: A call to Maritime freedivers

## *freediving*

by Perry Gladstone



Hold your breath- In the past two years Canadian Freedivers have earned three world records, the Women's National team has won first place in World Cup competition and the Canadian Men have consistently placed top five. This fall, for the first time ever, the AIDA World cup will be held in North American waters off Kona, Hawaii and you can be absolutely sure that Team Canada will be there- with longfins on.

Freediving, also known as the 'original extreme sport', traces its roots back nearly 1500 years to the Ama pearl divers of Japan who, on one breath of air, dove to up to three minutes hunting for abalone with no equipment at all. Although seemingly incredible, Freediving is really just another natural state for all mammals. Simply being in the water invokes the mammalian diving reflexes we share with our seal and dolphin cousins. With simple techniques we can train ourselves to recognize these innate abilities allowing us to return to the ocean in our natural state with confidence and ability.

Today in Western Europe and many other countries with ocean-going cultures, breath-hold diving and its hero's are well celebrated. Meanwhile in North America things are just beginning to take off as Freediving and a new breed of athletes capture the attention of adventure lovers and the media.

Here in Canada the Canadian Association of Freediving and Apnea (CAFA) has over 90

active members and Performance Freediving, an organization dedicated to the training and development of amateur and professional athletes led by World Record trainer Kirk Krack, has trained hundreds of freedivers from the Cayman Islands to Oslo Norway.

With both of these top organizations based in Vancouver the freedive community has mainly been centered in the west resulting in precious few East coast participants. CAFA President Kirk Krack and Toronto based National Team Member Perry Gladstone are looking to change that as quickly as possible.

After ten years of coming out East to surf and watching that community grow, Perry is convinced that the Maritimes and its dedicated ocean goers are going to be a major part of Freediving's future in Canada. All that's needed is a catalyst, which just happens to be Kirk and Perry's specialty.

This past June Performance Freediving held the first Eastern Canada clinic in Ontario which prompted the start of FreeDive Toronto, a local club of freedivers dedicated to continuing their training and hosting future regional CAFA events.

To bring some balance to the National scene Performance Freediving is looking to coordinate at least one Intermediate level clinic over two and a half days this summer/fall in the Halifax area. If you are interested in learning more about our your true underwater abilities or becoming part of freediving's future please contact Performance Freediving at 604.862.5868 or email

kirk.krack@performancefreediving.com.

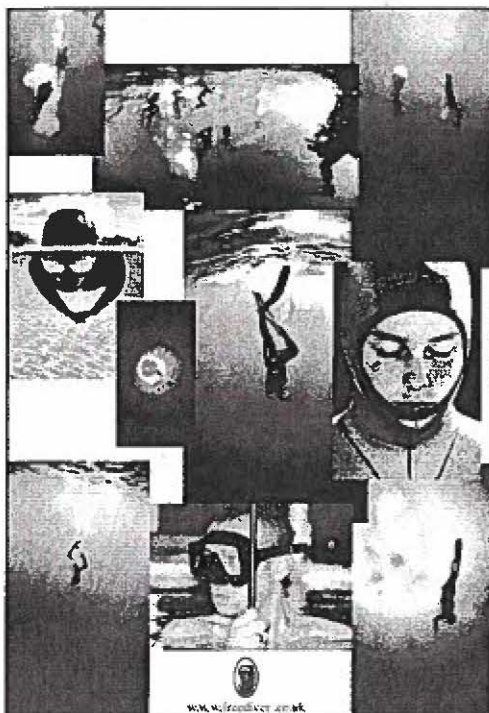
Also, for a look at what's going on right now please drop by the following websites:

[www.performancefreediving.com](http://www.performancefreediving.com)

[www.freedivecanada.com](http://www.freedivecanada.com)

[www.freedivetoronto.com](http://www.freedivetoronto.com)

*Perry Gladstone is Member of the Canadian National Freedive Team and President of FreeDive Toronto, a local club and online discussion forum for Eastern Canada Freedivers*



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