

Skin Diving A Family Affair

Couple Find Wonderful World Under Water

By DARLENE J. CHAPIN

Look out men—the gals are taking to skin diving! More and more women are diving into the watery wonderlands all over the United States to discover the thrills of swimming under water.

Interest in skin diving has grown since World War II when the face mask, snorkel and fins appeared. Manufacturers of skin diving equipment estimate six million people now participate in some form of underwater sport. Of this growing group, only one-tenth are women, but the number is increasing every year.

"Togetherness" is the theme of many young couples like Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth P. Wren, 919 Sheridan Place, who took up the exciting sport four years ago.

"I decided to take up skin diving simply because it was all my husband ever talked about," laughed Lois Wren. "Now we can share another new sport together."

Lois and Ken Wren, members of the Midland Skin Divers Club for three years, go on weekend jaunts to the surrounding lakes to test out their skills.

"The important thing is to keep in shape by going as often as you can," stressed Lois. "My husband and I just pack all our gear and our two

children in the car and we're on our way." The Wrens have two daughters, Debby, 2, and Pamala, 1.

They usually go with another couple and share baby sitting with them.

What should the well-equipped sports enthusiast have with him when he decides to explore the underwater depths? — a face mask, swim fins, one or two compressed air tanks, underwater suit of neoprene or rubber, compass, depth gauge and weight belts. The equipment, with a strap-on tank containing

70 cubic feet of compressed air, will permit diving for about an hour in water 10 to 20 feet deep, and about 20 minutes at 100 feet depths.

"My husband has been down 100 feet, but I've only been down 25 feet," commented the young housewife.

A volunteer instructor for the Midland Skin Divers Club, Ken stresses to his pupils they must never dive alone. "This is the first rule of underwater safety," he said. "Maybe this is why so many husbands and wives are becoming skin div-

ing enthusiasts."

What are the tests a beginner must pass to insure his own safety? First of all, he must be a fairly strong swimmer. If he can swim 75 feet on the surface of the water, then he qualifies for further training. And most important of all, he must be able to relax in the water and breathe without panicking.

"I give a new diver what I call a 'panic test' explained Ken. "If he panics when something goes wrong while he's in the water, then I flunk him."

Ken is not the only individual who is interested in encouraging other people to discover the excitement of skin diving. Donald L. McLellan, another diving enthusiast, will be in charge of a skin diving class at the YMCA which will run Nov. 9 to Dec. 14. Any individual over 16, male or female, may enroll in the class which meets 7:15 to 9:30 p.m. Mondays.

"You just can't describe the beauty of an underwater world to someone who has never seen it," sighed Lois. "It's the nearest thing to floating in space!"



UNDERWATER COUPLE—A feminine touch has been added to skin diving, sport once dominated by men. More and more women like Mrs. Kenneth P. Wren are sharing the excitement of exploring underwater worlds with their husbands. Preparing for an excursion to a nearby lake, Ken checks his wife's equipment. (Saginaw News Photo).