

THE SCUBA SCOOP

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www.saginawunderwaterexplorers.org

2025 Board:

President	Tony Piazza	989-751-0361
Vice President	Vacant	
Secretary	Carol Piazza	989-751-1285
Treasurer	Dave Sommers	989-751-8517
Compressor Chair	Michael Garner	989-284-8282
Member-at-Large	Mike Fabish	989-295-2627
Newsletter Editor	Joel Garner	

In this Issue:

- pg. 1 President's Letter
 - pg. 2 SUE Picnic/Munising Dive
 - pg. 3 Guinness World Record for Merpeople
 - pg. 4 Dale Hendershot Honored
 - pg. 5 Annual Crucifix Dive
 - pg. 6 Underwater Pumpkin Carve
-

President's Letter

As we turn the page from summer to fall, I find it hard to believe that our annual Christmas dinner is less than two months away. Although we have not had a lot of diving news, I, for one, have been extremely busy. Our board met on July 15th and discussed several items including the vice president vacancy, club insurance, constitution update and compressor operation, to name a few. An email was sent to all members for their input on some of these items, with only 17% of the members responding. Minutes of that meeting are available upon request.

Unfortunately, the dive charters we scheduled in 2024 were already booked for 2025 so I will get on this early for the 2026 season. Several of our members have been active with dives to Munising, Torch Lake, Alpena, Tawas Bay and Petoskey, including the annual cleaning of the crucifix. Let's keep the momentum going by promoting our club and the sport of scuba diving.

We had a good turnout for the annual picnic at Haithco Park on August 12th, with 12 members tolerating some inclement weather to enjoy good food and friendship. Mike and Bill even got a dive in!

I would like to launch some new initiatives to help us navigate the challenges small clubs encounter -- maybe a mid-winter club dinner in Bay City? Please mark your calendar for the Christmas dinner at Harvey's in Saginaw on December 6th at 4pm. It's never too early to start thinking of that perfect Christmas/scuba gift to be raffled off after dinner.

Tony Piazza,
President

Annual SUE Picnic

It felt like a hurricane blowing through Haithco Park on the evening of August 12th, and if you don't believe me, just ask the 12 Saginaw Underwater Explorer members who attended the annual picnic. At least the storm held off until after Mike Fabish and Bill Kirksey got their dive in!

That's what it's all about, some diving, good food and great friends, despite the weather conditions. Have you ever been asked if we're calling off a dive because of rain?



Munising's Alger Preserve

It's been a few years, so Carol and I took a trip to Munising in mid-July to dive the Alger Underwater Preserve with Lindquist's Wreck Express. Chartered by Dive & Glide, it was an instructional open water dive for some which meant a lot of bottom time.

Day one: Selvic & Manhattan

Day two: Hettler & Bermuda

Weather was great, good visibility and bottom temps mid-60's. Always a good trip to Michigan's U.P.!



Anchor of the Hettler



Hang-Time over the Selvic



A little silty on the Bermuda

Guinness World Record

Did you know there is a Miss Michigan Mermaid? Her name is Elyssa Steward and her dream to break the World Record for the largest gathering of Merpeople became a reality on August 1, 2025. SUE member, Cathie Garner, was there to help achieve that record!

500 professional, hobbyist and mermaid enthusiasts donned their tails on Oscoda Beach along the coast of Lake Huron for this fin-tastic event! The event was organized by Elyssa and Oscoda Citizens for Clean Water. Two years of planning went behind the Pirates and Mermaids festival to bring awareness to PFAS, an insidious "forever chemical" polluting local waterways and sites throughout the country. The main event of this year's festival was the Guinness World Record attempt.

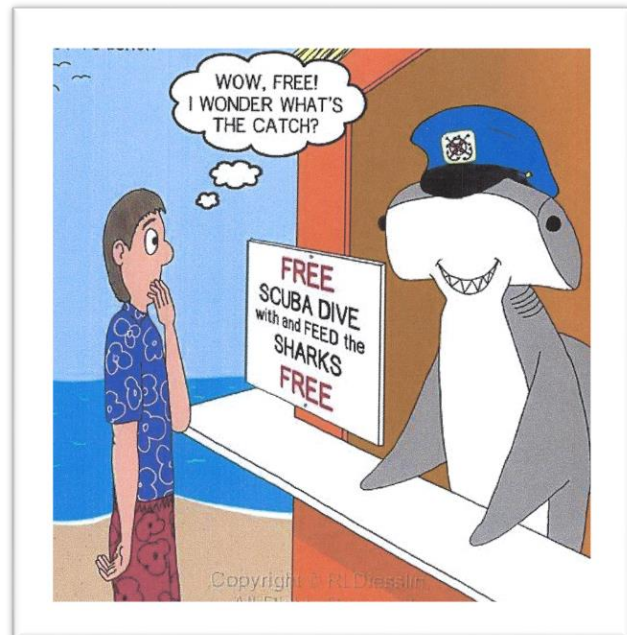
Cathie, a longtime friend of Miss Michigan Mermaid, was excited to participate in the GWR event and swim away as part record holder. Cathie describes the event as awe-inspiring! Seeing mermaids of all ages and backgrounds gather together was mermazing.



O-fish-ally World Record Holders



Cathie Garner poses with Miss Michigan Mermaid, Elyssa Steward (holding the new record) and Elyssa's mother.



Dale Hendershot Honored

SUE member, Dale Hendershot was recently honored as DNR Hunter Education Instructor of the year! Congratulations Dale!

Featured article from the DNR website:

Dale Hendershot of Gladwin is the Michigan Department of Natural Resources 2024 Hunter Education Instructor of the Year, an honor bestowed Thursday at the June meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Commission in Bay City.

“I am very humbled by this,” Hendershot said. “There are many deserving instructors, and I’m honored that my peers felt I was deserving of this.”

Hunter education helps the next generation of hunters and outdoor enthusiasts learn how to enjoy safe, responsible hunting and understand the importance of wildlife management. The DNR-managed program teaches lifelong skills, such as firearm safety, basic first aid and outdoor navigational instruction, to an average of 14,000 students each year.

Since 1991, in his more than 34 years of volunteering as a hunter safety education instructor, Hendershot is estimated to have instructed over 200 classes and more than 6,400 students.

“Passionate volunteers like Dale are the core of Michigan’s recreational safety programs,” said Lt. Tom Wanless, DNR recreational safety, education and enforcement supervisor. “Dale believes in providing safe hunting and trapping experiences for all. His enthusiasm is displayed by his willingness to teach at a variety of schools and clubs in his community and beyond, whether the curriculum focuses on hunter, trapping or bow-hunter education.”



Dale Hendershot of Gladwin was honored as the Michigan Department of Natural Resources 2024 Hunter Education Instructor of the Year. Hendershot has been a volunteer hunter safety education instructor for more than 34 years. Pictured, left to right are Chief Jason Haines, DNR Law Enforcement Division; Erica Moore, DNR department specialist; Hendershot; Lt. Tom Wanless and Cpl. Ken Lowell, both with the DNR Law Enforcement Division.

In 2006, Hendershot was a member of a statewide committee that created and implemented Michigan’s trapper education program. That same year, he expanded his credentials to include bow-hunting education and became the lead instructor at his club. He also volunteers to assist other clubs to restructure their hunter education programs.

Hendershot also has served as president of the Red Flannel Rod and Gun Club and the Michigan Trapper and Predator Callers Association.

“Hunter education is a rewarding program for volunteers and students,” Wanless said. “Anyone who enjoys hunting, fishing, hiking or simply being outside will benefit from taking hunter education. The program creates not just ethical hunters, but also stewards of our natural resources, and we owe that success to dedicated volunteers like Dale.”

Annual Crucifix Dive

On September 21, 2025, SUE members gathered in Petoskey for the annual Crucifix Dive. The Underwater Crucifix is located within Little Traverse Bay. Club members gather yearly to clean and maintain the 11-foot marble cross.

The buoy marker for the Crucifix had broken away days earlier. John Garner, Jr. arrived early and snorkeled the area for 30 minutes in an attempt to locate and mark the monument. He was unsuccessful. Luckily, Mike Fabish, had GPS coordinates to the cross and buoyed it quite quickly.

A successful dive was then had, and members cleaned the Crucifix and surrounding memorials and monuments. A job well-done to all!

The group then gathered for lunch and fellowship in downtown Petoskey.



Pictured: Mike Fabish, Justin Fabish, Mike Garner, Jean Owens, John Garner, Cathie Garner and Joel Garner



Underwater Pumpkin Carve

October 5, 2025 proved to be a beautiful day for diving and pumpkin carving! Underwater Antics, owned and operated by SUE members Tim and Cheryl Middleton, held their annual Underwater Pumpkin Carve Dive event at Bear Lake near Kalkaska.

The Garner family was there to compete in this annual fun dive. The weather was gorgeous, and the competition was strong! Designs were so creative this year!

Board Member, Joel Garner, walked away with a third-place trophy for his sea otter carving. The trophy was a hand carved sea turtle from Bali! Great job Joel!



John, Jack, Joel and Cathie Garner



From left: Joel and his sea otter carving. Jack Garner carving "Jaws"! Cathie Garner carved a mermaid tail. Joel and his trophy!

SAVE THE DATE!

SUE Christmas Dinner: December 6, 2025
Watch your email for more information!



Do YOU have something to be featured in the next issue of the Scuba Scoop? Send an email to Carol Piazza at piazza.carol6@gmail.com