

History Of The Saginaw Underwater Explorers

Dale Purchase, Fred and Doree LaClair, and John Garner are interviewed by Tom Mudd concerning the early years and development of the Saginaw Underwater Explorers. Interview took place at Fred and Doree's home in the mid-1990s.

Tom: When did this club get its start?

Dale: Around 1958.

Tom: Where was your first clubhouse?

All answer: Saginaw YMCA--the old one that was on N. Michigan

Dale: There was a general room where we had our meetings.

Tom: Who had the idea to form a club?

Fred: Don McClellan was one of them.

Dale: He was the first president.

Tom: Did you give lessons at the YMCA? Was there any certification at that time?

Dale: There was certification of sorts. McClellan and George Morley taught some of the early classes.

All answer: There was some guy who had a small dive shop and another who was associated with Wickes...

Fred: And Joann Crampton was in it, too.

Tom: Where was your compressor? Where did you get your tanks pumped?

All answer: We didn't have one.

John: It was about three years later.

Dale: Wolverine Gas in Carrolton. There was a guy who operated a little dive shop in a garage on Crapo Street. His name was Walt Thomas.

Tom: When did people start diving?

Dale: Not many people were doing much diving prior to 1957 or 1958. The first gear didn't become available until about 1955.

Fred: The first commercial gear I bought was in 1955--regulator and tank. The first regulator I used was the one I made up in 1953.

Dale: The first commercial gear--SCUBA gear--became available in 1953 but didn't become generally available until 1955 or 1956.

Fred: U.S. Divers was among the first to offer SCUBA gear. And Dacor.

Tom: And look at that--a 1958 U.S. Divers catalog.

Dale: Healthways was around then.

John: \$7.95 for a K-valve.

Tom: Where was the dive area then? Was there a local area where people dove? Did they dive at the bay?

Dale: Not so much at the bay. We used to go to Otter Lake quite a bit then.

John: And the Vassar gravel pit.

Dale: Lake Fenton, just south of Flint.

Fred: And almost anywhere at Higgins Lake. We dove all over Higgins. And Loon Lake, up between Rose City and Mio. It was very clear, and we would take the whole family and have a picnic.

John: Dive the backwaters.

Tom: When did the club get its first compressor, because dive clubs are kind of built up around a compressor?

Fred: I would say between 1960 and 1961 because Ray Branch was head of the compressor committee, and I remember when they bought that army surplus one. Whirlington, or whatever it was.

Dale: We used to keep it at Mercy Ambulance which used to be right across from

Case Funeral Home.

3

John: In the same block...near Princing's Pharmacy. It's torn down now.

Fred: We had it there for a long time...in the Mercy Ambulance building.

Tom: Have you seen how diving has changed over the years? We're talking about first five years after the club was started.

Fred: An awful lot.

Dale: There were no B.C.s and no CO2 vests, either.

Fred: Snorkel vests...

Dale: Some divers adapted military surplus Mae West vests. Snorkel vests came out in the early 60s.

Fred: Those were just oral inflation.

Dale: B.C.s really didn't come in under near the end of the 60s.

John: No, in the mid 70s.

Fred: The first ones had a self-contained bottle. The Frenzy was one made in France, I think. They didn't have the low-pressure hose like the ones we have now. When they came up with that everything just mushroomed. It just made diving so much more easier.

John: Diving has become a more comfortable sport...from a macho sport. Before the buoyancy compensators you'd have to know the amount of weight you would need to get to a certain depth.

Dale: You'd have to fight your way down and fight your way up.

Fred: Early diving, he could tell you, there were lots of weight belts left on those wrecks. They'd get down there and were unable to ascend without letting their weight belts go. The old vests just didn't have enough buoyancy.

Tom: What about the early regulators?

Fred: Years ago regulator was like being in an iron lung. They were demand type regulators, like the ones we have today, but really demanding.

John: You could adjust them some, but they would free-flow.

Dale: Over the years you pick up your own tricks for tuning your gear. Early regulators weren't very reliable. They did malfunction. I had an early Healthways regulator that malfunctioned at least four times.

Fred: I had one malfunction and had to make a free ascent from 80 feet. A valve would allow water to come in, and you had to sometimes swallow water along with the air.

Dale: Yeah, water would get into the exhaust hose

Tom: And what about the finds back then? Were they as powerful as today's?

Fred: Oh, they were powerful but were just stiff.

John: You had to have some good muscles in your legs to kick them. Helluva leg cramp.

Fred: It was like swimming with two-by-fours on your feet.

Dale: Voit and U.S. Divers had some like that. You could hold them and they wouldn't even bend down.

Tom: Were snorkels used early on? I can see in that old catalog that some came with that check ball.

Dale: I'd say that the ones with the check ball outnumbered others in the early years.

Fred: Some had ping-pong balls and others a rubber ball. They were a drag for free diving.

Dale: A hundred feet was considered very, very deep. Most of the time we went over 50 to 60 feet.

John: The old latex dive suits which leaked.

Fred: There was no air injection into the suits then.

Dale: The dry suits which used to exist were of latex rubber, but there was no inflation for them. You'd put them on over underwear. When you got over 50 or 60 feet they got downright uncomfortable. The early wet suits were...well you could buy a few off the shelf, but they were strictly standard size. And there was no nylon lining. You'd sprinkle them with corn starch or talcum powder to get in

or out of them. They did not slide off or on easily. The early ones could be pricey,

5

so some bought wet suit kits.

John: You sent your measurements and they would send back a bunch of pieces that you glued together, using neoprene cement

Dale: There was no stitching.

Fred: You needed some nylon to reinforce the rubber in some areas, or you would just tear it up with your fingernails while putting it on.

Dale: Every couple dives or so you had to patch it up.

Fred: Everybody had a can of glue.

John: A can of glue was just as important then as duct tape is now.

Fred: I never seen duct tape used like it was when we got into cave diving. We went down there and everything was taped.

Dale: We were constantly patching our suits.

John: The problem with going deep back then was that we had no buoyancy control.

Tom: Did you have a pressure gauge?

Fred: No, you had a J-valve.

Dale: Some divers just had K-valves, and you'd check your pressure before you went down with a surface gauge. And when you went down and got near 400 to 300 psi it would get hard to breathe and you would just pull the reserve but then you only had about 300 pounds left. You sure couldn't get into decompression then. And sometimes the J-valves were not very reliable. 100 feet was considered very deep then. Very few divers were going that deep in the late 50s or early 60s. 50 to 60 was the maximum.

Tom: How long was the club at the YMCA?

John: I don't remember exactly, but it was about the year that the diver drowned up in Charlavoix.

Dale: That was about 1964 or 1965.

Fred: I had to work that Saturday. He wasn't in the club; he was asked along as

6

a guest, and nobody had screened him. And he told everybody he was an ex-frogman. But they should have known better when they seen his gear. Les Gilson told me about it. The man had a partial plate, and they didn't know about it at the time. That became lodged in his throat, and that's how he drowned. I think it was before 1964. 1963 was when we were our biggest. We had over 100 members in 1963.

Dale: Most of them were divers. Yes, we were up to about 100 members at one time, and over the years the club has gone up and down, and it settled at about 20 or more.

Fred: We had one of the biggest clubs at that time. Was it the Vikings or Sea Kings? One of them had 102.

Tom: Are we the oldest club in Michigan?

John: One of the oldest. According to the Sea Horses, they have been going longer than we have.

Tom: Did you cooperate in dives with other dive clubs?

Fred: There were divers from the Bay City area who came to dive with us but didn't belong to our club. They later formed their own club. We were kind of affiliated. A little rivalry...that purple tank deal.

Tom: What's this purple tank deal?

John: That was from 1963 on. It was kind of a baton-type relay. You had a five-person team with one a tank man and another a safety man. The participants donned snorkel gear. The tank man dove down to a baton then brought the baton up to the next swimmer, and then it was a relay race from then on. And all of that was from the Michigan Skindiving Council Treasureama Weekend. All weekend we'd have some competitions.

Fred: We used to have up to 600 people up there.

Tom: And where was that held?

All: Higgins Lake.

Dale: Here you can see typical gear from 1964. Oh, yeah, that's our dive club at a cleanup.

Tom: What about the masks from that early time? If I recall, they were a little

7

difficult to seal.

Fred: I still dive with the one you see in that photo.

Dale: The American Red Cross building for a few years. The real old one that was downtown.

Fred: And we met at the osteopathic hospital for awhile. That was right after the YMCA, and then we finally went into the Red Cross.

John: It was north of 675.

Tom: Oh, way up in that area.

John: It was about four or five blocks from N. Washington in an old mansion.

Fred: We also met at First Savings and Loan on Mackinaw for awhile.

Tom: All of these moves in the first ten years?

Dale: It was wherever we could get a room for free.

John: The Farm Bureau...a bank at Hemmeter and State.

Tom: Was there ever a plan to have a permanent clubhouse?

John: We thought about it.

Fred: We even had some plans to build a clubhouse.

Dale: But we never came up with the money to do it.

Fred: We had the foresight, but we didn't have the money.

Tom: When did you establish your first constitution and bylaws?

Dale: 1959. It's been revised a lot of times over the years, but it's the original constitution.

Fred: Don McLellan was the first president.

Dale: George Morley became president after McLellan.

John: I'd like to see the club put up a rogue's gallery; that's what they call it in the

8

Field and Stream Club with photographs of past presidents. We used to take pictures of the president of the board every year, but where all that stuff went, I don't know.

Tom: Don't you have club newsletters from years back that would help with that?

Fred: Well we had that flood...

Dale: I had lots of that stuff but lost it in my basement.

Fred: I had all the issues of Skin Diver but lost that too. Well, I have them in boxes, but they're in bad shape. Mine started with 1958.

Tom: When did Skin Diver first come out?

Fred: 1956. Before I joined this club I was a member of the _____ Frogman Club out of California. I joined that when I was 14 or 15 years old.

Dale: The three of us are the only charter members still in the club. We were there at the beginning.

Tom: Did you ever get into decompression dives in the early years?

Dale: No.

Tom: Did anybody run into any problems like getting the bends?

Fred: Not the bends; you got cold.

Dale: You generally froze.

John: Back then they taught in the classes that you didn't need to worry about decompression because you'd run out of air at any depth before you'd need to decompress. They teach you more about such things today. Divers are more knowledgeable today. I was certified as an instructor at the same time as our first president, Don McLellan. He taught me, and we both became certified so we could then issue cards.

Dale: Not open water, just the pool.

Tom: Where was the first certification issued?

Dale: YMCA in this area.

Fred: Then NAUI and PADI.

Dale: Different clubs had their own certification for awhile. The limiting factors you had back then were you froze to death, and you'd breathe much more air because the regulators were so hard to breathe through. You also had a lack of buoyancy and fins that performed poorly. And you had to be in better shape. The 71.2s were the biggest tanks. There were 38s and 42s.

Fred: I made one from a fire extinguisher for my first one. I threaded it and installed a valve. But my very first one was made from a aircraft oxygen bottle. When we started diving we were pioneers ourselves, experimenting...

Tom: Did they dive as much back then?

John: We dove more in the 60s

Fred: We dove every weekend...and sometimes during the week.

John: We dove more before we were married (laughter).

Tom: When did they start wreck diving? You were limited at first due to depth, but there must have been a few shallow wrecks.

Dale: In the early 60s we started diving on wrecks.

John: We were diving a wreck the day the guy drowned. At Lake Charlavoix...the Kuka or KuKu.

Fred: It was a gambling ship at one time.

Dale: We used to dive lots of wrecks you could reach from shore. One time in the early days we went up...I know John was up there. We raised a rowboat and put the outboard motor on it.

John: That was a club dive.

Dale: We raised the rowboat off the bottom of Grand Traverse Bay and used a one-and-a-half horsepower motor and ran it around a point to dive a wreck. We had to go back to shore about every half mile to dump the water out of it because it leaked. And we dove this wreck in about probably 25 to 30 feet of water. And on our return to shore after the dive we broke a shear pin, so a cabin cruiser came by and hooked up and towed us back. Our rowboat sank just about the time we got back.

Tom: So this would be an example of an early boat dive.

John: A salvage dive.

Tom: Generally, what do you think the biggest change there is in how you feel about diving?

Fred: It was more of a challenge back then.

Tom: Did it become less of a challenge because of the better equipment?

Fred: We made up some of our equipment or improved it. You were in the elite back then if you had twin 50s.

John: They had twin tanks when it first started.

John: Here's a triple tank block.

Tom: What year is that catalog?

John: '58.

Fred: I bought my first commercial tanks in 1958 or 1959. Montgomery Ward.

Dale: What did you pay?

Fred: I bought a new tank, regulator and backpack and a pressure gauge that you put on the tank. I still have that gauge and still use it. And I still have my original tank, but I don't have the two-hose regulator. Was it \$90-some dollars for everything (to Doree)? Oh, you got your discount on it, so it ended up costing me \$75, complete. She worked at Montgomery Ward, so she got a discount on that.

Dale: My first buy was \$130. I got it at Morley Brothers. That was a tank, regulator... I remember that I didn't want to spend that much, but I couldn't find what I wanted because they were all out of it. So I bought the next step up.

To: With hard-breathing regulators and cold diving, were there any women diving at that time?

Fred: Joann Crampton. She was the forerunner of those new psychedelic colors. She had her tanks painted pink, didn't she? She wanted everyone to know that she was a gal diver, you know.

John: She had blue flowers glued onto her cap.

Dale: Nancy Nickodemus was one of our good divers.

Tom: I see an article here from 1965 that shows a big float--a big fish--with a couple of women on the tail.

Fred: That was the Timbertown parade. One of them is my wife.

Tom: How many years did you have a float for that event?

Fred: About two or three years.

John: We had a pirate ship one time.

Dale: And for a couple of years we entered the WSAM Raft Race.

Tom: During that first ten years, what else did the club do?

Fred: Fish shelters.

Dale: We built several of those. Higgins Lake...

Fred: They were well constructed, too.

Dale: Higgins, Loon, Otter, Shupack.

Tom: What about cleanups?

Fred: We did lots of cleanups--state parks and swimming areas.

Dale: We did cleanups on the Manistee, the AuSable.

John: And we put a plaque somewhere.

Tom: Here's an article from July 1966 about entire families working as teams to clean up the AuSable. And here's another from October 1964 about members of the Saginaw Underwater Explorers helping the Conservation Department to clean up the beach at Higgins Lake.

Dale: We did one cleanup dive a year for a long time.

Tom: Why did the club stop doing that?

Dale: Bottle and can laws, so you don't find as much trash now. The DNR once estimated that we picked up over a ton of stuff from the Manistee River.

Tom: I see that in 1964 you placed a plaque at Little Traverse Bay at Petosky.

Fred: It's still there, but they moved the crucifix. It was placed at the base of the crucifix at a depth of 60 feet on August 12, 1962. Seven divers and two boats were used in the dive, according to this article. There were also plaques from Indiana and Ohio. The plaque read: "Oh, lord God, all divers through thy wondrous underwater world, give them wisdom, patience and courage, and preserve them from all dangers of the sea, through Christ our lord, Amen. Saginaw Underwater Explorers, 1964."

Dale: I think that's still down there. I'll have to go look this summer.

Tom: One of the divers at the banquet said that there used to be lots of partying in the club. Did some divers join the club just for social activities? Was it more of a social club back then?

Fred: Yeah.

Dale: There were people who were in the club for the social activity. I think they were all divers of sorts, but some of them only dove a couple times a year.

Tom: Did you log your dives back then?

Dale: I didn't even keep a log for years.

John: Me, either.

Dale: I didn't start keeping a log until 1971.

John: I designed a log book.

Dale: A lot of people didn't log dives in the 60s. By the end of the 60s people were starting to log their dives.

Tom: Would you make double dives on the same day?

Dale: Two...three.

Fred: As many as we had air for. And that's when you learned to use the snorkel. You became better swimmers.

John: Back then you didn't have two or three tanks. One tank was all you could afford.

Dale: You'd come up from a dive and snorkel all the way back in order to save air.

Tom: All three of you have been president of the club at one time or another, so how would you compare what a meeting is like today with the meetings you held in the early days?

Fred: Donnybrooks. One time our club was split...for a long time.

Tom: Why was it split?

Fred: Personality conflicts.

John: That was in the mid-60s.

Fred: It was a good 8 to 10 years that it was kind of a split club. We put things together, but there was some hard feelings.

Dale: There were distinct factions.

Fred: One of them did not believe in competition, whatsoever.

John: We would have constitutional changes, and you'd have real arguments going.

Tom: How come they were hotter blooded then?

Fred: I think it was because we were pioneering then.

Tom: Were the members more involved then?

Fred: Oh, yeah, because every time we had a function, like when we built the floats and stuff like that, everybody would show up. It was more of a family club then.

Dale: And more people would run for office. Back then you'd have five or six people running for one office.

John: Proxy voting.

Fred: Like the Eclipse would do is go around and collect all the proxies so that

14

they could get their way.

John: Their spouses would come...

Dale: There might be 10 or 12 people running for one office sometimes.

Tom: A little more exciting back then?

John: Oh, yeah.

Fred: It took hours to get through elections.

John: The people who would volunteer to do the jobs, or the people who accept the nominations, they would do the job. Now the people kind of get railroaded in, they just say "screw it."

Fred: They don't care. Back then we took pride.

Tom: You said that going back then, diving was tougher. You were pioneering then. Do you think that pioneering spirit has been lost somewhat? Not yourself, but I'm looking at some of the new divers coming in. Has the advanced equipment been responsible for that?

Dale: Somewhat...to a certain degree.

John: I don't think it's being done on the individual basis anymore; it's more in the companies pioneering the new equipment to make it more high tech, something that they can sell.

Fred: They're always coming out with new stuff like a car coming out with a new body style. You're nothing if you don't have that new body style. In the 60s, if you had an Aqualung Royal Master two-hose regulator, you were considered the elite. (John looks at a catalog and views it.) I still have parts for that regulator.

John: I do, too.

Tom: Have you had an old equipment show?

Fred: Yes, we did. We used to have little seminars at our meetings, too. One would get up and show how to clean a regulator...helpful hints for the new divers coming in.

John: But we didn't do that during the first ten years or so.

John: We also had pool swims every Friday night...at the Y, all year long.

Tom: During the early years, did certain members of the club actually certify other people to dive?

Dale: Don McLellan, George Morley, John Garner and Pat Tunney were the first instructors in the club.

Tom: They would get a card from the YMCA, right? And you would then give them further training, certification and a checkout dive?

All: No.

Doree: In the early years we didn't have enough money, so we had some bake sales, rummage sales. We pitched in and helped.

Fred: It was more of a family club then.

Doree: We took the kids along, and most of the time it was like a potluck gathering, like summer picnics.

Tom: And what was the money raised for?

Fred: The compressor.

Dale: Or to charter a boat.

Tom: Were there dues in the early years?

Fred: Not very much. They kept it down because it was a family club. We welcomed other divers. John here joined the club when he was 16 years old. And I came in before I was married at about 21.

Doree: And we donated some money to some charitable organizations, too.

Fred: Red Cross...because we were in with them.

Dale: And we also had a club film festival back in the late 60s and early 70s. We rented the auditorium at old North School a number of times, showed "Silent World."

Fred: And we had John D. Craig.

Dale: We had Col Craig a couple of times. And we had Stan Waterman a couple
16

of times before he became famous. He had a diving show entitled "Adventure Is My Business," or something like that.

Fred: He was a hard-hat diver.

Tom: And I heard someone say something about the Saginaw Fair.

Doree: We had a display there.

Fred: We had a big booth.

Dale: Diving was a big attraction then. We had goldfish in a tank and kids could buy them for a quarter. We had a big water tank about 6 feet across with a window in it, and we still have it.

Fred: We used to have it in the fire barn but moved it out of there. We'd play checkers and cards underwater, catch fish. You could get two divers in the tank.

Tom: That must have been exciting then because diving was so new.

Dale: In the early days we'd have a club dive like at the Tawas dock. You'd be diving along the dock at there--and it's only 15 to 20 feet deep--and you'd come up and there would be 150 to 200 people watching from the dock. That's when "Sea Hunt" was such a popular TV show. Diving was a real novelty then.

Fred: And we had the mystery bus trip. What we did was, you'd get your gear ready and we chartered a bus.

John: And only one person knew where we were going.

Doree: That person would tell the bus driver where we were going.

Fred: And then we would inform the state police just in case. We'd all chip in and pay for the bus. We had a good time, bring a picnic lunch, play volleyball, have planned stops. That was a big thing in the 60s and 70s.

Dale: Then getting a bus became too expensive.

Fred: The we started to have van trips where we'd get a number of vans together. So we'd caravan, as we called it.

Dale: Because diving was such a novelty in the 60s, any time more than four or five divers were involved you always had news coverage of some sort. Just like

all these clippings. Something would need to be pretty spectacular nowadays for

17

something to make the paper. Back then it was unusual.

Tom: You were like the early astronauts.

John: We entered the Timbertown parade for several years. They always put us in the commercial class, so we didn't win a major trophy.

Tom: It's lots of work to make a float. Where would you make it?

John: One year we made one in a fairgrounds building, and another year we make one in a building behind the old Wickes plant.

Tom: Is there anything about the early years that we haven't yet talked about?

Fred: I think that diving has just become more sophisticated. The fun is still there.

John: It's easier today and more comfortable.

Dale: Souvenir hunting was a big thing back there, too. If you went wreck diving you brought back a piece of the wreck. Even if it was just a spike, you had to bring something back.

Fred: I've got some items, but my wife doesn't want me bringing anything else back home.

John: It was hard wreck diving during the first ten years or so due to limitations on depth. We never had boats...

Fred: And the technology, like now we have LORAN and can get right to the wrecks. We can punch in the coordinates and then we're there.

John: Years ago, we used to hunt all day just to get a dive on a wreck. Now we can dive three dives.

Dale: Up in Alpena in the early 60s, with the exception of about three wrecks, that's all we could dive. Used grappling hooks to snag them, but several were in shallow water, just under the surface.

John: A big dive boat then was like a 16' runabout.

Dale: Diving the Montana out there, we used to line up some landmarks. We used to carry a little map with this landmark and that landmark, and then you'd

throw out your grappling hook and start dragging. You could spend several hours

18

before you hooked up on the Montana. Nobody dove anything that was out of sight of landmarks.

Fred: And another thing, on our first wreck diving we weren't as exploring as we are today. Today the divers are better trained and therefore have more confidence in their ability to penetrate a shipwreck, for example.

John: And make it back out.

Fred: Before, if you silted it up once, you were done. We never had tether lines and such back then. If it got silty, it was hairy in there. We were diving the Pucca (?) and John and another diver dropped a door...

John: Hatch cover.

Fred: I was diving with Clarence Greenberg at the time, and we both had lights. The hatch cover dropped and sent all that silt into the aft end where we were inside the ship. Everything went black and our lights were useless. I used my head and started counting the ribs with my hands, and I knew that I had to go to a certain part. Something tapped me on the shoulder, and I looked up to find a little hatch. I went up through that, and to this day I can remember how hairy that was. With the training we have today you learn to be calm and not panic under such a situation. That could have been a bad situation if we'd panicked.

Dale: Depends on how much air you're got, too.

Fred: Just imagine that guy whose mask you found...the man who drowned down there on the Monrovia. They were going to get a porthole. They overstayed there time and it silted up and they got caught up.

John: His partner found his way out.

Tom: Did they have a line?

John: No.

Fred: He wanted to go back and get the other guy but he didn't have enough air.

Dale: John and I almost ran out of air on the Nordmeer. We'd taken off a couple of portholes down inside the Nordmeer, the third deck down. We'd pushed the J-valves down on the ceiling. We'd knocked them down reefing on the portholes. We got separated after we got the portholes because we were totally silted out. I went out one way and John went out another. I'm looking for him and he's

looking for me. I went back down and didn't see him, so I came back up. We

19

finally ran into each other on the surface. Neither one of us had any air left.

Fred: We had some close ones.

Tom: So this club has never lost a diver?

Fred: Not a club member. The guy that drowned told everybody that he was an ex-frogman and had all that experience. You'd run into that back then. Back then everybody was a frogman or U.D.T.

Tom: This could help the club because they'll realize that there's more to a club than just diving. The club members can learn by your comments that the club was more involved.

Fred: Like I said before, we had lots of parties. Not that we got drunk or anything because we didn't. We had Christmas parties, Halloween parties...

Dale: I think that part of it now, too, is simply the fact that so many people are involved in so many other activities. We're all examples of that.

Fred: More turnover in membership, too. In the early days we had to hustle just to find a place to meet. And I think we were more enthused or excited about diving then.

John: There was more mystique about diving back in the early years.

Fred: Just like our name, we were explorers back then.

Dale: Diving is big business now. Diving was new in the 60s, but now it's more established.

Fred: Who would ever think that we would have what we have today. When I started diving, no way did I ever think we'd have the stuff we have today. Like our using those 16 mm underwater cameras. They were heavy and bulky. And now there's an 8 mm camcorder.

Dale: You were lucky to get three minutes recording with that 16 mm.

Fred: And now you've got sound, too. And the watches they have today and dive computers

John: We didn't have pressure gauges, and now you've got one that tells you, according to existing conditions, how many minutes you're got left in the tank.

Tom: For those of you who have thousands of dives, is the adventure still there?

Dale: Not exactly. I don't think any of us just do lake dives. We used to go dive just to dive--to get wet.

Fred: We'd come up from some wreck dive, all cold and shivering and say, "Boy, wasn't that fun?" Now we've got these dry suits, and you don't get cold in them.

Dale: I dive now to take pictures. About 95% of the dives I take today I take my camera with me. And John does the same thing. It's especially rewarding when you are on a new wreck.

Fred: Finding the Griffin...back years ago that was the big thing. Everybody thought they were going to find the Griffin.

Tom: During the early years, 1958-68, did any club members find new wrecks?

Fred: We didn't have the technology that we've got today, like side-scan SONAR. We were limited. The only way wrecks could be found was by accident, or maybe they'd be brought in by the ice into the shallows. Or fishermen would get their nets hung up on them.

Dale: One time we went up in an airplane to see if we could spot wrecks.

Fred: Becker used to spot some that way.

Fred: You know, after a dive we'd take our suits off and throw everyone into the water.

John: Yeah, to get the talc off.

Fred: And in the water, we'd pull some trunks off so those divers couldn't get out of the water.

John: We're remembering Don McLellan and George Morley because they were the ones who really started the club. They were the true pioneers.

Tom: So you were an early member, too, Doree.

Doree: Yeah, after we got married. I used to take our child to all the meetings.

Fred: We used to have wives and kids to pool parties and picnic dives, not so much for wreck dives.

Tom: Why did you change the club logo?

John: We had to take the YMCA off. The new one doesn't have the diver; it's got a dolphin. Don McLellan was a commercial artist at the news, and he did that.

Doree: We really had lots of compliments on our jacket design, too.

Dale: (departs)

Fred and John: (describe modifications to early two-hose regulators and modifying valves to accept pressure gauge).

Fred: We home-made our pressure gauges. This was a plug for a reserve, but I turned it into a port for high pressure gauge.

Fred and John: (describe some of the modifications they made to early equipment, which included much experimentation, and they also had tools for rebuilding or tuning regulators)

John: (John describes some early cave diving which took place in the late 70s or early 80s in Florida)

John and Fred: (the interview, which took almost two hours, concluded with John and Fred describing early two-hose regulators and changes, both good and bad, over the years)