

Wisconsin's UNDERWATER HERITAGE

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Shipwrecks In Review

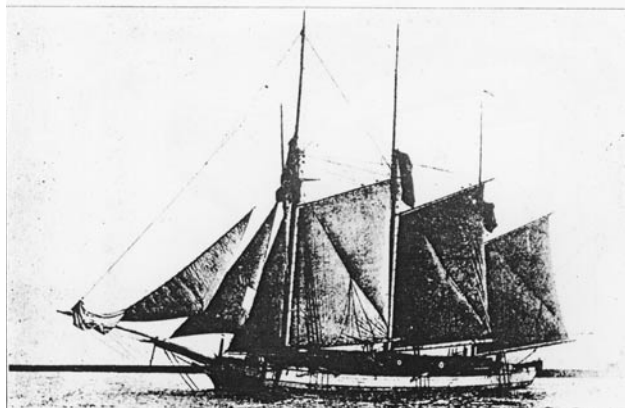
by Dr. Richard Boyd



As is our custom, we will review various activities surrounding the recent discovery, exploration and scientific study of shipwrecks. Projects dealing with underwater archeology or historic preservation may also be mentioned. While these reports will concentrate on the Great Lakes, notable events in other parts of the world are included. For ongoing news about Great Lakes shipwreck activities, further details are available on Brendon Baillod's excellent web site <<http://www.ship-wreck.net/shipwreck/news.jsp>>

2004 was an unprecedented year for Great Lakes shipwreck hunters. Important discoveries were made

The Rouse Simmons



all over the five lake region. In the Wisconsin area, two long-lost vessels were found: the *Ocean Wave* in Lake Michigan and the *May Queen* in Green Bay, both in the general vicinity of the Door Peninsula. The *Ocean Wave*, a scow schooner sunk in 1869 with a cargo of stone, had been sought by divers for years without luck, probably because it is NOT located where it's supposed to be! The heavily leaking vessel was reportedly abandoned some 10 miles offshore southwest of Bailey's Harbor, after which its crew rowed 20 miles to shore in Whitefish Bay. Therefore, most researchers had assumed the vessel rested far out in the lake in very deep water... in fact, reports from 1869 suggest about 360 feet of water.

The wreck was located by a commercial fishing "net snag," which was reported to sport divers who investigated the site to find the hull largely buried in sand. It rests near the Door Peninsula in 105 feet of water several miles off the boat ramp in Whitefish Bay. To this point, vessel

identification has been made on the basis of hull structure and measurements, plus the fact that she carried a load of stone! Since wrecks of stone carriers with cargo are fairly uncommon, its highly likely that this is the *Ocean Wave*. Verification was initially confused by the fact that brief historical reports mention that the *Ocean Wave* had sunk in 1866 in deep water off Chamber's Island in Green Bay. This, in fact, was true, but that *Ocean Wave* was salvaged after several months and put back in service. It remains unclear at this point if the two vessels are one and the same. This matter is currently being investigated.

The *May Queen* was a 13-ton fishing schooner which was owned by John Linquist of Menekaunee, Michigan, a harbor suburb of Menominee. Linquist was a prominent citizen who operated a fishery and popular mercantile business there. Heavily loaded with \$1,500 of salted fish, the *May Queen* was being towed by the tug *J. Dayan* in December, 1882, when a horrendous leak developed. So rapid was the flooding that the craft plunged to the bottom within five minutes,

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Wisconsin Underwater Archeology Conference

The First Annual Wisconsin Underwater Archeology Conference was held on Saturday, October 22, 2005 in Milwaukee. Brendon Baillod, welcomed everyone to the event. Dr. Richard Boyd then gave some opening remarks, discussing the history of the Wisconsin Underwater Archeology Association and the current status of underwater archeology in Wisconsin.

Keith Meverden, the state underwater archeologist, gave a talk on scow schooners; ships built to access small, shallow water ports. They had a flat bow and a rectangular cross section with a very flat bottom. The hulls had a hard chine and the bottoms were cross planked, distinguishing them from traditional schooner hulls. Keith also discussed this years's field work on the wrecks of the scows *Lottie May*, *Larnia*, *Iris* and *Ocean Wave*.

After lunch, Bob Birmingham discussed the history of the fur trade in the Great Lakes. Conflicts between

Indian nations, between European & American companies and between missionaries and traders were all linked to the demand for fur. Bob described the archeological work done at fur trade posts on Madeline Island, including underwater surveys on parts of the posts which are now submerged.

Kimm Stabelfeldt and Brendon Baillod gave a presentation on the recently found brig *Mahoning*. The *Mahoning* was built in 1847 and worked the grain and lumber trades. It was actually built as a two-masted brigatine, one mast square-rigged and the other fore-and-aft-rigged. Later it was converted to a three-masted barkentine. In 1864 she ran ashore near Sheboygan. Salvors pumped her out and began towing her in for repair. However the ship was very waterlogged and the *Mahoning* sank before they reached port. The wreck, in 55 feet of water, is now broken up and covered with zebra mussels.

C. Patrick Labadie, of the Thunder Bay National marine Sanctuary described current methods used for underwater surveys. He covered drawing sketches, perspective drawings and measured drawings; trilateration and grid documentation; photography and videography; sonar surveys and the use of ROV's.

After these presentations there was a roundtable discussion on identifying shipwreck remains. Panel members were Richard Boyd, C. Patrick Labadie, Kimm Stabelfeldt and Keith Meverden. Panelists agreed that both archival and underwater survey work is required to identify shipwreck remains. Sometimes a wreck is not the one it is first assumed to be. Also, investigation of wrecks can shed light on what happened to the ship and can confirm or deny stories reported by witnesses and survivors.

Wisconsin's

Underwater Heritage

is published quarterly by the Wisconsin Underwater Archeology Association, a nonprofit association of individuals and organizations interested in studying and preserving the underwater cultural resources and historical sites of Wisconsin.

In addition to publishing this newsletter, the Association also holds semiannual meetings

and provides support to members' research and publication projects. Annual membership dues are \$15. For membership information write to the postal or email address below.

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WUAA Fall Business Meeting

The fall business meeting of the association was held in Milwaukee on Saturday October 23, 2005, before the underwater archeology conference.

The meeting was brought to order by president Russel Leitz. There were 15 members present and 2 non-members. Steve Wagner, the treasurer, reported a balance of \$1,859.

The topic for organizing a second project on the whaleback *Meteor* was discussed. Russel Leitz asked if this was a project we would be interested in assisting with again. Brendon Baillod mentioned that the vessel is badly deteriorating and if nothing was done the ship would only last another year or two. By volunteering to assist with further clean-up we could extend that time by a number of years. The majority of members agreed that something needs to be done. Russel Leitz stated that he would discuss further with Pat Labadie to determine a date and to answer any questions.

Potential projects for 2005 were brought up. Brendon Baillod mentioned interest in doing a survey project on the brig *Mahoning*.

Russel Leitz asked if any members had any updates for projects currently being worked on. Dick Boyd gave an update on the Rock Lake Pyramid project and said that during the WUAA conference opening remarks he would be talking more about the progress of additional projects. Brendon Baillod talked about a project for transcribing insurance articles and accident lists for Inland Lloyd's Register. He asked for volunteers to help get the information into electronic format. He also stated that we could put this information out on the WUAA website. Russel Leitz reported that the Manitowoc Pilot database was complete and that he had completed entering 1852 through 1859 data for the Door County Advocate. Janet Defnet asked how one could access this information. Keith Meverden said a link to this information was

available at www.wisconsinshipwrecks.org.

Election of officers and directors was brought up for vote. It was decided that all current officers would retain their positions with the exception of the position of secretary, being filled by Paul Laue and a director position being filled by Danny Aerts.

Special Thanks To Robert Korth

Robert Korth announced he will step down as a director of WUAA. The Association extends a special thank you to Bob for his many years of service to the Association.

Action Meeting

The next action meeting will take place at 9:00 am on January 21, 2006 at the third floor board room of the State Historical Society building in Madison. Meeting topics will include 1) next seasons projects 2) outcome of conference 3) option to continue using conference calls for sub-committee meetings. All members are welcome to attend.

Discussion panel members, from left to right: Brendon Baillod, Dick Boyd, Pat Labadie, Kimm Stabelfeldt, Keith Meverden
photo courtesy Greg Kent



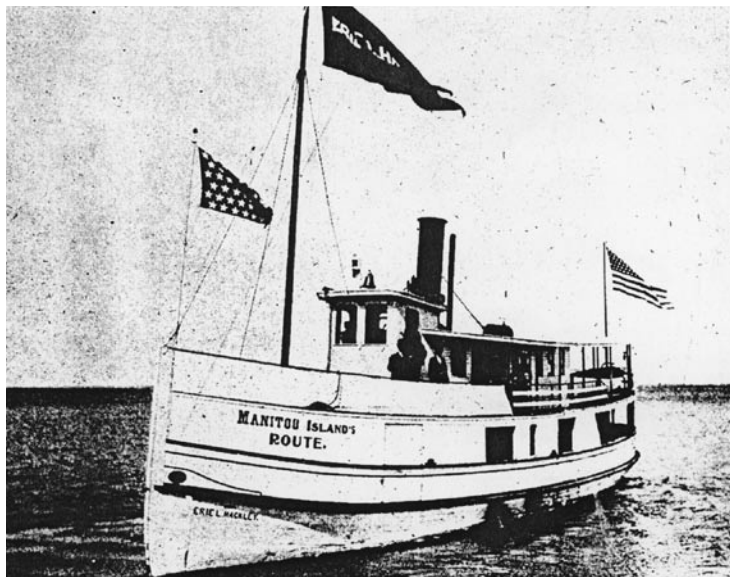
Shipwrecks In Review

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giving the crew no time to launch a life boat. One sailor tossed an oar to Captain Thor Anderson to keep him afloat while the rest of the men swam to the overturned yawl. The sinking had occurred after dark at 9 PM, so the tug's captain, John Heck, was not instantly aware of the problem. Soon realizing what had happened, Heck swung the tug around and rescued the stricken sailors.

The vessel had disappeared northeast of Menominee, between Ingallston and Rochereau Point in Michigan waters west of Chamber's Island. Local newspapers gave varying locations for the sinking: Nine miles north of Menominee, 1.5 miles offshore in 40-50 feet of water, and 12 miles north of Menominee in 48 feet of water. By late December, packets of salted fish were found drifting near Chamber's Island. Newspaper accounts reported that the vessel had been overloaded and uninsured, an unfortunate combination of circumstances.

The Erie L. Hackley



Next May, the *Dayan* was enlisted to find the wreck, but since the site of the sinking was not precisely known, all efforts proved futile. In early July, a commercial fisherman snagged the wreck, but the *Dayan* had left the area to operate on Lake Winnebago. Thereafter, the records are vague, but apparently efforts to salvage the schooner were abandoned when the depth of the water was ascertained. The *May Queen* had been built in 1875 by E. B. Graham and was now a total loss.

In the early 1970's, commercial fishermen occasionally reported snagging their nets in the area where the *May Queen* had disappeared almost a century ago. Found in their retrieved nets were pieces of painted wood and other small artifacts, obviously debris from a shipwreck. These findings were relayed to Frank Hoffmann and this writer at the Mystery Ship Seaport in Menominee. Two trips were made to the area where fruitless sonar searches were conducted for the wreck. The vessel was not located until 2004 when diver Ken Mortinson found her resting in 80 feet of water, almost twice as deep as had been originally reported in

1882. The *May Queen* is apparently in excellent condition with many intact artifacts still aboard.

In lower Lake Michigan, diver Jerry Guyer has come up with at least five new wrecks in the Milwaukee area. Jerry is a well-known dive shop-owner and

charter captain who has actively pursued wrecks for several decades. In 2004, he purchased a new Marine Sonics 900 Khz sonar, one of the most sophisticated towfish units available. The sensitivity of this device quickly resulted in new findings: three barge-like vessels, probably of early 20th century vintage, all located off the Milwaukee Harbor in the general vicinity of the sunken freighter *Prins Willem*. A broken schooner was also found off the harbor's south pier as well as an additional 200-foot long severed hull in that same area. Work is presently underway to identify these lost ships. Jerry gave an interesting program on these discoveries at the last Ghost Ships Festival in Milwaukee.

Another round in the legal battle between diver Paul Ehorn and the State of Wisconsin is over. Ehorn was arrested some years ago after removing a porthole from the *Rosinco* which sank in 185 feet of water off Racine in 1928. The *Rosinco* was a palatial yacht owned by Colonel Robert Morse, a millionaire industrialist from Fairbanks-Morse Company in Beloit. Ehorn successfully challenged his arrest on the basis that the State did not own the vessel at the time he salvaged the artifact. He eventually won the case. However, Wisconsin soon placed the wreck on the National Register of Historic Places, which was promptly recognized by the court as State ownership. Ehorn has now regenerated his suit for reclamation of the porthole, still insisting that Wisconsin had not owned the wreck at the time of its removal. So hang on ... it's not quite over yet.

In Door County (WI), rejuvenated interest in the shipwreck *Erie L. Hackley* has taken place. The *Hackley*, a small packet freighter, was the worst maritime disaster on Green Bay, and took place in October, 1903, off Green Island.

Various prominent Door County citizens perished in the tragedy. In June 2004, the Noble House, a pioneer home museum in Fish Creek, offered a memorial program, display and tour which revisited the *Hackley* tragedy. Funerals for victims of the sinking were actually held in the Noble House in 1903 because the village had no undertaking facilities. The Door County Maritime Museum in Sturgeon Bay has also feature a *Hackley* segment as part of a new, major display, "From Sails to Steam," opened in April, 2005. Divers had searched for the little steamer for almost 30 years until this writer found it in 1980.

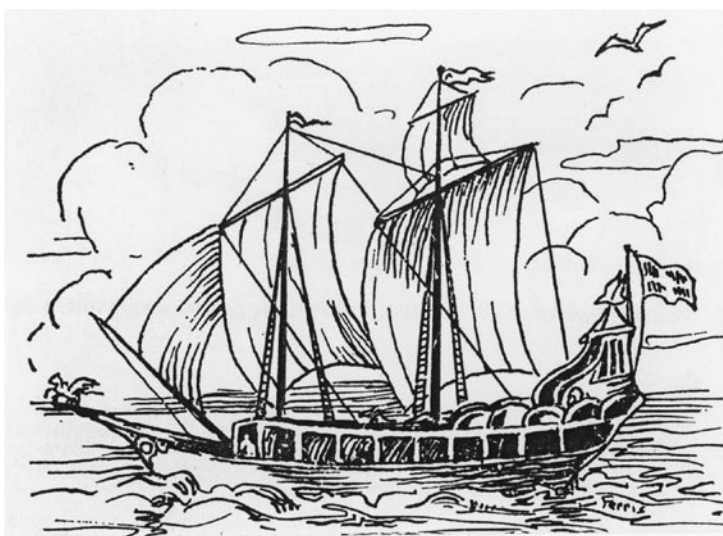
In recent months, revitalized interest in the famous Christmas Tree Ship, a.k.a. the *Rouse Simmons*, has occurred. For years this classic 3-masted schooner transported evergreens from Michigan's Upper Peninsula into the Chicago River to the Clark Street Pier where it was then transformed into a floating Christmas tree lot. The arrival of the *Simmons* with its first load of trees was considered by many to be the start of Chicago's holiday season. Enroute to the Windy City in November, 1912, the *Simmons* was overwhelmed by an ice storm and foundered with all hands in 175 feet of water off Kewaunee (WI). Eventually discovered in the 1970's, the schooner has been a popular TEK dive site as well as the springboard for annual memorial dinners, a popular musical play, and several new books. At Christmas 2004, cable television's Weather Channel produced an excellent documentary depicting the history of the *Simmons* and the Schuenemann family who brought trees and Christmas joy to Chicago's waterfront for so many years.

Since our last review, the old carferry *Straits of Mackinac* has finally found a resting place on the

lake bottom. Originally scheduled to be sunk off Algoma WI, the vessel was moved to Chicago after "Plan A" fell through. The dive club that had originated the project relinquished the vessel to a Windy City group after they pre-

ma- turely lost their free storage and dockage at Kewaunee. Following a thorough internal cleaning to meet environmental requirements, the ferry was loaded with several truckloads of concrete, towed out into the Lake, and the hull was punctured. After a longer-than-expected time, the vessel begrudgingly sank in 80 feet of water about 10 miles northeast of Navy Pier. It is now the largest dive attraction ever sunk in the Lake and has quickly become a popular underwater site. Nimrod's Dive Club of Green Bay, which first procured and then lost the *Straits*, got a replacement vessel, namely the old Chicago fireboat, *Joseph Medill*. Unfortunately, sinking of this ship has been stymied by Wisconsin DNR environmental regulations. Political problems with the proposed Algoma site has also complicated the matter, so the project is presently "on hold."

From northern Lake Michigan, came several new claims declaring the discovery of the long-lost *Griffon* which, of course, was the famous vessel of French explorer Robert La Salle. It was the first to sail the Great Lakes as well as the first to be lost (fall, 1679). Steve Liebert of Fairport International, a treasure-hunting firm, reported a new find last



Artistic sketch of the Griffon

summer off the Garden Peninsula. Liebert became famous some years ago after locating the wreck of the schooner *Captain Lawrence*, which has been associated with the legendary and controversial Poverty Island treasure. The newly found site has been examined by several prominent archeologists who told this writer that the remains date to the late 19th century, not the 1600's. Scientific evaluation has not dissuaded Liebert, however, who has filed a \$35 million suit to claim the site. Elsewhere on the Lake, another *Griffon* claim likewise turned out to be bogus, involving a wreck of improper vintage, although some interesting French uniform buttons were found there. At the bottom line... the *Griffon* still goes missing!

Last summer over on Michigan's Leelanau Peninsula, a team of archeology students probed for the remains of the original lighthouse built there in 1852. A temporary structure, that light tower was demolished and replaced in 1858 with a new one, along with a keeper's quarters. Operating on a "best guess" plan, the lucky group has uncovered part of the original brick foundation. Future plans for the site

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calls for a historical display encased in plexiglass for public viewing.

A grisly reminder of the multitude of shipwrecks which occurred a century ago along Lake Michigan shorelines washed up near Glencoe IL, in 2003. A human skull found on the beach was first thought to be that of a recent drowning victim. However, records disclosed no loss of life in that area of the lake for decades. Moreover, teeth in the skull had a distinctive gold-foil filling which was used only briefly in the pre-Civil War era. Evidence now suggests that the skull is that of a victim from a 19th century shipwreck!

Late last summer noted underwater explorer Dr. Bob Ballard did a live, real-time broadcast from the site of the *Titanic* as part of his return expedition to that famous wreck. As Ballard's advanced ROV Hercules cruised over the hull and the adjacent bottom lands, it sent back hi-definition photos of the vessel and assorted artifacts strewn about the site. A direct satellite link to the Milwaukee Public Museum allowed a group of invited guests to view this video while conversing with Ballard about his current work and future plans. The program was coordinated by Milwaukee philanthropist Michael Cudahy who is Ballard's personal friend and sponsor. This writer was privileged to be

there and can attest to the quality of the video and cutting-edge nature of Ballard's work. In that regard, Ballard recently received the Roy Chapman Andrews Distinguished Explorer Award at Wisconsin's Beloit College. This award, named after a Beloit paleontologist who made ground-making discoveries involving dinosaurs, is given to individuals or groups whose explorations have made pioneering advances in some scientific discipline.

Even high-profile scientists like Ballard occasionally have a "bad trip." His international cruise during late 2003 was slated to explore various previously discovered shipwrecks in the Mediterranean and Black Seas. The newly developed ROV Hercules (the next generation after Jason) has advanced sonar and photographic systems as well as the ability to perform deep-water excavations. Ballard planned to test Hercules on several Greek and Byzantine wrecks near Bulgaria and Turkey, followed by excavations on two Phoenician vessels off Egypt. However, for undisclosed reasons, the countries involved denied Ballard official permission to probe these wrecks. Initial mechanical problems with Hercules also stymied the expedition, but as reported above, it was working perfectly by the time Ballard returned to the *Titanic* in August, 2004. Seems that everyone suffers a "back-to-the-drawing-board" project now and then. ■

To be continued in the next issue of *Wisconsin's Underwater Heritage*.

Wisconsin Fish ID Website

There is a new website to use in identifying Wisconsin fish. Fish can be sorted by common or scientific names or by family.

Each listing includes photos from various angles of adults and juveniles. Distinguishing features are also pointed out. The website is:

<http://www.wiscfish.org/fishid/wFrmWisconsinFishList.aspx>

Another informative site is Sea Grant's Fish of the Great Lakes at:

<http://www.seagrants.wisc.edu/greatlakesfish/>

Mahoning Article

The Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel had a nice article about the wreck of the *Mahoning* on November 14, 2006. The story, *Sorting Out Wrecks*, by Meg Jones, mentions several WUAA members including Kimm Stabelfeldt, Brendon Baillod, Keith Meverden, Tamara Thomson and Bob Jaeck.

The article can be found at:

<http://www.jsonline.com/alive/news/nov05/370037.asp>

Regional Events

Ghost Ships Festival

The Ghost Ships Festival will be held March 24 - 25, 2006 at the Four Points Sheraton - Milwaukee Airport, 4747 South Howell Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53207.

The program will include films, workshops & seminars devoted to Great Lakes shipwrecks, diving and maritime history.

For hotel reservations call (414) 481-8000 or (800) 558-3862, ask for the Ghost Ships Discount.

Tickets will be available at the door for \$25 each or you can order advanced tickets for \$20 each.

To purchase advance tickets with credit card (Mastercard or VISA) go to www.ghost-ships.org, or send your name and address to:

GLSRF, Inc.,
7844 St. Anne Ct.
Wauwatosa, WI 53213

Advance tickets will be available at the will call desk at the show Friday Night and Saturday.

You can also get Festival updates online at www.ghost-ships.org.

Sponsored by the Great Lakes Shipwreck Research Foundation, Inc. (GLSRF) (a non-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization).

North American Society for Oceanic History Conference

The North American Society for Oceanic History and the Canadian Nautical Research Society present:

Charting the Inland Seas: Recent Studies in Great Lakes Maritime Research

At the Wisconsin Maritime Museum in Manitowoc, on June 1-4, 2006.

In addition to panel presentations, activities will include an evening reception onboard the 138-foot Great Lakes schooner *Denis Sullivan* and tours of the Rogers Street Fishing Village in Two Rivers and the Door County Maritime Museum in Sturgeon Bay.

Call for Papers

We invite you to participate by presenting a paper at the conference. Please submit an abstract including name, affiliation, location, telephone, fax and email address, title of the paper, and a brief description of its contents, not to exceed 200 words. Submissions must be received no later than March 31, 2006. Please send abstracts to:

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North American Shipwreck and Dive Show

You are invited to the 2006 North American Shipwreck & Dive Show.

Our show is an exposition of scuba diving, shipwreck exploration and dive travel around the world. We feature presentations on shipwreck discoveries in the Great Lakes, diving expeditions, scuba gear, underwater photographic equipment and dive travel.

Date:

Saturday March 11, 2006

Time:

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Location:

Jewish Community Center of
Metropolitan Detroit
D. Dan and Betty Kahn Building
Eugene and Marcia Applebaum
Jewish Community Campus
6600 West Maple Road,
West Bloomfield, MI 48322

You can find more information about our show at www.shipwreckshow.com/

We have special low-cost exhibitor pricing for non-profit organizations and dive clubs. This show will be a great opportunity to gain exposure in the local diving community. For more information about being an exhibitor at our show, please visit our website, or contact our Exhibitor Coordinator, Dennis Bosak at dbosak@shipwreckshow.com.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2006 Show.

Bill Lamping - co-chair
wlamping@shipwreckshow.com

Coming Events

- Jan. 21, 2006 **Wisconsin Underwater Archeology Association Action Committee Meeting.** 9:00 am at the State Historical Society, Madison. For information check the WUAA web site at www.wuaa.org or email us at wuaa@mailbag.com
- Feb. 25, 2006 **Dive Into The Past, Twin Cities Shipwreck Scuba Show.** At Ramada Inn and Thunderbird Convention Center, Bloomington, MN. For information check the Great Lakes Shipwreck Preservation Society website at www.glsps.org.
- Mar. 11, 2006 **North American Shipwreck & Dive Show.** West Bloomfield, MI. For information check their web site at www.shipwreckshow.com.
- Mar. 24-25, 2006 **Ghost Ships Festival.** At Four Points Sheraton, Milwaukee, WI. For information check the festival website at www.ghost-ships.org.
- Jun. 24-25, 2006 **North American Society for Oceanic History Conference.** Wisconsin Maritime Museum, Manitowoc, WI. For information check the museum website www.wisconsinmaritime.org.

**Wisconsin Underwater
Archeological Association
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*For those interested in the study and preservation of
Wisconsin's underwater history and cultural resources.*