



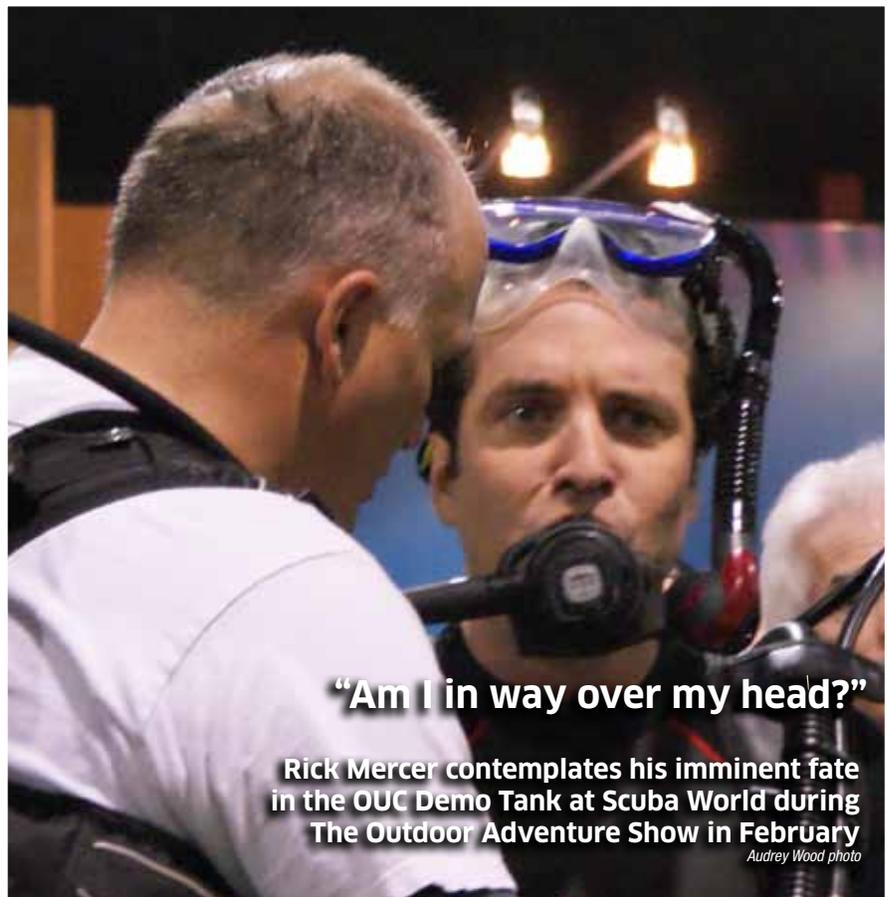
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ONTARIO DIVER

SPRING 2010

OUR MISSION

To help support and promote the sport of scuba diving in Ontario through safety, advocacy, cultural and environmental awareness, self-governance, education ...and fun!



“Am I in way over my head?”

Rick Mercer contemplates his imminent fate in the OUC Demo Tank at Scuba World during The Outdoor Adventure Show in February

Audrey Wood photo

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Threatened gentle giants make awesome snorkel buddies in Homosassa Springs





President's Corner

Raimund J. Krob

At OUC, we're always on the lookout for new ways to fulfill our mission of serving the sport of scuba in Ontario, so it was a very pleasant surprise when one of those new ways came to us.

On February 24, I received several urgent voice-mails, e-mails and text messages from Tanya Williams of National Event Management and Joe Sildiryan, OUC Regional Coordinator and Chair of OUC at the Outdoor Adventure Show 2010 saying, "...Rick Mercer wants to come to the show on Saturday or Sunday to learn the art of scuba diving."

My first thoughts were something like, "...That's great, but who's Rick Mercer and who told him we're running scuba courses at the Outdoor Adventure Show"? (I DO get out, but my eyeballs are more often glued to a computer than a television screen, so I knew nothing about Rick or "The Mercer Report.")

Tanya and Joe quickly brought me up to speed, and with the show opening in just two days, we scrambled to get all the important things done: ensuring Rick's safety and comfort, arranging for his equipment and instructor (yours truly), and begging for demo tank time (previously booked solid with other Exhibitors).



*Raimund demonstrates
PowerSpit mask defogger,
camcorder lens cleaner
Audrey Wood photo*

The big day (Sunday, April 28) dawned and show attendees soon packed Hall #5 of The International Centre. Rick and his crew had arrived in the morning, and early that afternoon they made their way to the Scuba World section, the OUC Booth and the OUC coordinated Demo Tank.

Rick, his producer, director and camera crew introduced themselves, and then we reviewed the plan for Rick's "Discover Scuba." Rick changed into his wetsuit and we went over the Discover Scuba briefing, including breathing on scuba, equalizing, communicating underwater, BCD inflation/deflation, and regulator removal/recovery.

What I described above in less than 45 words, however, took over 45 minutes to do in real time. Rick's a mischief-maker extraordinaire and he missed no opportunity for hilarious take-offs on training instructions, come-backs to the audience and jabs at political parties and politicians. There wasn't a minute when he didn't have us all in stitches.

I also learned very quickly to avoid telling him what NOT to do. For example, I told him “Rick, for safety reasons, if you need to walk in your fins, walk only backwards or sideways, and only for short distances, OK?”

Rick replied “OK!” and immediately hiked forward through the crowd in his fins with an exaggerated goose-step! I thought, “If this ever gets aired, I’ll never hear the end of it!”

My home club, Scarborough Underwater Club Inc. had very graciously donated some of their scheduled tank time (thank you, SUCI!) and after the pre-dive briefing, Rick and I climbed the 14 feet from the show floor to the top of the tank. Easier said than done, because there wasn’t a lot of room up there for one person, let alone three (cameraman, beginner diver, and instructor).

Due to space constraints, Rick had to enter first, so I had him inflate his BCD, put his regulator in his mouth, then (with the crowd counting down) do a controlled seated entry into the water two feet below. He did great and after he signalled “OK,” I joined him.

Once the waves from our entry had settled, I reviewed the 6-point descent we were going to make, and the regulator recovery that Rick needed to do once we were underwater. We descended as planned, I demonstrated the skill to him, and then he performed it perfectly.

With the Discover Scuba requirements out of the way, we then focused (pardon the pun) on setting up the underwater camera, doing what the director wanted us to do, and having fun with the crowd. We experienced what goldfish must feel like, looking out through the glass and watching everybody on the outside looking in. Space was tight in the tank, so there were limits as to what we could do, but we had a great time, and so did the audience, watching Rick “Discover Scuba with OUC!”

After about 45 minutes underwater, having completed everything that needed to be done, we exited the tank to remove our gear, dry off and change. Rick and I traded Thank-Yous, and I invited him to the OUC Ice Floe Race on March 7th. We also exchanged the information he would need whenever he decided to pursue his Open Water Scuba Diver certification.

A little more than a week later, “the Mercer Report” aired on CBC, sharing Rick’s “Discover Scuba with OUC” experience with all Canadians.

Reflecting on everything afterwards, I couldn’t think of a better way for OUC to have fulfilled our mission.

Contact Raimund at ouc.president@underwatercouncil.com



*Rick takes a call on his snorkel prior to climbing ladder to Scuba Demo Tank
Audrey Wood photo*

To see the full video of The Mercer Report, go to www.cbc.ca/video/#/Shows/The_Rick_Mercer_Report and search on “Outdoor Adventure Show.”

OUC Promotes Ontario Scuba Diving at Major Spring Travel, Outdoor Shows

OUC Booth at Ultimate Travel Show and Outdoor Adventure Show helps visitors become part of the great Ontario underwater experience

Ultimate Travel Show

This was OUC's first appearance at the Ultimate Travel Show, as well as Joe Sidiryan's first opportunity to chair such an event, a role he was to repeat later in February.

The two-day event was held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre Jan. 23-24. Traffic on the Saturday was moderate but picked up significantly on Sunday.

"We weren't sure what kind of people or exhibitors were going to attend," explains Sidiryan. "Most exhibitors were from tropical destinations and many offered dive getaways. Us being there was a good choice, because we were able to promote the great diving in Ontario as an alternative."

Sidiryan points out that most people have no idea that Ontario is home to the best freshwater shipwreck diving in the world in terms of quantity, state of preservation and chronological range, spanning several centuries.



Audrey Wood photo

"A lot of people showed interested in the OUC booth. Both divers and non-divers stopped by to ask questions about Ontario diving. Many people wanted to know how to become scuba divers.

"The demo tank is always a big crowd-pleaser," adds Sildiryan. "The Etobicoke Underwater Club volunteers managed it very professionally. It worked great - no problems whatsoever."

During both days, OUC volunteers handed out information brochures, "Diver" magazines, as well as member clubs' flyers. Visitors snapped up the popular OUC "Ontario Scuba Community Directory" and the "FREE Discover Scuba" coupons that some clubs provided.

Wayne Green of Thousand Island Pleasure Diving (www.islanddiver.ca) generously donated a 2-tank dive trip for two in the 1000 Islands area, won by Karen Jafs of Newmarket, Ontario.

"Now I know just how much work is involved in an event like this," observed Sildiryan. "Special thanks to everyone who helped tend the OUC booth and made things run so smoothly - Brooke Hooykaas, Dave Noble, Raimund Krob, David Taylor and members of the Etobicoke

Underwater Club and the Ontario Underwater Explorers.”

Sildiryan was impressed with the show management team, too. “They were great. Everything I asked for or needed to be done was done in minutes. It was well organized.

“The show was a great success for OUC. I’m sure we’ll be back next year.”

Outdoor Adventure Show

Just over four weeks later, Joe Sildiryan was back in the saddle again, this time chairing the OUC Outdoor Adventure Show effort at the International Centre, Toronto on Feb 26-27-28.

Presented by Ontario Parks and billed as “Canada’s largest outdoor adventure and travel show,” the event’s Scuba World section holds special interest for OUC and its members. It’s an ideal venue for OUC to fulfill its mission by reaching both hard-core divers and those interested in becoming certified.

“It was a great show!” beams Sildiryan, “lots of people and lots of interest in our booth and the Demo tank.” Despite some technical and mechanical problems, the tank once again captivated the crowd, with five OUC member clubs demonstrating scuba skills to the audience or manning the booth all three days of the show. Clubs fielding volunteers were Etobicoke Underwater Club,



Joe Sildiryan chats with visitors at this year’s Ultimate Travel Show

Ajax Scuba Club, Scarborough Underwater Club, Ontario Underwater Explorers and Hart House.

The highlight of the show on Sunday was the appearance of Rick Mercer of “The Mercer Report,” delighting the crowd with his hilarious “Discover Scuba Diving” performance under the guidance of his instructor, OUC President Raimund Krob (see *President’s Corner* on page 2 for Raimund’s full description of the session).

“Raimund got him in the tank and it was all taped for Rick’s CBC show,” says Sildiryan. “We got incredible exposure!”

Once more, Sildiryan was effusive in his praise of the volunteers and OUC Board members who helped with the demo tank and booth. “They couldn’t have done a better job.

“And thanks to Raimund, who was there with me from Thursday afternoon till Sunday closing.

“It was a great experience, chairing two shows back-to-back. I’d do it again, no hesitation!”

Joe Sildiryan is the OUC Regional Coordinator for Ontario Central-East. E-mail him at ouc.central-east@underwatercouncil.com

Diving on the Tube “Dive Detectives”

History Channel
Wednesdays 6 p.m. and 11 p.m.



2010 Save Ontario Shipwrecks Marine Heritage Award Winner Announced

The winner of the 2010 SOS Marine Heritage Award is author and Great Lakes enthusiast Paul Carroll.

Paul is co-author of *Four Years on the Great Lakes: The Journal of Lieutenant David Wingfield, Royal Navy* (Dundurn, 2009). He is also the sole author of the soon to be released book *The Wexford* (Dundurn, 2010).

Paul lives in Goderich, Ontario and has published numerous historical articles about Huron County. He also maintains www.ShipwreckWexford.ca documenting the history of the Wexford lost in the Great Storm of 1913.



The Marine Heritage Award is awarded to an individual who demonstrates special effort promoting marine heritage awareness and conservation in Ontario.

Created in 1981 by marine historian and artist Ian L. Morgan, the model portion of the award depicts a shipwreck upright on a lake bottom. The master award will be displayed at the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes in Kingston, Ontario.

For more on the SOS Marine Heritage Award, please contact President@SaveOntarioShipwrecks.on.ca

Save Ontario Shipwrecks is a Provincial Heritage Organization dedicated to the study, preservation and promotion of marine heritage.
www.SaveOntarioShipwrecks.on.ca

...Chillin' on the Otonabee

2010 OUC ICE FLOE RACES

When most sane people had fled to southern climes or were finalizing their escape plans, a hardy group of Ontario divers hurled themselves into the frigid waters of the Otonabee River in heroic pursuit of the 2010 OUC Ice Floe Race title.

Ice Floe Race chair Karen Theriault hails this year's event as a roaring success. "Everything went exceptionally well and we couldn't have asked for a more gorgeous day! Great weather, great people and a great time. Almost 100 divers participated and about the same number of spectators watched the madness.

"Everyone had a great time and no one was injured, thanks to Scott Holmes and his safety team!"

This year, the Colt Creek "Tank Jockeys" churned their way to first place in an incredible time of 42:15.

In all, seven teams were registered, one more than the previous year. And for the first time, a team comprised entirely of women splashed their way down the course in their bid for the frosty crown (tiara?). The Menacing Mermaids of the Scarborough Underwater Club Inc. (SUCI) paddled their floe valiantly, but came up just seconds short of passing the Ajax Scuba Club entry and escaping last place.



Don Macintyre of the Etobicoke Underwater Club, (oldest Ice Floe Racer at 80+ years old) proves that even for scuba divers, "Fashion Never Sleeps."

OFFICIAL 2010 ICE FLOE RACE RESULTS

Team Affiliation/Name	Start	Start Time (hh:mm:ss)	Finish Time (hh:mm:ss)	Elapsed Time (hh:mm:ss)	Rank	Time behind 1st Place
Colt Creek "Tank Jockeys"	7	12:44:48	13:27:03	0:42:15	1	----
Etobicoke Underwater Club "Slush Puppies"	1	12:17:22	13:03:20	0:45:58	2	0:03:43
Scarborough Underwater Club (Men) "Ice Floe'ers"	2	12:22:20	13:09:45	0:47:25	3	0:05:10
Canadian Sub-Aqua Club "Ice Pirates"	4	12:29:54	13:20:50	0:50:56	4	0:08:41
Ontario Underwater Explorers "Frozen Frogs"	6	12:39:20	13:38:32	0:59:12	5	0:16:57
Ajax Scuba Club "Warriors"	5	12:34:54	13:36:32	1:01:38	6	0:19:23
Scarborough Underwater Club (Women) "Menacing Mermaids"	3	12:25:06	13:26:55	1:01:49	7	0:19:34

The waters may have been a little chilly, but divers and spectators alike took the time to make heart-warming contributions to this year's selected charity. According to Kawartha Food Share's John Alleyne, almost 600 pounds of food items were collected on behalf of the area's needy families. "Needless to say, we're extremely happy and thankful to everyone who donated," says Alleyne.

While on the subject of heartwarming things, we should mention that Paul Prosdocimi of Hamilton, Ontario won the raffle for a tropical liveaboard adventure donated by Blackbeard's Cruises. But apparently Paul isn't planning on sharing his prize.



Paul Prosdocimi of Hamilton, Ontario tries to persuade 2010 Race Chair Karen Theriault to let go of his Blackbeard's tropical liveaboard adventure prize.

Even though this year's race was an unqualified success, Theriault says OUC is already considering improvements for 2011. "A topic of discussion for next year is the creation of an Ice Floe Race Committee," reveals Theriault. "The goal is to unload the burden of organizing the whole event from one person and to utilize the considerable talents of more OUC members.

"Along with my thank-yous to all the volunteers and team captains, I've requested their feedback on this year's race and asked if they'd serve on the committee for next year." The tentative date for the 2011 Ice Floe Race is Sunday, March 6, with a rain-date Sunday, March 13.

If you'd like to offer comments or volunteer for next year's Ice Floe Race, contact OUC at ouc.icefloerace@underwatercouncil.com and ouc.president@underwatercouncil.com



The Colt Creek "Tank Jockeys", 2010 OUC Ice Floe Race Champions



OUC Prez and IceMeister Raimund Krob shows he can still cut it. Race Chair Karen Theriault ...uh, warming up.



Scarborough Underwater Club's all-girl "Menacing Mermaids" paddle unidentified princess toward finish line.



Canadian Sub Aqua Club "Ice Pirates" show off what they almost froze off.

All photos by Dave Noble

Be sure to check out media coverage of the 2010 OUC Ice Floe race at these links:

CHEX TV <http://www.chextv.com/videoarchive/2010MarchWeek2.html>

The Peterborough Examiner <http://thepeterboroughexaminer.com/ArticleDisplayGenContent.aspx?e=16098>

*EUC fundraiser set for
August 10, 2010 - Welland Scuba Park*

2010 Dive 4 A Cause to benefit Tobermory Chamber, Hyperbaric Facility

DIVE 4 A CAUSE

One of Canada's most important dive emergency facilities, the Tobermory Hyperbaric Unit, will be the beneficiary of the Fourth Annual DIVE 4 A CAUSE fundraiser conducted by the Etobicoke Underwater Club. A majority vote by participants in last year's fundraiser chose the recompression facility as the most worthy recipient of this year's proceeds.

This year's charity event will be held at the Welland Scuba Park on August 28, 2010.

Located in the vicinity of Tobermory, Ontario, a favourite dive destination,

the chamber facility is always on standby in case of a dive emergency. The recompression chamber received its last re-fit in 1987. Funds raised will be used towards much needed maintenance for the chamber and the overall facility.

Divers can register for this event online (euc.ca/diveforacause) with a \$20.00 pledge. Better still, entrants can download the form that helps them recruit family, friends, co-workers, or local dive shop friends as sponsors.

"Set a realistic goal and do everything you can to surpass it," encourages Dive 4 A Cause Committee Chair Michael Krznaric. "Every penny helps! The charity will appreciate it and so will you."

If divers live too far away to attend this event in person, they can contact EUC (diveforacause@euc.ca) about scheduling a satellite event in their area. "Don't take long to think about this...step up and make a difference," urges Krznaric.

Dive 4 A Cause is sanctioned by the Ontario Underwater Council and complies with all the requirements set forth by the OUC. Event participants must be OUC members or Member Club Guest Divers.

Website: euc.ca/diveforacause
E-mail: diveforacause@euc.ca



Members of the Etobicoke Underwater Club will step up to the plate to raise funds for the Tobermory Hyperbaric Facility in their fourth Annual Dive 4 A Cause.



Past DIVE 4 A CAUSE Recipients

2009
Judy Dan Wound Care Center
\$4,446.04

2008
Epilepsy Research in North America
\$7,570.00

2007
International Vasa Previa Foundation

The MANATEES of Homosassa Springs

Brooke Hooykaas

Our two-day visit to the DEMA show in Orlando, Florida had just finished. We had taken as many seminars as our brains could handle and walked the floor numerous times, visiting booths offering everything from the latest scuba gear to the most exotic places to try it out.

Time for a change of pace.

My travelling partner had visited the manatees a couple of times and couldn't say enough about the experience. My curiosity was piqued, never having laid eyes on the creatures. I decided to take him up on his suggestion and we headed west to Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park.

We enjoyed a relaxing afternoon and looked forward to the next day when we would rent a kayak and paddle over to where the manatees were located.

We woke up bright and early, enjoyed a quick breakfast and headed out. After about half an hour of paddling (it seemed quite a bit longer to someone getting increasingly anxious about finally seeing these animals after many months of stories), we reached the spot where they had previously been observed.

At this point, I had my doubts. All I could see were rocks and vegetation scattered along the bottom.



The victims of unsuspecting boaters, many Florida manatees bear scars of unfortunate encounters with propellers. Unusually cold winters also threaten their existence.

Then suddenly I heard, "Did you see that?" "Did I see what?" I wondered. What I thought was simply a ripple in the water turned out to be the spot where a manatee had risen to take a fresh breath of air.

As I put on my snorkel gear excitedly and quickly made my way into the

water, I was surprised to find out that what looked like a rock turned out to be - a manatee! Then shortly after, a mother and her curious calf came by for a visit. The calf seemed to take kindly to us and thoroughly enjoyed its new swimming companions.

I could have stayed in there for hours but was beginning to get chilled and decided to head back to the boat.

Back on board, I thought about the scars we had seen on the tails of many of the manatees where they had been slashed by boat propellers and wondered what I could do to help. There were many boats in the area we were swimming in, but hopefully by viewing these creatures for themselves, boaters would realize what was in the water beneath them and slow down to minimize further injuries.

Unusually cold Florida winters are another factor endangering these animals. Manatee mortality has been documented as increasing during these cold snaps. Unfortunately, manatees cannot tolerate colder temperatures for very long and that can cause their demise.

Upon my return home, I chose to "adopt" a Homosassa Springs manatee. Hopefully my donation may in some small way help to care for these troubled animals.

If you have a chance to visit Homosassa Springs, do it! It's a wonderful experience you're sure to enjoy.

Brooke Hooykaas is the OUC Insurance Coordinator as well as OUC Regional Coordinator for Ontario South. Contact her at ouc.south@underwatercouncil.com

Lake Simcoe's "J.C. Morrison" wreck permanently marked as federal dive site

Wreck, divers safer with new "No-boat" zone

Laurie Watt *Simcoe Advance*

BARRIE - For the first time since the old steamer sank in 1857, the J.C. Morrison's final resting place just off Centennial Beach will be marked.

Attracting divers from across Ontario for years, the paddle steamer that took tourists around Lake Simcoe between 1854 and 1857 will be protected from the wakes of speedboats and the anchors of itinerant boaters.

"The boat has been designated for a long time as an official dive site by Save Ontario Shipwrecks. We've gone a step further, to get a permanent (marine) marker position over the J.C. Morrison. This makes it an official federal dive site," said Brad McConnell, the acting coordinator of City of Barrie marina.



Robert Prince, museum technician, examines artifacts from the wreck of the J.C. Morrison. Stan Howe photo

Commissioned in 1854, the 150-foot J.C. Morrison served tourists, businesses and residences around Lake Simcoe.

But in 1857 while docked at the government dock in Barrie, the boat caught fire, after a blaze started near the fireplace. Everyone escaped, but the blazing boat was cut free from the wharf. The blaze went out as the boat went down, finally resting near what's now Centennial Beach.

It was forgotten for years, until underwater work associated with the city's sewage treatment plant occurred in the 1970s, said diver Tim Lester, who runs Tim's Diving Supplies in Midhurst.

"What's left of it is skeletal remains, (some) wood frame. The top of it burnt off, when it caught fire," he noted. Two of the paddle wheels were stolen, but one was later found by divers near Johnson's Beach.

"It's now encrusted in zebra mussels. On a nice day, you can get good visibility. It's a lot of fun," Lester added. "It's a really popular diving destination."

McConnell suspected the J.C. Morrison may be the only federal dive site on Lake Simcoe. The site attracts divers year-round, and Tourism Barrie also promotes the Morrison as a local destination.

"We have 3,000 unique visitors to the J.C. Morrison page each year," said Tourism Barrie's executive director Kathleen Trainor.

"Lake Simcoe is one of the good lakes to dive in, and the J.C. Morrison is an attraction for divers."

Dive Club Profile

BARRASCUBA DIVE CLUB

Brooke Hooykaas

Live in the Hamilton area? Considering taking up scuba diving or already a diver? If so, you may be interested in becoming a member of Barrascuba Dive Club.



Richard and Daniel loading up our little trailer for a 2009 Brockville dive.

The longest-established dive club in Hamilton, Barrascuba started back in 1956 at the YMCA, 79 James Street South, where it's still based. Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 pm. And everyone's welcome!

Barrascuba is one of the founding Ontario Underwater Council member clubs and has been a teaching organization since its inception. With both NAUI and ACUC-certified instructors on board, Barrascuba offers a full training program, ranging from Discover Scuba, through the Open Water Basic Program and on to Master Diver certification.

To keep divers active, club members plan bi-yearly trips down south (most recently to the Bahamas) and arrange local Ontario-area charters.

Interested in diving with a great bunch of people? Call Doug (289) 260-1392 or Elaine (905) 765-3776 for details.

OUC Commercial Members

New and Renewing Members - Spring 2010 Edition of Ontario Diver

Thanks for supporting The Ontario Underwater Council!

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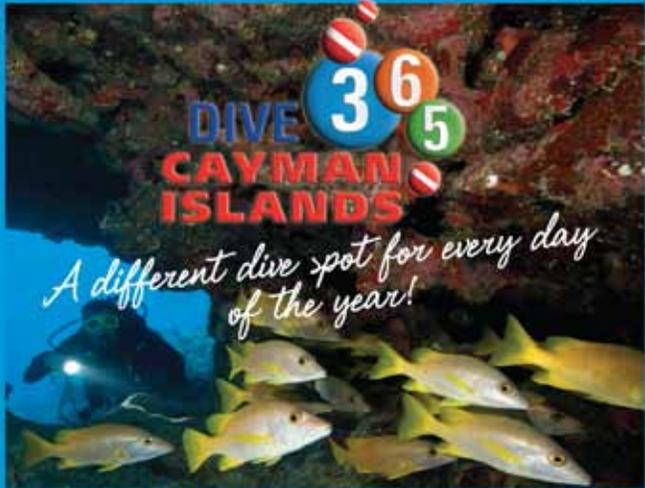
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Ontario Diver

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NEW DAN EMERGENCY HOTLINE NUMBER +1-919-684-9111



Already effective, the new phone number eliminates the need to decide whether to call DAN, TravelAssist for emergency evacuation or a medical facility. All emergency assistance will be triaged from the new number.

The DAN Emergency Hotline is active 24/7 and can be reached by collect call or from outside the U.S. In any life-threatening emergency, contact 911 first (or equivalent local emergency response system), then call DAN.

OUC members are encouraged to write the new number in their logbooks and any other emergency contact records.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR ONTARIO DIVERS

CRITICALL ONTARIO  **1-800-668-HELP**

CritiCall Ontario is a one-number, 24/7/365 emergency consultation and referral service for hospital physicians that facilitates emergency consultations with medical specialists. It's the only service of its kind in Ontario and unique within Canada.

Although normally reserved for physicians only, OUC negotiations have given Ontario divers access to the services of CritiCall Ontario. They simply have to call the above number and identify the emergency as a scuba diving incident.



DIVER

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