

New Legislation to Restrict Access to Ontario Shipwrecks Proposed.

Another decompression dive into the unfathomed waters of political satire.

1st draft



We recently attended the annual meeting of the Ontario Archaeological Society which was held in Toronto this year. It is difficult to explain how personally rewarding it is to see the good work of a new generation of Underwater Archaeologists come into their own.

The work of Chris McEvoy, Aaron Moir and Simon Belanger is extremely encouraging and I think they will all go on to greatly increase our understanding of our maritime heritage. One of Canada's only PHD's Kimberly Monk gave an excellent paper: Reengaging Niagara's Historic Landscape: **Excavations at the Shickluna Shipyard.** In a way it is surreal and curious to me. When I started out it was difficult to even find books on the subject and now, we have new teams of experts.



Figure 2 Scott and Dr. Scott at conference listening to papers.

Of course, being once again in the presence of my former professor and friend Dr. Scott Hamilton was an obvious recipe for a little mischief. If you have ever seen the Muppets it is kind of like the two old guys in the theater balcony when we get together.

Interestingly two of the older people who have been involved in underwater archaeology for a very long time brought their old thinking with them and they both seem to have control issues and both proposed legislative changes to restrict access to Ontario Shipwrecks.

Ladies first.

Scarlett Janusas (Archaeology Inc.) gave an interesting paper, recognizing that **Shipwrecks can be Cemeteries Too!** I can tell you what happened but you're on your own when it comes to figuring out if there is any merit to her thinking. Which was worthy of Megamind, but has its own kind of fiendish diabolical charm.

It is admittedly a difficult room to have this kind of talk in. Many in the crowd were older men and women the type of people you might imagine having a cup of coffee with after church or at home doing some knitting in the company of a couple of cats. Scarlett did a masterful job of being politically sensitive but as part of the talk dealt with advanced stages of decomposition of human bodies underwater, she mentioned it up front in case any of the more sensitive in the audience would prefer to sit the talk out.

Scarlet then showed a picture of a bar of soap to get the idea of saponification across. No one in the audience was alarmed at the site of the soap, so she was off to a good start.

The main thrust of her argument is a change to the Cemeteries Act and possibly the Canada Steamship Act to prohibit sport divers from diving on shipwrecks that “**might**” have human remains on them. That is an interesting idea. This prohibition would not be limited to wrecks with confirmed human remains but to sites that could possibly have human remains on them. She did note that this would be difficult if not impossible to enforce.

This seems like a failure in logic. There are somethings in life that “might” be there that you should definitely avoid and change your behaviour or course of action to steer clear of. Things like IED’s, Landmines, Herpes and HIV etc., things that can hurt you. Other things that go bump in the night and being afraid of the dark are really not that much of a problem.

Her test case is a shipwreck in Lake Huron that went down with a loss of Human Life and a number of horses. To make sure you are offending as many people as possible an effort was made to track down living family members so they can help you complain and close down the site to divers.

To find out if there was a problem here the Ontario Provincial Police dive team was contacted. They have one of the most statistically successful recovery teams in North America and are well recognized for their considerable expertise and skill.

Police divers did visit the site but did not find any human remains. They did take a sample which was likely a wad of paper. Of course, when your experts come back and they do not have the answer you want you attack their credibility, education and intelligence. Scarlet was quick to point out that they are not archaeologists and therefore did not know what they were doing. With a little more diving she did eventually produce a shot of a few human bones proving her point, at least in Scarlets mind. Obviously, if you are ever pulled over for something like a speeding ticket the correct course of action is to question the police officer’s credulity, education and intelligence . . . I am sure they will understand you can just refer to Scarlets research.

Then things just went “I told you not to drink the bong water,” crazy, or it was one of those rare cases of “**FAKE**” archaeology. Scarlet then began the tragic tale of “**Old Whitey**” and the *Kamloops*. The *Kamloops* is a deep shipwreck site at Isle Royale National Park. We were some of the first divers to explore the wreck shortly after its discovery including the ships engine room. I was one of the crew that worked the site when the park did the initial archaeological survey and I made

contributions that the Editor and then Chief archaeologist included in the final report.

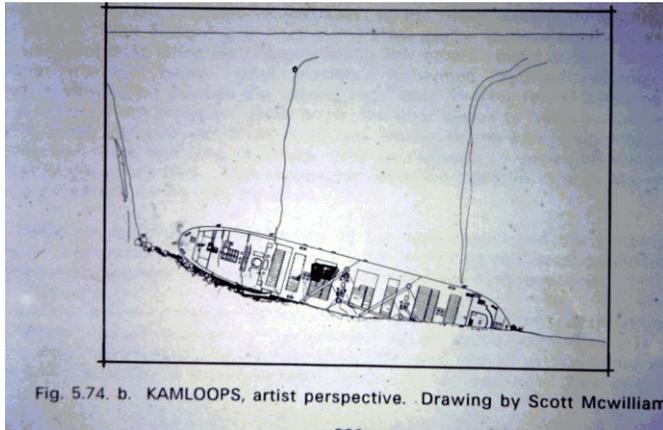


Fig. 5.74. b. KAMLOOPS, artist perspective. Drawing by Scott McWilliam

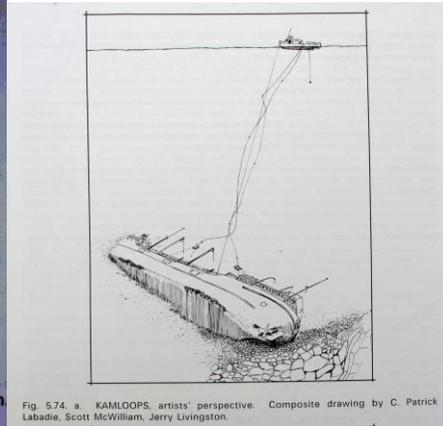


Fig. 5.74. a. KAMLOOPS, artists' perspective. Composite drawing by C. Patrick Labadie, Scott McWilliam, Jerry Livingston.

Our understanding of the *Kamloops* Site also benefited from ROV footage done with a couple of National Geographic ROV's. To the best of my knowledge Scarlet has never worked the site and I would be very surprised if she has made a dive.

Scarlet also had an illustration but it does not look like my work (or the *Kamloops*.) She had a picture of a shipwreck that is not in Lake Superior that was labeled *Kamloops* over which an illustration worthy of any eight-grade art student had been imposed. This of course was “**Old Whitey**” now wearing a black sweater and wool hat. The illustration has no resemblance to the bodies on board the *Kamloops*.

Scarlet seemed to be a little miffed that the body was being referred to as “**Old Whitey**” by sport divers as this, in the least, is incongruent with her vision of political correctness. While this may be true and I am not one to judge, I do believe in evolution and I see this as a great advancement, great progress towards a degree of political correctness by the diving community that should have made Scarlet happy. The divers first to enter the engine room usually referred to the bodies as George and Blob. As you might suspect Blob is the one whose legs have fallen off. Callus as it might be it does illustrate the nature of the problem. Bodies in an advanced stage of decomposition are difficult to remove as they fall apart. 200'+ of water does not make it any easier. They sleep in the deep and rest in peace, mess with them and they rest in pieces. If you do not want to see this type of thing or think it would disturb you don't dive the site.

It is true that these bodies of long-lost sailors who died at their stations trying to save their ship are the most photographed bodies in the Great Lakes. I am not sure that something Scarlet perceives as a problem and bad behaviour in Michigan is going to benefit or be remedied by a change in legislation in Ontario? Also, I am not sure how a couple of degrees in Anthropology make me or anyone else morally or ethically superior and, in any way, qualified to make this kind of judgement. (I may very well be, I would just rather hear it from you as I have enough trouble getting my head through my dry suit neck seal as it is.)

I do not post pictures of dead bodies and I do not think others should be using dead sailors or divers (Stargate) as props in their video extravaganzas and I might support legislation to that effect but it looks like someone went to incredible lengths to make a mountain out of a molehill and invent a reason to restrict diver access to shipwreck sites.

Alternatively, I am old but I am not intransigent. I thought about things. Perhaps I have been going about underwater archaeology all wrong? The things I have tried to control in diving and underwater archaeology are things like my ascent rate, bottom time, SAC and decompression times etc. I have never had an interest in controlling the actions of other divers.

However, I have come close. The day the crew traded three kegs of beer for Amygdaloid Island and lowered Old Glory and lofted the Maple leaf may have been a little over the top. At first it went over well when my American brothers realized that they were now all blessed with universal health care. This became less of an attraction when they came to realize that they had a better first aid kit than we did. In fairness the crew did give the Island back to the United States after the party and we never got the beer back, so, I have come to think of it as one of those no harm no foul, type things.

Then it finally came to me. There is something we could all do legislatively that would do a great deal to preserve the archaeological record. I guess if you have been in the game long enough as an archaeologist, we have all been disappointed by site attrition by the sport diving community. However, even if you hold to the idea that divers are .02% pirate by volume there are other groups of people that are far more dangerous to the archaeological record and we should move in joint to protect the thing we love, the thing we do from them. This group I can assure hail from a far more dangerous corrupt and contemptable roots than a little piracy.

In the general discussion part of the conference in the best interest of the archaeological record and resource I had to suggest a change in legislation that I am hoping both divers and archaeologists will get behind and support me on. At this time, I am advocating for a complete total and absolute prohibition and ban, to keep politicians off shipwreck sites and off the topic all together. Those guys are dangerous.

One politician can do more damage to a shipwreck site before first coffee break in the morning than a thousand sport divers can do in a year. Case in point.



The Right Honourable Steven Harper Prime Minister of Canada 2006 - 2015. After the discovery of the *Erebus* shipwreck site Harper is famous for his on-camera CBC News conference in which he announced the discovery of the wreck and then instructed Parks Canada Archaeologists. “tell the boys to bring the bell up for me.” They did, the bell ended up in England because Harper was dumber than dirt and new nothing about contemporary maritime archaeology and violated an existing agreement with Great Britain over disposition of artifacts from the two sites. Canada’s sport divers had adopted a conservation ethic on shipwreck sites and understand their value to our nations cultural heritage and voted him out of office thirty-eight days later.

Interesting archaeological sites in just about any civilized country attract more politicians than fresh horse manure does flies on a hot summer day. Harper made the 4,000 k round trip flight to the artic just to have his picture taken and be associated with the site. It really does not matter what country you live in politicians are a clear and identifiable threat and danger to archaeological sites in general and shipwreck sites specifically. Reliably, they do not dive and the stroke knows nothing about archaeology. But they love to have their pictures taken and maritime archaeologist are generally attractive, intelligent, athletic and of course, modest, you can understand how politicians find them magnetic and like to be seen with them. If that “**me too**” thing works for women it should work for

archaeologists as well. There is that long standing concept of equity under the law, why should we constantly have to suffer these fools gladly?

It is kind of a sensitive topic to approach but this is a universal. It really does not matter what country you come from it is the same problem. Some in the archaeological community have been disappointed in the past and have a hard time seeing any advantage in working with members of the sport diving community.

This is an error. The clear result of a lack of study. It does not matter what country you are from; a politician has a shelf life equivalent to a good pair of socks, at best and nothing more. They are a transitory, by in large a flash in the pan, whom, by virtue of their popularity, and little more, have the ability to do profound damage to the archaeological record. No matter where you live you only have one archaeological record and if you mess up, that part of the past is lost to all of mankind forever.

It is therefore, essential that the archaeological community comes to understand the true nature of threat to the archaeological record and know the difference between divers and politicians.



Figure 1 The tube in the diver's mouth is called a snorkel, it allows the diver to breath and swim on the surface with ease while looking below the waterline.



Figure 2 The tube in politician Doug Ford's mouth is a crack pipe. It is made of glass and used to smoke a modified form of cocaine called crack.

Speaking of which . . .



Divers are respectable people who have always rendered a service to mankind. You have never seen a video of Jacque Cousteau smoking crack, higher than a kite threatening to beat the crap out of people while in a homicidal, narcotically accelerated fit of rage.

It pains me to have to admit it but Canada rarely has clean hands when it comes to problems in the United States. You have to understand that we live side by side and this type of thing happens. No Canadian has any right to look South and ridicule his neighbour.



Donald Trump, President of the United States of America. President Trump says he does not drink, but has to date, (and he is still getting warmed up) told over 10,000 lies.

You may very well think that this is an American problem but in fact it is one of those **“Blame Canada”** situations. President Trumps principal grace has been the ability to piss away vast sums of money that he inherited from his father Fred Trump but the guy who started it all was grandpa Fredrick Trump.



Figure 3 A young future president Donald Trump left the future president’s father, brothel owner and realtor Fred Trump Right.

You have to understand that this is all family money. In addition to the hotel and brothel owned by Fredrick Trump (the president’s grandfather) in California he had a real little money maker in the Yukon. The Arctic Restaurant and Hotel actually had two locations first on Bennett Lake in northern B.C., and then moving it to Whitehorse, in the Yukon.

It was a classic case of a superior American the entrepreneurial spirit overcoming poorly educated and less foreword thinking Canadians and making a fortune. Fredrich ran a legendary high-quality line of prostitutes from Quebec and had a client tell that consisted of an endless supply of athletic handsome Canadian miners simply trying to make a living, only rarely overcome by that one need that calls us all in the night. Let’s face it, all those horny Canadian men banging all

those French Prostitutes morning noon and night authored the political landscape of the United States of America. May God have mercy on us all.

Even at his worst Fredrick had his virtues. There were always clean towels and soap in the bathroom.

Moving foreword, it is difficult for people from other countries to understand the full scope and nature of Canada's relationship with the United States of America. If one country can not think of something stupid to do, in terms of archaeology, the other country is more than happy to step in and help out. Fortunately, and as an example to other nations Canada and the United States have an outstanding relationship based on honesty and free trade. Who ever thought flesh pedaling could have such a disastrous consequence for the world?

If we return to my earlier analogy, politicians have about the same shelf life as a pair of socks. Tragically, the difference between Canadian Politicians and American politicians is little more than the difference between cotton and wool. What you like depends on where you live, but at best you only get two terms out of a good pair of socks.

The truth is that understanding the difference between Canadian and American politics is different but not complex. If you are a fair-minded soul whom values life's decisions, governs your life by cogent logical decisions, and straight up, do your best to make good decisions and acknowledge your political responsibilities as citizens, by voting etc., I will be the first to acknowledge, we walk the same path.

In Canada, unlike the United States we know were our politicians come from. A broken home.



Margret Trudeau at Studio 54 with paparazzi this photograph appeared in McLain's Magazine around the same time the story broke regarding Margret's disappearance for three days while partying with the Rolling Stones. Canadians with reasonable visual acuity know where their politicians come from.



Figure 4 Superstar musician Keith Richards "it is not the size of the organ that matters, it is the size of the cathedral."

Canada has an economy that is much smaller than the United States or Great Briton and 22 Sussex is the official residence of Canadian Prime Ministers. It is smaller and far less ostentatious than the White House and less well known than 10 Downing Street. It has been undergoing renovations that are being done by Mike Holmes.



Canadian TV Icon Mike Holms. Mike has had a couple of programs Holms on Homes and DIY Disaster that are doing well. Initial reports suggest renovations are going well and that the patio is still functional and will not require work as Margret laid the stones herself and the quality of her work is beyond reproach. Mikes resemblance to Mr. Clean and quality workmanship may serve our nation well.



The main problem with politicians like the Right Honorable Justin Trudeau is that you never really know what you have. By analogy it is like buying Granola but then when you get home and open the box you have Fruit Loops.

Are these people even citizens in our underwater world? Regardless of what country you live in or your own personal political beliefs, which I respect, the vast

majority of divers strongly believe that three hundred politicians on The *Hamilton* and *Scourge* Sites would be an excellent first start. The main problem is getting them on the boat.



For those of you still young enough and naïve enough to believe in the political system please allow me to introduce you to The Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of the Environment and Minister responsible for Parks Canada. As I am sure you can understand Catherine is attractive but lonely and bored. It is the off season all the parks are closed and she has nothing to do. She still gets her hair done on Tuesdays but loves to make new friends on the internet. You can email her at: ec.ministre-minister.ec@canada.ca

Send her a note say hi, tell her you like her hair and then make your best argument and see if you can get her to get Canada to join the rest of the civilized world and join UNESCO and follow the UNESCO rules and guidelines for management of submerged cultural resource's.

Good luck. When that does not work, I can only hope that you join with me and pursue a legislative fix to this problem, banning all politicians from archaeological sites and the topic of shipwrecks in general.

Thank you for your time.