

Jim Vafeas' & Mary Davis  
**Canadian Diving Adventure**



August 11 to 14, 2023



# St. Lawrence River Brockville, Ontario, Canada

## Dive The Canadian Caribbean

Join us on our East Coast Dive Tour trip to the 1,000 Islands to dive the incredible wrecks of the St. Lawrence River. Visibility in these 70 degree waters can reach 60 feet this time of year, and the currents cause the lake to have **no thermoclines** - even to depths of 130ft - earning this area the nick name Canadian Caribbean. This trip is perfectly suited for all levels of divers.

The 1,000 Islands are as beautiful underwater as they are above water. The irregular bottom contour provides many shallow shoals that surprised unsuspecting ships, leaving them scattered about the lake bottom, but remain in excellent condition due to the freshwater. From paddlewheel steamers of the 1800's to contemporary freighters, this river has them all awaiting us.

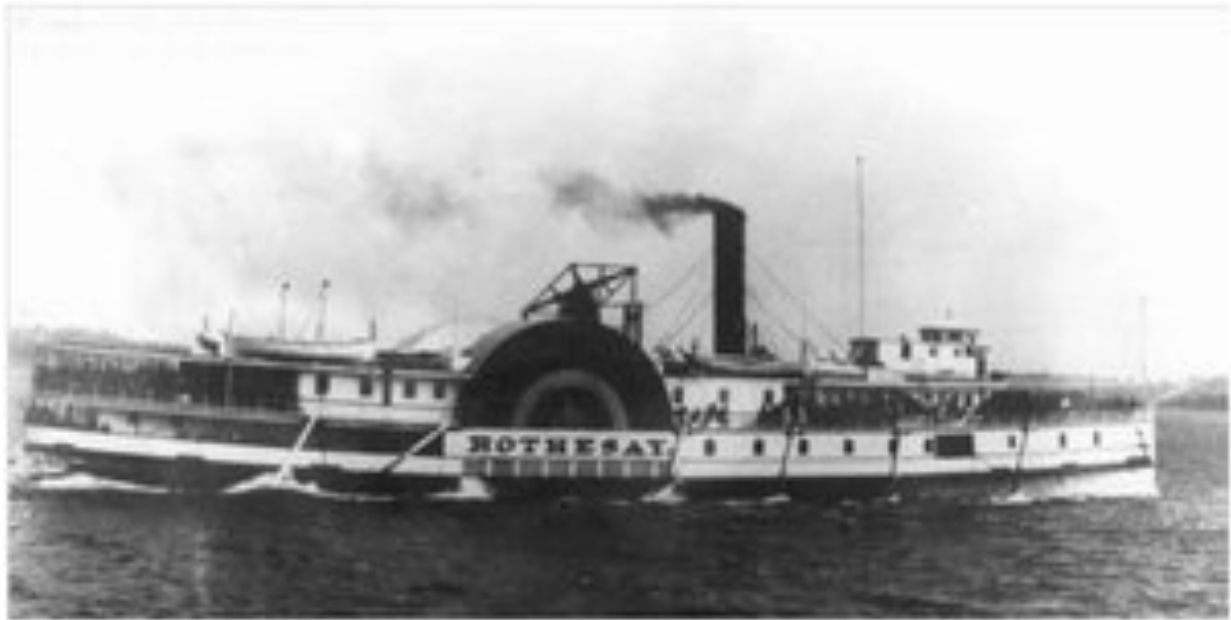
## Celebrating 20 Years Of Trips!

2023 marks 24 years since our first trip to Canada, which started back in the Fall of 1999. 7 of us drove up and dove Saturday and Sunday. Since then we've made regular trips to the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario.

## Sailing On The Best Of The River ...

We'll be diving off some of the most spacious boats available featuring enclosed cabins, wide, easy to board ladders, an indoor head and an upper deck for relaxing between dives. During this trip, you'll have the opportunity of diving some of the best and most unique wrecks in the area.

The wrecks that we might dive include:



## Rothesay

The Rothesay is a 19th Century wooden twin side wheeler about 200 feet long and in only 30 feet of water. It was built in 1867 and the ship sunk in 1889.

Today, the bow and stern of Rothesay is still very much intact, including the paddle wheels, the rocker arm and the twin boilers. Having sunk only 250 feet from the shore, the river bottom here is firm clay with weed growth between the Rothesay and the shore. Bring a light to see into the chain locker and hold. Prepare for a 1 to 2 knot current along the surface. There is hardly any current at depth of 30 feet.

As with almost all wrecks, fishing line can be a concern. Everyone need to have a cutting tool. Safety shears or a dive knife will do.

Also, a SMB (surface marker buoy) are mandatory since we are sharing the waterways with boat traffic.





## Robert A. Gaskin

The Robert Gaskin is a double masted iron rigged wood barge that was built in Kingston, Ontario, by Charles W. Jenkins in 1863. She is 113 feet long and weighted 3332 ton.

She sits on a firm bottom (with light silt) approximately 400' off shore, with her bow facing inland at 65'-70'. The Gaskin's upper deck is quite open allowing ample ambient light for easy penetration throughout the wreck. A great wreck for new wreck divers!



## Lillie Parsons

The Lillie Parsons is a 131 foot long double masted (fore & aft) retractable centerboard schooner built in Tonawanda N.Y. in 1868. On August 5th, 1877, She was being used to transport 500 tons of coal when a squall shifted her cargo, pushing her into Sparrow Island. She started taking on water, capsizing, and sank off the west side of Sparrow Island.

She lies upside down, against the side of the island (in a quick current) with her bow downstream in about 70' on a rock slope. The Stern and its impressive rudder lies upstream at about 20' depth.



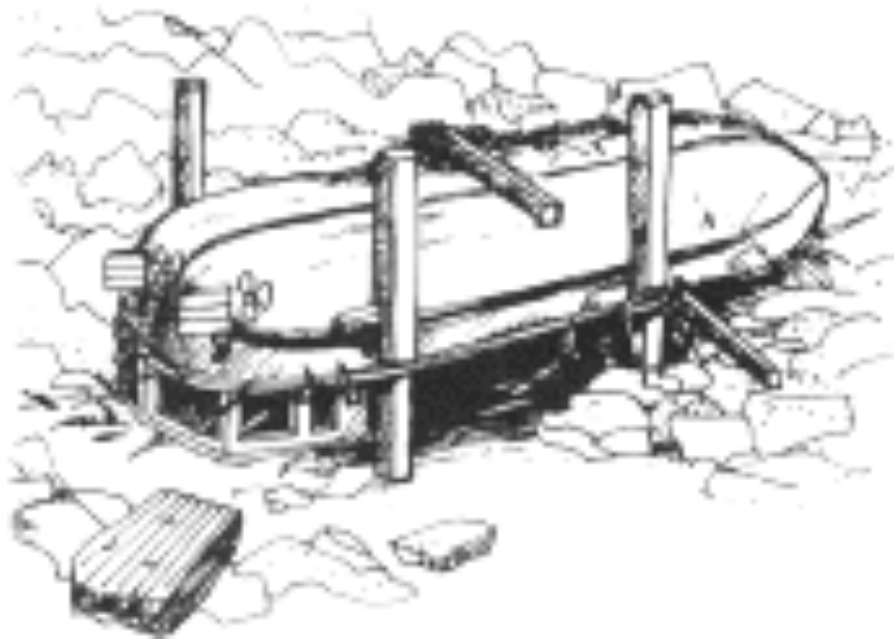
## Keystorm

The area's most popular wreck, the Keystorm was a 256' steel laker built in 1908 that went down in October, 1912 after it struck Scow Island's outer shoal.

From swimming through it's immense cargo holds, to the spectacular photo opportunities by the wheelhouse and prop, this wreck has something for everyone. She sits on its starboard side in 20' to 120' and is truly an unforgettable wreck.

A visit to the Keystorm reveals why she is such a favorite. She stretches from her bow at 25 ft depth to 115 ft depth at the props. It is an inviting superstructure with easy access through her wheelhouse area.

About midship it is suggested that you back away 50 to 60 feet to view the entire panorama. Don't miss the air pocket trapped in the anchor nest and the fatal gash on the underside near her bow.



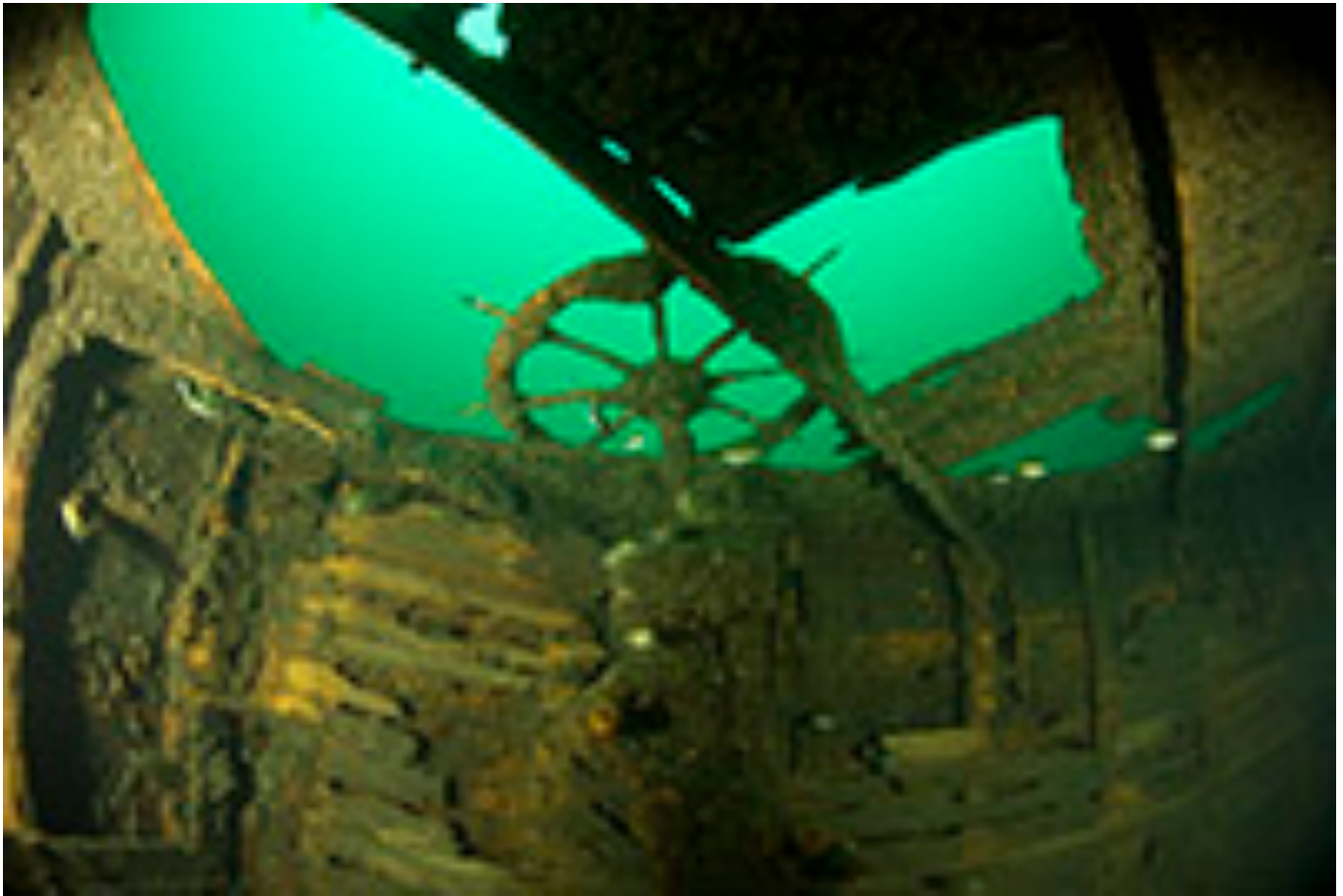
## America

The America is a 297 ton steam screw drill barge that sank on July 29, 1932. She sits upside down at 70' depth off of Dark Island in the shipping channel. This 4-legged ship was used to dynamite sections of the St. Lawrence Seaway to make it deeper and safer for travel.

She is accessed off the side of the shoal (35' depth) by dropping over the edge and following a bearing towards the castle, you should see the support legs extend over her profile. The bow is upstream (50' depth) and by descending to the deck (65' depth) you can see across and under her (cluttered with equipment and winches).

At the stern you will see twin props, rudder (surprisingly small), and the four large support legs (used while she was drilling) as well as the blasted rock on the bottom between her and the shoal. The props are at 50' to 55' depth and the bottom is at 72' rock/silt/sand.





## Kinghorn

Also known as the Rockport Wreck. The Kingshorn is a 130' largely intact schooner/barge that was one of seven being towed by a powerful tug bound for Montreal. It sank in 1897.

She sits in around 92' of water with a medium current. This lovely wreck is a photographer's delight with some awesome ship parts including an intact ship's wheel, bilge pumps and a pot bellied stove to name but a few.



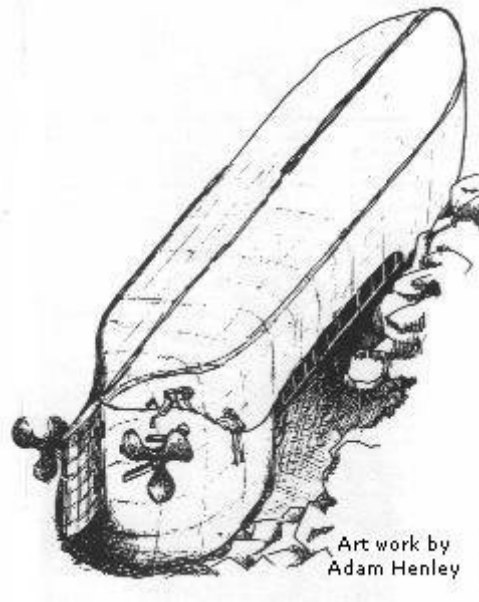


## A. E. Vickery

This 136' long, triple-masted schooner went down in 1889 on a rocky shoal and has a maximum depth of 120' deep.

There is a windlass on the upper deck, along with what looks like a section of mast and several openings to the hold which can make for a fun swim through.

Two of her masts lie on the bottom just forward of the stern on the starboard side, and her entire rudder appears intact.



## Henry C. Daryaw

The Henry C. Daryaw is a 219' x 35' steel freighter built in France in 1919. While crossing a shoal around Crossover Island on Nov. 21, 1941 she tore a large gash in her starboard side where she sank intact but upside-down in 90 feet of water.

The descent line is tied near the props and then another line leads to the block on the bottom. There is also a line running alongside the wreck that could be used for pulling when the current is just too strong.

Highlights include twin props on the stern that are now rising to the sky and spacious cargo holds. If you make it all the way to the bow, you can then drift (or rocket, depending on how strong the current is) back to the stern and the props.



## Muscallonge

The "Muskie" was the largest tug on the river at her time. Shortly after midnight on August 15th, 1936, a fire was discovered in her boiler room and quickly spread. As the flames continued to soar she had burned to the water line.

At 5:30 am the fire had reached her fuel tanks and exploded sending flames 80 feet into the air. The shock practically obliterated her hull and she broke in two as the bow settled into 95 feet of water in a medium to good current.

She has become one of the most popular sites for the local fish population, the boiler, winches, the engine, and various other ships parts.

Other things to do on your Canadian adventure...



Brockville RibFest - Great news for our old timers who have been on the trip in the past. Our diving weekend coincides with the famous Brockville RibFest which we have enjoyed in the past. Talk about good planning.



Adventure Park - There is also a newly opened Adventure park, Treetop Trekking. Only 10 minutes from one of the dive shops, this new outdoor area includes a Zipline Tour, Aerial Adventure Courses and a Treewalk Village.

Non-divers can take a "City of the 1,000 Islands" cruise or visit the historic Boldt and Singer Castles. There are lots of lighthouses to visit, or hit the mall in Brockville for some great deals due to the value of the American dollar in Canada.



**If you are interested in this amazing wreck adventure, please note that the number of divers we can take is very limited.**

If you wish to get a spot, stop in or contact the shop at 516-796-6560. We need a \$100 deposit to hold your spot. You may use a credit card over the phone.

The balance, which is due the week before the trip, is \$790 in Canadian dollars. At the time of this writing, that is about \$560 US.

Tiedemann's Diving Center will collect the balance. Balance is paid in US dollars. The amount will be determined on the exchange rate on Monday, August 7, 2023.

If you wish a single room, or you want to bring a non-diving friend, the extra cost is only \$240 Canadian dollars.

**Here is what is included in the price...**

- Shore wreck dive on Friday afternoon
- 2 Tank Boat dives - Saturday - Sunday - Monday
- Nitrox fills
- 3 nights of double occupancy accommodations at the Comfort Inn in Brockville - Friday - Saturday - Sunday
- Full, hot, continental breakfast each morning and complimentary popcorn nightly
- Full lunch (burgers, hot dogs, chips, cookies and drinks for Saturday and Sunday
- All taxes and tips
- The amazing services of instructors Jim Vafeas and Mary Davis.

## **What is not included in the trip...**

Transportation to and from Canada. It is about a 7 hour drive.

Transportation in Canada. You must have a car or be part of a car pool.

No meals are included other than the ones stated above. Any rental gear you may need. We do have special rental pricing for members of the trip at Tiedemann's Diving Center.

## **What gear is needed for the trip...**

You will need thermo protection for dives in about 70 degree water.

Since the dives can be deep a 7 mm all around is recommended. Boots, hood and gloves.

- Mask, fins, snorkel
- Two tanks, make sure VIP and Hydros are current.
- Regulator (with a main and "octo", and pressure gauge and depth gauge) and BC.
- Weights - fresh water - so plan accordingly (we will not have any extra weights)
- SMB - surface marker buoy
- Cutting device - safety shears or dive knife
- Whistle or a audible surface signaling device

We do have tanks, regulators, BCs, wetsuit jacket and pants, wetsuit hood, and weights in rental.

We do not rent SMBs or Cutting devices.

## STRONGLY RECOMMENDED FOR THE TRIP...

- Dive Computer
- Dive light
- Pony bottle
- Wreck reel

Tiedemann's rents Dive Computers, and pony bottles.

### **A few details...**

**Driving** - Drive time is about 7 hours. When you sign up let us know if you want to use your car or be part of a car pool. We will do our best to set something up for you. To be on the Friday afternoon beach dive you should leave Long Island no later than 6 am. That should put you at Canadian customs by 1 pm.

**Passport** - You need to have a current passport that will not expire before February 29, 2024. This is important. If you have less than 6 months left on your passport, you will not be allow into Canada.

If you have any arrest/DUI history or record, check with the Canada Consulate to make sure it will not be a problem. We have had people turned away at the Canadian border.

**Certifications** - You will need speciality certifications for this trip. Because the dives can be deep, on fragile wrecks, and with mild to moderate currents. We currently require Nitrox certification, Wreck Diving and Deep Diving certifications (or similar experience). If coordinated in advance, Deep Diving certification may be completed on the trip.

**DAN Insurance** - Everyone on the trip has to have DAN Accident Insurance.

**Diver Medical** - Everyone on the trip has to have a current medical (less than one year old) signed by a doctor.

**Weather** - The weather in Brockville that time of year has air temperatures in 50s in the mornings and evenings. It gets warm during the day into the 70°Fs to low 80°Fs. It's best to have layers and a light coat available to deal with the changes.

**Meals** - What about meals for the trip? A hot buffet-style continental breakfast is included at the Comfort Inn. The Inn is located in the heart of Brockville and there are lots of dining options nearby as well as in downtown Brockville.

**Non-diver** - Can a non-diver go on the trip? Yes, non-divers are welcome as there are a lot of sightseeing opportunities. They can take a City of the 1,000 Islands Cruise or visit the historic Boldt and Singer Castles. There is the ever popular Brockville Rib Fest all weekend and the Poker Run on Saturday. A new outdoor Adventure park opened nearby and includes a Zipline Tour, Aerial Adventure Courses and a Treewalk Village. There are also lots of lighthouses to visit, or hit the mall in Brockville for some great deals due to the value of the American dollar.

**Trip Insurance** - Should I purchase trip insurance? We recommend trip insurance for all our diving trips. If you need to cancel and we are unable to fill your spot, certain costs of the trip are non-refundable.



## Want to get more out of your trip?

The trip is a great way to experience some new and interesting dive locations. Since we are going to be doing a good number of dives, why not use those dives to learn something new.

The Courses we will be offering during this trip are:

- Nitrox Diving
- Deep Diving
- **Intro to Tech** (Introduction to Technical Diving)
- Advanced Nitrox
- Decompression Procedures

Depending on the course, we may have academic review sessions on Long Island before the trip. All required dives will be worked into the trip's normal diving schedule.

Contact Ed at Tiedemann's Diving Center for all the details.

**Trip leaders** - The trip leader for this trip is long-time shop instructor and dive leader Jim Vafeas. Jim has been a dive instructor with Tiedemann's since 1996 and has been running trips to Canada since 1999. He has also organized trips to Bonaire, Roatan, North Carolina, Massachusetts, Maine, Florida, Bonne Terre Mine and Rhode Island. He is a thorough, organized and passionate trip leader determined to make your trip with us the best and most enjoyable that it can be. Joining Jim once again as a co-leader on this trip will be staff Instructor, Mary Davis.

## The last word from Ed...

Thank you for taking the time to go over the details of this wonderful trip. When Jim presented this idea to me over twenty years ago I figured we would do it every few years like our other trip.

I was wrong. This trip is one of our oldest and much loved trip. Many people have gone on this trip year after year. Jim does a great job in setting everything up.

Mary Davis, the trip co-leader, brings to the trip her many years of experience helping me to run our longest running trip - the January Florida trip.

Everyone at Tiedemann's loves diving and it shows in our attention to details. If you can not join us on this trip, we hope you can on a future trip.

Everyone needs to have some diving adventures in their lives.

Take care,

Ed

PS - If you want to talk with me directly about the trip? I am at the shop four days a week. Check the shop website - [www.TDCScuba.com](http://www.TDCScuba.com) - for current hours.

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