



## Letter From the Board

Greetings MSRA supporters,

The 2006 Search season has been an unprecedented success as you will read about in our feature article to the right! In some of our lean years in the past, the balance of the summer was spent doing additional research and working up the energy and enthusiasm to continue the hunt the following spring.

This year we have actually had to make a choice of which project to tackle, holding the others for work during a possible future year with no new discoveries.

With the discovery of the historic steamer Hennepin, the MSRA Board has decided that it will be most appropriate to focus first and foremost on documenting this very historic wreck. You can read about her history on page three.

Early plans include a nomination to the national register of historic places, a video survey of the site, the preparation of a site drawing, and a documentary film. We will pursue grant opportunities and a possible collaboration with professional resource managers and institutions.

Great Lakes Shipwrecks, as you know, have no monetary value. Instead their discovery leads to financial burden as those who discover their location strive to be responsible, (as those of us with MSRA try to be) and document the remains for the historical record.

We hope you might consider making a special donation towards the Hennepin's documentation effort. Details are listed on page four.

Thank you all!

*Valerie Olson van Heest*

*Not one, not two, but three new wrecks have been discovered by the MSRA team this year! We thought that the 2005 search season was amazing with two discoveries, but we never would have imagined this year. For those of you who are members you likely followed our email updates during the course of the 10-day search, you already know much of what is being announced here, but for others this is news.*



## The Steamer Hennepin is Found! Plus two other shipwrecks!

### A New Port Sheldon Dive Site

Due to an unavoidable issue, side scan expert, David Trotter was delayed from mid June to early July, which marked the latest that MSRA has ever begun a search season. The timing could actually not have been better. In late June, Ron and Heather Potter a husband and wife fisherman team, contacted MSRA with the news that they had picked up a very large target with their bottom finder in 200' of water off Port Sheldon. They interviewed several divers before approaching MSRA with their discovery. They were concerned that perhaps they had located an historic vessel and wanted to contact a dive team that had the experience and resources to properly deal with such a discovery. MSRA's web site and a meeting with the Board convinced them that MSRA was the team to handle such a discovery. With David Trotter arriving in less than a week, MSRA invited the Potters to accompany the team to scan the site. Hopes were high that the target may represent the *Andaste*, however, the first pass with the sonar, did not reveal the telltale shape of a whaleback. The square edged, rectangular mass suggested that this was yet another work barge. Dives a few days later made by two members of the MSRA technical diving team, Jeff Vos and Todd White, confirmed the observation. Eight miles off the Port Sheldon channel, impaled in the bottom much like the *Ann Arbor No 5* lays the remains of a flat top commercial barge. Whether scuttled or lost accidentally, MSRA will not at this point pursue. Most importantly this new site will provide an awesome opportunity for dive training at a site not too far from shore, and deep enough to be a challenge, but not so deep to be a hazard.

### A Schooner or Barkentine off Saugatuck

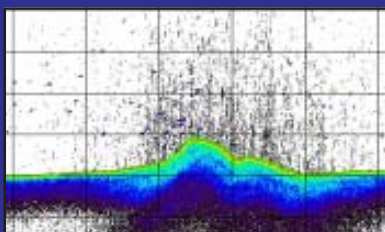
MSRA could not have been more surprised to actually locate a shipwreck in a small swath of bottomland left uncovered in 2003 due to building seas. In our drive to be thorough, we decided to spend a few hours this year to close the gap that had been left years prior. Imagine our surprise when an approximate 100' long target appeared in an area less than a half mile wide, not more than 2000 feet from previously covered territory! A dive made by Todd White in mid July revealed a schooner or a barkentine in 270 feet of water off Saugatuck. There appears to be damage that may have been made by a clamshell unit., which fits the rumor that a commercial salvor stumbled upon this years ago and tired to bring up pieces of the wreck to confirm what he had found. MSRA believes this site has previously been dived upon by local divers who may have been given the location by the contractor. Unfortunately the damage will make this a difficult ship to identify. MSRA affiliate divers will again visit the site this year to take basic measurements which may help MSRA narrow down the possibilities for identifications. It will likely take until next year to be able to make enough dives to identify the wreck. *Con't on next page*

## 2006 Discoveries!! *con't*



*Self Unloading Elevator*  
Video Still by Todd White

### "The lump is a lump!"



Well, we just had to go and explore this target located nearly two years ago by a Michigan State fisheries scientist. Hoping it might represent a shipwreck 40 miles off shore, MSRA traveled with Trotter and the side scan accompanied by a second vessel, *Just Relaxin*, owned and operated by MSRA sustaining member Stan Buell, for safety. (It's not a good idea to travel in alone in a 24', single engine vessel to the middle of the shipping lanes!)

The water was flat and the sun was shining and the lump appeared on our bottom finders just as it had to the DNR. The problem was the side scan picked up nothing but a fast rise in the bottom. Our hopeful shipwreck was just a pile of clay in the middle of the lake!

The third discovery of the year is the most exciting! And it is quite exciting because it was found the day after the search ended and in the van Heest's kitchen rather than on the lake! How so you ask? Well we must back up to the discovery made by the NUMA/MSRA team while in search of Flight 2501. A small target that we called "rib cage", because that is what it looked like on the side scan, turned out to be a 30' section of ship's hull. Assuming that the larger ship that this piece had been a part of could not be far away, MSRA set out to scan the bottom areas for several miles surrounding the small portion of wreckage. Realizing that 1927 news accounts suggested that the *Hennepin* had been lost in this area, and knowing that area also offered the possibility of locating the *Chicora*, the tea spent over four solid days covering area to the east, north and west of the "rib cage", but with no luck.

Loosing the last day of the search July 10th due to weather, David Trotter suggested that we unroll all of the side scan paper and review the area covered to make sure nothing had been overlooked. As the paper unraveled from Friday's expedition, all eyes were drawn to a very unusual smudge on the paper. It did not take long for David and the MSRA team to realize that the smudge represented a shipwreck. With a variety of volunteers manning the side scan that particular day, a little cat nap may have accounted for not seeing this target as it printed out. The scan lacked detail from which to gather much information, but David estimated the target to be at least 200' long. That was good news, but both the *Chicora* and the *Hennepin* were in that length range. Only a dive would tell.

It only took a week for the technical dive team to get out to the site. Bob Underhill, Todd White and Jeff Vos made the first dive on this newly discovered wreck on July 30 after studying the construction details of both ships. Expecting a broken site, the divers were quite surprised that visibility was nearly 100' and stretched out more than 75' below them was a complete and nearly intact shipwreck. No detective work would be necessary. The steamer *Hennepin*, looking just as it did in the last photo taken before it sank in 1927, was resting gently on the bottom beneath them. They took their time enjoying an experience that few divers ever get-- to be the first people to set eyes on a ship since it disappeared beneath the waves. They traversed the wreck in awe of so many incredible visions- the perfect ship's wheel, the standing mast, the self unloading elevator perched 30 feet high just as it stood nearly 80 years ago. Sending a message via rope and slate up to us waiting on the dive boat, I was proud to announce to the team the discovery of the *Hennepin* 40 minutes before the divers returned to the dive boat after their decompression. We all toasted with bottles of *Hennepin* beer brought along just in case!



*The Double-Wheel*  
Video Still by Todd White

Submitted by Valerie Olson van Heest

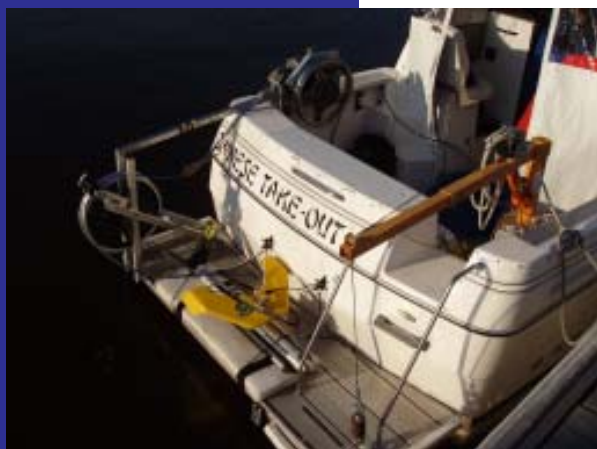
## "Chinese Takeout" survives another search season

Over the past several years, MSRA's official search vessel has been the 24' Bayliner, "Chinese takeout" owned by Jack and Valerie van Heest. Their family boat, undergoes a transformation each spring as Jack installs his custom designed winch and guide wheel and a crane for setting and retrieving the towfish and cable used for the side scan operations.

It is a process that takes several days before the search to prepare for and the first evening of each search season finds David Trotter and the MSRA team installing the side scan, generator, batteries and auxiliary gas tanks to make it all happen.

Once the search is completed, the boat is transformed into a dive boat with stations set up for storage of tanks and equipment. Towards the end of summer the boat is converted to a camper as the van Heests, head up north island hopping over labor day. It has held up nicely over the past many years and saw us through many shipwreck discoveries.

For anyone wondering the origin of the boat name "Chinese Takeout", the photo (above) of the Van Heest's two daughters should be explanation enough!



# Introducing a whole new line of MSRA Merchandise

Now you can show everyone you know that you're a member of the MSRA support team while you financially support the research, discovery and documentation efforts of MSRA. Just log on to [www.cafepress.com/msra](http://www.cafepress.com/msra) and order MSRA hats, t-shirts, sweatshirts, tote-bags, mouse pads and more!

You'll find several varieties of shirts and caps, as well as coffee mugs, teddy bears and even kids wear – all proudly printed with the MSRA logo. Some items even proclaim, "MSRA DIVE TEAM".

These items make great gifts for the historian, diver or shipwreck hunter on your gift list! Prices are very reasonable and all proceeds from the sale of MSRA merchandise will go directly to fund shipwreck discovery and documentation efforts.

[www.cafepress.com/msra](http://www.cafepress.com/msra)



## Special Program Announcement

Thursday Aug. 24th



MSRA Members are invited to join the discovery and dive team after the program at the New Holland Brewery for a post-event gathering.

MSRA will provide the appetisers and there will be a cash bar.

We hope to see you there!

Please join Michigan Shipwreck Research Associates and the Holland Area Historical Society for a one-of-a-kind program on the very new discovery of three deep water shipwrecks off the shores off West Michigan.

In July 2006, Michigan Shipwreck Research Associates conducted their annual side scan sonar survey in Lake

Michigan and discovered an unprecedented three shipwrecks during their 10 day search period, including a barge, a schooner and the historic steamer *Hennepin* lost in 1927. In years prior MSRA has discovered four other large shipwrecks that have been the subject matter of their annual Evening Beneath the Inland Seas program in May. This will be the first opportunity to see underwater footage just weeks after it was first taken and experience the excitement of the discovery and first dives on the wrecks with the individuals who were there.

The discovery and dive team will also share the frustrations, surprises and unusual coincidences involved in these new discoveries, and will offer a first hand demonstration of the side scan sonar and technical diving equipment utilized for these specialized efforts.

You will not want to miss this exciting program! There is no monetary profit in shipwreck hunting, and no treasures in the conventional sense to be found on these vessels. MSRA does what they do purely out of a love for our communities maritime history and to preserve it for future generations. It is rich and worth cherishing. Your donation of \$10.00 at the door will greatly assist MSRA in documenting these new sites, and delving more fully into the history of these vessels.

Thurs. Aug 24, 2006 7:00 PM Winants Auditorium Graves Hall - Hope College  
263 College Holland, MI. Presented in affiliation with the Joint Archives of Holland



Holland non-profit Michigan Shipwreck Research Associates present the first underwater footage of three newly discovered shipwrecks off West Michigan including the historic self-unloading steamer *Hennepin* sunk in 1927 \$10 donation at the door - No reservations needed Call Valerie at 616-566-6009 for information

Shipwreck Discovery 2006

Jan Miller  
 Valerie Olson Van Heest  
 Craig Rich  
 Ross Richardson  
 Jack van Heest  
 Geoffrey Reynolds

# The Steamer Hennepin

The story of the sinking of the *Hennepin* is an often-overlooked tale of loss on the Great Lakes. While the vessel had reached a sorry state of repair after nearly 40 years of plying Great Lakes, her useful life came to an end without a loss of life.

She was built in 1888 as the wood-hulled steamer *George H. Dyer* by Wolf and Davidson of Milwaukee, Wisconsin for Davidson Steamship Company. The 208 foot long cargo vessel had a beam of 35.1 feet and a draft of 21.6 feet. She had one large cargo compartment rated at 1,600 tons.

Her machinery was comprised of a rebuilt steeple compound engine salvaged from the schooner-turned-steamer *William. T. Graves* which had been driven ashore near North Manitou Island. The wreck of the *Graves* is still visible in 10 to 20 feet of water. Her #2 boiler was built by Lake Erie Boiler Works at Buffalo, New York and was 6.5 feet in diameter. The rebuild was done by Sheriff's Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

She was later re-measured at Milwaukee, WI, June 2, 1902 (208.66 x 35 x 12.33; 990), then re-measured at Milwaukee, WI, 1915 (214 x 35.66 x 17.33).

In 1898, she was owned by W. E. Fitzgerald of Milwaukee, R. H. Hebard of Buffalo and W. M. Killie of Gladstone and was renamed the "*Hennepin*".

On June 27, 1901 at about 1:00 PM she caught fire from an adjacent freight house while loading in the Blackwell Canal in Buffalo, New York. Her upper works and most of her machinery were damaged. The loss was estimated at \$30,000. She was then sold to the Lake Shore Stone

Company and fitted with an elevator belt to handle crushed stone from Stone Haven, Wisconsin, about 6 miles north of Port Washington where there was a quarry.

Some time later, when her hull became unstable, it was decided that she would be used as a tow barge rather than to run her engines. She was acquired by Construction Materials Company of Grand Haven, Michigan sometime in the mid 1920s and continued service as a tow barge. Her usual tugs were the *Ufasco* in 1926 and the *Lotus* in 1927.

On August 18, 1927, while under tow by the *Lotus* and while returning to Grand Haven from another uneventful trip to Chicago to unload a cargo of gravel, the *Hennepin's* end came. Leaving early in the morning on the 18th, the *Hennepin* would have reached mid-lake when she ran into a squall caused by a stiff "Norwester" at about 10:30 AM. The old vessel had sprung a leak. The crew worked for four hours before abandoning the vessel for the safety of the tug at 2:30 PM. The *Hennepin* stay afloat another four hours before finally slipping beneath the waves at about 6:00 PM. Captain Ole Hansen and his crew of 13 all lived to tell the tale. Captain Hansen was quoted as saying, "She died a hard death."

According to a story in the Grand Haven Tribune, the "*Hennepin* now lies in 203 feet of water and will remain there as there is no hope of salvage." The loss was valued at \$100,000.

The following year, she was replaced by the *Andaste* which, ironically, would suffer a similar fate after just one year of service.

Submitted by Craig Rich



## Associates

Brendon Baillod  
 Historian/Writer

Arthur Allen  
 Oceanographer, U.S. Coast Guard

Dr. Guy Meadows  
 University of Michigan

Kenneth Pott  
 Maritime Archaeologist

Dr. David Schwab  
 Oceanographer, GLERL

Michigan Shipwreck Research Associates, is a Michigan nonprofit corporation, whose mission is to Preserve Michigan's submerged maritime history. To that end, the organization's work includes research, exploration, documentation and education regarding historic shipwrecks within Michigan waters, with an initial emphasis on the area off West Michigan. MSRA works in cooperation with State Agencies. As a Holland-based volunteer-driven organization, MSRA relies on memberships, fundraising events and grants to continue its work.



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## Your Financial Support is Needed!

MSRA's annual film festival fundraising event in May was a great success and allowed MSRA to move forward with the 2006 search as planned. The funds raised this spring covered the cost of David Trotter's services, side scan paper, and gasoline. With gas prices at an all-time high this year and with our search being located far from shore, our funds have been nearly depleted with only enough remaining to continue the basic administration of the organization, but nothing left over for documentation of the shipwrecks that have been discovered. MSRA Board members have pledged a total of \$1000.00 to the effort, but an additional \$2000.00 is needed to undertake the necessary documentation.

We need your help. Please consider supporting MSRA in one of several ways:

**Membership:** See [www.michiganshipwrecks.org/join](http://www.michiganshipwrecks.org/join) for opportunities

**Attendance:** Please join us on May 24th in Holland for "shipwrecks 2006!" (details on Page 3)

**Web site sponsorship:** a \$300 donation will support the MSRA web site domain. Your name or your company's name will be featured on MSRA's home page for one year.

**Support a documentation dive:** It runs \$150 in gas to reach the site of the *Hennepin* or Schooner to make dives for the purpose of documentation. Your support will be included in the credits of the documentary film and you will receive three complementary copies of the documentary.