



## Letter From the Board

Hello Members!

Even when our ports are iced in, the MSRA is hard at work planning this years search and dive operations, and, of course, our May 5 presentation, which is only two short months away! This year's presentation will feature the discovery of the *Hennepin*, the father of all self-unloaders. I think everyone will be pleasantly surprised to learn the historic significance of West Michigan's newest wreck discovery.

We spend much of January and February collecting data, brainstorming, and planning the logistics our search. It doesn't sound too tricky, but when you think about the rising cost of fuel, and then add in the fact that our search areas are getting farther and farther from shore, you can see that everything needs to be well thought out, economically, and safety wise.

When we plan our search areas, we consider this years search, next years search, and searches for years to come, along with our future targets. We try to buttress the search areas to one another, if possible, to get maximum coverage. To do this, we need to know what's out there, and where those "what's" are. That is why research and interpretation of the research is so important. It's a big lake out there, and we are not only working on our next find, the *Andaste*, but the next find after that too! ☺

See you at the show!

**Ross Richardson**  
MSRA Board Director

## MSRA awarded Planning grant from Michigan Humanities Council!

Of all the shipwrecks that MSRA has found or would like to find, the *Hennepin* had the least compelling "sinking story." You will certainly recall the heroic actions of the crew of the *Michigan* in the 40 days they were icebound; the drama of the *Chicora* caught by a fierce winter storm; and the story of how the six men who chose to stay with the *HC Akeley* sadly perished. But the *Hennepin* simply sprang a leak and slowly sank. The crew transferred to their tug boat and didn't even get a foot wet! But it is not the sinking event that makes a shipwreck important.

Actually the *Hennepin* is so very historically significant that the Michigan Humanities Council, which is the State affiliate of the National Endowment of the Humanities, has awarded MSRA with a matching grant for a project called: **The Steamer Hennepin- Revolutionizing the Bulk Cargo Transportation Industry**. The grant will allow MSRA to work with the Heritage Museum in St. Joseph as they develop plans for an exhibit that will explore the rich maritime history and cultural traditions of the St. Joseph and Benton Harbor area. In partnership, the two organizations will explore how to incorporate the *Hennepin* and the roots of the bulk cargo transportation industry, which still flourishes in Western Michigan, into the exhibit scheduled to open in 2008.

This grant will give MSRA the opportunity to collaborate with the museum as well as Western Michigan University students who will be involved in developing the exhibit. This is the perfect opportunity to take a shipwreck discovery and turn it into a wonderful educational opportunity, which is a major component of MSRA's mission.

Stay tuned for more information about this developing project. You will also hear more about the *Hennepin* discovery at MSRA's upcoming annual event May 5th at the Knickerbocker. Please mark your calendars!

## Application to the National Register of Historic Places

In another collaborative venture, MSRA will be working with noted maritime historian and self-unloading vessel expert, William Lafferty, from Wright State University in Ohio to submit the *Hennepin* to the National Register of Historic Places.

Currently Michigan boasts ten shipwreck sites on the National Register, most of those in the Isle Royal National Park in Lake Superior. Never before have private citizens or a private organization been instrumental in making a National Register submission for a shipwreck. MSRA hopes we can be the first ones to do so.



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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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# The SS Michigan Featured in Michigan History Magazine



Did you see the story in the January February issue of Michigan History Magazine about MSRA's discovery of the SS Michigan? This will be the second time that the team's work has been included in this beautiful magazine published by the State of Michigan. (The first time was concerning the discovery of the H.C. Akeley which appeared in the July/August 2003 edition)

While you are probably already familiar with the story of the *Michigan*, you can access the article on line at [www.michiganshipwrecks.org/MichHistory-Icebound.pdf](http://www.michiganshipwrecks.org/MichHistory-Icebound.pdf) if you are interested.



## Time to Renew Your MSRA Membership

### \$25 Annual Individual Membership

*Includes one free admission to May "Mysteries and Histories" event, daily search emails and MSRA newsletters.*

### \$50 Annual Family Membership

*Includes two free admissions to May "Mysteries and Histories" event, daily search emails and MSRA newsletters.*

### \$100 Sustaining Membership

*Includes two free admissions to May "Mysteries and Histories" event, daily search emails and MSRA newsletters, plus a complimentary documentary in video or DVD format.*

### \$250 Benefactor

*Includes two free admissions to May "Mysteries and Histories" event each year, daily search emails and MSRA newsletters, plus two complimentary documentaries in video or DVD format.*

### \$500 Individual Sponsor

*Includes the above plus the opportunity for you to join the MSRA search crew on a side scan expedition for one day during the June 2007 "Wreck Quest".*

### \$1,000 Patron/Lifetime Member

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### \$5,000 Corporate Sponsor

*Includes the above plus opportunity for you and a friend to join the MSRA search crew on a side scan expedition for one day during the June 2007 "Wreck Quest"; AND corporate advertising in MSRA web site, newsletters and other publications for 2 years.*

Memberships and Donations can now be made on line using PayPal at the MSRA web site [www.michiganshipwrecks.org/payments.htm](http://www.michiganshipwrecks.org/payments.htm) or your check can be mailed to the address at left.

9th Annual

# MYSTERIES & HISTORIES Beneath the Inland Seas



Presented by the Joint Archives of Holland and Michigan Shipwreck Research Associates

**The evening events include the short program "Piece of a Ship" and several live narrated presentations including the following:**

**Saturday May 5, 2007  
The Knickerbocker Theatre  
86 East Eighth St. Holland  
7:00 PM - 9:30 PM**

## *She Died a Hard Death The Sinking of the Hennepin*

*Presented By MSRA*

When the tugboat *Lotus* moved slowly up the Grand River in Ferrysburg Michigan on the sultry evening of August 18, 1927, it was immediately apparent something was wrong. She had left the day prior towing the barge *Hennepin* and was returning without it. The *Hennepin's* Captain Ole Hansen who had taken refuge on the tug shouted across to employees waiting at the Dock: "We lost here boys. She died a hard death." 79 years later Michigan Shipwreck Research Associates discovered the ship that Hansen had lost in 230' of water off South Haven, Michigan. Through research and diving this very pristine wreck, MSRA would piece together the true account of the sinking of this ship, told through historical reenactment, and place this vessel in its proper historical content as the first self-unloading steamer.

## *Hidden Depths Amazing Underwater Discoveries*

*Presented By David Trotter*

Share the excitement of several new shipwreck discoveries with Undersea Research Associates. The stories involve ships of very different sizes, sunk decades apart in different lakes and for different reasons, with one thing in common- they were all carrying coal! Share the excitement of discovering and thrills of diving on the small schooner *S. H. Kimball* lost in 1895 in Lake Huron, the midsize Steamer *George Stone*, lost 14 years later in Lake Erie and the massive freighter, *Edward Demmer*, sunk in 1923 in a collision.

## *Adventures of a Shipwreck Hunter*

*Presented by Ralph Wilbanks*

Back for his third time in Holland, Ralph Wilbanks, marine archaeologist, side scan sonar expert, and a leading member of the National Underwater Marine Agency, (and our own "Dirk Pitt"), shares the adventures of hunting for the world's greatest shipwrecks with nationally acclaimed author and a shipwreck hunter himself, Clive Cussler.

**Sign Up Early & Save! Tear Here and Mail. Support Local History in the Making. Admission: \$12.50 Per Person in Advance.**  
No tickets will be mailed, your name will be held at the door. Admission available at the door for \$15.00 per person. All proceeds will be directed MSRA's Shipwreck Quest 2007

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Children Under 12 Free: \_\_\_\_\_

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Annual Membership includes 1 Free Ticket @ \$25.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Tickets: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$12.50 = Total Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Membership includes one free admission, special seating for members and guests, post show party, daily emails during the annual shipwreck search, and quarterly MSRA newsletters

**You may also use PayPal to purchase tickets and various membership levels on line at [www.michiganshipwrecks.org/payments.htm](http://www.michiganshipwrecks.org/payments.htm)**

**Mail to:**  
MSRA 1134 Goodwood Ct.  
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**Questions:**  
Contact Valerie van Heest  
616-566-6009

**Further Details and Directions to the Theatre:**  
See MSRA's website:  
[www.michiganshipwrecks.org](http://www.michiganshipwrecks.org)

**Payment:**  
Make checks payable to MSRA  
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