



2007 Report on Scuba Diving Related Incidents in Ontario

Compiled by:

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Director, Sport Safety



Document Control

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Submitting an Incident Report

To submit a report, you should contact one of the ***OUC board members***.
You can also complete and return an ***Incident Report Submission Form***.

For comments on this document please contact

OUC's Director of Sport Safety
ouc.safety@underwatercouncil.com



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Ontario Underwater Council

2007 Report on Scuba-Diving Related Incidents in Ontario

Foreword:

The primary goal of this Ontario Underwater Council (OUC) report is to **prevent future scuba diving incidents**¹ by collecting, analyzing, and sharing information about past scuba diving incidents.

So as to ensure the greatest possible benefit to the Ontario Scuba Community, OUC's goal is to share the information on fatalities in Ontario as collected and any recommendations on OUC's website at:

<http://www.underwatercouncil.com/?action=cms&cmspage=safety>
within 72 hours.

Recommendations are not intended to be a comment or conclusion on the cause or causes of the specific incident.

With regards to "Near Misses", the OUC reserves the right to select incidents for publication.

Disclaimer:

No claim is made by the OUC, the Director of Sport Safety or by any contributors, as to the completeness or accuracy of information contained within this report. Every effort has been taken to include only respected sources in the public domain, however it must be stated that none of these have been independently verified or investigated.

Certain personal risks are inherent in most sports, and the sport of scuba diving is no exception. By engaging in the sport of scuba, you accept these risks. No amount of training, experience, equipment, policies, etc. can completely eliminate all personal risks, and the OUC, its Board Members, Regional Coordinators, and Members are not responsible for any losses, injury, or death sustained as a result of members or non-members taking these risks.

¹ Incidents are divided into 2 categories, "Fatalities" and "Near Misses"



SECTION A: Fatalities - Summaries & Recommendations

Fatalities - Summaries and Recommendations are listed in chronological order.



Date of Incident: 2007-02-18

Summary:

At approximately 11:45am, Dr. Doug Smeaton, a 57 year old male drowned while diving in the St. Lawrence River at Rockport, Ontario. Dr. Smeaton, of Kanata, Ontario was with his buddy at the time of the accident. The dive was a technical ice dive being conducted using cave diving protocols. Reports state he had free flows from both his primary and alternate regulators.

For public domain information of this incident, please refer to Section C, Appendix #1 of this document.

OUC Recommendations:

- *All divers need to ensure they have appropriate and properly maintained equipment for the dive. This includes proper weighting, doubles, stage bottles or some other form of redundancy if required and tank(s) capable of carrying adequate gas supply for the dive plan.*
- *Extreme cold-water diving requires special equipment and procedures.*
- *Overhead environments require special equipment and procedures.*
- ***Divers are strongly encouraged to obtain the proper training for either situation***
- *Divers should ensure they have an adequate dive plan for the site, the conditions and the training and experience level of the divers participating in the dive. That dive plan should include appropriate gas supply and type for the dive.*
- *All divers should determine their Respiratory Minute Volume (RMV) in advance of planning dives to ensure their gas planning is based on their current consumption rate. ALL dives should be planned based on the rule of thirds. One third of the air supply for heading out, one third of the air supply for heading back, and one third of the air supply in reserve.*



Date of Incident: 2007-05-04

Summary:

At just before 4:30pm, , a 44 year old male was pulled from the water in an unconscious state. Dale Metherall was taken from the water by 2 boaters and taken to the Elizabeth street pier in Grimsby where he was airlifted to hospital.

Dale and his buddy were diving off the Old Grimsby Pump House in approximately 10 to 15 feet (3-5 meters) of water. The buddy signalled problems with equipment and surfaced. The buddy found Dale floating beside him unconscious.

The buddy signalled to boats for assistance, while holding Dale on the surface. The boats pulled the buddy out of the water first and the victim sank back below the surface. The victim was hooked by an anchor from another boat and was surfaced then pulled into the boat where CPR was started by the buddy. Exit to the boat was difficult with divers in full gear.

The victim was taken to hospital where he was in a coma. The victim passed away a week later on the 12th.

The coroner has not yet released specifics as to the cause of death.

For public domain information of this incident, please refer to Section C, Appendix #2 of this document.

OUC Recommendations:

- The first step in any rescue is to establish positive buoyancy of both victim and rescuer. To establish buoyancy , divers should inflate BCDs, and drysuits, Divers should also consider dropping weights. This is to ensure that both divers remain on the surface until they can be removed from the water.
- Ensure that all equipment is inspected at the start of the dive season. Regular tune-ups are recommended.
- Divers should always do a self-evaluation before a dive. This helps ensure the diver is prepared for the dive. To view a copy of the OUC's Scuba Diver Self Evaluation document please click on the icon or go to the following link



Diver Self
Evaluation.doc

http://www.underwatercouncil.com/downloads/fathom_five_scuba_diver_safety_awareness_program_2006-11-06%20.pps#14

- All divers should consider continuing their education to a minimum level of Rescue Diver. Additional supervised instruction helps to reinforce basic concepts taught at the entry level.
- When exiting to a boat, divers should first consider removing all gear, weight belt first.



Date of Incident: 2007-05-28

Summary:

A 53-year-old male diver from St. Hilaire, Que., died in Brockville , Ontario on Monday, May 28th, 2007. Yves Thibault was diving with 3 friends on the wreck of the Muscellonge. The conditions on the wreck are believed to have included current, limited visibility and cold water. A missing or un-locatable tag line from the wreck to the ascent line may have also contributed to stress. Stress and fatigue may have caused the diver to ascend directly to the surface.

The coroner reported cause of death due to air embolism in the cranial artery.

The coroner's investigation is continuing at this time.

For public domain information of this incident, please refer to [Section C, Appendix #3](#) of this document.

OUC Recommendations:

- When breathing compressed air underwater, always breathe slowly and deeply through the entire breathing cycle, and never hold your breath.
- If you become fatigued while diving, stop, rest, and then proceed at a slower pace.
- BCD and Drysuit inflators are meant to be used to control and fine-tune buoyancy, not as a means of ascent.
- Before diving with new gear, check it out thoroughly in a controlled environment (e.g. swimming pool) first
- Diving with borrowed or rented gear can complicate your dive as things may not be where you expect them &/or may not work the way you expect.
- Only dive in conditions for which you are trained or have experience



Date of Incident: 2007-09-18

Summary:

On Sunday, September 16th, 2007, at approximately 9:30 a.m., two divers, Perry Clelland of Brampton and Michael Ford of Etobicoke, failed to surface from a drift dive in the Niagara River and Chippawa Creek near Niagara Falls, Ontario.

The 2 were part of a group of 5 divers whose general dive plan was to:

- enter the Niagara River at 8:30 a.m.,
- drift down and into the Chippawa Creek, (450 feet/150 metres)
- continue down the creek for a total of about 50 minutes, and
- exit at the Sodom Road boat launch by around 9:30 a.m.

4 out of the 5 divers had dived the Chippawa previously, and 2 had previously used the same entry point.

All 5 divers entered the water as planned around 8:30 a.m. As soon as the divers were together, they descended to depth. Visibility was poor, in the range of 5'.

For the first few minutes of the dive the group stayed together, although at least one diver was unable to see the others. After the first few minutes, the group became separated into 2 smaller groups of two divers each, and one solo diver.

Divers "A" and "B", proceeded along the planned dive route down the creek, except that instead of drifting, they had to kick their way down because of the lack of current. Divers "A" and "B" separated at the bridge where Diver "A" continued on the surface to the exit point. Diver "B" continued the dive solo and made it to within 800 yards of the exit point before having to stop and exit, after more than 2 hours in the water.

Diver "C", the solo diver, concerned over the unfamiliar terrain and current conditions, surfaced to find himself in the vicinity of the sluice-ways under the pedestrian overpass. This area was not far from the entry point, and with the current from the creek threatening to push him back into and down the Niagara River; the diver inflated his Surface Marker Buoy, removed his gloves to hold onto the overpass supports, signalled a passer-by for assistance, and was subsequently rescued.

The remaining 2 divers, Perry Clelland and Michael Ford, (Divers "D" & "E"), are assumed to have drifted and/or swum out of the Chippawa Creek and into the Niagara River. Once in the Niagara River, they are further assumed to have drifted and/or swum downstream with the current for several hundred feet at which point they were drawn into the nearby Sir Adam Beck Hydro-Electric Plant water intakes.



On Friday September 21, 2007, at approximately 1:00 a.m., the Niagara Regional Police Service was notified by the Sir Adam Beck Power Generating Plant at 14000 Niagara Parkway (approximately 10Km distant from the entry point) that the body of an adult outfitted in a scuba diving suit had been found near a hydro intake. Upon lowering the water level to recover the diver, the body of a second diver was discovered in close proximity.

In information published in several news sources, it has become evident that this creek is used by Ontario Power Generation as a source of water for its generating facilities. This may not have been general knowledge to the diving community.

OPG was making some investigations of structures in preparation for repairs and maintenance in the future. As a part of the process, OPG operations made configuration changes which may have significantly changed the normal flow, possibly even reversing it.

OPG apparently notified local residents and media (Osprey News) as an article referring to the upcoming event was published. It was interesting news as it was the first time in 30 years, the flow had been significantly changed, thus not an occurrence to be expected by divers coming in from other areas.

Local police were quoted as telling divers that the area was not recommended for diving. This was not seen to be the case several weeks earlier when a club from Toronto was conducting a charity dive and the police did not mention anything.

OPG apparently had spotters in boats along the creek to warn people entering the water of potential danger. It is believed that one of these boats rescued Diver "C".

Due to the unusual entry point and lack of use of surface marker buoys during the dive, the OPG observers would have had little opportunity to spot the divers or warn them of the dangers.

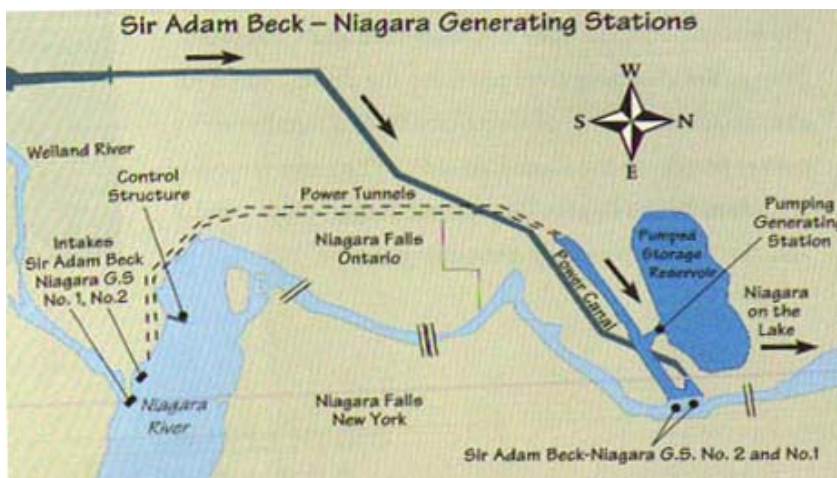
In addition to the inherent dangers of the Niagara River, there is also an intake to the Niagara Falls Water Treatment plant. This intake is 75inches in diameter and is fed from the Chippawa Creek just inside the sluiceway on the North side of the creek.

Area Map:



Sir Adam Beck Hydro-Electric Plant Tunnel 1 & 2 Route

(Note: Tunnels 1 & 2 are underground and are designated by the dotted lines in the lower half of this image)





For public domain information of this incident, please refer to [Section C, Appendix #4](#) of this document.

OUC Recommendations

OUC acknowledges that scuba diving, like all sports, is not without its risks, and scuba divers, like other sport participants, must manage those risks intelligently through appropriate equipment, preparedness, mental and physical fitness, training and adherence, and experience.

When accidents do happen, analysis often reveals not just a single event, rather a chain of events where each event contributes, in varying degrees, to the end result.

OUC's role is to try to uncover as many of these causative links in the chain of events as possible and then draft recommendations to prevent these links from being forged in the future.

In drafting its recommendations, OUC recognizes that no two links in a causative chain of events are exactly the same and that different links may contribute more to the end outcome than others.

Finally, OUC makes its recommendations based on the best information available at the time of publication. Should materially new, different, or additional information be brought to OUC's attention post-publication, then OUC may, at its own discretion, incorporate the new information and ensuing recommendations, if any, in the next revision of the report.

On November 8th, 2007 the Niagara Divers Association and the OUC held a public meeting in St. Catharines, ON to present the facts (as they are currently known) regarding the accident and discuss the recommendations.

The Niagara Divers Association presented an overview of the accident site and a detailed overview of the Adam Beck Generating Station and OPG operations. The presentation also discussed the hazards of diving the Chippawa Creek related to natural and man-made factors which contribute to the changes of currents and levels in the creek.

The OUC presented a detailed overview of the accident, reviewing decisions and factors which likely contributed to the event. The OUC also presented the recommendations as found in this document.

The presentations included significantly more photos and images which could not be included in this document.

If an organized group is interested in these presentations, they are invited to contact the OUC at ouc.president@underwatercouncil.com or ouc.safety@underwatercouncil.com to discuss their request.



OUC Recommendation #1:

OUC recommends that you as a diver know the “points of no return” of your dive, and stay safely clear of them at all times.

OUC defines a “point of no return” as a place or time during your dive after which you have little or no opportunity to bail-out safely.

When considering **your** dives’ point/s of no return, don’t forget to take into account contributing environmental conditions (e.g. current) that could push you towards and past your point/s of no return faster than might normally be the case.

In this case, the point-of-no-return for these two divers was probably at Kings Bridge Park just before the break-wall before the intakes.

Examples of other points of no return include:

- 1) **man-made** and **natural hazards** such as:
 - a) hydro-electric generation facilities, sluice-ways, intakes, dams, and spillways
 - b) nuclear-electric generation facilities, sluice-ways, and intakes
 - c) municipal water intakes
 - d) operating locks
 - e) waterfalls
 - f) rapids
- 2) remaining air supply at depth
- 3) nitrogen exposure including narcosis and tissue saturation

OUC Recommendation #2:

OUC recommends that you as a diver use a Surface Marker Buoy (Scuba Diver Below flag) at all times when diving in waters known to be frequented by boat traffic.

Doing so helps:

- 1) Boaters to see you and avoid you
- 2) Separated buddy/ies reunite with you, or you with them
- 3) Dive Masters and /or onlookers see where you are and take appropriate measures if they see you heading towards danger.

In this case, use of a Surface Marker Buoy could have alerted observers and the public, that divers were approaching a potentially hazardous area and triggered preventive action.

OPG had observers in boats on the creek that day watching for people entering the water.



OUC Recommendation #3:

OUC recommends that you as a diver pre-plan your dive and dive your plan.

In particular, as ***just some of many*** parts of your pre-dive plan, you should review all potential hazards, clearly designate buddy teams, and review, and adhere to, the lost buddy procedure, e.g.: If buddies become separated during a dive, all members of the buddy team should search for their missing buddy/ies through two full 360 degree rotations, looking around, up, and down (to a maximum of 1 minute as recommended by training organizations). If the buddies cannot find each other in that time, all members of the buddy team should make a controlled ascent to the surface and reunite there.

In this incident, clear designation of buddy teams, as well as reviewing of and adherence to lost buddy procedures could have broken the chain of events resulting in these divers' deaths.

OUC Recommendation #4

OUC recommends you as a diver get an orientation from a local member of the scuba community (retailer, club, etc.) before diving in an unfamiliar area or in an area you haven't dived in for a while.

Also, if you are diving in an area you are familiar with, but see or feel something that doesn't line up with your prior experience, or lose your bearings, OUC recommends you surface safely to confirm that you are where you should be.

In this case, 4 of the 5 divers had dived the Chippawa route before, so perhaps a local orientation was not required but **the entry point was a significant change from the normal.**

The 2nd part of this recommendation, namely that of aborting the dive or surfacing if something doesn't line up with your prior experience, does relate.



OUC Recommendation #5:

OUC recommends that whenever Public Waterway Impacting Entities (PWIE) cause, or allow to be caused, by their actions, or lack of actions, **extraordinary changes** (1) to a public waterway, that those PWIE should give **prior and sustained notification** (2) to **ALL members of the public** (3) who could reasonably be assumed to be impacted by those changes as to the nature, duration, and consequences of those changes.

1. OUC defines **“extraordinary changes”** as changes that in their magnitude, scope, or nature go above and beyond the normal routine, such as in this case, where the PWIE’s actions had impacts which had likely hadn’t been seen in decades.
2. OUC recommends that **“prior and sustained notification”** include:
 - 2.1. Notification every day for at least a week prior, as to when and where the extraordinary changes are anticipated to occur.
 - 2.2. Identification of the nature of the anticipated changes e.g.: lower/higher/no water levels, faster/slower/reversed-direction current, etc.
 - 2.3. Identifying when the extraordinary changes are anticipated to start / finish.
 - 2.4. Identifying possible hazards caused by the changes e.g. increased risk of hitting rocks (low water), risk of boats ripping loose of permanent moorings (high water), risk of disorientation (reversing current flow), etc.
 - 2.5. Utilizing numerous different media, so as to maximize the numbers of impacted members of the public getting the message, including but not limited to:
 - 2.5.1. Signage
 - 2.5.2. Local Newspapers
 - 2.5.3. Radio
 - 2.5.4. Television
 - 2.5.5. Telephone
 - 2.5.6. E-mail
3. OUC defines **“ALL members of the public”** in this case as:
 - 3.1. Scuba Divers, Clubs, and Retailers (Ontario Underwater Council)
 - 3.2. Boaters / Sailors / Personal Watercraft operators
 - 3.3. Swimmers
 - 3.4. Waterway property owners / dwellers
 - 3.5. Marina Operators
 - 3.6. Other organizations (municipal waterworks, sewage control, etc.)



OUC Recommendation #6:

*OUC recommends that when areas are known to be **exceptionally hazardous to scuba divers** that the appropriate authorities clearly post signage **specific to scuba divers** in locations where **scuba divers** are likely to see them.*

For example, a sign posted **near a likely waterway entrance point** in the vicinity of an exceptional hazard to scuba divers would be **MUCH** more effective than a sign posted on a pedestrian overpass that merely said “No Swimming, No Diving”. Reason: Scuba Divers do not consider themselves to be “swimmers” per se, and the pedestrian overpass location of the sign would suggest to Scuba Divers that the sign was targeted at swimmers “Diving” into the water, not Scuba Divers scuba diving under the water.

OUC Recommendation #7:

OUC recommends that you as a diver know how to use your compass and use it as your preferred choice for underwater navigation.

Using current as a navigational indicator when diving in a river may not be reliable as current in rivers may change (slow down, speed up, stop, reverse direction, etc.) at many different times and places during the course of even a single dive.

In this incident, use of a compass could have alerted the two divers that they were as much as 90° off course.

Note:

- This location, if used as a dive site, has inherent hazards and should only be attempted by Advanced divers.
- The water flow - current direction, current speed and water levels are all subject to change at any time, without prior warning.
- Under no circumstances should divers be entering the water in the Niagara River or on the Niagara River side of the Weightman (Portage Road) bridge.
- Always contact a local dive store prior to diving this site to see if there are any known changes expected to the water flow in the Chippawa Creek / Welland River. This is no guarantee that the creek is safe for diving.
- The OUC provides its Ontario Scuba Community Directory on its website at www.underwatercouncil.com .



SECTION B: Near Misses - Summaries & Recommendations

Definition of a “Near Miss”

A “Near Miss” is any scuba-related situation or incident that did not result in a fatality, but that did put the diver/s health and/or safety at risk.

To report a near miss and submit it for consideration for publication in this report, please send an e-mail to ouc.safety@underwatercouncil.com with all relevant details.



Date of Incident: 2007-mm-dd

Summary:

TBD.

OUC Recommendations:

Recommendation 1

Recommendation 2



SECTION C: Appendices



Appendix #1

Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality of 2007-02-18:

A screenshot of a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window displaying a news article from Canada.com. The browser's address bar shows the URL "http://www.canada.com - Print Story - canada.com network - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The page content includes the Canada.com logo, the date "Monday » February 19 » 2007", and the headline "Kanata diver killed exploring wreck". The author is identified as Maria Kubacki, an Ottawa Citizen. The article text describes a diving accident on the St. Lawrence River near Rockport on Sunday, February 18, 2007. It mentions that a 58-year-old Kanata man and another experienced diver were exploring a shipwreck 240 metres off shore. The article details the equipment failure, the police investigation, and the search and rescue efforts by the OPP's underwater team. A "CLOSE WINDOW" button is visible at the bottom of the article content. The footer contains the copyright notice: "Copyright © 2007 CanWest Interactive, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publications, Inc. All rights reserved." The browser's status bar at the bottom shows "Done" and "Internet".



Ice diver, snowmobiler die in separate mishaps

By TRACEY TONG Staff Writer

ROCKPORT -- Two men died in separate accidents in the area Sunday.

A Kanata-area man died in an ice diving accident at a dive site in Rockport.

Police received the call at 11:53 a.m. from the ambulance, said Leeds County OPP Constable Stacey Cooper.

Cooper said two male divers from the Kanata area had been at a shipwreck dive site in Rockport.

The shipwreck, which is reached by a line 800 feet from the shore and 90 feet underwater, is a popular dive site, Cooper said.

The dive usually takes about 45 minutes, Cooper said.

"They did make it out to the ship, but there was a problem on their return," Cooper said.

"It's believed there was a problem with the regulator and the partner attempted to provide assistance with his backup regulator but was unsuccessful," Cooper said.

Another group of recreational divers from New Jersey was able to locate the body, but weren't able to successfully recover it, Cooper said.

"The diving partner attempted to bring the body back to shore but was unsuccessful as well."

Cooper said that the relationship between the two divers was not known, but the police report stated that the dive was a weekly event for the pair, Cooper said.

"We're not sure what happened, but the equipment will be inspected."

The OPP's Orillia-based underwater recovery unit was at the scene this morning, Cooper said.

She said police are not releasing the names of the divers until the body has been recovered.

<< clip >>

Published in Section A, page 1 in the Monday, February 19, 2007 edition of the Brockville Recorder & Times.

Posted 4:32:37 PM Monday, February 19, 2007.



http://ottsun.canoe.ca/News/BreakingNews/2007/02/19/pf-3645390.html - Microsoft Internet Explorer

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February 19, 2007

OTTAWA SUN **Police identify diving victim**
Monday, 1:30 p.m. Police recover Kanata man's body in St. Lawrence

By DONNA CASEY, Ottawa Sun

A 58-year-old Kanata man died Sunday in an ice diving accident on the St. Lawrence River near Rockport.

OPP underwater divers pulled the body of Melvin Douglas Smeaton from the frigid waters of the 1000 Islands, east of Gananoque, shortly after 1 p.m. today.

Smeaton, an experienced diver, became trapped under the ice shortly after noon Sunday while exploring a shipwreck with another Kanata man. The pair were diving about 27 metres below the ice surface and 240 metres from the shore, assisted by a guideline.

Smeaton ran into trouble with his air flow regulator when he was returning to shore. The other diver tried to help him with his own regulator but Smeaton was unconscious and unable to take air, said OPP Const. Dana Mellon.

A group of nearby divers from New Jersey located Smeaton under the ice but were not able to pull him to surface.

Internet



Rockport Accident 18 Feb 2007 - Page 6 - Ontario Diving - Microsoft Internet Explorer

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Address <http://ontariodiving.com/showthread.php?t=5488&page=6> Go

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robinfante
Nurse Shark
Join Date: Feb 2007
Location: boonton nj
Posts: 1

Hello folks. My name is Rob Infante, I was part of the dive team from New Jersey that located Doug and secured him until the OPP could recover him. I've spoken to Kevin personally, and briefly to his son Matt, but as a community I wanted to offer my deepest, most heartfelt condolences to you all. I never had the good fortune to meet Doug, but if a quarter of what I've heard and read is true than his passing is a staggering loss.

I'd prefer not to convey what I know of the incident itself, as it would be second hand info from Dan at Northern Tech Diver, and I'm sure Kevin will post when he feels up to it. For what its worth, I will post my own personal experience. A group of five of us from New Jersey were up for the weekend, and had dived in Rockport on Saturday. When we arrived Sunday I contacted the officer in charge of the scene to offer our services. They were understandably reluctant, but after two hours and some persuading by Jeff at Rockport Dive Center they informed us that they wouldn't sanction it, but they also wouldn't stop us. We suited up four divers, myself and Carl Bayer to do the search, Sunny Longordo and Stephan Francke to wait underwater by the end of the dock, and John Bayer as surface support. Based on the information relayed from Kevin, Carl and I went out to the rowboat, tied off a reel, and began a sweep downstream, looking up for Doug's silhouette and/or HID light. Just short of 400' out we found him on the surface, brought him down to depth, and clipped the reel to him. At that point we had been in the water about 45 minutes, and I was low on diluent for my rebreather, so we returned to brief the first responders and come up with a plan to bring him out. We went in again about 5 o'clock, but for number of reasons (leaking suit, failed primary light, failing daylight) we elected to secure him with a stronger line and then let the police dive team take over. They were already on the scene when we surfaced, and we gave them as thorough a briefing as we could.

Doug was in all our thoughts that night, and it was important to us to return this morning and get some closure. The Dive Team did a swift and professional job of locating and recovering him via holes on the surface. Hats off to all the first responders and rescue personnel there. Their consideration and gratitude were way out of proportion to what little we actually accomplished, but I'll always appreciate, for my own selfish feelings of helplessness, that they let us do what we could.

Looking around the board, you all seem like a nice bunch here. Please take care of Kevin, I know he's hurting bad.

Quote

Today, 11:24 PM #54

Chantelle Rob, thank you for posting, and thank you so much for your help. We are all here for Kevin, and thank you

Internet



Police identify diving victim

Monday, 2:45 p.m. Police recover Kanata man's body in St. Lawrence

By DONNA CASEY, Ottawa Sun

A respected hi-tech business leader died Sunday in an ice diving accident on the St. Lawrence River near Rockport. Dr. Doug Smeaton was pulled from the frigid waters of the 1000 Islands, east of Gananoque, shortly after 1 p.m. today by OPP divers.

Smeaton, the president and CEO OF Semiconductor Insights, became trapped under the ice shortly after noon Sunday while exploring a shipwreck with another Kanata man. The pair were diving about 27 metres below the ice surface and 240 metres from the shore, assisted by a guideline.

Smeaton ran into trouble with his air flow regulator when he was returning to shore. The other diver tried to help him with his own regulator but Smeaton was unconscious and unable to take air, said OPP Const. Dana Mellon.

A group of nearby divers from New Jersey located Smeaton under the ice but were not able to pull him to surface.

Smeaton, who served as a VP AT Mitel Semiconductor before taking the helm at the Mosaid-spinoff Semiconductor Insights in 1992, was a mentor to many, said Jenn Markey, VP of marketing at Semiconductor Insights.

"He was very generous with his time. He believed very strongly in people. He was almost a father figure, especially at our office in Kanata," Markey said.

"He was socially conscious and aware that a company was a lot more than numbers, it was the people that made them up," added Markey, recalling how after one profitable year, Smeaton paid for a weekend in Montebello for 140 employees and their spouses.

Markey said Smeaton, who is married and has three grown sons, was an experienced diver who practiced his sport around the world, including Australia's Great Barrier Reef and the Sea of Japan.

Managers at Semiconductor Insights's Kanata office gathered the company's 140 staffers in the cafeteria yesterday morning to relay the news of Smeaton's death.



<http://www.cbc.ca/money/story/2007/02/19/dive-death.html>

Ottawa tech CEO dies in diving accident

Last Updated: Monday, February 19, 2007 | 4:09 PM ET

[CBC News](#)

Police divers pulled the body of an Ottawa technology executive from the St. Lawrence River Monday, a day after he died in a diving accident.

The body of Melvin Douglas Smeaton, 57, was recovered around 1 p.m. ET near Rockport, 50 kilometres east of Kingston, Ontario Provincial Police said.



*Doug Smeaton was president and CEO of Semiconductor Insights.
(Semiconductor Insights)*

Smeaton, an experienced diver from the Kanata area of Ottawa, began having equipment problems around 11:50 a.m. Sunday while exploring a shipwreck about 30 metres below the surface and 240 metres from shore.

His diving partner tried to give him a regulator, but he lost consciousness, police said, and other divers in the area were unable to get him to the surface.

Smeaton was the president and CEO of Ottawa-based Semiconductor Insights.

The company's vice-president of marketing, Jenn Markey, said Smeaton loved diving and trained in a pool for two hours daily during his lunchtime break.

"That's part of what's makes this such a shock — 'cause he was so healthy," she said.

She added that she once asked him to explain why he loved being underwater.

"He said when you're down there, your head is completely clear; you're forced to focus. And that's really what he enjoyed the most about it."

Markey said Smeaton was a boss who made sure everyone in the company felt included as part of the team.

"He cared genuinely for his people, for his employees. He was almost like a father figure," she said, recalling that Smeaton took the entire company and their spouses to Quebec's Montebello resort about a year ago as a reward for the company's strong performance that year.

Markey said Smeaton is survived by a wife and three grown sons.



Semiconductor Insights, which employs around 160 people around the world but mainly in Ottawa, provides analysis and advice to businesses in the microelectronics industry. One focus of the company is patents and intellectual property.

According to the company's website, it has taken part "in virtually every major semiconductor licensing campaign since the company's inception in 1989." It lists Infineon, Intel, TSMC, and Texas Instruments as some of its past clients.

Double-click on the article below to see the entire article.

Print Story - canada.com network



Tuesday » February
20 » 2007

Leader in Ottawa's tech community dies in St. Lawrence diving accident
Semiconductor Insights president Smeaton guided company through tough times

Neco Cockburn, with files from Maria Kubacki
The Ottawa Citizen

Tuesday, February 20, 2007

Doug Smeaton always pushed himself.

As president and chief executive of Semiconductor Insights, the "very, very bright man" steered his company through tough times in Ottawa's tech sector.

As a father and husband, he lunched with his three sons, Paul, Matthew and Kurt, and took cruises with his wife of 38 years, Marg.

And as a diving enthusiast, he got in shape -- running, lifting weights and swimming. He went diving at least once a week, even in winter.

Mr. Smeaton was on one of those weekly dive trips Sunday, when his equipment apparently failed in the St. Lawrence River near Rockport. His body was recovered yesterday.

The 57-year-old was a highly-experienced and skilled diver who had completed dives across the world, including Australia's Great Barrier Reef.



CREDIT: Darcy Cheek, The Canadian Press

Members of the OPP Underwater Search and Recovery Unit cut a hole in the ice on the St. Lawrence River yesterday just off the Rockport waterfront as they try to find the body of Melvin Douglas Smeaton. Mr. Smeaton drowned after an equipment malfunction during a dive on a wreck Sunday. His body was recovered at around 1 p.m.



Appendix #2

Public Domain Information on Scuba (Incident and) Fatality of 2007-05-04:

THE TRIBUNE

MAKING A DIFFERENCE...DAILY

Printed from www.wellandtribune.ca web site Monday, May 07, 2007 - © 2007 Welland Tribune

Mishap leaves Grimsby diver in coma

Tribune Staff

Saturday, May 05, 2007 - 09:00

Local News - GRIMSBY

A scuba diving mishap Friday afternoon has landed a 44-year-old Grimsby male in hospital, where he remains in critical condition.

His name has not been released by Niagara Regional Police.

The diver ran into trouble just before 4:30 p.m.

Emergency crews responded to the Elizabeth Street pair off the Old Grimsby Pump House after a 911 call was made regarding a diver in distress.

Police said two boaters who had been fishing on Lake Ontario were able to rescue the man and bring him to shore.

The diver was airlifted to Hamilton General Hospital.

Acting Det. Sgt. Dan Nadeau said Saturday morning the diver remained in a coma in critical condition.

Police are continuing their investigation but do not suspect foul play.

ID- 517075

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The Standard

Printed from www.stcatharinesstandard.ca web site Monday, May 07, 2007 - © 2007 St. Catharines Standard

'I reeled him in like a fish'; Boater recalls bringing unconscious scuba diver to the surface with anchor

MONIQUE BEECH

Monday, May 07, 2007 - 01:00

Local News - David Cadman spent the weekend nursing bruises and hoping the scuba diver he helped rescue from Lake Ontario Friday afternoon recovers.

The 44-year-old man, pulled from the lake near the old pump house at the base of Elizabeth Street in Grimsby, remained in critical condition at Hamilton General Hospital Sunday.

The Grimsby man's name was not released by police.

"I just want to know he's alright," said Cadman, 27, of Grimsby.

"I just hope he pulls through."

Cadman was returning from an afternoon fishing for salmon with friend Doug McKinnon of Smithville when they heard screams for help. They immediately turned Cadman's 17-foot boat around to find two male scuba divers. One was unconscious and was being held above water by his diving partner.

Cadman said they pulled the conscious man aboard before calling out to another boat nearby, which brought in Mike Van Leeuwen to help.

While Van Leeuwen and McKinnon helped the first exhausted diver, Cadman threw out the boat's anchor to try and hook the unconscious diver who had sunk to the bottom.

Tossing it out to the waves beyond the submerged man, who was about 3.6 metres underwater, Cadman hooked the anchor under the diver's arm and pulled him to the side of the boat.

"It was just a one in million shot," Cadman said.

"I reeled him in like a fish, basically."

Cadman said both he and McKinnon, a former co-worker, were exhausted Sunday from the rescue. Cadman's arms and legs were badly bruised.

But his thoughts were with the men he pulled from the water.

"I'd like to get both their names at some point, and see how they're doing."

Niagara Regional Police Insp. Bob Ciupa said police were still investigating Sunday what caused the man to sink to the bottom of the lake.

Foul play is not suspected, Ciupa said.

The man was an experienced diver, he said.

mbeech@stcatharinesstandard.ca

ID- 518107

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The Standard

Printed from www.stcatharinesstandard.ca web site Tuesday, May 15, 2007 - © 2007 St. Catharines Standard

Grimsby diver 'rescued a lot of people'

Standard Staff

Monday, May 14, 2007 - 01:00

Local News - Dale Metherall died doing what he loved.

The 44-year-old Grimsby man, who was an auxiliary member of the Grimsby Area Marine Rescue Unit, had to be rescued himself during a scuba dive May 4.

He had lost consciousness and was being held above water by his diving partner and friend, who called out for help.

Two women walking a dog about 4:30 p.m. heard the cry and stopped. They waved down two boats that steered toward the dock near the Grimsby Pumphouse.

The men in those boats pulled Metherall out of Lake Ontario and performed CPR until emergency crews arrived.

Metherall was airlifted to Hamilton General Hospital, where he died from his injuries Saturday.

The cause of death has not been released, but foul play is not suspected.

“He was only 44 years old and very alive,” said his wife, Joanne.

“We had a wonderful life. We have been married 19 years, together 26 and have two daughters.”

Metherall grew up in Hamilton, said his wife, who is from the Niagara area.

His favourite colour was yellow — the colour of his pickup truck — and he loved his two Dobermans, Cody and Cleo.

He was a very active and adventurous man, Joanne said.

“He didn’t just scuba dive, he wakeboarded, he cooked, he was a jack-of-all-trades,” Joanne said. “All the neighbours are grieving because he fixed everything for everyone.”



He also rescued people when they needed it as a member of the local marine rescue unit, which he joined 12 years ago.

Members of the unit, which relies heavily on fundraising and the skills of their members to purchase and maintain the vessels, are going to miss him very much, said leader Ralph Fitzgerald.

An electrician by trade, Metherall spent hours working on GAMRU 240, a custom-built red boat with a white stripe, Fitzgerald said.

“Dale was instrumental in getting that boat built,” he said. “That’s one thing, he did a lot of work on that boat.

“He was a valued and competent member and he’s going to be greatly missed.”

Metherall is survived by his wife and his daughters Shayla and Brooke.

A funeral service will be held Thursday in Grimsby.
ID- 528221

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METHERALL, Dale Cameron -

It is with great sadness we announce the passing of Dale Metherrall in his 45th year at Hamilton General Hospital on Saturday, May 12, 2007, the tragic result of a Scuba diving accident in Grimsby on May 4th. He leaves to mourn, his beloved wife Joanne (nee Vihar) Metherrall, Loving father of Shayla and Brooke, Cherished son of James and Margaret "Betty" Metherrall, Sadly missed by sister Brenda Fwing (Frank) and sister-in-law Olga Alibudic (Mena), Fondly remembered by nephews and niece Andrew and Laura Steins, Emil and Eric Alibudic, Predeceased by brother Steven James (1957). Dale was a longtime employee of Bell Canada/Nexacor. He was also a volunteer for G.A.M.R.U. (Grimsby Auxiliary Marine Rescue Unit) for many years. Dale was very active and thoroughly enjoyed outdoor sporting activities. Special thanks to the doctors and staff in ICL East for their expert care and support. Visitation at Stonerose Whitcomb Funeral Home, 11 Mountain Street, Grimsby (905-645-2755) from 3-5 and 7-9 p.m. on Wednesday, May 16, 2007. A Memorial Service will be held at St. John's Presbyterian Church, 13 Mountain Street, Grimsby on Thursday, May 17, 2007 at 1 p.m. In lieu of flowers, expressions of sympathy to a charity of your choice would be sincerely appreciated by the family.

www.smithoff.com



Appendix #3

Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality of 2007-05-28:

Brockville Recorder and Times; 2007 05 29

Quebec diver dies here

By NICK GARDINER

Staff Writer

A 53-year-old diver from St. Hilaire, Que., died Monday morning of undetermined causes while scuba diving near a wreck site east of Brockville.

Yves Thibault was diving in 90 feet of water on the St. Lawrence River with three friends just before 10 a.m. when he encountered difficulty, said Leeds County OPP Const. Stacey Cooper.

Cooper said Thibault was an experienced diver searching an unknown wreck in an area marked by buoys and with a guide-rope between the surface boat and the wreck.

She said police were alerted at 9:57 a.m. after one of his fellow-divers placed a distress call to the Coast Guard, which contacted the OPP.

"He was unconscious when he was transported by ambulance to Brockville General Hospital," said Cooper.

She said Thibault was pronounced dead at the hospital.

"It's unknown at this time if it was something medical or a problem with equipment," said Cooper.

"Until we have the report from the autopsy about noon today, we won't know the cause."

She said Thibault's body was transferred to Kingston General Hospital for a post-mortem scheduled for this morning.

Cooper couldn't place the exact location of the dive boat nor provide the name of the underwater wreck that Thibault and his friends were examining.

Dan Humble, owner of the Mallorytown-based Dive Tech Training Centre, said he learned of the fatality while conducting some banking business in Brockville on Monday.



"I heard about it, but I don't know any details," said Humble, who hopes the OPP will provide more information when it becomes clear what happened.

He said the dive appeared to be arranged by an independent group not associated with his business or others in the area.

"I understand it was a private boat from Quebec."

- **Published in Section A, page 1 in the Tuesday, May 29, 2007 edition of the Brockville Recorder & Times.**
- **Posted 4:30:56 PM Tuesday, May 29, 2007.**

Brockville Recorder and Times; 2007 05 30

Air embolism caused the death of Que. diver

By NICK GARDINER

Staff Writer

An air embolism from an undetermined source caused the death Monday morning of a St. Hilaire, Que. scuba diver on the St. Lawrence River opposite the grounds of the Brockville Mental Health Centre.

Lansdowne OPP Const. Stacey Cooper said an autopsy conducted Tuesday morning in Kingston determined the cause of death of Yves Thibault, an experienced diver who was with three friends searching the wreck Muskellunge when he went into distress shortly before 10 a.m.

"The preliminary autopsy result indicated an air embolism in the cranial artery would have been the cause of death," said Cooper.

She said the cause of the embolism remains under investigation and the OPP search and recovery team from Orillia will arrive this weekend to examine Thibault's equipment to see if it malfunctioned.

Thibault was diving in 90 feet of water in clear conditions and his fellow divers indicated there had been no difficulties maintaining communications or attempting the dive despite a strong current in the area, she said.

"It's unknown at this point whether there was an equipment failure or some other cause."



When Thibault encountered difficulties, his friends contacted authorities. He was unconscious when he was transferred by ambulance to Brockville General Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

His body was transferred to Kingston General Hospital where the autopsy was performed Tuesday morning.

An air embolism occurs when air gets trapped in the bloodstream. It normally occurs when a diver ascends too fast and air expands in the lungs.

A similar occurrence caused the death of a Scarborough-area diver on Thanksgiving Monday three years ago.

A series of tests including microscopic examination of the victim's tissue, a toxicology report and an equipment inspection are conducted over several months to determine the cause of the embolism.

- **Published in Section A, page 3 in the Wednesday, May 30, 2007 edition of the Brockville Recorder & Times.**
- **Posted 4:30:56 PM Wednesday, May 30, 2007.**



Appendix #4

Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality of 2007-09-18:

Mississauga local news, search and information - Print Article - Mississauga.com - Microsoft Internet Explorer

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Address D:\Ontario Underwater Council\Incident Reports\2007\Chippewa\Mississauga local news 2.htm Go

Google Go 34 blocked Check AutoLink AutoFill Settings

Links HP cloak surfing Diving Brd EI Reporting 8112 eMessenger eSnipe LinkedIn OLCG Winners OUC PADI Member RBC - Online Banking

The News Mississauga logo, featuring a Native American figure in a red headdress.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Missing diver's body found

2007-09-21 11:44:49.000

The body of a Lakeview high school teacher who had been missing since Sunday morning has been found near a power generating station in Niagara Falls.

Niagara Regional Police said two bodies were discovered around 1 a.m. today at the Sir Adam Beck hydro generating station. Police say they are the bodies of missing divers, who disappeared during a recreational scuba diving expedition in the Welland River with a group of fellow divers on Sunday.

Michael Ford was an Etobicoke resident who ran the business and social sciences department at Gordon Graydon Memorial high school on Ogden Ave.

The other body belonged to Brampton resident Perry Clelland.

The two were part of a group of five divers who entered the water Sunday at around 9 a.m., but became separated from the group by the strong currents generated from a nearby Ontario Power Generation (OPG) plant.

For most of this week, Niagara police divers searched for the bodies with help from the Erie County, N.Y.'s sheriff's department, which supplied a helicopter to assist in the search.

rosella@mississauga.net



NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE
68 CHURCH STREET
ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, CANADA, L2R 3C6
TELEPHONE (905) 688-4111 FAX (905) 685-5081

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR RELEASE:	<u>September 21, 2007</u> DATE	<u>Immediate</u> TIME	<u>Long</u> DISTRIBUTION
PREPARED:	<u>September 21, 2007</u> DATE	<u>1000 hrs</u> TIME	<u>Niagara Falls</u> LOCATION

*** Update #5 *** Bodies of the Missing Divers have been recovered

Search Operation Underway For Two Missing Divers

At 9:30 a.m. on September 16th, 2007 the Niagara Regional Police Service responded with the Niagara Parks Police and the Niagara Falls Fire Department to the Kings Bridge Park area of the Niagara River for a diver in need of assistance. The diver had initially been part of a 5-person recreational dive group that entered into the water near the mouth of the Welland River at the Niagara River.

This diver was rescued at the diversion tunnels near the intersection of the Welland River and Niagara River. Two other divers had exited the water on their own power near the Weightman Bridge and were located by emergency personnel a short time later. The two others were unaccounted for.

The Niagara Regional Police Service Underwater Search and Recovery Unit and the Niagara Regional Police Service Marine Unit, assisted by the Niagara Falls Fire Department, Chippawa Volunteer Fire Department, Ontario Power Generation and the Erie County Sherrifs Office, undertook an extensive search effort. Search efforts in the Welland River near Kingsbridge Park in Chippawa as of September 16th, 2007 yielded negative results.

*****UPDATE*****

Shortly after 1:00 a.m. on Friday September 21, 2007 the Niagara Regional Police Service was notified by the Sir Adam Beck Power Generating Plant located at 14000 Niagara Parkway that the body of an adult, outfitted in a scuba diving suit was visible near a hydro intake.

Police were notified of the discovery and attended the area.

PREPARED BY:	<u>Sal Basilone</u> NAME	<u>Cst. 9004</u> RANK & FILE NO.	<u>Public Affairs Unit</u> UNIT
AUTHORIZED BY:	<u>James McCaffery</u> NAME	<u>D/S/Sgt.</u> RANK & FILE NO.	<u>2 District</u> UNIT



The Standard

St. Catharines Standard (ON)

Local, Wednesday, September 19, 2007, p. A6

Search continues for missing divers

ALISON LANGLEY
Osprey News Network

Anxious family members watched and waited Tuesday as police divers continued to search for two missing scuba divers in the muddy waters of the Welland River.

Comforting each other, the group stood on the bridge that spans the intake area where the Niagara and Welland rivers join near Kingsbridge Park. They waited for word of the two missing divers who entered the water Sunday morning near the boat ramp at Sodom Road.

The Niagara Regional Police dive unit searched the area for much of the day, Tuesday, but their efforts were unsuccessful. The two men are presumed dead.

Police have not released their names to the media. The Toronto Star on Tuesday reported the missing men are husbands and fathers from the Toronto area. That report identified one of the divers as Michael Ford, a Toronto-area high school teacher.

By mid-afternoon Tuesday, police launched a service supply operation where an officer walks along the riverbed with the aid of an airline and ropes operated by two officers on shore.

At times, visibility was zero in the 10-metre-deep water, said Sgt. Gord Nash, a member of the dive unit.

On the opposite side of the water control structure, officers aboard a police boat used sonar to feel along the bottom because conditions were too hazardous for a diver.

Nash expected to return to the water today, adding the search is now officially a recovery operation.

"We're playing it day by day. It all depends on the water conditions and the availability of divers," he said late Tuesday afternoon.

Questions remain as to how the two experienced divers became separated from their five-person group.

Matt Mandziuk, manager of Dan's Dive Shop Inc. in St. Catharines, said the Welland River is a popular spot for recreational divers.

"It's a very basic, easy, fun, safe dive that we take our new divers to," he said.

He often takes graduates of his diving school to the river because "it's one of the great dives we have around this area."

Employees with Ontario Power Generation have assisted in the search.

According to police, the water current in the Welland River at the time of the incident was reversed because OPG was conducting an operation to look at erosion in the hydro canal.

It isn't known yet if the altered water flow played a role in the mishap.

OPG spokesman John Earl said the company had sent letters to residents living along the river and to nearby marinas informing them of the work that could affect the flow of the river.

"We had informed the community it had the potential to impact on current," he said.

Earl added there are warning signs prohibiting swimming posted throughout the area in question.



Raimund Krob, president of the Ontario Underwater Council, has been diving in the Niagara area for close to 15 years. He said the Welland River has always been an enjoyable place to dive.

"The current is not very fast and you can see sturgeon 12 feet long, and, if you're lucky, sometimes you can find old bottles," he said.

The only hazard Krob has experienced on the river is boat traffic.

The OUC promotes the sport of scuba diving in Ontario through safety, advocacy, self-governance and education. It also investigates scuba diving fatalities and injuries.

It works with the Coroner's Office in cases involving scuba diving issues.

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Document number:
news:20070919-XW-0021

NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE MEDIA RELEASE - CONTINUATION

2

Efforts to recover the body were undertaken by emergency and Hydro personnel. In an effort to expedite the recovery effort, water flow to the immediate area was lowered. Upon lowering the water flow, it became apparent that the body of a second person, also wearing a scuba diving suit was present.

Utilizing emergency equipment in the area, emergency personnel were able to recover the bodies of both adults.

Once recovered, the Coroners office examined the bodies and officially pronounced their deaths. Members of the Niagara Regional Police Service Forensic Services Unit were onscene and also conducted examinations of the deceased.

The bodies of the deceased have since been transported to the Hamilton Health Sciences – Hamilton General Hospital, where post-mortem examinations will be conducted. The post-mortem examinations are expected to be conducted today, at yet to be determined times.

The deceased have been positively identified as those of the two missing divers that have been the focus of search efforts since Sunday. The next of kin of both families have been notified of the recovery. The names of the deceased will not be released.

The Niagara Regional Police Service – 2 District Criminal Investigations Branch continues to investigate the matter, and encourages anyone with information to contact investigators at 905 688 4111 ext. 2200.

The Niagara Regional Police Service wishes to thank members of the Niagara Falls Fire Department, the Erie County Sheriff's Office and members of the Chippawa community for their assistance and offers of assistance regarding the matter.

-30-



St. Catharines Standard (ON)
Local, Wednesday, September 19, 2007, p. A6

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Document number: news-20070919-XW-0021

The following is a request by a friend of the family -

A fundraiser has been initiated to help support the children of the 2 divers. For more information please feel free to follow the link below.

The link is <http://www.michaelmattner.com/PerryAndMichael.html>



Appendix #5

Public Domain Information on Scuba Fatality of 2007-XX-XX: