

UASC Wreck Checker

News and Views of the Underwater Archaeological Society of Chicago

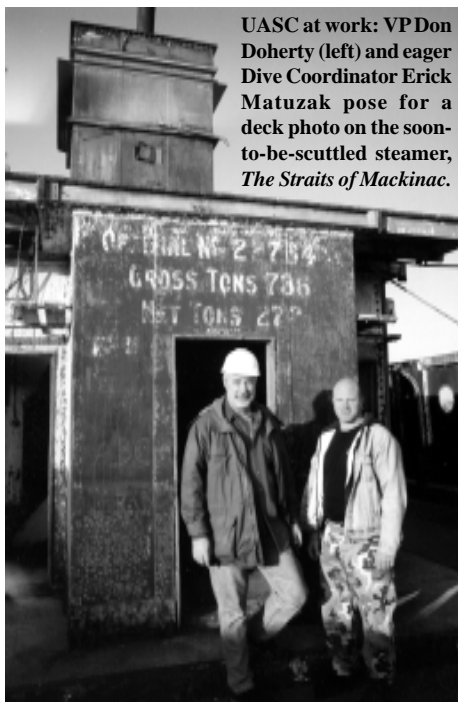
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Vol. 14, No. 1

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Recording a Pre-Wreck Shipwreck: *The Straits of Mackinac*



UASC at work: VP Don Doherty (left) and eager Dive Coordinator Erick Matuzak pose for a deck photo on the soon-to-be-scuttled steamer, *The Straits of Mackinac*.

The Straits of Mackinac, the retired ferry vessel on the verge of becoming Lake Michigan's newest shipwreck scuba dive site, has received much attention in her final years afloat, cleaned up by volunteer armies of scuba divers from Green Bay and Chicagoland, and most recently, measured, sketched, photographed and videotaped by UASC members.

Patrick Hammer of Our World--Underwater and Dave Wetherold of the Tim Early Foundation, two of the main forces, both financial and driving, behind the scuttling of this ship off Chicago, are determined that she will be on the bottom of Lake Michigan before the Our World--Underwater Show in late April.

"Wouldn't that make a GREAT opening sequence for the Show's Film Festival: *The Straits of Mackinac* sinking off Chicago!" Dave recently told this newsletter editor. Pat Hammer also made it clear that the longer the ship sits at the dock, the more of an expense she becomes. Bottom line: Be Prepared!



UASC President Chet Childs prepares to shoot videotape in the engine room of *The Straits of Mackinac* for an upcoming UASC production on this ship(wreck).

(PHOTOS BY CRIS KOHL)

Feb. 26th UASC Meeting: Special Early Mini-Seminar!

A free seminar entitled "Fitness for Diving and Divers (The Other Equipment Check-Up)" will be offered by UASC from 5:30 to 7 PM just prior to our regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, February 26, 2003. Two presenters are coming from Chicago's Swedish Covenant Hospital, **Matt Hickey, D.O.** (Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine) and a former Navy Seal, and **Claude Zanetti, M.D.**, Director of the Hyperbaric Unit there. Space is limited, so, whether you are a member of UASC or not, please make your reservation prior to the seminar by telephone (708) 636-3604 or fax (708) 636-5847 or e-mail: dkdoherty@chicagosite.org. **SEE YOU THERE!**

In This Issue:

- Pre-Shipwreck Survey & Video Work Pages 1, 2
- Chicago's 2002 Christmas Tree Ship Page 3
- Calendar of Upcoming Maritime Events Page 4
- Potpourri of Maritime/Great Lakes News Page 5
- Membership Information Page 6



Shedd Aquarium

UASC Meetings Left in 2003

Our meetings are held at the **Shedd Aquarium** just off Lakeshore Drive on the scenic Chicago waterfront on the last Wednesday of every month (unless otherwise noted), beginning at 7 PM at the northwest entrance (the Education side door facing Monroe Harbor) of the **Shedd**. There is no meeting in December.



Winter view of Chicago from the Shedd

(PHOTOS BY CRIS KOHL)



Tony Kiefer hard at work below deck on *The Straits of Mackinac* jotting various measurements he took onto his rough sketch of the ship's engine room.



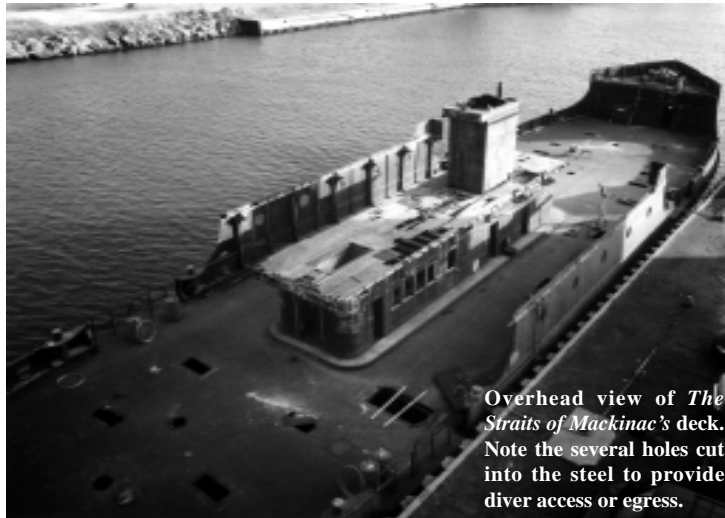
Counter tops and wooden cupboards and drawers remain in the galley.



UASC Past Presidents Tony Kiefer (left) and Don Doherty, 2003 VP, compare drawings of the ship's layout.

The old (launched in April, 1928) auto and passenger ferry, *The Straits of Mackinac*, hasn't had this much attention paid to her in about three decades!

Various members of the Underwater Archaeological society of Chicago (UASC) were busy in November, 2002, measuring, sketching, photographing and videotaping the vessel, tentatively to produce one or possibly two underwater slates in time for when this vessel becomes a dive site off Chicago, and later a video documentary. (ALL PHOTOS BY CRIS KOHL.)



Overhead view of *The Straits of Mackinac's* deck. Note the several holes cut into the steel to provide diver access or egress.



The old, black, iron stove in the galley cooked thousands of meals for the crew.

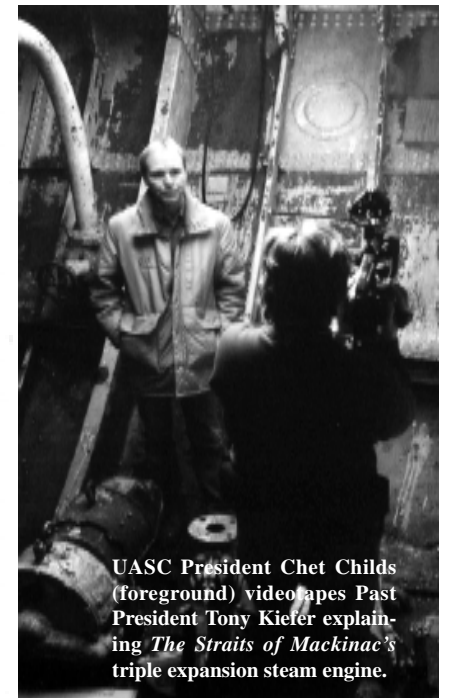
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UASC President Chet Childs (foreground) video apes Past President Tony Kiefer explaining *The Straits of Mackinac's* triple expansion steam engine.

UASC Thumbnail Info

Accomplishments!

New President **Chet Childs** reminded us of an article in *Illinois Archaeology* (Vol. 8, No. 1 & 2, 1996) called "Preserving the Shipwrecks of the Prairie State" by Thomas Emerson which details UASC's accomplishments in its relatively short life, including the publication of research/survey results such as those on the *Lady Elgin* (left) in 1993.

The *Lady Elgin*



A Report on the 1992 Reconnaissance Survey By the Underwater Archaeological Society of Chicago

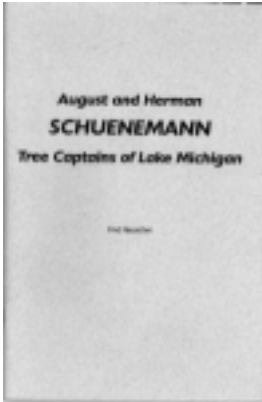
Presenters!

Claire and Bob Gadbois cuddle after their presentation of the UASC video "They Call Me Jack" (about World War II aircraft lost in Lake Michigan) at the annual "Shipwrecks and Scuba" Show in Sandusky, Ohio, on November 16, 2002. PHOTO BY CRIS KOHL.



More Presenters!

Fred Neuschel, author of the book *August and Herman Schuenemann, Tree Captains of Lake Michigan*, planned to be our January guest speaker, but a medical emergency involving his mother postponed it. (Member **Cris Kohl** substituted a presentation in the last moment). We wish Mr. Neuschel's mother well and hope that he can join us in the future.



"Thanks" to Don Doherty for this item from the *Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 7, 2002.



Crew members on the U.S. Coast Guard ship Mackinac get Christmas trees from Michigan ready for distribution to more than 200 needy families Saturday at Navy Pier. *Chicago Tribune, 12/7/02*

Mariner's holiday spirit sails on

In 1942, a ship with Christmas trees for the needy sank, but sailors keep the captain's work alive

By **Shirley Hagan**
Tribune Staff Reporter

It's been 61 years since Capt. Herman Schuenemann and the plucky House Simmons carrying thousands of Christmas trees perished in one of the worst Great Lakes storms.

Although the holiday seemed lost that year for the needy families who waited at the Chicago dock to pick up a tree, Schuenemann's spirit of giving continues on.

Chicago's maritime community brought 200 holiday trees to the city's downtown harbor Friday and will distribute them to needy families Saturday.

"It's a way to give back to the community," said Paul Rosenbush of the U.S. Coast Guard, which is taking part in the event.

The trees, which came from Michigan, will be handed out from the Coast Guard cutter Mackinac... just as Schuenemann would do from his ship nearly a century ago, Rosenbush said. The trees will go in the hands of Chicago-area charitable organizations, which will give them to families who otherwise can't afford one.

It is the third year that the Mackinac has sailed to Navy Pier to distribute trees, which are purchased with donations from members of the maritime community and other people.

The cutter, which will be open for tours Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Navy Pier, is considered the flagship of the Coast Guard.

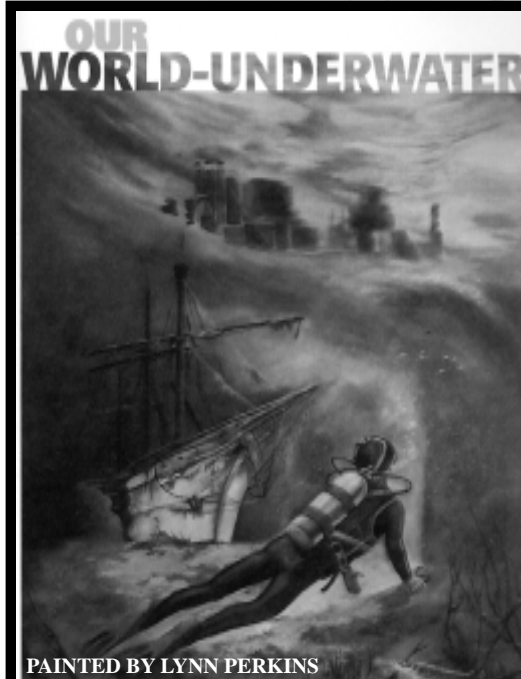
"It's a symbol of strength because it is the ship that came in the rescue of other ships on the Great Lakes," said Ned Doherty, president of the Chicago-based Boat Owners Association.

It is a far cry from Schuenemann's vessel. The House Simmons was built in 1861 and was unable to stay afloat in a territorial gale in November 1941. The 2,000 trees aboard hampered the journey from Manistiquic, Mich., to Chicago, maritime experts say. The trees landed in the dock, got soaked, then froze, weighing down the boat. It was 10 years before the ship was discovered, with the trees still attached, Rosenbush said.



Provider and Consumer

We again thank **Scott Reimer**, arguably the most important person in the Underwater Archaeological Society of Chicago, for so often providing snacks which verged on meals after our meetings. This photo shows Scott, center, preparing food outside the Shedd during a water's edge viewing of the weekly fireworks show at nearby Navy Pier last summer, while member **Keith Pearson**, left, sampled pizza toppings. PHOTO BY CRIS KOHL.



DON'T MISS THIS ANNUAL EVENT!

Join us on April 25-27, 2003 for the largest dive show in the Midwest/Great Lakes region; hundreds of exhibitors' booths, dozens of fascinating scuba presentations, many workshops, two evenings of film festivals, and much more!

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Calendar of Events



January 31-Feb. 1, 2003 (Fri.-Sat.)--The annual "Strictly Sail" show, Navy Pier, Chicago. Presentations, including by UASC members **Tom & Chris Kastle** and **Cris Kohl**. Contact 773-774-7216 or email: kastle@enteract.com.

February 8, 2003 (Sat.)--Winter Banquet of the **Neptune Nimrods** (the oldest scuba diving club in Wisconsin, established in 1958), Rock Garden Supper Club, Green Bay, WI. Keynote speakers: UASC members **Cris Kohl** and **Joan Forsberg**. Open to the public. Contact Tom Hurley at 920-434-7975, or at tuff714@hotmail.com.

February 22, 2003 (Sat.)--The usually annual "Great Lakes Shipwreck Festival," offered since 1978 by the Ford Seahorses Scuba Diving Club, at Ford Community and Performing Arts Center, Dearborn, MI. Presentations include "The Great Storm of 1913" by Ric Mixer, "Loss of the Schooner *Corsair*" by Tony Gramer, "The Sinking of the *W. C. Franz*" by Dave Trotter, and a **Lee Murdock** mini-concert. Check www.fordseahorses.org for more information. **UASC will have a booth there. Volunteers are needed!**

February 22, 2003 (Sat.)--The 4th annual "Dive Into The Past" Twin Cities Shipwreck-Scuba Show, Roseville, Minnesota, sponsored by the Great Lakes Shipwreck Preservation Society. Booths and speakers. See www.glsps.org.

February 26, 2003 (Wed.)--UASC monthly meeting at 7 PM, with a free pre-meeting mini-seminar from 5:30 to 7 PM on the topic of "Fitness for Diving and Divers" by doctors from Chicago's Swedish Covenant Hospital. See more information on page 1. Call (708) 636-3604 for reservations.

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February 28-March 2, 2003 (Fri.-Sun.)-- The **FIRST ANNUAL Chicago Maritime Festival** at the Chicago Historical Society, Clark St. at North Ave., Chicago, IL. Sat. Seminars, Workshops, and evening **MARITIME CONCERT**; presentations by UASC members **Tom & Chris Kastle**, **Cris Kohl**, **Chet Childs** and possibly others. Other presenters include David Nelson on "Remember the *Eastland*" and Ted Karamanski on "Schooner Passage." **If you live anywhere at all near Chicago, DON'T MISS THIS SHOW!!!** Contact 773-774-7216 for info, or see website: www.chicagomaritimefestival.org.

March 2, 2003 (Sat.)--The annual show of the **Ohio Skin & Scuba Diving Council**, held this year in Columbus, Ohio. Presenters include Jim & Pat Stayer, Joyce Hayward and Steve Lewis. Call 419-483-3074 for information.

March 5, 2003 (Wed.)--8 PM, **free lecture**: "Splendors of the Oldest Known Shipwreck (ca. 1300 BC) at Uluburun, Turkey" by Cemal Pulak (Texas A&M), Breasted Hall, Oriental Institute, U. of Chicago, 1155 E. 55th St., Chicago.

March 8, 2003 (Sat.)--**DAN Oxygen Provider Course**, U. of IL at Chicago, Eye & Ear Infirmary, Rm. 106, 1855 W. Taylor St., Chicago. Instructor: Jim Gentile. 8 AM--noon. Course materials: \$25/person. Minimum class size: 6.

March 8-9, 2003 (Sat.-Sun.)--The 49th annual **Boston Sea Rovers' Underwater Clinic**, Copley Plaza Hotel, Boston, MA. The "Longest Continuously Running Dive Show in the World." Exhibits, presentations, workshops and film show. Contact 203-856-3702 or 401-782-8408, or www.searovers.org.

March 15-16, 2003 (Sat. & Sun.)--The 4th annual "Ghost Ships Festival," Clarion Hotel, 5311 S. Howell Ave., Milwaukee, WI. Sat. 9 AM to 7 PM, Sun. 9 AM to noon. Hotel 414-481-2400 (ask for Ghost Ships discount). www.ghost-ships.org. Presenters will include UASC's **Larry Boucha**, **Bob Gadbois**, **Valerie Van Heest**, **Kimm Stabelfeldt** and **Cris Kohl**. Other presenters include Harry Zych, Jeff Gray, Brendon Bailod, Jim & Pat Stayer, Mike & Georgann Wachter, Joyce Hayward, Dennis Hale, Steve Radovan. \$20 in advance, \$25 at door. **UASC needs volunteers for its booth there!**

March 23, 2003 (Sat.)--The 8th annual Niagara Divers Association "Shipwrecks" Show at Welland, Ontario, Canada. Presenters include Jim & Pat Stayer, Bernie Chowdhury and Dave Trotter. Contact www.vaxxine.com/nda/

March 28-30, 2003 (Fri.-Sun.)-- The 27th annual "Beneath The Sea" New York City Show at the Meadowlands Exposition Center, Secaucus, NJ. Exhibits, workshops, seminars, evening film show. UASC members **Cris Kohl** and **Joan Forsberg** will present "Wreck Diving the Hawaiian Islands," "Crossroads of Disaster: The Straits of Mackinac Shipwrecks," and "Great Lakes! Great Wrecks!" See www.BeneathTheSea.Org.

April 5, 2003 (Sat.)--The 3rd annual "Great Lakes in Depth" show, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada. 9 AM to 5 PM. Speakers include Scarlett Janusas, Dr. D. Sawatzky, Andrew Hibbert, Kimberly Monk, and Jim Hopkins. Call 519-432-1727 for info, or see www.uhms-glc.ca/glid.

April 5, 2003 (Sat.)--The 11th annual "Wrecks (2003)" Show put on by the MetroWest Dive Club, Framingham, Massachusetts (just outside Boston). Speakers include Tom Mount, Kevin McMurray, and UASC member **Cris Kohl**. See www.mwdc.org.

April 12, 2003 (Sat.)--The 7th annual "Great Lakes Underwater" Show, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM, 106 Lanigan Hall, SUNY, Oswego, New York. For more information, call 315-343-7990 or visit www.oswegomaritime.org.

April 24, 2003 (Thurs.)--Presentation by UASC member **Cris Kohl**, "Tales of Great Lakes Shipwreck Pairs" at the West Chicago Public Library, 118 W. Washington St., West Chicago, IL. 7 PM. Contact 630-231-1552, ext. 4.

April 25-27, 2003 (Fri.-Sun.)--The 33rd annual "Our World--Underwater" show (the largest scuba show in the Midwest/Great Lakes area) at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont (Chicago), IL, tel: 847-696-2208. Exhibits, workshops, seminars, film festivals. Presenters to be determined. 250+ exhibitors. Over 12,000 anticipated attendance. Accommodations at the Hyatt-Regency O'Hare next door, tel. 847-696-1234 (ask for special Our World--Underwater rate). www.ourworldunderwater.org. **UASC will have a booth there. Volunteers are needed!**

November 8, 2003 (Sat.)--The 8th annual "Shipwrecks Remembered" Show, McMorran Auditorium, Port Huron, Michigan. Presentations, booths and displays. For more information, call 810-359-8660.

November 15, 2003 (Sat.) **tentative date** (alternate: November 22, 2003)--The 21st annual "Shipwrecks and Scuba" Show, Holiday Inn, Sandusky, Ohio. Presentations, seminars, booths and exhibits. Call 419-483-3074.

POTPOURRI

Great Lakes Book Collectors! There is one copy of an old book available called *New Discovery of a Vast Country in America Extending About Four Thousand Miles Between New France and New Mexico with a Description of the Great Lakes, Cataracts, Rivers, Plants, and Animals* by **Louis Hennepin**. Originally published in French, this first English edition was printed in London, England, in the year 1698. It includes the first published view of Niagara Falls. In 1679, Hennepin travelled with LaSalle on board the fabled *Griffon*, the first ship (and first shipwreck!) of the upper Great Lakes. He, like LaSalle, stayed in the Green Bay area before the *Griffon* was lost. Price of this book from a California rare book dealer: \$10,000.00. Contact me if you're interested. (I'll race you to it, Brendon!)



* * * * *

The city of Port Huron, Michigan, is seeking formal recognition as the "Maritime Capital of the Great Lakes." What have they got that Chicago hasn't got -- besides a maritime museum.

A flood of hostile e-mails has reached thousands of people regarding the removal of an anchor (some say two anchors) reportedly from a shipwreck named the *Maggie L.* in the St. Lawrence River off New York state. It seems that one of the people responsible for the anchor's removal is on the program to make a documentary-like presentation of its removal at the New York City scuba show called "Beneath The Sea" (BTS) on Saturday, March 29, 2003. He reportedly will be spreading the word about what a great place the St. Lawrence River is for treasure hunting. See www.northeastaquanauts.com. The National Geographic Society is allegedly named as taking part in this anchor incident, giving it an air of legitimacy. Marine conservation groups in the U.S.A. and Canada have called for a boycott of BTS. Members of marine conservation groups have also suggested that the other BTS presenters from the Great Lakes (**Dave Trotter, Jim & Pat Stayer, Cris Kohl**) boycott the show.

These presenters see no benefit towards a solution by boycotting BTS. They will continue their established efforts to educate divers as best as they can about the importance of leaving our freshwater wrecks, the best-preserved shipwrecks in the world, intact. However, it will be difficult. With some surprising Great Lakes court decisions made recently, no one can say with 100% certainty today that it is illegal to remove anything from a Great Lakes shipwreck.

It could still be a hot time in the Big Apple that weekend!
THANKS to **Joyce Hayward** and **Dave Trotter** for information on this controversy.



The annual Marine Mart at Harbor Hill Marina, Detroit (organized by that city's Dossin Great Lakes Museum) on Saturday, December 7, 2002, attracted UASC members **Liz Jurkacek, Jim Jarecki** and **Cris Kohl**. Jim bought an artistic color print of *The Straits of Mackinac*.



Detail of a brochure view of Lake Michigan from the top of the Hancock Building.

UASC member **Gene Hasiak** recently visited the top of Chicago's tallest structure, the **Hancock Building**, and he was pleasantly surprised to see in their brochure that they list several shipwrecks in Lake Michigan as part of the view to the east. Put away the sidescan sonars and magnetometers, boys and girls, and buy yourselves tickets to the top. We just found a new way to find shipwrecks!

* * * * *


Check out Great Lakes troubador **Lee Murdock's** schedule of performances at www.leemurdock.com or www.artistsofnote.com.

VP **Don Doherty** presented two UASC programs to members of the Great Lakes Yacht Club in Lake Bluff, IL. Good work, Don!


We wish member **John Loftus** a speedy recovery from his hip replacement operation. Hurry back!

In our last newsletter, we accidentally listed **Bob Gadbois** as presenting at the Dearborn Show instead of Ghost Ships. Sorry, Bob!


* * * * *





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Members cannot participate in dive activities if membership is not current.

UASC Wreck Checker

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MISSION STATEMENT — The Underwater Archaeological Society of Chicago (UASC) is a volunteer, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the study and preservation of Illinois' shipwrecks and other underwater cultural resources.

The UASC conducts shipwreck site surveys which employ field drawings, underwater photography and videotape. Field survey work is augmented by academic historical research. The Society attempts to preserve sites by

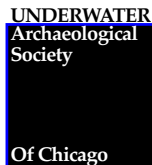
studying the effects of natural and biological forces as well as the impact of human activity on shipwrecks. It advocates responsible use of submerged cultural resources.

Membership is open to everyone. The Society presents the opportunity to meet, work together, and socialize with others who share similar avocational interests. It allows members to apply their diving or other skills to group projects that produce site maps, published surveys, technical drawings, and

educational programs.

The UASC shares the results of its work with the community through publications, museum exhibits, and presentations to all interested public and private groups.

Through its work, the Society hopes to add to the body of archaeological data available to local historians and maritime enthusiasts of future generations. It also seeks to enhance the enjoyment and value of local sport diving.



Underwater Archaeological Society of Chicago, P.O. Box 11752, Chicago, IL 60611