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THE LOOKOUT

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A Message From the Wheelhouse

Thanks for checking out Issue #14 of The Lookout, our annual newsletter covering wide ranging topics that are historical, technical, and of interest to our diving community in New England. This issue covers our 2021 diving season.

We'd like to thank all our customers and crew for your continued support and participation aboard Gauntlet. This year marks the 20th year for NADE and 17th for Gauntlet. It is hard to believe we have this many miles under our belt, especially considering we still have so much we want to do! In 2022, we hope that you'll join us on our adventures whether you are looking for training or just some great wreck diving off the coast of New England!

We hope you enjoy this issue of The Lookout!

Heather and Dave

A Glance Back and Full Steam Ahead

In March 2001, we formed Northern Atlantic Dive Expeditions, Inc and began building our dive business with a focus on dive charters, leading trips and training. Our vision was always to have our own platform, that being a dive boat suitable for technical diving, and a training and mentoring component to attract and build a network of capable divers that could collaborate and partner on shipwreck exploration projects. In 2004, we launched the Gauntlet along with our technical diving training programs through NAUI and TDI. 2021 marks our 20th year as NADE.

The technical diving landscape looked quite a bit different in 2001. Most of us were still diving air to technical diving depths or just switching over to trimix. Few of us were diving rebreathers. A certification card was far less important than a personal endorsement from a prominent dive boat captain. Networking did not rely on social media, but rather personal relationships and “paying your dues” coming up the ranks and proving you were capable. A lot has changed since then, most of it for the better. For one, there are many more women in technical diving, technology and quality of equipment has improved, and generally speaking training has become more accessible and fit-for-purpose. But there is still no substitute for mentoring and building community, that has not changed. And that is still at the core of NADE and what we aim to cultivate on the Gauntlet.

Our mission and core values have been at the center of NADE since our very beginning and are enduring: NADE is dedicated to shipwreck research, discovery and exploration in New England, as well as conservation of the ocean environment and our shipwrecks. NADE is committed to offering dive charters to facilitate sport diving in Massachusetts Bay and the Gulf of Maine; undertaking shipwreck research; pursuing shipwreck exploration and discovery and; training and mentoring skilled, knowledgeable and safe divers.

In 2021 we see a whole new generation of divers out there with divers coming into the sport at a time when technology, equipment and training has created possibilities to be doing extreme technical dives within a few short years that 20 years ago would have taken many years to have achieved. More than ever there is a need for mentoring and building community. There is still much exploration to do, and much of it will take place in deeper water and involve greater complexity in the execution. We're excited to continue fulfilling our mission and values, and seeking out adventure wherever it may be found. Onward!



Dave and Heather working the NADE booth in the early days.

The Value of 1-1 Training

Oftentimes progression through training involves taking a series of courses in sequence with small gaps in between. Divers move through recreational training through to Master Diver or Divemaster at breakneck speed, often without ever having solidified a foundation. The approach of “watch me do it, then you do it, requirement met” is unfortunately the sum total of mainstream recreational dive training. We have to accept that although there are better training options, they are often not easily accessible and this mainstream approach tends to be the path for most. It is generally when divers

seek to enter technical diving that they discover their foundational skills are absent or weak.



Coaching and 1-1 training is a great way to focus on specific areas for development and improvement.

There is also a perception that training is linear, there is a start and finish, and with the exception of “specialty” training, once finished and certifications received, there is not much left to do until a new piece of equipment or diving type becomes of interest. It is also the case that “traditional” diving configurations are seen more as optional, without a student necessarily understanding the implications of their choices. For example, side mount diving vs beginning in a back mount configuration or going straight from a recreational diving configuration to a rebreather. Again, we accept that this is the diving world in 2021.

So, where does this leave the diver who wishes to address gaps, improve overall foundational skills and refine their equipment configuration outside of formal training (which may be perceived as repetitive or too onerous a commitment)? The opportunity for direct, focused and impactful feedback lies in the 1-1 training setting. It is here where the exact needs of a diver can be identified and a plan to address those needs can be developed. This kind of training picks up wherever someone is at - it is not necessary to meet prerequisites or make changes to equipment (although that could be an outcome of the 1-1 training). The power of 1-1 training is that it can be what it needs to be without the pressure of a class and expectation around certification. It can be as few or as many sessions as required. The objectives of the training are client satisfaction through personal improvement.

In other sports, there is a coach. Whether this is the coach of a team or a personal coach for an individual athlete, the concept of coaching is center to achieving desired performance. Wouldn't it make sense then for high performing divers to have a coach? In this context coach and mentor do blend together, a coach can be a mentor, but a mentor isn't always a coach. Coaching is specific, there are desired outcomes, the feedback is actionable. Mentoring often focuses on experience building whereas coaching is about working on specific skills, techniques and approaches needed to maintain a high degree of performance or achieve that high degree of performance. Said another way, technical divers can benefit from coaching too - whether it is to break bad habits, dispel

complacency or help in a post-class setting with working on the fine points (i.e., rebreather buoyancy and skills).

NADE has developed a 1-1/coaching program that is tailored to individual needs. For those unsure of where to begin, we start with a foundations of diving curriculum intended to optimize or improve equipment configuration, focus in on buoyancy, trim, balance and stability, and finally propulsion. For technical divers looking for specific feedback, whether it is rebreather or technical-level skills, using a DPV or working out equipment adjustment, we take a custom approach. Finally, 1-1 training/coaching can also be used in a supplemental fashion to prepare for a class or to augment the class if there are specific areas that need more work than the class schedule allows. The key takeaway is that 1-1 training/coaching is flexible, private and intended to meet the client's needs.

Addition of the Gauntlet II

Gauntlet has proven to be a solid, effective dive platform for our near-coastal diving activities. However, moving the boat around is more complex logistically and expensive. In the past, we ran trips as far south as Point Judith, RI and as far north as Portland, ME. In some cases we remained at sea for the entirety of the voyage and in other cases we ran out of ports, berthing the boat in a temporary slip at a marina. While this can work well if a more substantial amount of time can be devoted to the trip, there are downsides which has always left us considering the utility of a smaller, more mobile dive boat.



Gauntlet II aka G2 getting ready for its maiden voyage for diving.

The logistical challenges with operating Gauntlet away from home port are fairly significant. For one, we have much more overhead with the cost of fuel both for repositioning the boat as well as purchasing fuel during the time we are running trips without discounts. Second, the total time involved is more substantial since the boat has to be moved round trip and we could face delays from weather issues. Finally, once on site unless prior arrangements are made we do not have a vehicle, and we have to sleep on the boat. While this sort of roughing it can make for an adventure, we have found ourselves less interested in making such a big lift for a few days of diving elsewhere.

Additionally, a smaller trailered vessel has the advantage of agility when scouting new targets. It can be more logistically feasible to launch at a point of land closer to our area of interest, have a shorter run to the area and do our recon quickly vs a longer, more complex effort to use Gauntlet. Once something promising gets identified, then there is more of a justification and rationale to bring the bigger boat into the picture.

In the spring of 2020, we purchased a Boston Whaler Guardian 22, which is a heavily built hull with commercial grade fiberglass laminate. This particular hull is often used in government and military applications. They are not always easy to find, so it was a score to find one locally in Gloucester.

The hull was in good shape but the motor was blown, so we took the hull and did some restoration installing new controls, a splash guard to keep water out of the hull near the transom, fabricated a bench for suiting up divers, and installed a heavy duty ladder for returning aboard. We also installed all new electronics including a Humminbird Solix unit, like the big boat has. Finally, we installed a 225 HP Honda outboard which gives a top speed of about 40 mph and a cruising speed of about 25 mph.

Bearing in mind the boat is not a large vessel, we optimized the set up to support 4 technical divers. There is plenty of room in the bow area of the boat with space to store stage/ bailout bottles. The scuba units themselves can be stored along the gunwale. Under the bench, 4 totes can be stored. Overall, we made efficient use of the space.



Gauntlet II in Lake Champlain, set up to support 4 technical divers.



Gauntlet II in Lake Champlain, two divers can comfortably suit up on a table bench with a sturdy ladder off the transom to re-board.

The Gauntlet II will enable us to explore areas beyond our immediate waters. We've already ventured into Lake Champlain with the boat. We have lots of other ideas whether they be a road trip to far away locations like the Great Lakes or expanding our footprint within New England.

The Gauntlet II will not operate on a charter schedule. The boat will largely be utilized for projects, training, and personal use during the spring-fall seasons. Gauntlet will continue to be our year-round dive boat, operating on a charter schedule and semi-private basis out of Beverly, MA.

For sure, with two boats the possibilities are endless and so are the bills!



Dave and Heather in a rare photo together at Ginnie Springs.

2021 Diving Highlights

2021 felt like the year to reclaim everything lost and given up in 2020. And while that did not include a large scale international trip, we did have some really nice diving opportunities that made 2021 a solid year.

Cave Country / Florida

While we were still in a “work from anywhere” paradigm we had the opportunity to “relocate” to the High Springs area for 3 weeks in late February. It was pretty cool purchasing a Ginnie Springs annual pass and paying for it within a few weeks diving there nearly every night after work!

We had the opportunity to return for another week in November. The overall conditions were better with more cave systems open. We did some great dives and even got a couple of photoshoots in. Spending over 4 weeks in cave country was a great way to build upon cave diving skills and currency. This is something we hope to continue to do, as work configurations allow.

Presque Isle, MI

This year we finally made it to Presque Isle, Michigan to dive the wrecks in what is now considered to be Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary as a result of its massive expansion. This was a trip we had intended to do in 2020 but needed to postpone. But in 2021 we made it happen. We got to dive all the signature wrecks in this particular area - the Florida, Typo, Norman, Spangler, Windiate, and Defiance. These are absolutely beautiful wrecks in pristine diving conditions. We did get blown out of a few days of diving thanks to catching a windy week, but we still had a great time and really enjoyed the dives. We definitely plan to return!



We ate a lot of mint chocolate chip ice cream in 2021—from High Springs, FL to Presque Isle, MI to Alexandria Bay, NY!

Alexandria Bay, NY and Lake Champlain, VT

We made our usual trips to Alexandria Bay this spring and fall. We did some fantastic diving which included a couple of great dives to the Jodrey stern section as well as shore dives to “beyond Bonnie Castle” which includes making some serious transits to a shoal area—definitely the coolest area from the shore based dives we’ve done.

We were a little less active in Lake Champlain this year primarily due to a very busy schedule overall. However we did take the Gauntlet II up there for dives to the La Valle tug and another coal vessel, the Sloop Island Canal Boat. And this fall, we checked out the OJ Walker shore dive scooter route from Burlington, VT. Needless to say there’s a lot of great diving to do in Lake Champlain and we hope to do more in 2022.

Explorers Club / NYC

In November 2021, we visited New York City for the first time in a good while to participate in the Explorers Club Sea Stories event. We first presented in 2010 prior to our joining the club.

This was the first large in-person public event at the clubhouse since the pandemic and it was a success. The presentations on revolutionary war shipwrecks, sperm whales, sharks and the Titanic were all fabulous. We discussed the Allentown discovery and identification project for our presentation. It was great to be back in NYC and engaging with other Explorers Club members and fellows. There is so much diversity in the membership, it makes for a great learning opportunity!



Explorers Club Sea Stories 2021 presenters.

Gauntlet News & Updates

Gauntlet will be in the water this winter and in our regular winter slip. We plan to resume charters in March 2022. In the meantime, check the website’s [Gauntlet Blog](#) for periodic updates, and if you have any questions about the upcoming season or would like to join our email list, drop us a note.

We are dealers for Light Monkey, Divesoft, and Dive Xtras! Let us know if you’re interested in any of these great products!

