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"How blithely might the bugle horn  
Chide, on the lake, the lingering morn!  
How sweet at eve, the lover's lute  
Oh me, when the groves were still and mute."  
—Lady of the Lake.

"Their vigils that shrouded e'er the vale,  
Have fled away like withered leaves  
Before the Autumn gale;  
But the memory liveth on your hills,  
Their baptism as your shores."—Stjourney.

VOLUME 13, NO. 44

THE WEIRS, LAKE WINNIPESAUKEE, N.H., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2004

COMPLIMENTARY



*Found in Melvin Bay, 67 Years Later. This is what Brad Swain saw in August when he found a car that sank in Melvin Bay in Lake Winnepesaukee in 1937.*

DIVE WINNIPESAUKEE PHOTO

# DIVER FINDS CAR WHICH SANK IN 1937 MELVIN BAY TRAGEDY

by Roger Amsden  
News Correspondent

MELVIN VILLAGE - A car which sank off from Haley's Point some 67 years ago was found this summer by scuba diver Brad Swain, who has been trying to find the car for more than a decade.

Swain, 60, is an IT specialist with United Health Care in Hartford, Conn., who has spent part of every summer since 1948 vacationing in Melvin Village, first at Lane's End and in more recent years at the end of Senter Cove, where his wife's family has had a vacation home since the 1950s.



*Hood ornament from the car found in Melvin Bay this summer.*

The Oldsmobile sank into the lake late in the afternoon of Feb. 26, 1937, claiming the life of the driver, 30-year-old Roy Thompson of Tuftonboro.

His passenger, Mary Sullivan, 20, of Melvin Village, narrowly escaped death and was rescued by nearby ice fishermen who used a long plank to reach her as she floated on a piece of ice.

An account of the tragedy which appeared in the Granite State News the following week said that the woman was rescued by Harold Sargent, who owned the bobhouse near the scene of the accident, and

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## - EDITORIAL - Bush Is Best for America and New Hampshire

by Robert Lawton  
Weirs Times Publisher



This Tuesday Americans will go to the polls in record numbers in what is perhaps the most important election in our lifetime.

Great issues are at stake, issues which will decide the future course of our nation for decades.

Will we persevere in the War on Terror? Or will we retreat into a denial of the importance of this struggle, leaving future generations more at risk?

Will we stand firm in Iraq and continue to pay the cost of confronting this nation's enemies in their own backyard? Or will we lose our nerve and miss out on the opportunity to establish a Middle Eastern counterweight to the anti-American and anti-democratic forces in that volatile part of the world?

Will we continue on the path of policies which promote greater economic freedom for our citizens? Or will we succumb to a siren song of

See **LAWTON** on page 4

— **VOTE!** —  
**Tuesday, November 2nd**  
Look on page 15 for our Belknap  
County voter's guide...



**CAR**, from page 1

Clifton and Arthur Smith.

The car was reported to have gone through the ice while on its way to a fishing house about a quarter of a mile from Haley's Point and sank in about 35 feet of water. (See centerfold map, Section A-5). A diver from Franklin whose last name was Tilton recovered Thompson's body about 20 feet from the car the day after the accident.

Investigators from the Carroll County Sheriff's Department said that the ice was 12 to 14 inches thick in the area of the accident, which left



*Diver Down overlooking the rear of the car.*



*Left Side Of Engine Compartment*



*Top of front windshield support with steering wheel sitting on it. Placed by diver.*

a large, gaping hole which measured 10 to 14 feet.

Thompson, who was a Tuf-tonboro school board member, had been employed as a gardener by Mrs. Amy Kling of Melvin Village, who reportedly owned a substantial property there.

A graduate of Fryeburg Academy who had attended the University of Maine, Thompson was survived by his father, Simon Thompson, and four sisters.

Swain said that he talked with relatives of the drowned man who told him that Thompson was a strong swimmer but was wearing a heavy

wool coat, which must have weighed him down and prevented him from reaching the surface.

"I got my diving certification because I wanted to find the car," said Swain, who said that he was always fascinated by the conversations of older family members about the car that went through the ice in Melvin Bay. But it wasn't until recent years that he got a better understanding of what had happened.

An avid swimmer and snorkeler, Swain used to spend a lot of time during the summer months with his friend Dave Hungerford

looking for lost anchors in Melvin Bay.

"We'd pull them out, scrape them down and then paint them and sell them," says Swain, recalling that Hungerford, who was four years older than him, once donned scuba gear in the early 1960s to search for the car.

Swain earned his scuba diving certification in 1981 in New Haven but it wasn't until 10 years later that he made his first attempt to find the car. And he tried several times thereafter in the Twin Islands area, but without success.

Hoping to better pinpoint the location, in 2002 he went to older people around to find more information about the incident.

"Del Haley told me that two people were in the car and one drowned. He knew where the gravesite was so I went there and found the Feb. 26, 1937 date of death on a tombstone," says Swain.

He then went to the Granite State News, which was in the process of moving and was unable to locate the 1937 archive. But he found the information he wanted on microfilm at the Wolfeboro Li-

See **CAR** on page 29

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**CAR**, from page 28  
brary.

He also checked with the Sheriff's Department to see if there was any sketch of the accident scene. There was no sketch but the report did contain a note that there were rocks in the area where the body was recovered.

Armed with this new knowledge, Swain dove on August 22 of this year with one of his daughters in the dive boat in water 35 feet off from Haley's Point. But he found only sand and muck, no car.

The next day, with his wife, Ann, on his diving boat, Haley tried a new location closer to Twin Islands, where he expected to find rocks in about 30 feet of water.

He found rocks but no car and with about 30 minutes of air left swung out closer to the point, making a U-shaped pattern.

"Suddenly I saw something dark looming in front of me, something with right angles. I came right up to the front of the car and was looking right at the radiator and headlights," said Swain.

"My heart started pounding. I realized I had discovered what I'd been looking for all these years," said Swain, who then surfaced to get visual marking locations before diving again and resurfacing in another area to get more visual markers.

He paddled back to the boat and told Ann what he'd found. But he said it in such a subdued manner that she wasn't at first convinced that he had.

"I found it. I can't believe it," he said, and she finally knew that he had, indeed, completed his quest.

Since that day Swain has made five more dives with three friends, including one with Tom Wachsmuth of Dive Winnepesaukee in Wolfeboro who took underwater photos.

He has also recovered the radiator medallion, as well as hubcap identifying the car as an Oldsmobile, and a red stop light from the rear of the car. He says that the car is a late 1920s or early 1930s model with spoke wheels.

His most recent dive was on October 9, with his old friend Dave Hungerford, who came over from his cabin in Maine to see the car that he had searched for himself about 40 years ago.

"It's been a real thrill, a great find," says Swain.

Melvin Village has always been a special place for Swain, who got his first-ever job there as maintenance worker at the Bald Peak Golf Club.

And it is even more special because that's where he met his wife-to-be when she was a waitress at the Village Restaurant on High Street.

"That was always the place



*A 1929 Oldsmobile similar to the one found in Melvin Bay by Swain.*



*Brad Swain holds recovered parts of the Oldsmobile, a hubcap, the hood ornament and a tail light.*

ROGER AMSDEN PHOTO

to go on Sundays," says Swain, who worked delivering milk for Brewster Dairy at the time and recalls he and Ann exchanging messages when he made his deliveries.

The Swains now spend just about every weekend from the first of May until late October at the Senter Lane home built by Ann's grandfather in 1962 and expanded by her parents in 1981.

They have three daughters, Kristin Upchurch, 30, of Raleigh, N.C., a senior media buyer and planner; Karin Lovering, 26, a realtor in Wolfeboro, and Kerri Swain, 25, a compensation analyst with Sun Life of Canada in Waltham, Mass.

Swain says he has an idea of what may have caused the car to go through the ice.

"An ice ridge usually forms between the islands and the point. There's a slight east-west current there that would have weakened the ice. It was late afternoon and he was driving west into the sun. He could have been blinded and not seen the ridge or the thin ice."

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