

# Lady of the Lake

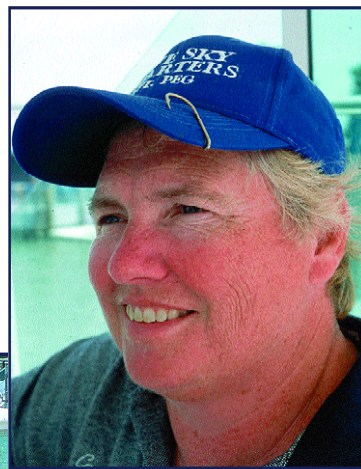
If you're of the opinion that it's still a man's world, you might not want to mention that to Peg Van Vleet. A Lake Erie sport-fishing charter boat captain for the past three years, Peg owns and operates her own boat — a new, 28-foot fiberglass Baha Cruiser named the *Blue Diamond*.

"I'm a third-generation Great Lakes angler," Peg said. "I grew up in Medway, (near Dayton), where I learned to fish from my father and grandfathers. My grandmother was a fish cutter for a market in Springfield, so I also learned to clean fish at a young age."

From the time Peg was a child, she remembers spending summers fishing at Lake Erie. "My parents and I would travel to Put-In-Bay and rent a cottage. At first, we had only a small fishing boat, but my parents eventually bought a larger boat where our family could all stay onboard. We then bought our own summer place, a mobile home on Catawba Island. All told, I've probably been fishing on Lake Erie for more than 40 years."

Peg continued, "I started fishing on my own in the late 1980s, after purchasing my first boat. My current boat is the third one I've owned. I enjoy being a charter captain because I love the water, I love to fish, and I enjoy sharing those experiences and the lake with others. I also like teaching people how to fish, especially kids."

As an example, Peg tells

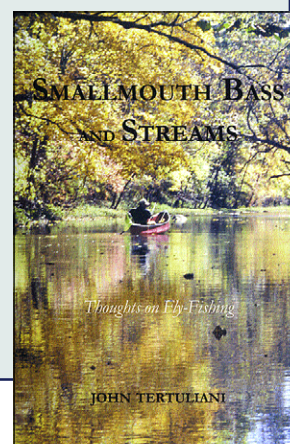


the story of a six-year-old boy, Caleb, who came aboard the *Blue Diamond* with his parents last summer. "I told his parents to just relax and enjoy the day, and that I would work with Caleb. Well, he not only caught the first fish of the day — a walleye — but he later hooked a huge catfish. That catfish did a big figure eight in the water at the side of the boat and tangled four other people's lines. We landed the fish, but afterwards had to cut all the lines and re-tie lures, as it was all too much of a mess to try and untangle. But that's just part of fishing, and the bottom line is the family got a good laugh out of it, enjoyed a great time on the water, and at the end of the day had made a memory."

Captain Peg runs an average of two to three charter fishing trips per week, as her schedule allows. "I own Van Vleet Facility Management, and my real job is as an independent project construction manager. I represent the owner of a facility who is constructing or renovating a building by interacting with architects, general contractors and subcontractors. I also own two other ventures — a small commercial housekeeping business and a handcrafted candle making business. I guess you could say that I'm an entrepreneur, and I believe that it takes that same kind of mentality to be a good charter skipper. My ultimate goal when I 'retire' is to have a charter boat here on Lake Erie in the

### Smallmouth Bass and Streams: Thoughts on Fly-Fishing

Even an experienced smallmouth angler will learn a thing or two from John Tertuliani's new book, *Smallmouth Bass and Streams: Thoughts on Fly-Fishing*. A professional fisheries biologist as well as a fisherman, the author both entertains and informs while taking you along on his many trips wading and drifting Ohio streams. The book is available on Amazon.com or, for autographed copies, contact Tertuliani at Lotic Books, P.O. Box 453, Hilliard, OH 43026. (\$19.95, 136 pages, softcover)



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summer and a second boat down South somewhere in the winter, possibly South Carolina or Florida."

Van Vleet does not think that her being a woman has hurt her charter business. In fact, it may help. "Being a female captain, I believe I draw more women anglers as clients. There are a lot of women who fish, but they don't necessarily want to go out with a male captain. I've even had women come fishing with their husbands who would not have gone if it were just all guys onboard. I think the guys like it, too, because they may get treated a little better by me. I instruct my first mates — who are both men, by the way — to make sure that all our clients enjoy themselves, have fun, and, of course, catch fish."

Captain Peg also knows well how dangerous Lake Erie can be and that things can get ugly in a hurry. Safety is always first on her mind, and she is haunted by the fact that her grandfather almost drowned in a boating accident on the lake, Peg's father jumping into the water at the last moment to save him.

"It's from hearing that story time and again as I was growing up that I developed a great respect for Lake Erie. For example, if there is a small-craft advisory on the lake on any particular day, I'm not going to take my clients out and risk their safety or beat up my boat and equipment just to catch a fish. The way I look at things, the fish will always be there tomorrow."

"But, all in all, charter fishing is a fun business," Van Vleet concluded. "Do you make a lot of money at it? In a word, no, but it keeps me on the water. And I figure that I'm going to be fishing every weekend anyhow, so why not share what I know and love with others?" o



Says Van Vleet: "I figure that I'm going to be fishing every weekend anyhow, so why not share what I know and love with others?"

Captain Peg Van Vleet can be contacted at *Blue Sky Charters* online at [blueskycharters.net](http://blueskycharters.net), by e-mail at [captainpeg@blueskycharters.net](mailto:captainpeg@blueskycharters.net), or by calling 937-414-6742 or 937-237-7252

### Lyman Boats: Legend of the Lakes

You may recall an article about Tom Koroknay (also known as Doc Lyman) and his one-man Lyman boat restoration business in the August 2003 issue of

*Country Living* (The Lyman Doctor, pages 40-41). Since then, Koroknay has poured his extensive knowledge of the history of Lyman boats into a beautiful coffee-table book, *Lyman Boats: Legend of the Lakes*. Illustrated with about 70 color and more than 120 black-and-white photos, the author has used his exclusive access to the original Lyman archives to tell the story of the Lyman family and their successful Ohio wooden boat-building business. To order an autographed copy, call 419-884-0222, send e-mail to [doclyman@lymanboat.com](mailto:doclyman@lymanboat.com), or write to

Koroknay's Marine Woodworking/Lyman Boats, 3718 Lindsey Road, Lexington, OH 44904. (\$34.95, 148 pages, hardcover)

