

Like a Local:

Captain Peg VanVleet Blue Sky Charters

S&IO: Tell us about Blue Sky Charters. Why did you choose to start a sport fishing business?

CAPTAIN PEG: We are a sport fishing charter business in Port Clinton, fishing the Western Basin of Lake Erie. We fish for walleye and yellow perch. We use light tackle, and drift fish for walleye, and anchor-down fish for perch. Blue Sky has been in business since 2011. I chose to start a sport-fishing business because I wanted to share my love of Lake Erie and fishing with others.

S&IO: Tell us about your family and crew. Who all is involved in making your business a success?

CAPTAIN PEG: I have a “son from another mother” who is a Captain, two of his children, who are also Captains, and two other kids that I consider grandchildren: one is a Captain and the other is my first mate. My spouse is our IT and admin staff. Mark Perkins, my “son,” runs the Charters on the weekends, and I run through the week.



S&IO: Tell us what it's like being a successful woman-owned business?

CAPTAIN PEG: Perhaps one of the greatest honors of my life was to be voted Captain of the Year in 2016 by the Lake Erie Charter Boat Association. There are 750 charter Captains in the state of Ohio, and there are only 15 female Captains registered in the state. In this “man’s world,” nothing says respect like the respect of your peers.

I'd always worked in a man's world and had learned that “respect is respect” regardless of gender. But what I learned being a woman in a man's game was that I bring a feminine angle to the table that was very attractive to families. I feel I'm always on the lookout for ways to teach kids more than just fishing. I'm able to catch the nuances of a kid's interest in say the navigation system, or the off-handed question, “how do fish have babies,” or “how can you tell a mommy fish from a daddy fish?” I take those questions to heart and make it my business to be prepared. It's tough to out-think what a kid might ask!



S&IO: Why fish Lake Erie?

CAPTAIN PEG: Lake Erie is the Walleye Capital of the World! Plus, I've been coming to Lake Erie fishing since I was about 5 years old, which makes this my 65th year. So, Lake Erie is home for me as much as Dayton, Ohio. I tell everyone that I've got lake water in my veins.



S&IO: What is the name of your boat and where did the name come from? What kind of boat is it and how many passengers are you able to take on a trip?

CAPTAIN PEG: Blue Diamond is the name of the boat. I named her that because the blue diamond is the most valuable gem in the world, and when I bought her, she was definitely the most valuable asset I'd ever owned! She is a 28-ft. Baha Cruiser Hardtop, powered by an 8.1 liter, 370 HP Mercruiser Engine. We are fully-insured and licensed for up to six paying anglers, plus a Captain and First Mate.

S&IO: Tell us about a typical charter excursion with you. What can your guests expect? What should guests plan to bring and what do you supply?

CAPTAIN PEG: Guests can expect to leave the dock no later than 6 am. The First Mate will help them unload their gear and get aboard. Next, they'll fill out the passenger manifest as Captain Peg prepares the boat to leave the dock. Then they head to a great fishing spot, but on the way be on the lookout for one of the best sunrises in the nation.

In route, the First Mate will give each angler a rod and show them how to bait and cast. The Captain will provide the countdown for the depth of the fish before reeling the line in. Then it's on!

The First Mate will net the fish; unhook the fish; measure the fish; and reset the equipment to return to fishing. Keep going until everyone has their limit or eight hours have passed.

Guests should plan to bring:

- Valid Ohio fishing license (for anyone 16 yrs. of age and older. Members of the U.S. Armed Forces on active duty, while on leave, or on furlough are not required to have a fishing license).
- Motion sickness medication – recommended starting this the night before your trip and again that morning.
- Dress appropriately for the weather, Lake Erie can change quickly and in the spring or fall it can be cold.
- Soft-soled (non-marring) shoes.
- Sunscreen, sunglasses, hat, jacket, rain gear.
- A way of taking a photo of your big catch!
- Food and beverages; one non-wheeled cooler per party. (No glass bottles or hard liquor, beer is okay. Please know your limit for safety's sake).
- Cooler to take your catch home.

S&IO: When is your season and how does the fishing change between spring, summer, and fall?

CAPTAIN PEG: My season is May 1 to Oct 1. Walleye are more plentiful in the late spring and early summer. As the water warms up, the fish become more lethargic making them harder to find and get them to bite. Late summer and early fall is when the yellow perch begin to school up, making “perch-jerking” a really fun time for kids of all ages.



S&IO: What is your favorite way to prepare and/or eat your catch?

CAPTAIN PEG: Fillet and debone the fish. Chunk it up. Lightly dry batter it, and deep fry until golden brown.

S&IO: What is your favorite thing about living and working in the Shores & Islands region?

CAPTAIN PEG: First and foremost, it's home to me even though I actually live in Dayton, Ohio. But there is so much to do and see! I've lived in the same campground for 30 years. So, I truly have a “Lake Erie” family.

S&IO: If you had friends visiting from out of town, where would you take them?

CAPTAIN PEG: Some not-to-be-missed spots include: Marblehead Lighthouse, Catawba Island State Park pier for sunsets, Cold Creek Trout Camp to feed the trout, Great Lakes Popcorn Co. to buy popcorn for the fish and friends, Catawba Point Preserve to watch the Miller Ferry going to and from Put-in-Bay, Toft Dairy, Brown's Dairy Dock, Mutach's Wine Room, Gideon Owen Wine Co., The Original Margaritaville, Firelands Winery, Ferguson Gallery, African Safari Wildlife Park, and Johnson's Island to pay respects to Civil War soldiers. We also love visiting Put-in-Bay and Kelleys Island with so many sights to see there!



S&IO: Perch or pizza? Where is your favorite place for either?

CAPTAIN PEG: I cannot choose! For pizza I would pick Cameo inside Mr. Ed's at Put-in-Bay and when I want someone else to prepare the perch, I go to Jolly Rogers, in Port Clinton.

S&IO: Lake or land? Would you prefer spending time on the water or by the shore?

CAPTAIN PEG: That's an unfair question! How can you pick? I have Lake Erie in my veins, so either is wonderful. But I do have to say that having dinner at Dock's Beach House is a pretty sweet place to watch the lake and sunsets.

S&IO: Anything else to add regarding how to enjoy the region “like a local?”

CAPTAIN PEG: My best advice is to experience ALL and become ingrained with the wonderful community of Port Clinton. It's my little “Mayberry” corner of the world.

Fishing Charters

Port Clinton

Blue Sky Charters

at Safe Harbor Lakefront Marina

1805 W. Lakeshore Dr. (SR 163)

937.414.6742

blueskycharters.net

Sport fishing for walleye and yellow perch on Lake Erie's western basin. Charters for up to six anglers. Great for families, executives, guys, and gals. All ages welcome. Open May-Oct 1.

boat



MOTEL & RV PARK

COMFORTABLE
ROOMS AT
SENSIBLE PRICES

Minutes from Downtown
Port Clinton, ferries, head boats,
restaurants & shopping

Motel rooms, RV sites, dockage

Clean, cozy and comfortable
1-, 2- and 3-bedroom
cottages available

April & October fishermen rates
Book now at thewhitecapsmotel.com!

(419) 734-3816
THEWHITECAPSMOTEL.COM



Nature at its finest. Seventeen acre garden estate. Rare and unusual plants, ancient dawn redwood grove, world-class bonsai display, water features, themed gardens, welcome center and gift shop. The Blair Museum of Lithophanes – largest collection in the world – displayed in the 1881 manor house.

19255 W. PORTAGE RIVER S. ROAD
ELMORE, OH 43416 • 419-862-3182
schedel-gardens.org