
AQUANEWS

www.rocklandaquanauts.org

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PROGRAMS

Beneath The Shallow Waters Of Florida Bay

By Peter Bein

It is warm again. Last week I went snorkeling in Florida Bay. That is the body of water on the right side of the road as you head southwest towards Key West. The water temperature is now 83 degrees in the shallow bay. No wet suit necessary. No decompression required. Not even a safety stop. Spend two hours down from eighth to twelve feet and see wonders.

I was out with my son Steven hunting Grouper in the bay. Warm sun and mild breezes ruled the day. We acquired some new GPS locations from some local divers and were eager to check them out.

The first wreck was scattered debris of a boat leaving behind an engine block and some housings that appeared to come from some above deck protrusions such as a storage locker or a cuddy cabin cover. All remaining parts were steel and although rusted, still solid and firmly imbedded in the rough rock bottom. To our surprise we found a small Jewfish, maybe 80 pounds, just an adolescent, filling the inside of the cuddy cabin. A fantastic find at any depth. but this was only twelve feet. The remainder of the wreckage was surrounded with Atlantic Spadefish, Bar Jacks, and many Snappers of various denominations. Steve bagged a Lobster and a Stone Crab.

We moved on to the second site which turned out to be the remains of a pontoon boat, which appeared to have been scuttled. This was obvious because there were more than 100 cinder blocks around the site. Again Atlantic Spadefish, Bar Jacks, Parrotfish and Snappers. Between the pontoons, which were connected by cross beams, a 450 to 500 pound Jewfish lay on the bottom in ten feet of water. This fish was over eight feet long and four feet wide. It just sat there and watched us as we dropped down to stare, surface for air, and drop down again and again. This proved to be an even greater discovery.

The last site was the remains of an airplane. An intact engine with a prop, fuselage debris, wings and a tail. Again the area was rich in wildlife and could be investigated at length with a snorkel at a depth of ten feet.

The viz was sixty feet and you may move about these wrecks without creating a blackout by stirring up the silt because there isn't any silt there. The bottom is rock hard flat coral with some rough sandy patches.

Just another way to pass the time in paradise on and under the water with or without a tank.

AQUANEWS

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JERRY GHERARDI

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 8, 2003

7:30-9:30 pm at the **Palisades Mall**

Level 4, East End

The Adler Community Room

West Nyack, NY

This month's general meeting will be Tuesday, April 8. We are pleased to have Craig Michaels as our speaker. Craig is the Education and Outreach coordinator for the Hudson Riverkeeper and will give us a presentation on the work of that organization to protect the quality of the Hudson River. For more information about the program, see the bio below or visit our web site at www.rocklandaquanauts.org

Directions:

The Palisades Mall is located on the New York Thruway (I87 and I287 at exit 12 - West Nyack, Route 303). You can't miss it.

The Adler Community Meeting Room is located on the 4th level (top floor) at the east end of the Mall, directly above Filene's. The Raso Room - and other meeting rooms - are in a hallway leading to the Ice Skating Rink (also above Filene's).

The best and easiest way to get into the mall is to drive into the underground parking area. Proceed to the east end of the parking garage to parking areas "M" or "N" near the "East Mall Entrance". Take the escalators in the East Mall Entrance all the way to level 4. When you come off the escalator, turn around and you are looking right at the Ice Rink. The Raso Room is on the left.

Hungry? You'll find just about every major restaurant chain - fast food joints and sit-down restaurants that will appeal to just about any pallet and mood - somewhere in the Mall. Join other Aquanauts at one of these restaurants or you can bring your dinner into the meeting room. But please plan to be at the meeting by 7:30. We must vacate the room at 9:30 sharp.

Got some good ideas for future programs or speakers? Please let us know what you would like to see at our meetings.

Craig Michaels Education and Outreach Coordinator Hudson Riverkeeper

Craig Michaels joined Riverkeeper in 2000 as the Assistant to the Executive Director where he worked closely with Alex Matthiessen on the campaign to force General Electric to remove toxic PCBs from the Hudson River. He was promoted to fill the newly created Education and Outreach Coordinator position in September 2001. Before joining Riverkeeper, Mr. Michaels worked for the Headwaters Sanctuary Project, an environmental non-profit formed to protect the world's last privately owned grove of ancient Redwoods, and as a Naturalist at the Mendocino Woodlands Residential Outdoor Science School, where he designed and taught lessons in Redwood, stream and coastal ecology. He also served as a Community Coordinator for the AmeriCorps Watershed Project where he managed the implementation of a watershed-based curriculum in a rural elementary school. Mr. Michaels has a B.S. in Environmental Policy and Behavior from the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment.

March Meeting

Kyle Swan

By Steve Improte

Kyle Swan – The “Adventures of Commercial Diving” was our Guest speaker and presenter from our March General Meeting. If you missed it, you missed a good one.

Kyle displayed some impressive slides and spoke about living and working as a commercial diver for an underwater pipeline corporation on a deep-sea barge. Kyle told stories of being at sea in the North Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico connecting pipelines to off shore drilling rigs and tanker pumping facilities. Living in compression chambers for up to 90 days with 5 other divers and working at depths in excess of 200 feet. Not only was the diving risky, Kyle experienced high seas, oil well fires, and high winds during his career. Oddly enough SCUBA was frowned upon and rarely used by the commercial diving operations for safety reasons, if you're connected to hoses from the barge or dive bell, they always know where to find you. This is the stuff you see in the movies and gave some of us the desire to want to become divers.

New Jersey Shipwreck Symposium

Time is running out to sign up for the New Jersey Shipwreck Symposium, April 26, 2003 from 2 pm until 6 pm at the Post Theater, Sandy Hook, New Jersey. Admission is \$15 per person; \$10 for NJHDA subscribing members. Seating is limited - reservations are required.

The program includes:

- A Film by F. Allan Vogel
- Dan Lieb - *Identifying the CECILIA M. DUNLAP*
- Donna L Blaszcak - *Visit to a few of New Jersey's Shipwrecks and their Residents*
- Peter Hess - *Wrecked Diving?: The Bureaucrats' Claims On Shipwrecks*
- Danny Crowell - *The U.S.S. MURPHY Project*

For information, directions and reservations call 732-776-6261 or e-mail NJHDA@aol.com

You may also mail a check or money order (\$15 per person) made payable to NJHDA, Inc.
107 Wilson Road
Neptune, NJ, 07753

Beneath the Sea 2003

A Celebration of Diving

By Dave Swope

Beneath the Sea 2003 just wrapped up. I hope you were able to be part of it. It was the biggest and best BTS yet.

The exhibit floor was packed with more booths than ever before. All the major manufacturers were there showing off their newest offerings. Dive destinations from northern New York to Southern Indian Ocean were there to provide us with a wide variety of dive opportunities. Dive apparel, dive jewelry, diving accessories of every description were for sale. What had been the non-profit “coffin corner” now included many of the local dive clubs, several nautical artists, and the New York Jets, Marvin Jones. No coffins to be found.

The seminars covered the gamut of diving interests. But there seemed to be a definite focus on shipwrecks, shipwreck diving and the continuing debate over shipwreck salvage. Most of the workshops sold out. Feedback that did come out of these clinics validated their worth to those who want in-depth education from the best teachers.

This was the second year of the “Meet the Fish and Famous” program, a benefit evening for the Ocean Pals “Sea of Tomorrow” project at the Westchester Medical Center Children’s Hospital. All of the this years’ celebrities and were there and available to meet the attendees. And the Saturday evening film festival was a complete success. There were no A-V snafu’s, no one was offended, most were highly entertained, and it only ran a half hour over.

Add in several parties, a VIP awards dinner, dealer receptions, book signings, photo and video awards, hundreds of raffle and door prizes, on-site diving in the PADI pool, and the opportunity to meet your diving friends. It was the place to be for one weekend in the spring. Now, let’s go diving.

Dues are Due

Collecting dues is one of the unfortunate necessities of club life. Since we don’t qualify for a federal grant, we need your dues, which were due January 1. The sooner the better. Only \$42 for a full year of Aquanauting. We are working on this year’s dive subsidy program and hope to make it attractive to more than the northern diver. All intended to give you value for your dues.

Please send your dues to Paul Galeazzi at the PO box noted on the cover of this newsletter. Or, better yet, bring a check or cash to the April 8 meeting.



Rockland Aquanauts
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Florida Bay Snokeling

BTS 2003

NJ Shipwreck Symposium

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West Nyack, NY

Craig Michaels

Hudson Riverkeeper