

# AQUANEWS

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## Holiday in the Key's

By, Peter Bein

The Holidays in the Keys are upbeat and exciting. There are parties everywhere every night.

Many residents and tourists gather at the local watering holes to celebrate.

Many are dislocated from their families but find companionship among friends. Sometimes it is sad, sometimes it is happy.

The Keys' diving since early summer has been uniquely unstable and erratic. The various hurricane attacks on our southern shores have played havoc with the diving and have left behind poor visibility, rough seas, cold winds and vacant laid-up dive boats.

I managed to squeeze in a dive with Divers City in Tavernier on December 19 to the US Coast Guard Cutters Bibb and Duane.

Both vessels were decommissioned in 1985 and donated to the Keys Association of Dive Boat Operators for use as artificial reefs and scuttled on November 27, 1987. Both lie in the waters off Molasses Reef in water from 120 FSW to 130 FSW on a sandy bottom.

The Duane alighted completely upright while the Bibb settled upon her starboard side about one half mile apart.

We were hot dropped up current first on the Bibb since it is a deeper site. The port gunnel is first encountered at 96 feet and everything else is deeper. It is surprising to find so little wildlife on this wreck but it has never been known for its' animals. There was encouragingly little current that day and I descended easily into the 77 degree water. I did some minor penetrations but did not drop down to the sand. If you penetrate the Bibb completely you will inevitable find yourself on the bottom below 130 FSW. Your penetration is straight down. I was saving my bottom time for the Duane.

We ascended to the dive boat Diversity and used our surface interval time to swap dive stories.

All of the other divers on the boat were New England divers and we were able to reminisce about diving Cape Ann, Maine, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire.

Again we were hot dropped on the stern buoy of the Duane and descended into the dense marine underwater life always in and around this wreck.

The Barracuda were thick, many sporting hook, line and sinkers dangling from their toothy jaws.

I entered the superstructure at the deck level of 100 FSW and cruised through the interior until I encounter a stairway leading upward toward the after part of the ship. On this higher level I was able to explore the interior, increase my bottom time, and enjoy a section of the Duane that I had never before seen or had seen and had forgotten, which is the same thing. The superstructure is virtually clogged with fish of all kinds. I spotted some huge beautiful Black Groupers.

I resumed my tour toward the bow and exited the superstructure through the portals of the wheel house. The viz was so clear that I could see the ascent line at the bow about 70 feet away. Letting the current carry me forward I grasped the bow ascent line and leisurely returned to the surface.

There was a third drift dive but since I was frozen I decided to spend the drift aboard Diversity snoozing in the warm sun.

It was a good day in December.

Most reports would conclude at this point but I have to tell the tale of the rescued abandoned baby manatee.

For about two weeks prior to this dive one of my Stirrup Key neighbors told me that a

*(Continued on page 2)*



East River to Generate Electricity?  
By Tom Incantalupo  
Newsday

A Virginia company won federal permission Wednesday to install six underwater turbines in the East River in a \$3.5 million experiment to generate electricity from tides.

The company, Verdant Power LLC, based in Arlington, eventually hopes to install as many as 300 turbines on the river bottom next to Roosevelt Island in a field a mile long and 270 feet wide.

It would be the first of its kind in the nation and generate electricity for about 8,000 homes.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission gave the privately held company permission for the six turbines without the lengthy approval process normally required for such facilities.

"We need to ensure that new ideas are fostered and not impeded by existing requirements," commission chairman Pat Wood III said in a statement announcing the decision.

Verdant still needs approvals from the state Department of Environmental Conservation and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the six turbines and further energy regulatory commission approval for any additional turbines. The state agency yesterday issued a request for public comments and will rule after the period for submissions ends May 16.

Katherine Kennedy, a senior attorney for the environmentalist Natural Resources Defense Council, said the technology has great potential for producing clean energy if it does not cause undue damage to marine life. "It's great to have a new technology in debate, and we have to see how it works," she said.

Verdant proposed the project in 2002 in response to a request from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority for ways to generate electricity that would be cleaner than burning fossil fuels, said authority spokeswoman Colleen Quinn.

Verdant tested a prototype system late that year and early in 2003, including a turbine deployed from a barge, on the east side of Roosevelt Island, at a cost of \$1.5 million, including \$500,000 in state funds.

Quinn said the first two of the six turbines could be installed in June, followed by a study on possible effects on nearby marine life, after which the additional four turbines would be placed in the river.

Quinn said the first six turbines would be tested for 18 months, with the electricity generated to power a supermarket and parking garage on Roosevelt Island.

The federal commission said similar projects are being considered for San Francisco Bay and off the coasts of Florida and Washington State. Bloomberg News said a Canadian plant built in 1984 uses the tides in the Bay of Fundy in Nova Scotia to generate power and tidal action is also used by plants in France and Russia.

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The Rockland Aquanauts Organization  
Presents

**“THE SUPER FLEA MARKET”**

We will be selling some of the Equipment Donated to our Organization  
ON

Sunday, February 19, 2006 from 9:00 Till 2:00 at the  
Toms River Intermediate School North (Formerly West)  
150 Intermediate North Way, Toms River, NJ

**YOU ASKED FOR BIGGER AND BETTER AND YOU GOT IT!!**  
**JOIN US AT THE BIGGEST AND THE BEST SCUBA FLEA MARKET IN NEW**  
**JERSEY!**

**DIVE-RELATED ITEMS!!!**

Food, Raffles and Door Prizes Admission is \$5.00 at the door.

Children under 12 yrs old Free 'with a Paid Adult!

For more information, see their website at; <http://www.oceanwreckdivers.com> .  
And then click on the Frequently Asked Questions link.

**Directions:**

From the North: Take Garden State Parkway to Exit.88 (Rt. 70). Take the ramp, toward Lakewood/Manchester/Lakehurst. Merge onto Rte. 70 West. Follow Route 70 to New Hampshire Ave. Take the jug handle to New Hampshire Ave. South. Cross over Rt. 70. Follow New Hampshire Ave. (which becomes Old Freehold Rd.) about 4.3 miles. Turn right onto Intermediate North Way.

From the South: Take Garden State Parkway to Exit 83 (Rte 9 N), toward Pleasant Plains/Lakewood. Merge onto Rte 9/Lakewood Rd. Turn right onto CR-571/Indian Head Rd (which becomes Bay Lea Ave/Bay Ave). After about 1/2 mile, turn left onto Intermediate North Way.

If you need to see a map of the area, go to their website  
<http://www.oceanwreckdivers.com>.

First ever prosecution for alleged underwater thieves  
Karl Schembri

The police have filed charges against six expert divers accusing them of stealing and destroying priceless underwater heritage from Maltese territorial waters, in the first ever case of marine heritage pilfering to end up in a Maltese court. The accused face a maximum six years imprisonment sentence and a fine of between Lm500 and Lm50,000. The case is expected to start being heard in January following months of wide-ranging investigations by the police Cultural Heritage Crimes Unit and the superintendence of cultural heritage, as revealed by MaltaToday last September when the first suspects were arrested following raids on private collectors and a scuba diving school.

The suspects, who include two foreigners, stand accused of looting heritage items from Malta's seabed, some of them dating back to the Roman period. They are also charged with holding illegal exploration for national heritage which would require a special license, illegally removing the discovered artifacts without a permit from the heritage authorities, failing to report their discoveries to the authorities, and damaging and destroying heritage items.

Their arrests earlier this year had sent shockwaves among the diving community used to "taking souvenirs" from deepwater wrecks, although the accused were notorious among divers for their unrestrained looting for business. The items seized by investigators that will be presented as evidence in court include ancient amphoras, cannonballs from the period of the Knights of St John, and priceless artefacts pilfered from a World War I shipwreck off St Thomas Bay - the 153-metre ship SS Polynésien known as one of the greatest shipwrecks in the world. Among diving circles, it is also known as "the plate ship" because of the impressive number of fine porcelain plates, brass lanterns, period decorations and furnishings buried on the wreck, together with, it is believed, priceless sealed champagne bottles dating back to the WWI period.

MaltaToday's coverage of the arrests had also triggered a petition to the culture minister signed by more than 500 bona fide scuba divers and concerned citizens, calling for an amnesty to collectors who present their underwater artefacts to the authorities.

"The aim of this petition is to protect the artefacts which over the past years have been salvaged from the seabed and now form part of private collections," the petition read. "The diving community is now aware that investigations are underway and there is the risk that some antiquities and artefacts may even be destroyed intentionally by their possessor in an effort to avoid being prosecuted."

The minister, Francis Zammit Dimech, however remained noncommittal when asked for his position.  
MediaToday Ltd, Vjal ir-Rihan, San Gwann SGN 02, Malta

**Annual Dinner  
2006**

**The Rockland Aquanauts are going to have their Annual Dinner on Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006. The Dinner will be held at Arthur's Tavern, 214 Kinderkamack Road, Emerson, New Jersey, 07630. Their phone number is 1-201-265-5180.**

**Appetizers will be served from 4:00 pm until 5:00 pm and dinner will be served from 5:00 pm until 8:00 pm. There will be door prizes and awards presented.**

**Don't forget to get your log books reviewed by Allan Block for bottom time awards. They must be sent to Allan before the first week in March. Contact Allan for more details at [allanblock@yahoo.com](mailto:allanblock@yahoo.com)**

**More details on the dinner coming soon, as the event is finalized.**

This is a **“Proposed”** Dive schedule  
For  
Hessian Lake, Lake Sebago, Lake Welch

**Hessian Lake**

Saturday June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2006 at 9:00 AM  
Sunday July 9<sup>th</sup> 2006 at 9:00 AM  
Saturday August 5<sup>th</sup> 2006 at 9:00 AM  
Sunday September 10<sup>th</sup> 2006 at 10:00 AM  
Saturday September 30<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM  
Sunday October 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM  
Saturday October 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM

**Lake Sebago**

Saturday June 24<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM  
Sunday July 23<sup>rd</sup> at 9:00 AM  
Saturday August 26<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM

**Lake Welch**

Sunday September 17<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM

As soon as the schedule is approved by the Park Commission an official list shall be posted

**Stingray Divers** has a couple of spots left to dive with the best-rated live-aboard, the Odyssey Adventures, to dive the “ghost fleet” of Truk Lagoon.

- \* Boat departs \* 9/10/06 \* to \* 9/17/06 \*
- Cost: Odyssey. Boat fee PACKAGE PRICE \$2,495.00
- Plus air fare Approximate Cost \$1200.00
- \* Airfare available thru (Continental Airline), fees, port \*
- \* All transfers included, plus one night stay at the Blue Lagoon Hotel \* (Double occupancy). \*
- \* Includes \* Odyssey Adventures (7 NIGHTS-double occupancy) \*
- \* 5 1/2 days diving (up to 5 dives per day) \*
- \* All meals (except final night), beer and wine include \*
- \* 30% Nitrox fills for Nitrox certified divers (no charge) \*
- \* Double tanks, dual isolation, DIN, 0/2 available \*
- \* Nitrox and Trimix courses available for additional fee \*
- \* Separate island airfare \*
- \* Excursion, available to Palau, Yap, Hawaii, Guam \*
- \* For just \$200 more) many other locations available \*
- \* Deposit: \* \$500 non-refundable \*
- \* Contact: \* <http://www.stingraydivers.com/>
- Phone 718-384-1280 Email us at : [info@stingraydivers.com](mailto:info@stingraydivers.com) \*Fax \* 718-302-0465

## **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE DUE**

### **Rockland Aquanauts Organization 2006 Dues**

I guess it is that time of the year again, Membership Dues are due. Last year all our members received much more than they gave out to the Organization.

As usual you will be receiving a tax donation for the first \$25.00. All members who attended the Annual Dinner not only received money off their own dinner but they also received money off their guest's dinner. Everyone whom attended also received prizes, some worth many times the cost of their Dues. Don't forget the Annual Picnic as well as all the BBQ lunches after the Lake Dives.

So please send in your \$42 dues today; to

Rockland Aquanauts Organization  
c/o  
Paul Galeazzi Jr.  
4 Greensward Drive.  
Valley Cottage New York  
10989



**Rockland Aquanauts  
Post Office Box 387  
New City, NY  
10956**

**January 2006**

**Holiday in the Key's, Super Flea Market, "Proposed" Dive Schedule, 2006 Dues, Annual Dinner**

**Happy New Year! Have a happy and safe 2006**

**February 2006 Meeting TBA**

**Don't Forget the Tom's River Flea Market on Sunday, February  
19 (details inside)**