

AQUANEWS

Volume 32, No. 11/12

November/December 2008



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Happy Holiday & Happy New Year

by, Paul Galeazzi Jr.

I want to wish everyone a joyous Holiday season and a Happy New Year. I am very sorry that there was no November newsletter and that December is so late. I guess none of you care anyway, because I didn't get one call or e-mail to see what was going on.

Well some of you know that I was on vacation most of November. I made my yearly trek to Truk Lagoon with a side trip to the Philippines. After completing 24 memorable dives I made it home at the first cold spell of the season. Talk about shock, when I left Manila it was 106 degrees and 20 hours later it was 26 degrees. Now that was really a shock to our systems. So we think that next year we are going to go back to September for our trip.

As usual we met up with a bunch of very interesting people everywhere we went. The most interesting of the bunch was a guy from Australia who was an oil exploration consultant. Then there was another guy who was a pilot trainer for air busses. He would take a month off every 3 months to dive. Now that is a GREAT JOB, at least having all that time off. Of course most of these people came from that side of the world so their trips were short compared to ours. Other than a group from Utah, we met no one from the States. I guess the additional cost of air travel is really putting a damper on such trips. Hopefully now that fuel is a little lower the rates will go down and more people can go back to traveling.

I must say after diving in Truk over the last 5 or so years, the shallower wrecks are

really starting to deteriorate. Of course they will be around for 100's of years more, but they are showing severe signs of deterioration. Then again the deeper wrecks are still pristine. We did much deeper penetrations of these wrecks than we have in previous years. So we were in areas that most people never see. There are no words to say how unbelievable these wrecks are. The dive shops are now catering to these groups of deep divers more than they ever have before. They are also now bringing Tri Mix to the Island, but at a real premium cost. There was a group from Germany that didn't care and they dove with Tri Mix every dive. Of course the exchange rate from Euro's was in their favor.

Our group dove with air with stage bottles and 100% O2 at 20 feet to finish our Deco. We also used some custom mixes like 23% O2 for some of the deep dives to increase our bottom times.

The Blue Lagoon Dive Resort really catered to all of our needs. And all their Dive Guides are very experienced divers that not only know where the wrecks are, but they know them inside and out. They refuse to use GPS devices because they are not as accurate as their dead reckoning from reference points. They are amazing because they never miss no matter what the weather is. And they will hook in on the wrecks where you want to be.

So until next year, which is only a few weeks away, have a great New Year and take some time to do what you want to do before it is too late.

AQUANEWS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION
OF THE ROCKLAND
AQUANAUTS ORGANIZATION.
WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS &
PHOTOGRAPHS ARE ALWAYS
WELCOMED & ENCOURAGED.
SUBMIT MATERIALS FOR
PUBLICATION BY THE 19TH OF
THE MONTH

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10th Annual Polar Plunge SuperBowl Sunday February 1, 2009 around 12pm at the Grassy Point Seawall Stony Point

Come take the Plunge or sponsor your favorite Seal. There will be Music, food, t-shirts and prizes.

Raffle prizes of:

1st \$5,000.00

2nd \$2,000.00

3rd \$1,000.00

Ticket available at:

- Babes Bar and Grill on Railroad Ave in West Haverstraw
 - Dee's Country Deli on 9w in Stony Point
 - The Bee's Nest Deli on 9W in Stony Point

This year's Polar Plunge will be for Lexi Manning and Danielle Swoboda. The funds will be used to help with mounting medical expenses.

<http://www.stonypointseals.com/>

Rockland Aquanauts Organization Inc.
Mission Statement:

To provide, promote, and advance environmental protection, care, and voluntary clean-up of waterways by any and all lawful means; to promote the importance and care in every manner possible by environmental awareness and otherwise; to purchase, print, publish, and circulate literature to promote the importance and care of the waterways and the work of the Corporation. To perform all acts the Corporation may deem appropriate or advisable in such operation; to establish, provide, and voluntary clean-up waterways, to encourage, support and subsidize the cleaning and protection from pollution.

THINGS THAT DIVERS SHOULD KNOW

Some Observations of Corals

By Lada Simek

Let me pose three questions or situations about corals that you may have observed but probably not questioned:

Why do corals come in different colors?

Why are the polyps on all sides of a coral colony the same size and health? (You would think that the polyps on the up current side of the colony would catch more food and be bigger or healthier).

How come you never see two colonies of different corals grow into each other?

The answer to the first question is simple. There is more than one type of “chlorophyll”-algae come in red, blue and green. It is the type of zooxanthellea that the host favors that give the polyps their color pigment.

Answer to the second question: The entire coral colony is coated with a slimy membrane called a **coenosarc**. If a lucky polyp manages to snag and digest a planktonic creature, that nitrogen (think protein!) is passed through the coenosarc and shared by the entire colony, no matter where the polyps are. In fact, the coenosarc is sticky enough to be fishing on its own and any catch is passed to the nearest polyp.

For the answer to the third question, consider a piece of white, dead coral from a beach. Where the polyps used to be is a radial arrangement of sections, much like that of an orange, called mesenteries. These hold filaments called **mesenterial filaments**, which are extendable to any food the polyp catches, pull it down into the gut and secrete digestive enzymes. These filaments can also be extended outside of the polyp, as much as four inches. If another species of coral threatens, the mesenterial filaments are waved about like spears or swords and the more aggressive coral stops the invading competitor. There is an actual pecking order among the corals. Here is a list, with the most dominant and aggressive on top:

- Large flower coral
- Tan brain coral
- Large cactus coral
- Boulder coral
- Elkhorn coral
- Sunray lettuce leaf coral

Mystery Ship Found in Lake Ontario

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (Dec. 13) - Two explorers conducting underwater surveys of Lake Ontario have uncovered an aquatic mystery — a rare 19th-century schooner sitting upright 500 feet under the waves.

Jim Kennard and Dan Scoville located the 55-foot long dagger-board ship unexpectedly this fall using deep scan sonar equipment off the lake's southern shore, west of Rochester.

The ship is the only dagger-board known to have been found in the Great Lakes. Kennard said vessels of this type were used for a short time in the early 1800s. The dagger-board was a wood panel that could be extended through the keel to improve the ship's stability. The dagger-boards could be raised when the schooner entered a shallow harbor, allowing the boat to load and unload cargo in locations that would not otherwise be accessible to larger ships.

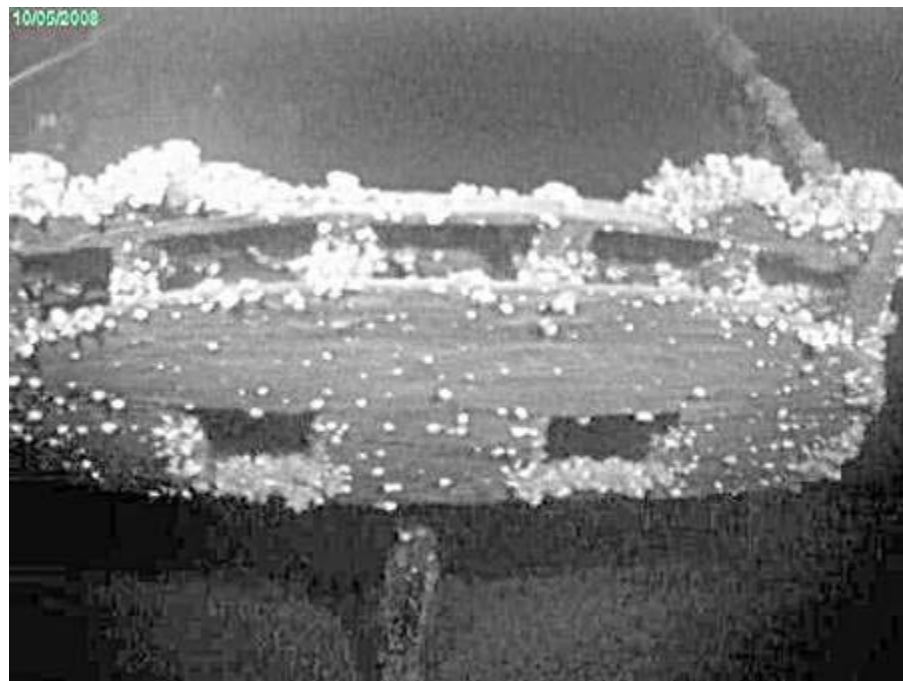
The shipwreck was found upright and in remarkable condition considering it had plunged more than 500 feet to its resting place on the bottom, the men said.

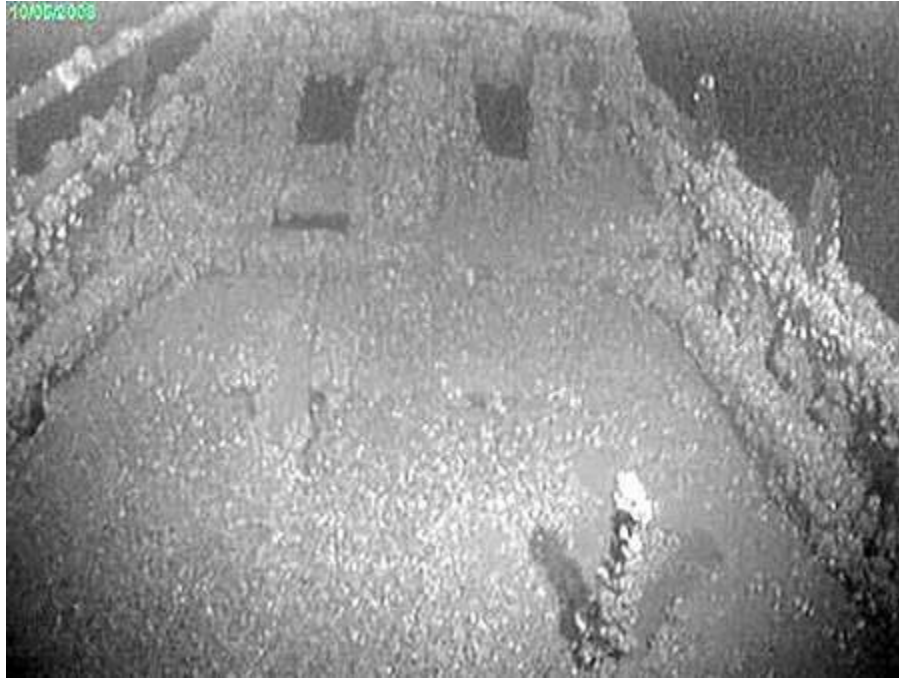
The schooner's origin is a mystery so far.

The name of the schooner is unknown and there are no documented accounts of a dagger-board schooner sinking in Lake Ontario.

The explorers suspect the schooner was being converted to a barge or other sailing craft by its owners and perhaps broke free from its moorings in the ice or during a violent storm and was carried far out on the lake before it eventually sank.

19th Century Ghost Ship





Explorers stumbled upon a rare 19th century dagger-board ship off the southern shore of Lake Ontario this fall, west of Rochester, N.Y. This underwater photo shows the bow of the ship, the only dagger-board known to have been found in the Great Lakes.

Proper Liveboard Hygiene

What can be more upsetting than to spend big money traveling halfway around the world, only to come up sick in the middle of a trip and have to miss dives? We get many reports from liveboard divers who note that their trip begins with one person sick and ends with nearly everyone, including the crew, with a cold or the flu. While most of us don't spend our days worrying about catching a bug, it pays to be cautious in the close quarters of a liveboard boat. In a warm, moist, tropical environment, where everyone is holding on to the same handrails and turning the same doorknobs, the chance that one sick patron will infect a host of others is quite high.

Although viruses require live hosts to multiply and spread, they can live on inanimate surfaces for up to two hours, giving them a convenient window of opportunity to be picked up by unsuspecting divers. Chlorine bleach is a good germ-buster, says Ernest Campbell, M.D., a blogger for ScubaDoc.com. "A quarter cup of regular laundry bleach in a gallon of cool water is an effective all-purpose disinfectant and can also kill common food pathogens like salmonella and E. coli." If hygiene is lacking on your liveboard, suggest the crew use that mixture. You can also carry a chlorine bleach solution in a spray bottle to wipe down railings and doorknobs as you go. Here are some other problem areas:

The mask-rinsing bucket. It's the perfect collecting and breeding environment for viruses. When everyone is rinsing their masks in the same bucket, they're not only sharing their crud but also collecting everyone else's. Avoid that by rinsing your mask in seawater. It's going to end up there anyway. If you do keep it in the dive deck's rinse buckets, Campbell says a small amount of chlorine bleach will reduce the bacteria count.

Cups of water. On many liveboards, water is handed out in cups that are simply rinsed, not sanitized, in a tub of water. And since all cups look alike, it's easy to confuse one person's cup with another's. To prevent cross contamination and relieve crew from having to distribute glasses and collect them for rinsing and refilling, some liveboards now give passengers their own water bottles, with names written on them. Bring your own bottle anyway, just in case you're on a liveboard that doesn't do this.

The dining room. Most liveboards don't have a sink or hand sanitizer station in the dining room. After contaminating their hands on handrails and doorknobs, guests in the dining room have no way of cleaning or sanitizing them, so it's unwashed hands passing dishes and eating their own food. Installing a sink is expensive, but hand-sanitizing liquid dispensers cost as little as \$10.

But the jury is split on the effectiveness of hand sanitizers. Popular ones like Purell and Germ-X contain about 60 percent ethyl alcohol, which strips away the skin's outer layer of oil, preventing bacteria present in the body from coming to the surface of the hand. Studies done at the Children's Hospital in Boston and Colorado State University found that alcohol-based sanitizers were better at reducing germs on human hands and reducing gastrointestinal illnesses. But a Purdue University study concluded that while alcohol-based hand sanitizers may kill more germs than plain soap and water, they are killing off the bacteria normally present in the body, not the kinds that make one sick. And another study by French researchers found that the chlorhexidine-based hand sanitizer Nanochlorex was better than Purell at reducing bacterial levels.

If hand sanitizer is on board, by all means use it. But don't make that the only way you clean your hands. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommends that hand sanitizers only be used as an adjunct to soap and water, not a replacement.

"Nothing has been conclusively found to be as effective as good old soap and hot water," says Campbell.

So while you may not wish to go through life like a hypochondriac with an unwarranted fear of germs, a few precautions in the close quarters of a liveboard -- or resort -- in the tropics could be good insurance against getting a bug that will knock you out of the water for a few days.

-- Kent Roorda and Vanessa Richardson

Rare Photo of Mexican Navy Seal
By; Les Parker



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE DUE

Rockland Aquanauts Organization
2009 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 guests 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 lunch's after the Lake Dives.

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

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

BBQ Help Needed

We have BBQs after every Hessian Lake dive, but next year, we don't want the chef tasks to fall on the same people all the time, so we are asking for your help. If you plan on coming to the Hessian Lake dives, please consider offering to set up, cook, or break down the BBQ gear.

Setting up might mean you set up before diving, get out of the water first, or forego diving that day. **Cooking** means you cook for everyone who shows up, not just yourself & your friends. **Breaking down the BBQ gear** means you stay until everyone has eaten and the grill is cool enough to put into your car to store until the next dive.

You don't have to be a Board Member to help. Everyone can pitch in. Any expenses, like buying food, are reimbursable. So please look at the dive dates and let us know when you can help out.

Thank you

Don't Forget to Visit EmbroidMe for your Rockland Aquanauts Apparel

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November/December 2008

Happy Holidays , Polar Plunge, Mystery Ship, Mexican Navy Seal, Membership Dues

****There Will be NO January Meeting ****