



# Neptunes Sounding Newsletter

## Calendar 2018

11/30 Deadline for artifact, largest lobster/fish, & photo of the year  
 12/2 Club Dive @clubhouse 9 AM  
 12/4 General Meeting/Nominations  
 12/9 Club Dive, @clubhouse 9 AM  
 12/11 Board Meeting  
 12/18 Elections—Angelo will be cooking—newsletter assembly

## 2019 Calendar

1/1/2019 Club Sober Up  
 Dive, Pleasure Bay  
 1/8 General Meeting: Discussion of  
 amendments to Club by-laws  
 regarding awards  
 1/15 Board Meeting  
 1/22 Diving NC Wrecks by Rob  
 Robison; newsletter assembly  
 1/26 Annual Banquet at Common  
 Market, Quincy

## ACTIVITIES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, & REMINDERS

- 11/30 Deadline for artifact, largest lobster/fish, & photo of the year. For rules and contest forms, go to: <<http://www.southshoreneptunes.org/membership.html>>
- Underwater Rugby Boston came in 1st in the mixed division for the 23rd NAL UWR tournament in Newark, New Jersey, the first of our 2018-19 season, in an unbelievable game against the Hammerheads that went to 6 rounds of penalty shots in overtime. Boston also took 2nd in the women's division, our first time bringing a full women's team. We lost the final game against the incredible Mako girls, who have worked SO hard for SO long to get to where they are and deserve so much respect and support. We will be cheering you all on at Champions Cup Boston and USA UWR family.



NEXT STOP for UR TEAM: BERLIN! ❤️ CHAMPIONS CUP!

As the current USA Underwater Rugby (UWR) National Champions, the Boston

Narwhals will be traveling to Berlin this November to represent USA in the co-ed division at the Champions Cup.

The Champions Cup is an annual, international UWR tournament hosted in Berlin, Germany. Only the national championship team from each country is invited to participate in the prestigious tournament. The Boston Narwhals have worked incredibly hard over the past several years to earn a spot to compete among the top teams from 15 other countries. Although USA teams have participated in Champions Cup in previous years, this is the first appearance for the Narwhals!

In addition to our physical conditioning and team training for this event, the Boston Narwhals are working hard not only to expand our local club, but also to raise awareness about our unique and amazing sport!

To this end, we are collaborating with the talented Zach Whalen of Whalen Underwater Productions to produce a full length film about Boston UWR, including the road to Champions Cup. We need to bring the production crew to Berlin with us so they can capture all of the action. The full film will cover the history of the sport and the team, with interviews and underwater footage.

We have set up this GoFundMe account to help our team cover the costs of the time, travel, equipment and production of bringing a film crew with us to Berlin.

Any donation in any amount is enormously appreciated! Thanks so much for your support! Here's the **link to their Go Fund Me Page:**

[https://nam03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gofundme.com%2Fboston-uw-rugby-film%26rcid%3Dr01-154153002926-490758f801c1402b%26pc%3Dot\\_co\\_campmgmt\\_w&data=02%7C01%7C%7C1e001a88ba914f1ff3b608d644fc42bc%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C636772247565826453&data=GX2Ffyf8l3FaP629gA9gY%2FNr%2FaZa4%2Bva1TgKxf4moE%3D&reserved=](https://nam03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gofundme.com%2Fboston-uw-rugby-film%26rcid%3Dr01-154153002926-490758f801c1402b%26pc%3Dot_co_campmgmt_w&data=02%7C01%7C%7C1e001a88ba914f1ff3b608d644fc42bc%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C636772247565826453&data=GX2Ffyf8l3FaP629gA9gY%2FNr%2FaZa4%2Bva1TgKxf4moE%3D&reserved=)

**\*Quincy Quarry and Granite Workers Museum** is seeking information on the Quincy Underwater Recovery Dive Team from the 50's through the present. The early dive team was headed by John Blackadar. He organized the dive team for underwater recovery of drowning and murder victims, some of whom may have been in the quarries. The early dive teams also used the quarries for practice dives including ice diving. The museum is looking for pictures, slides, 8 and 16 mm movies, and any written stories and materials related to the dive team. The museum will digitize materials and return originals to individuals. If you have material to contribute, please **email** Neptune board member Jay Theriault at [jtheriault@msn.com](mailto:jtheriault@msn.com). The museum is also interested in the Neptunes giving a presentation on scuba diving in the Quarries in conjunction with the Quincy Historical Society. If you would like to participate in the presentation, please let Jay know as well.

**\*DEADLINE For dues (\$35.00) and Elections Dec. 18!**

## OCTOBER /NOVEMBER DIVES

**Sunday Nov. 11. Back River Dive.** Doug Eaton and Chuck Zarba made a mid morning dive in the Back River searching for old bottles, crockery, and munitions type artifacts. Instead of the latter, Doug (pictured at right) brought home the bacon with bronze hatch. Dive depth: 20', water temp: 48°, vis:5', time:.; 47 min. "Great dive," they both exclaimed! (Ed.note:

*Special thanks to Doug E for the story & photo*)

**Tuesday, Oct. 23. Morton Park Pond** I made a 20-minute dive in Morton Pond (Plymouth) and for the first time here in New England saw freshwater jellyfish. FB viewer Charles Benoit said he had done... "A little research and found out that freshwater jellyfish are fairly common in most ponds and lakes in Massachusetts. In fact, fresh water jellies are found in all but 4 states in the US!...PS: Morton Pond also has a beautiful koi; bright orange with a white tail. It's about 18 to 20 in. long."

I also found a small school off bass fry, plus what at first seemed to be a





chocolate donut but upon inspection turned out to be an underwater unidentified "flying" object. Viewers online seemed to think it was a scrungy for girls' hair, an oar lock for an inflatable raft, a worn out prophylactic, a male enhancement ring, or something else. Maybe someone can tell me



definitively what it is.

Additionally, I photographed the standard Morton Pond icons for your viewing pleasure (See club FB page and Page 6 for more photos). Special thanks to Michael Gardner, a good dive buddy from church, who dive-mastered for me despite a bad cold. Vis 20-25', temp 52°, depth 20', dive time 20 min.(A quickie if there ever was one!)

**Dive of the USS Spiegel Grove Wreck (Late September),**

*By Robert Christian; photos from Wikipedia & Art to Media*

During a business trip to Miami last September, I had an opportunity to practice wreck diving skills on the USS Spiegel Grove. I've begun to accumulate experience via an SDI Wreck Certification obtained through East Coast Divers (under Aleksey Averin, a terrific instructor that I highly recommend) and a recent dive trip with other Neptunes to dive the Graveyard of the Atlantic through the Olympus dive center



(previously

shared in a newsletter article by Rob Robison).

The USS Spiegel Grove was a Thomson class landing ship for the US Navy. She was notably involved with goodwill exercises for various African nations during the 1960s as well as an evacuation exercise of American citizens from Cyprus in 1974 during the Turkish invasion. She was sunk as an artificial reef in May 2002. During the sinking the ship settled

too soon and rolled to her starboard side, forcing the workers to abandon ship and resulting in the wreck settling on its side. However, by pure chance, in July 2005, Hurricane Dennis shifted the ship to an almost perfect right-side up position.

Late September, as I learned, is not an ideal period to visit Miami for diving, as the winds pick up from the fall through March. I scheduled my dives at the end of my business trip, and of course had diving on my mind the entire time. But the 36 MPH gusts we were having were not favorable. Sure

enough, my dive to a local wreck in Miami was blown out, but given the charter scheduled the following day to the Spiegel Grove was out of Key Largo (which was experiencing slightly more favorable weather) I was hopeful. I had my fingers cross as I slept that night.

I arrived at the dive shop the next morning (South Beach Divers), surprisingly only one of two dive shops in Miami, and was relieved to hear that dive was a go. I was paired with a diver from Norway, a diver with about 5 years experience, but was new to wreck and deep diving. He was renting gear, I went through the pain of bringing my own on the plane (getting my carry on full of dive gear is a story for another day). For tanks, I asked for the biggest tanks they had available to rent, which ended up being an over-pressurized LP108 and LP95. Plenty! I filled with EAN 28 (MOD 132ft at 1.4 PO2, acceptable for the max depth of 133 ft).

The shop-provided transportation for the hour-long trip to the dock, which gave me some time to become acquainted with my Norwegian buddy. We found ourselves compatible with shared diving interests. We formulated a tentative dive plan based on a photo of the wreck we took at the shop shown below:



The maximum depth was expressed interest in maximum. While dive plans goal are inadvisable, I admit

133 ft, the Norwegian descending to the with depth as a primary that having previously that having previously dived to a max of 115 ft, I also wanted to descend to the maximum recreational dive depth. In addition, we agreed we would explore the main deck at about 80 ft and investigate possible opportunities for limited penetration for our second dive.

The charter was out of Rainbow Reef, based in Key Largo. The dive boat was large, able to accommodate 20+ divers, but given rough seas, only five customers were aboard. One was a resident of Philadelphia, who had hired a dive master. A visitor from Kuwait was paired with a resident of Toronto, and I, the Bostonian, paired with the Norwegian. Skies were clear, but winds were strong, gusting just under 30mph. But the seas were tolerable, 4-5ft every 10 seconds.

The trip to the wreck was short, 30 mins. While the dive masters tied into the wreck, we received a thorough briefing. We would be anchored to the bridge in the center of the ship. Our dive plan was to descend, kick to the bow, descend to the ocean floor, safely ascend, and kick back to the anchor line (exploring the main deck in the process). Once at the anchor line, if bottom time/air permitted, we would explore options for limited penetration during our second dive.

Seas became somewhat rough at the site with 8' rollers. The tag line to the anchor was rudimentary, not held down by weight, left floating from the stern to the anchor line. However, current was mild. The descent was uneventful, visibility excellent at 100+ ft. We exercised our dive plan well, noting the anchor of the ship settled to the ocean floor, various debris on the main deck, but otherwise well intact. At max depth of 133 ft the effects of narcosis were certainly profound, a feeling of euphoria, almost bliss. The "Martini Effect," indeed. We stayed at the ocean floor for less than a minute and began a safe slow ascent, no faster than our bubbles.

Upon return to the bow of the main deck, my buddy had already run through his first 1/3 of air, so we began our return to the anchor line. We explored the entry points of the upper and middle decks and completed a safe ascent. But I learned a valuable lesson during our safety stop. I tend to do the “hang loose” sign (a twisting “Y” hand shape symbol), which I had incorrectly assumed was a universal sign for “that was fun.” My buddy misinterpreted that sign as me saying to ascend, and proceeded to blow off his safety stop. Of course, we Neptunes know that even if a buddy is out of air, that the options are to offer an alternate, share air, or let your buddy go, never to blow off your safety stop, particularly after a deep dive. Fortunately, I was able to grab my buddy’s ankle before he got away, and we both completed a full safety stop.

Up top on the dive boat, my buddy and I clarified the hand signal and had a good laugh. We then proceeded to plan our second dive. We would penetrate through the upper deck, as we saw clear passage from port to starboard during our first dive. We would then make another descent to 133 ft. My buddy insisted, and I admit I also felt like having a few more martinis. We would then circle to an entry point at the middle deck aft, explore and if safe, perform a limited penetration. My buddy would also position himself above me close by, as to give him a bit more bottom time due to his air consumption on the first dive.

Our entry was rough, similar to the first dive, compounded by a new obstacle in that the tag line got stuck under the boat. Accordingly, we kicked to the anchor line without a line, which was relatively safe given the mild current. We completed a safe descent and executed our dive plan perfectly. After our passage through the upper deck and descent to 133 ft, we found ourselves performing an approximately 50ft.-penetration on my reel (within our certification of 130 feet, including depth and penetration and with multiple exit points visible at all times) to a large room with two bulky engines. On our exit through a hallway, we passed a chart room, where a previous diver had set-up a mock chart for aesthetics (far too new to be on the original chart). We exited the ship with just over half of our air remaining near the anchor line. We explored a crane next to the landing pad aft of the ship and completed a safe ascent, including a full safety stop without any confusing hand signals!

Up top on the dive boat, we exchanged high fives, some laughs, and got out of our dive gear. We cracked open some local beers and enjoyed a beautiful sunset on the ride back. It was a good dive!

**Labor Day Shark Dive:** Last month, I intended to fold Ken Hayes’ brief synopsis of the shark dive into **Rob Christian’s** fuller written account of the club shark dive experience, but erred and forgot. I promised Rob I would print his article in its entirety in this edition of “Sounding.” With humble apologies to Rob C and Sounding readers, here it is:

On Labor Day 9/3/2018 at 6AM, **Neptunes Chuck Zarba, Doug Eaton, Ken Hayes, Terry Hayes, Rob Christian, Rob Vice, Mark Zipeto, Paul Greene, David Burchill, John Pell, Garrett Kane, and Mary Largess** met at Galilee fishing village (port of the Block Island Ferry in Narragansett, RI) to embark upon a shark cage immersion dive with Snappa Charters, captained by Capt. Charlie Donilon. The Neptunes loaded their gear in a shark cage propped upright at the stern of the 46ft. fiberglass custom sport fishing boat and were on their way before 6:45AM. The captain plotted a course due SSE to a site approximately 25 miles from port and approximately 9 miles ESE of Block Island.

The seas were calm and the boat ride was uneventful, with plenty of scallop boats trolling in the area. Near the destination, the mate began chumming, supplemented with fish oil, to attract the feature apex predators. The Neptunes arrived at the site prompting the Captain to muster up a makeshift crew to lift the shark cage and a floating surface deck into the sea. At which point, the Neptunes began to suit up and the mate began to toss fish parts overboard.

Ken Hayes broke the ice jumping in with a snorkel to set-up on the floating deck. Other Neptunes

followed, some on SCUBA others with a snorkel. About a half hour in, the first guest arrived, a 9-foot mako shark who approached, circled Rob Christian, and left for the day. After which, a long and tense wait commenced for further guests to arrive, during which the Neptunes were in the company of tail-like salps and florescent thimble jellyfish. The seas offered comfortable 50+feet of blue-water visibility at 73°F, and after lengthy watching, the florescent thimble jellyfish, floating in pairs, started to seem like a pair of eyes watching from the deep.

After approximately an hour and a half at the destination, the next guests, blue sharks, arrived in droves. The blue sharks happily made a feast of the fish parts cast in by the mate and became curious about the divers waiting in the cage. More divers and snorkelers cautiously jumped in for the fun. Hours of immersion with the seemingly friendly blue sharks began. But one only needed to witness one of these sharks (some of which spanned 10+ feet) breach to attack one of the fish heads/tails dangled off the stern of the boat to realize the aggression these predators are capable of (Ed. note: Sharks, the friendly beasts). The Captain began tagging the sharks for marine research purposes. Following the sharks were thick schools of mackerel, as well baby jacks (with yellow tails resembling tuna) which cleverly followed the toothy ones from behind to avoid becoming a meal. Up to seven blue sharks visited us, by the count of one Neptune. Thankfully, no divers were harmed. Given the shallow depths (max 10-15 ft), long bottom times were achieved, the longest dive being Rob Vice's with 2.5 hours on a single tank.

After several hours in the company of the circling blue sharks, the Neptunes bade farewell to our underwater friends and hoisted the cage and deck back onto the Snappa in reverse fashion. The Neptunes made short work of this effort. Then began the return to port, rife with friendly repartee and a few beverages, as well. We arrived at approximately 4:15PM, after which gear was offloaded and a group picture taken, followed by smiles by all as we headed home into Labor Day traffic. A long day for sure, but a day well worth the effort.

### PARTING SHOT AND THOUGHTS

In honor of Veterans Day, let's give thanks to those brave Neptunes and Americans who have served our country, and in some cases are no longer with us, as we gather together and celebrate Thanksgiving with those whom we love.

**HAPPY THANKSGIVING, EVERYONE!**

