



Sounding

Newsletter of the South Shore Neptunes

ANNOUNCEMENTS, ACTIVITIES, & REMINDERS

Calendar, 2020 Newsletter/

7/2 Zoom General Meeting
 7PM TBA
 7/5 Women's Dive Day
 CANCELED
 7/9 Zoom Board meeting
 7PM TBA
 7/14 Club Dive, CANCELED
 7/16 Zoom Pub social
 time, 7PM TBA
 7/20 Club Dive CANCELED
 8/2/Duxbury Outing
 CANCELED
 8/4 Zoom General
 Meeting 7:00PM TBA
 8/8 Club Dive 8AM TBA
 8/11 Zoom Board meeting
 7:00PM TBA
 8/16 Club Dive 8AM TBA
 9/1/ General Meeting 7PM
 TBA
 9/6 Club Dive, 8AM
 9/8 Board Meeting 7PM TBA
 9/15 Program 7PM TBA
 9/2p BSC Treasure Hunt
 Stage Fort State Park
 Gloucester, MA
 9/26 SSN Flea Market TBA
 10/3 Rain Date Flea Market

Newsletter: To help add interesting content to the newsletter during these unusual times, please send me (robisonr25@yahoo.com) any first hand accounts, stories, photos, or both about your exploits as a Neptune for potential publication. Photos or clippings enhance stories, so please include them if you can. Don't forget to provide contact info in case I have questions.

Club General and Board Meetings are now being held **on Zoom** until further notice. **See Club Facebook page** for pics and brief writeup.

Zoom Pub Social Hour is being held at **7 PM** on the **third Tuesday of the month** to replace Club programming until further notice.

Sounding will be emailed to you until further notice.

To be sure you receive your issue of Sounding and are included in the Zoom meeting notifications and newsletter, we are calling every member to verify your email address as well as your directory information. Please return calls when we leave a message. Thanks.

All Club activities and programs listed on the Calendar or not that are in conflict with the stay-in-place quarantine **are also CANCELED until further notice.**

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MAY/JUNE CLUB ACTIVITIES & DIVES

Canceled Club Dive June 14 or Diving for the Quincy Yacht Club Mooring Chains. *Story and photos by*

Tommy Lo

So, we have canceled the club dive due to COVID-19. But I needed to dive at the Quincy Yacht Club to find the mooring chains for the floats. Yes, we put the floats in the water today. I sent out a text looking for a backup diver. Doug and Chuck answered the call. They were going to meet me at 9 am. I arrived at the QYC at 7 am and watched and assisted as the crane lifted and put the floats into the water. I also assisted with holding the floats so they can be attached together. Yes, I did the easy stuff 'cause I knew I was going to get wet.

Around 9:30AM with no sign of Doug or Chuck and the QYC crew almost finished attaching the floats together, I suited up to go in. Chuck turned up just as I was entering the water. I gave him instructions as to what needed to be done. He said, "Okay," and was going to join me in the water. I started at the end next to the clubhouse and found the chains. I then instructed the guy on the dock as to what needed to be done.

We finished securing my end, so I swam to the other end of the floats. Submerging, I found one of the chains. (The chain size is 5/8 inches chain and weighs about 100lbs per 20 ft.) Back in the day, I would muscle the chain up to the surface. Now I work smarter and attach a lift bag to the chain. Also, as soon as you touch the bottom, the 2 ft. vis turns to zero, totally black from the mud. Anyhow, I start adding air to the lift bag and nothing happened. The vis cleared a little, and I could see that there was a hole in the top of the lift bag. UGH! I then attach my other lift bag and this one worked. Up to the surface the chain went.

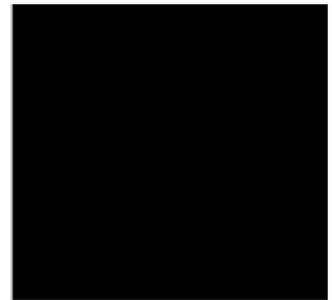
I was down to 1 lift bag. I found the rest of the chains for the floats and wondered where Chuck was. Apparently, his McDonalds breakfast did not want to be in to the ocean. Water temp was warm my biggest problem was overheating. As I was coming out of the water, Doug and Chuck came down to help me out of the water. Upon inspection of my lift bag I could see that the purge valve had separated from the rest of the bag. Hopefully some Aqua Seal or 5200 epoxy will fix it. (RV would use shoe goo.) I had also noticed that there was a small hole in my other lift bag. Moral of the dive is to inspect your gear before going in. By the way, Doug and Chuck could always tell where I was from the black mud cloud I was churning up from the bottom. It was a beautiful day both in and out of the water. Muscling the chains is a great workout

Treasures

I found a broken cleat and a bag of mussels

Picture of my dive or most of it very dark at right.

Tommy Lo



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Happy Diving

From

JOHN & KATHY BLACKADAR

Pebble Beach. Sunday, June 7th. *Story by Matt Meyer, photos by Peter Ninh*

I met up with Peter Ninh at the Burger King Beverly rest stop at 7:45am. After chatting for a few minutes, we decided to head up to Pebble Beach in Rockport. Parking is still restricted to non residents in Rockport, so Pebble Beach was the only spot we could dive with the current winds (North winds I think...).

The water was flat calm, with the tide coming in. Once parked, we quickly geared up and headed to the water. We had an excellent 63-minute dive with 15' visibility and chilly 45°F bottom temperature. Peter was able to snag one decent sized flounder while I was able to bag two lobsters.

Matt Meyer



Ft. Wetherill, Sunday, June 7th. *Story and photos by Rob Robison*

While Peter and Matt were enjoying Pebble Beach, Bonnie Zeller and I decided to avoid potential traffic jams in Boston, caused by the protests, and stayed south. We dove Ft. Wetherill, instead. I awoke with dawn's bright early light at 5:30 to gather my scuba gear, eat a little breakfast, and drive down to Ft. Wetherill in Jamestown, RI, to meet up dive buddy Bonnie Zeller. Yes, Rhode Island has reopened. Bonnie doesn't like the long drive north to the North Shore, plus she worried about getting caught in Boston demonstrations. And I did not want to go if there were going to be 5 of us, meaning 5 cars to have to find parking for in a very difficult area to park to begin with. Plus, at my age I don't want to be with 4 other people right now. In addition, I was hoping to use Commando, my 15.5' Zodiac, though the weather tanked a bit on that score, which is also why we wound up in RI.



Pipefish

The diving at Ft. Wetherill is relatively safe, vis is usually very average, all though it can be surprisingly good at times, and there can be unusual critters to see such as tropicals in the fall, seahorses in the very shallow water of the small cove, and more.

As we assembled our gear, Bonnie discovered that her integrated pressure gauge and dive computer's battery had died unexpectedly. She had a spare but neither of us could unscrew the back with a quarter, like we are supposed to be able to do. It was too tight. We knew how much air she had in her tank, so we planned an ultra safe 30-minute shallow dive so she could feel safe diving without the use

of her pressure gauge.

We started our dive in 5' of water and, thanks to Bonnie, almost immediately ran into a pipefish, a very difficult-to-spot, shallow water critter and our best find of the dive. Bonnie picked up the remnants of a crashed drone, while I bypassed a used diaper because I didn't

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have a way to carry it out. I don't carry a game bag 99% of the time when taking underwater photos because my hands are full. A couple of clams sitting on top of the sand, a shed lobster arm and claw, and a baby urchin skeletal shell were the most notable items photographed. A Tautog finning away from us as we glided through the submerged eelgrass was the only other excitement worthy of note.



Afterwards, we headed over to Flo's Drive In, a locally renowned clam shack in Portsmouth, RI, for her famous "clam cakes & chowda," and a "crabby" cake sandwich before heading home.

From Rhode Island to Cape Ann: A Weekend of Diving. *Stories and photos by Rob Robison*

Part 1. Saturday, June 13, at Ft. Wetherill, Jamestown, RI. Don't know about you, but it's been



quite a while since I've enjoyed two straight days of ocean diving. Neptune Eric Cantor wrangled me into meeting him at Ft. Wetherill with his 8-month pregnant wife, Lauren, for a dive. Up at 5:30 to organize and pack my gear, I arrived at 9:30 AM on a clear sunny day, only to find the parking lot packed with at least two dive classes worth of divers, plus some outliers like yours truly. Eric arrived



Channel whelk

with Lauren at 10:00, and we quickly suited up for what turned out to be one of the more interesting dives I've ever had at the Rhode Island state park.

We swam out a little, and submerged into filmy water, stirred by the classes that had preceded us into the drink. Regardless, we saw a lot of clams that had been surfaced from recent wind storms, a nice sized live whelk, three successively larger fluke or summer flounder (R), which I have never ever seen in the cove,



some colonies of feeding Northern Star Coral(L), perhaps a small school of bait fish, a clutch of squid eggs, a Tautog, lots of large and small cunner, and a monstrously large



horseshoe crab. The water had warmed from last week's 53° to 58°F on Saturday. A very nice 43-minute dive in low to fair visibility. (See FB for more photos.)

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Part 2. Plum Cove, Cape Ann, Sunday, June 14.

I was up at the crack of dawn, 5AM , to assemble my gear and head out to Macy's to pick up Bonnie Zeller, then drive to the Beverly Burger King Service Center to meet up with Peter. He arrived shortly after we did. We needed to wait a few for newbie, Bill Thomas, who apparently follows my FB blog on the Neptunes and Divers of Mass Bay pages. He turned out to be a



Juvenile Green Crab hugging eel grass

real nice guy and an excellent diver who is working on his technical diving certification for deep wreck diving. He seemed surprised and amazed we would drive so far to go diving.



Bonnie. Bill. & Peter

We headed to Old Garden Beach only to find strong northeast winds generating 5' waves that were pounding the beach. We all collectively shook our

heads and finally decided Plum Cove was the only spot where we could hope to get in. We caravanned over to the cove, which was looking good, unloaded our gear, and left Bonnie to stand guard while we parked our cars elsewhere and walked back to the dive site.



*L-R. Baltic Isopod on eel grass;
Moon snail*

Inside the cove the water was flat, but roiled on the outside. Our plan was to dive up the north side of the cove along the rocks, and return through the middle, which is clogged with occasional boulders, plenty of sand, eel grass, and critters that like to hide in both.

After gearing up, we finned





out into the cove a bit and dropped down in about 7'-8' of water; however, Peter took the wrong heading and swam in the opposite direction. Bill tried to steer him back our way, but Peter misunderstood and kept going. Bonnie, Bill, and I continued the dive we planned, and despite the milky 5'-7' of vis, found a number of animals: invasive green crabs, some club tunicates, beautiful eel grass some coated with Bryozoans and an occasional Baltic Isopod, a fluted clam or two or perhaps European Flat Oysters, a piece of what appeared to be some kind of metal, but turned out to be a chunk of slate, a beautiful baby comb jelly that I could not shoot in focus despite 5 attempts, some Black and Horse mussels, and more.

We began to round the northern point to the northeast and realized the vis was worsening instead of improving, so we turned the dive and headed back toward the beach. On the return, we ran into wavy sand and some baby flounders, one of which Bonnie told me followed my fins. Lying on top of the sand, I spied a huge sea or surf clam, the kind Howard Johnson's Restaurants used to harvest and grind up for their New England clam chowder, which they shipped all over the nation and which those of us non-native New Englanders ate as kids for the first time and thought it to be scrumptious. We didn't know the difference in taste and chewiness from steamers, cherrystones, little necks, and those tough rubbery sea clams.



European Flat Oyster

As we rediscovered the eel grass, Bill motioned to me and I spied the flounder he had spotted. The shot I took with my spear pole bounced off the fish, which understandably fled the scene, because the points on the spear tip had been dulled by too many flounders shot hiding on top of rocks and boulders. At the same time, the sling on my spear broke, so I wrapped the end that dangled around my hand and blasted the next one Bill spotted. It was a 17.5" inch doormat, the largest one I've taken in the 5 years since returning to Mass. Bill tried his hand, too, on a third but was unsuccessful. Finally, we spotted a skate that wasn't too interested in being photographed. Then, we surfaced and ended the dive.

We cleared the beach, stowed our gear, and in the post dive kibitzing, learned Peter had become confused and then decided to do his own thing. He bagged two keeper flounder during



his 61-minute dive, at 35', in 57° water. Ours lasted between 47-53 minutes, reaching a depth of 24'-25', in 58° water.

Afterwards, Bill headed back to Haverhill, while Peter, Bonnie, and I stopped for pizza and subs at the local Dairymaid before heading home to Brockton, Taunton, and Kingston, respectively. It was a wonderful end to a cool, sunny, and interesting dive day of diving into it and feasting afterwards before tackling the long drive home south via Boston.

I took a two-hour nap after reaching the house, offloaded and edited my photos, and then filleted the flounder. My wife, Carol, stuffed and baked it, and we enjoyed a lovely dinner of seafood-stuffed flounder, asparagus, and shucked corn on the cob. A good way to end the day.

OK folks, dive season is now in full swing. Time to get wet. Join us diving into it, won't you? Until next time,

Safe living and safe diving!

Rob

LOOKING BACK

Boston Harbor, Sunday May 21, 2017. Tommy Lo submitted the following **Scallop Dive** story and photos: **Doug, Todd**, and I went out with **Garrett** and his dad, **Matt**, on their boat looking for scallops. We all met at Todd's house beforehand to load the boat, launched at the Wessagusset boat ramp (AKA the George Lane Beach Boat Launch), and headed out of the Back River to the super secret scallop bed.

On our first dive I came up with a full bag and a third of a second bag of scallops. Doug and Garrett filled a bag, while Todd filled about a third of a bag.

On our second dive, the roles were reversed.

Doug, Garrett, and I each filled a quarter of a bag, while Todd managed to catch a full bag of scallops.

We had two great dives each and Matt did a great job at the helm. One lobster was caught.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Lobster Tale (AKA: *Fact is stranger than fiction or fiction is stranger than fact*) or **Wild lobster attacks diver**. *Story and photos by Tommy Lo*

The SSN had a club dive at Strawberry point in Scituate. This area is located on private property, but we had permission to do the dive. To conserve air the club members would always do a long surface swim to reach deeper waters. The rest of this story is what I remember from being told by the victim (Gary Greenberg) and what I remember.

Gary had done the long surface swim with the rest of the Neptunes. They then descended and started swimming out further in search of lobsters. After a fruitless search for lobsters Gary decided to head back in. Since Gary was taking acting classes, he decided to role play as a lobster. He started clambering along the ocean floor crawling along the bottom grabbing rocks to pull himself along the bottom. Then in an instant one of the rocks he put his hand on grabbed him and would not let go. The lobster must have thought he was dinner. Gary thought, "Oh shit! What do I do now?" Armed with his fine Neptune's



Tommy's daughter, Lauren, with lobster

training/instinct he grabbed the lobster and shot to the surface. Luckily he was in 12 feet of water.

Gary and the lobster breached the surface like a whale and screamed for help. Since I was on the beach, I yelled back, What's the problem? He shouted back "I caught a lobster" or "I got caught by a lobster." I could not tell which it was because of the fear and pain in his voice. Anyhow, I could see that it was a big lobster, so Don't let go. He replied with he wouldn't let go. I said, Good. in.



Gary with lobster

I shouted back,
Then bring him

As Gary got closer, I could see that the lobster's other claw was starting to reach for his neck and was going to finish him off. I ran out and grabbed the claw and secured it with some large rubber bands. We spent the next 20 minutes trying to pry Gary's fingers out of the lobsters crusher claw. Finally, after long struggle Gary was freed. Luckily the claw was so big when the claw was closed there was plenty of space between its teeth that none of his fingers was broken. They were just very sore for a week.

Go on to the next page!

Epilogue: Gary won largest lobster of the year, 13 3/4 lbs. And he had his first non kosher meal.

Tommy Lo

PARTING THOUGHT AND SHOT



Happy Fourth of July!

Club Info

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