



Sounding

Newsletter of the South Shore Neptunes

Calendar, 2020

5/2 Clubhouse Cleanup:
Postponed until able to
reschedule

**5/3/Club Dive from
clubhouse: Canceled**
**5/4 Zoom Board meeting
7PM**

**5/5 General Meeting via
Zoom 7PM Details TBA**

5/12 Board Meeting TBA
**5/16-5/23 Trip -Bonaire;
CANCELED**

**5/21 Program TBA;
Newsletter**

6/2 General Meeting TBA
6/9 Board Meeting TBA

**6/14 Club Dive from
clubhouse, TBA**

6/21 Newsletter/Program TBA
**6/28 Club Dive from
clubhouse, TBA**

7/5 Women's Dive Day TBA
7/7 General Meeting TBA

**7/11 Club Dive from
clubhouse, TBA**

7/14 Board meeting TBA
**7/19 Club Dive from
clubhouse, TBA**

7/21/Newsletter TBA

ANNOUNCEMENTS, ACTIVITIES, & REMINDERS

April 25, 2020. Club Foxwood Casino Trip. CANCELED, due to coronavirus, until further notice.

May 16—23, 2020, Bonaire Club Dive Trip: CANCELED, due to coronavirus, until further notice. John Blackadar has distributed all refunds due.

Club activities and programs listed on the Calendar that are in conflict with the stay-in-place quarantine are also CANCELED until further notice.

Future Activities and Programs: The club Board of Directors is meeting via Zoom to revise our activities schedule and come up with solutions to keep us all together as much as possible. Stay tuned. We will be in touch in the very near future.

MARCH/APRIL CLUB ACTIVITIES & DIVES

From Morton Pond to Plum Cove, a Strange Week in Diving. Thursday March 26 & Saturday March 28, 2020. Stories and photos by Rob Robison; video clip by Jon Willis.



Morton Pond. My main South Shore Dive buddy, Brian Smith, fresh from a three-month stint in the snow-



covered Rocky

Mountains of Colorado, and I met at Morton Pond at a leisurely 10AM on



Thursday morning because the seas were too rough to make a beach dive. Fishermen were in abundance along the shore line escaping the tedium of the state-induced self-quarantine, as we hurriedly donned our gear and headed into the clear waters of the pond.

We drifted down slowly and found the staked line leading toward the familiar underwater icons. With 25' of vis, we found everything pretty much as they had been the last time we made this dive: the concrete lids, the tree stump, Chilly Willy, Slo-Down Man, Frosty, the American

Flag, and Alien. The only living thing seen was an eel-like creature Brian was trying to identify. I didn't grasp he needed my camera work, so no photo. The only other novelty came courtesy of an unlucky fisherman who left a lure snagged on a log near the icons. Given the fishing activity overhead, we decided to end our dive early and headed back to the beach having enjoyed 41° water, 20-21' depth, and a strange subtle yet noticeable current on the bottom that made underwater movement more effort than normal. All in all, we delighted in a refreshing dip on a sunny morning in the pond. Thanks, Brian!

Plum Cove. After catching up on my finishing my tax return, except for tweaking, I packed my car full of Beverly Burger King Service Plaza 5 dive buddies for an afternoon. After Neptunes **Jon Willis** and his **Peter**, and **Mike** arrived, we headed which looked good, but given all recent storms, it looked too difficult drove over to Plum Cove, which is cobbles, no surge, and turned out to be wise.

We geared up in low 50s temps with wedding party doing a photo shoot (No



finances for the week and some proofing and minor scuba gear and drove to the on RT 128 Saturday to await dive on the North Shore. wife, **Jeannine**, **Matt Meyer**, off to Old Garden Beach, the cobbles covering it from to traverse for me. So, we very sheltered, devoid of

an even better site to dive visibility-



gray overcast skies, walked past a photos out of respect for the dearly beloved), and waded into the water. I took a number of group photos in hopes one would be serviceable. Then, we began a short swim out into the middle of the cove.

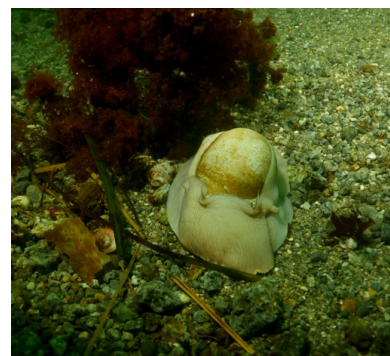


L-R: Rock vomit, Frond Aeolis, Moon snail

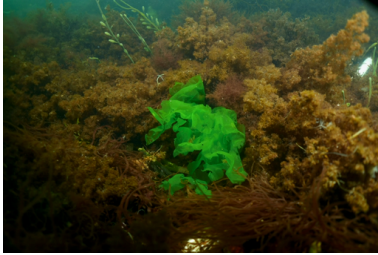
Remembering the sea worm spawns from the past few years, I dropped down early to

see if I could find them. No luck. I swam around large underwater rock formations looking for nudibranchs and Mysid shrimp. No luck.

I began to notice a large number of club tunicates and sea vases under the ledges and started photographing those. As I came around



the last formation before reaching the mouth of the cove and the open sand beyond sloping down to deeper depths, I noticed white popcorn-looking sponge on the underside of the rock formation. Closer inspection revealed it was the invasive species sponge, one local scientist calls “Rock vomit.” True to form, it was dining on the club tunicates and sea vases. I tried to take a number of photos revealing how it consumes its food. This animal can’t be broken apart in an attempt to kill it because that just makes the sponge proliferate. It literally mows down the area and either dies for lack of food or moves on or both. There used to be lots of club tunicates at Plymouth Beach, but last year there were virtually none because of this sponge. Eventually, the tunicates will return there, I hope, but it will take some time.

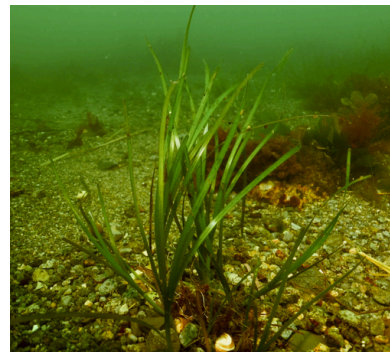


I reached 17-18’ around the 20-minute mark and decided to turn around and head back in. My dry suit was leaking frigid water because I hadn’t set my neck seal properly, and my right hand was getting cold due to the 5-finger glove I was wearing, instead of my usual 3-fingered mitt. On the way back, I found a lone nudibranch, Frond Aeolis, and

took some nice shots of eel grass, sea lettuce, and large clam shells both empty and live. Still no sea worms. I surfaced in about 7-8’ of water and determined by the dive flags and floats that the others were all following me in on the exact same compass heading.

First Jon, then Mike, surfaced, followed by who had swum out together to the 40’ depth vis dropped from 20-25’ to 5’ or less and the dipped from 42 to 41 degrees. Unbeknownst to returned early—she was back in Jon’s truck we returned—because her mask wouldn’t stop luck for Jeannine.

During our post-dive storytelling, I learned 15” flounder with his hands—I took several he and Jon found 2-3 nudibranchs, which Jon GoPro. They also saw a short lobster. Peter and lobster as well, but it was too deep in its hole to



Peter and Matt mark, where the temperature me, Jeannine had warming up when flooding. Tough

Mike caught a fat pictures of it—and filmed with his Matt sighted a extract.

Everyone had a good time diving. At the same time, it feels so strange not to be able to stop for grub, brewskies, coffee, breakfast, lunch, or something afterwards. Instead, we all monitored our social distance and drove our separate ways home, satisfied with our friendship, effort to continue getting wet and keep diving into it, despite the current circumstances.

BTW, here's a **link to Jon's video clip of our dive**: <<http://www.jw-ocean-stuff.net>>. On the lefthand side under 2020, **click on <Plum Cove, Gloucester MA>** and enjoy.

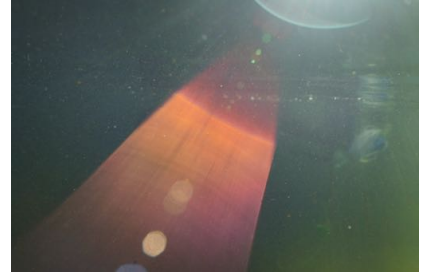
Stay safe and healthy, everyone!

Easter Egg Hunt in Hathaway's Pond. Sunday April 12, 2020. *Story and photos by Rob Robison*

Sunday morning, I came within a hair of not diving. If the third man in our group had not dropped out, I would have. Understandably, I was nervous about diving because I had just read new data from the Washington Post. In one day we had leaped from 16,000 deaths to more than 20,000 deaths nationwide, directly caused by COVID-19. We now surpass all nations in that category, even Italy. Twenty-one percent of infected adults ranging in ages 54-63 need to be hospitalized, and 20% from 64-74. In my age range 23 percent of infected adults are dying from the virus.

With that in the back of my mind, my buddy and I met down at Hathaway’s Pond at the appointed

time, instead of the ocean, roiled from a week of high winds. Although there were people in the park, we did not see anyone fishing or diving. We maintained social distance, suited up, and I headed for the water first because I was burning up in my drysuit. The air temperature had already risen from 31 degrees at 6:30 AM to the high 40s low 50s by @ 9--9:30 or so. An unleashed dog came racing at me barking his head off—I must have looked like the Creature from the Black Lagoon to the poor animal— and though I implored the owner to leash his animal, he refused to do so. Fortunately for the dog and me, I reached the water before the dog did or I might have sustained damage to my leg or dry suit or camera system or all three.



My buddy and I finished our preparations in the water by strapping on our fins. I attempted a couple of half-and-half shots before we submerged into the pond, one worked and the other produced light beam rays. I don't think I can replicate that shot any time soon, for sure!

From the beach, the bottom slopes gradually to about 12-15' at the mouth of the small cove before angling down past the tips of a few small rock mound guide markers. We passed some green algae as



we slowly descended to the 19'-20' depth, where we ran into the guideline that helps divers find the various objects, which have been submerged in the pond by divers, like Bill Jeter, and local dive shops for underwater diversion and skills development.

Following the guideline, we found an Easter Egg Hunt's worth of objects: a tea kettle, a corroded drive shaft, a large diamond-shaped swim through for buoyancy checking, a large pile of blocks with a float attached at the top, and a statue of a small boy reading, among other items.

Suddenly, we ran into a small statue the Virgin Mary, a fitting find on Easter Sunday, and a semi-derelict training platform surrounded by a small pile of boards. Not far away was a snowman clown of some sort.

About that time we turned the dive because one of us started the dive with half of a tank, and I was getting thoroughly soaked from a leak, caused by not having set my neck seal properly. We made the return without incident and surfaced after a short, fun, 30-minute dive, in 46 degree water, having reached a max depth of 20'.

While stowing away our gear, Bill Jeter drove up, told us he was taking a break from diving this Sunday morning because he'd already made 4 dives in the pond the past few days. He regaled us with a few stories about the pond's attractions, who had been diving there earlier in the week—East Coast Divers—spoke of his annual trip diving the wrecks of Lake Erie, and offered a suggestion about another pond to dive in further down the Cape. We just might try it at some point this year.

We've been having fun breaking cabin fever once every week or so, weather permitting, and diving into it. Maybe a few of you who don't mind social distancing will join us diving into it in the not too distant future.

Until next time, safe diving everyone!

Rob

CLUB ACTIVITIES & DIVES, PART 2: LOOKING BACK

Given our stay-in-place quarantine, I thought it would be a good idea to look back at some the articles and photos from the past 3 years to remind ourselves of the fun we have had diving and cavorting together. This month's Looking Back revisits couple of cherry-picked articles and activities from the April 2019 edition of Sounding.

Saturday, March 30, 2019. *Story by Doug Eaton, photo by Chuck Z.* Chuck Zarba and I went diving on the Back River Saturday at 7:30 a.m. The tide was perfect, high slack for 45 min. Water temp 48°, depth 25', vis 15'. The weather was perfect. We found my lights that I lost last December (*Ed.Note:* Minor miracle!) in the dock area and some bottles. Chuck came up with some bottles, also, from the middle of the river. We ended the day at Emma's Café in Quincy, where we met Tommy Lo.

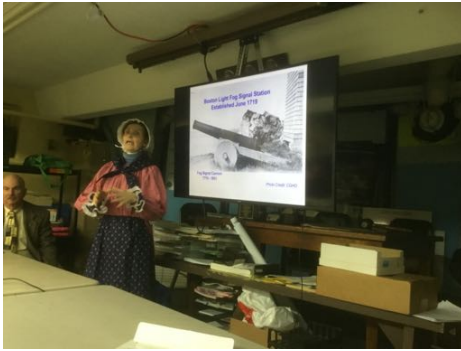


Program: Boston Light

At the March 19, 2019, Program Meeting of the South Shore Neptunes, the Club enjoyed hosting the only female lighthouse keeper in the United States, Sally Snowman and her husband, Jay Thompson, both retired former college professors and history buffs, who keep Boston Light. Dressed in traditional garb for the turn of the 19th to the 20th Century, Sally regaled us for more than an hour with nonstop photos and stories about the fabled lighthouse and its history, that it started out as a fog station,



and reminded us that this year marks the 300th anniversary of Boston Light. Thanks for a great evening, Sally and Jay! Also, a shout out to Tommy Lo who has the presence of mind to invite the dynamic husband and wife team to share the story of such an important coastal light.



PARTING SHOTS

Boston Sea Rovers 2020. As reported in the February and March newsletters, **Joe Hohmann** and Rob Robison were dunked in the Diver-of-the-Year silver bowl, filled with vodka and orange juice. **Joe, the 2020 BSR Diver of the Year**, was first of many to follow. Ironically, he was a (some say THE) founder of this BSR hazing shenanigan. Special thanks to **Theresa Czerepica** for these photos.



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