

Sounding Newsletter of the South Shore Neptunes

Calendar

2021

6/1 General Meeting 7PM Zoom 6/8 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom 6/12 (Sat) Club Dive 8AM at former Clubhouse 6/15 Program TBA 6/19 Sat) Club Dive 8AM at former Clubhouse 7/6 General Meeting 7PM Zoom 7/11 Club Dive 8AM at former Clubhouse 7/13 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom 7/20 Program TBA 7/25 Club Dive 8AM at former Clubhouse 8/1 Duxbury Outing (tent) 8/3 General Meeting 7PM Zoom 8/8 Duxbury Outing (rain date) 8/10 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom 8/14 Club Dive 8AM at former Clubhouse 8/17 Evening Program TBA 8/29 Club Dive 8AM at former Clubhouse 9/? BSC Treasure HuntTBA 9/7General Meeting 7PM Zoom 9/12 Club Dive 8AM at former Clubhouse 9/14 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom 9/21 Evening Program TBA 9/25 Club Dive 8AM at former Clubhouse *10/2 Neptunes Flea Market *10/3 River Run

ANNOUNCEMENTS, ACTIVITIES, & REMINDERS

• Divers' Market now offers Nitrox! Call (508) 746-3483 for more information.

• Underwater Rugby hours: Tuesday nites 8-9:30 PM at Westwood HS pool.

• Club General and Board Meetings are now being held on Zoom until further

notice. See Club Facebook page for picts and brief write ups. Please note: All other Club activities and programs listed on the Calendar or not, which are in conflict with the stay-in-place quarantine, are also CANCELED until further notice.

• Bay State Council: UPDATE on the Back Bay Neighborhood Assoc (BBNBA) lawsuit from BSC Minutes, courtesy of Tommy Lo and Steve Ouellette: The attorney for Back Bay Neighborhood Association (BBNA) brought 9 allegations against the Town of Rockport. Seven of the 9 allegations have been dismissed by the judge in the case. The other 2 contain enough factual material that they could not be dismissed so easily, but they do contain enough factual uncertainty they should be dismissed. Steve fully expects that they will be. We probably should still move to intervene on one point. Steve will prepare an affidavit, which Jim Nannery will sign, and will be submitted to the court We should continue to monitor Facebook. Town of Rockport is committed to defeating this; they are not happy with this continued difficulty. Steve believes the town will fight this the whole way, though they will probably not go after the group for damages. Divers should continue doing what they are doing, which is being polite, respectful, and keeping on diving. Everyone in Rockport is for public access, diving, swimming, except these three people.

• 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.

DIVER'S MARKET SCUBA CENTER

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Calendar 2021, cont.

10/5 General Meeting 7PM Zoom 10/12 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom 10/17 Flea Market Rain Date 10/19 Evening Program TBA 10/24 Club Dive 8AM at former Clubhouse 11/2 General Meeting 7PM Zoom 11/6 (Sat) Club Dive 9AM at former Clubhouse 11/9 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom 11/16 Evening Program TBA 11/28 Club Dive 9AM at former Clubhouse 12/5Club Dive 9AM at former Clubhouse 12/7General Meetina 7PM Zoom 12/12 Club Dive 9AM at former Clubhouse 12/14 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom 12/21 Elections 2022 1/1 Sober Up Dive Pleasure Bay 1/4 General Meeting 7PM Zoom 1/11 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom 1/16Club Dive 9AM at former Clubhouse 1/18 Evening Program TBA

*<u>Note</u>: Tentative dates for the 2021 Boston Sea Rovers Annual Clinic

• ANNUAL DUES-\$35-ARE DUE ASAP, if you have-not yet paid.Make checks payable to South Shore Neptunes , and mail to South Shore Neptunes Dive Club, P.O. Box 690716, Quincy, MA 02169

• Don't forget to visit the club store at <u>https://bit.ly/SSN-Store</u> for the latest in club swag.

In Memoriam

We were sad to learn that **Myra Clancy**, wife of Dave Clancy, passed away on Wednesday, April 28th. Here is a link to her memorial service:

http://www.facebook.com/TrinityEpiscopalChurch/.

And here is a link to her obituary:

https://obituaries.neptunesociety.com/obituaries/houston-tx/myra-clancy-10173450 We express our deepest sympathies to Dave and his family for their loss and sorrow. May She Rest in Peace.

Evening Program

Club president, Robert Vice, thanked newsletter editor **Rob Robison** for sharing the well-received slide show he made, entitled Diving the Maldives on the Aggressor Maldives II, from his April live aboard dive trip on Program Night, Tuesday, May 18, 2021. For more information and a **link to the slide show**, see the article on **P. 10** of this newsletter.



Our June 15 Program Night speaker is well known and highly regarded underwater photographer/videographer **Rudy Whitworth**, President of Seahorse Productions, LLC. Rudy has been an active scuba diver since 1978, an avid UW photographer since 1983, and a winner in many world wide UW photo contests. As President of Seahorse Productions, LLC, Rudy has been an entertaining speaker at DEMA, Our World Underwater, Beneath The Sea, (Ohio) SCUBAFEST, Shipwrecks

and Scuba, Niagara Divers, Baltimore DC Dive Show, and the Great Lakes Shipwreck Festival, as well as many presentations to scuba clubs, marine organizations, colleges and schools. His images have been printed in SKIN DIVER, Dive Travel and Dive Chronicles magazines, scientific descriptive papers, fish ID books, travel programs for public TV, and much more. So, **mark your calendars** for **7PM June 15**. You won't want to miss his **Borneo Malaysia** presentation.

PROFESSIONAL AQUARIUM & POND SERVICE

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From

JOHN & KATHY BLACKADAR

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Jeff Finnell

Recent Diving

Club Dive at Quincy Yacht Club. Sunday, May 24, 2021. *Story & photos by Doug Eaton.* Today's club dive was to help Quincy Yacht Club install the docks. I showed up at 9 a.m. and met **Jeff Finnell** all ready geared up. As **Chuck Zarba** and **Rob Vice** arrived, Rob geared up. While they went in first, I watched out for the boats. After some time went by, I went in for Jeff. Finishing up, I noticed **Todd Alger, Paul Green** and **Ken Hayes** had shown up for support and milk. Joining them after changing, we got to enjoy a round from the QYC. Just another day with a great group of

divers from the South Shore Neptunes.

Nantasket Beach Message-in-a-Bottle Dive. Saturday, May 15, 2021. Story by Doug Eaton; photo by Chuck Zarba.
On May 15^{th,} I met up with Chuck Zarba and Jeff Finnell at Nantasket Beach. We arrived at the beach at 12:30 and started gearing up. Jeff always had wanted to do this dive, so in we went.

The water was a clear 15 to 20 ft., air temp 68°F, and the water temp 54° at 15ft. I dove out to the ledges looking for any artifacts, but no luck. Chuck



had no luck either, but Jeff got the find of the day, a message in a bottle. So we will find out what the message is later when he extracts the note from the bottle. All you could hear is everyone singing message in a bottle while we were changing. The day, the dive, and the song turned out to be a good time. Afterwards, we headed to the Clam Box to get some food and drink. Yum!

Pleasure Bay (Boston Harbor), Sunday, May 2, 2021. Story & photos by Rob Robison It seems like only yesterday, when in fact it was more than 10 days ago now, that I was in the Maldives swimming with Whale Sharks, Manta Rays, Squirrelfish, Orange-Lined Triggerfish, interminable schools

of yellow striped grunts, blue and yellow striped Snapper, and much more, at depths to 106', in waters ranging from 83° to 86°F, with visibility often in excess of 150'-200'. Only today to be brought back to reality in Boston Harbor's Pleasure Bay by having to don my drysuit, which covers several layers of wool and Polartec underwear to withstand the 48°F water, nearly 30 lbs. of lead weights, and a negative steel 95 tank to help me reach the incredible depth of 25', to enjoy somewhere between 2'-5' of vis, in very brownish water with a siltcovered bottom. Yet, I did this and do this as always this time



REMEMBERING Local Scuba Pioneer JOHN BALDI MA REG SHOP #644 TOM DENNEHY UNIVERSAL AUTO BODY COLLISION SPECIALISTS COMPLETE AUTO REPAIR – ALIGNMENTS 288 North Avenue, Rt. 139 Abington, MA. 02351 781.878.2244.P 781.792.1744.F of year because I just love diving. It and the underwater world are in my blood.

After gearing up, Peter and I motored out to the drop in point using his TUSA electric scooter,

surrounded all the while by local kite surfers, who were enjoying the warm



weather and taking advantage of the strong westerly winds to propel them across the water.

We submerged through the silty water and could not see each other until we hit bottom at 21', where there was bit of clarity in the water column, if that is what you want to call it. Pleasure Bay's bottom is heavily



littered with empty and live clam shells, oysters and oyster shells, and even a few scallop shells, none of which can be harvested from this particular bay. Myriad Spider crabs were spread out

among the shells and shellfish, each one looking like the hub and spokes of an old wooden wagon



wheel, lying in ambush or actively hunting for food. To be sure a few rock crabs scurried about when disturbed by us, as did the invasive Green crabs.

Alas, the compound sea squirt has found its way into this protected bay and has begun to suffocate the abundant clumps of silt-covered sea vases that carpet the bottom. Long ribbon strands of sugar kelp festoon the substrate, providing shelter for Longwrist Hermit crabs, Forbes Starfish, the occasional lobster out foraging, and micro organisms too numerous to enumerate.

We came across a silt-covered board, which Peter upended and found hiding underneath a nice keeper lobster. We pressed on and

rediscovered the cave of the monster lobster we had seen together on the Sober Up Dive New Year's Day. Not long after that, we encountered a second monster lobster in another cave, slightly smaller than the first, but still a monster Godzilla would be proud to call each of these its own.

Forty-five minutes after dropping in, Peter and I called it guits, returned to the surface, and motored back to the entry point, where we celebrated a very nice dive for the log book. It was a great morning underwater.



I know many of you were wondering whether or not to get wet this

weekend. For us it was worth the effort; however, it would have been even more fun had we had more buddies to dive with and share post dive BS blather about our experiences. So, shake a leg, get your

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gear in shape, and let's get going. It's time to return to the hydrosphere, folks. Cousteau's water world beckons us to dive into it and go exploring! You never know what you will see, that's for sure!

Diving the Maldives on the Maldives Aggressor II. April 9 - 23, 2021. Story and Photos by Rob Robison



We had descended to around 75' feet after giant striding off the Dhoni, companion ship to the mother boat, and had been finning steadily on a very long, slightly upward trajectory across a field of dish corals into slightly shallower water along the underwater plain and sea mount in search of a Manta Ray feeding station. I was so engrossed in the surrounding underwater life around me—long heavily populated rivers of surgeon fish and colorful fusiliers—that I had not realized I had passed my own group and had nearly caught up with our second group, which was in front of me. Pausing to check my gauges for air and bottom time, I instinctively looked up and to the left and saw a

Manta Ray with a wingspan of somewhere between 7' and 10' nearly upon me, throat wide open, gill slits flared, front mandibles in scoop formation to help funnel plankton down its throat. It looked like it was going to barrel right into me. Reflexively, I fell back and raised my camera, as the ray abruptly turned nearly vertical to avoid collision and flew straight up and then directly over my head. I managed to take two photos before it disappeared. Wow!What a thrill! That near collision made my entire trip worthwhile, that's for sure, but then I'm getting ahead of myself.

This story actually began March 26, 2020, when Emirates Airlines communicated via email that the April flight and Maldives dive trip I had signed up for through Divers Market in Plymouth had been canceled indefinitely due to the COVID 19 pandemic. At that time virtually no one knew how long the pandemic would last nor how serious this infection was really going to be. The dive shop rescheduled for a time that conflicted with my calendar, so I decided to book my own trip through Aggressor Fleet, a travel group I had booked with on 4 of the previous 5 live aboard dive trips I had taken, and found them to be very enjoyable well run experiences, for the same time frame in April 2021.

Fortunately, lifting government restrictions, Covid testing, and vaccinations worked together to make this trip possible. I used my airline voucher from the canceled trip to book a new flight, once flights resumed, and flew nonstop on an Emirates Boeing 777 from Boston to Dubai (UAE), a 12 hour 40 minute flight, laid over in the airport for nearly eight hours, and then hopped on another Emirates 777 for the 4 hour flight to Male, capital of the Maldives, to rendezvous with the Maldives Aggressor II.

The Maldives archipelago is a series of coral reef and sandbar atolls, large and small, many inhabited, others not, out in the middle of the Indian Ocean, nearly due south of the southern most tip of India. The conflux of waters from the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, and Bay of Bengal bring an abundance of nutrients to feed the innumerable varieties of colorful fish species and corals that attract divers,

Dive Safely

Dave Clancy Check out my website... Hunting New England Shipwrecks www.wreckhunter.net



photographers, and honeymooners with money to burn from all over the world to this small island nation.

The Maldives Aggressor II crew met me and the other divers on this particular 10-day trip, who hailed from Kansas City, New York, New Jersey, Texas, Australia, and Germany, at the airport, which empties out right in front of the commercial dock, and escorted us to the pickup wharf a block away.

The Maldives Aggressor II is a 148' vessel with a 28' beam, the largest live aboard I have ever been on. the captain and crew hailed from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Maldives, and

Germany/Spain. The boat itself had been recently refitted. All the state rooms had been upgraded with new furnishings, beds, electric toilets, and beautiful designer showers and sinks, USB outlets, and more. To top it off, the there were only 12 divers on this trip to occupy spaces that can accommodate up to 22. This meant that all 4 of us single folks had air conditioned double berth staterooms to ourselves. The main salon had been similarly refurbished as well.

Best of all, everything worked!

The camera area was just outside the salon under cover, on the back of the main deck, with plenty of towels, electric outlets for chargers, a compressed air blower to dry off cameras, and space to work on and store camera equipment. All of our dive gear remained on the Dhoni, where the compressors, Nitrox blending, tanks, rinse tanks, and post dive warm water outdoor showers, etc., were located. Once we had been briefed by the dive director, we stepped over on to the Dhoni, motored away from the mothership to the next dive site, geared up, and made all of our dives.



Meals. The food was excellent to out standing. Breakfast included coffee, tea, juices, assorted yogurts, cereal, European style breakfast cookies, bread and toast, eggs to order, potatoes, sausage, bacon, fruit, and more. Lunches and dinners included fresh-caught fish, such as tuna, chicken, Argentine steak, soup, salad, fruit, rice, potatoes, pasta, vegetables, complimentary beer, wine, soft drinks, water, etc., all prepared by a chef and a pastry chef, who handled the scrumptious desserts we hungrily gobbled down to top everything off. As on all liveaboards, once you take one drink of alcohol, your diving is over until the next day—and they mean it! Rather than bore you with a litany of menus, let me just mention we were welcomed with an appetizer of raw tuna ceviche/sushi that was sliced from a fish caught that very day. It was the best tasting tuna I have ever had. One night, we even enjoyed a BBQ of pork, chicken,

and beef on an uninhabited island. Excellent!

Dive Schedule. We dove three times a day except when a night dive was scheduled, in which case there were 4 dives that day, for a total of 28 possible dives, two of which were night dives. Our dive schedule was rigorous: Every day after a light early breakfast at 6AM, our first briefing was at 6:30 AM, after which we moved over to the Dhoni, geared up as the boat transited to the dive site, and splashed by 7:00. Dive depths are limited to a maximum depth of 98' by the government and bottom time to 60 minutes; however, on our third dive, we dove to the channel opening of an atoll at 106', tethered ourselves to the bottom with metal hooks, faced the very considerable current, and watched the parade of large fish schools and pelagics flow by in front of us out in the blue, until our dive computers indicated we only had 5 minutes remaining before going into deco. Pretty exciting if you ask me!

Between Dives 1 and 2 full breakfast is served. The Dive 2 briefing follows at 10:00, and we splash no later than10:30. Lunch follows and so does nap time. The briefing for Dive 3 takes place at@2:30 PM, and we splash no later than 3:00. Night dive briefings are at 6:00 PM, and supper is served afterwards



around 7:30PM.

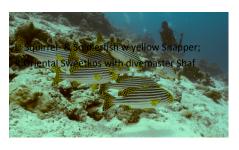
The Dives. Although there were a number dives with very strong current, most of the time the current was manageable. However, I was blown off eight minutes into one dive because of the current, and a couple half my age was blown off another dive a day or so later for the same reason. On the latter dive, the other septuagenarian diver, who is 4 months younger than I, on the trip and I were the only divers in our dive group to reach the sea mount. Hope springs eternal!

Most of the dives ranged between 60' - 90', with some exceptions, mainly the checkout dive, the atoll channel dives, the

whale shark snorkel, and the last couple of dives before the conclusion of the trip and departure. The coldest temperature I recorded was 83° and the warmest temp measured was 86° F. Visibility ranged from 50', if we were in a channel facing the

outgoing tide, to upwards of 200.'

The variety of species and color was stunning at times, if not



astounding; however, the whale shark and Manta Rays made the trip the bucket list trip it was cranked up to be. I was caught off guard by the abundance of surgeonfish of so many varieties and colors plus the abundance of multiple varieties of triggerfish and parrotfish heretofore unseen. Likewise, I was caught by surprise at the abundance and variety of clownfish and the anemones they love to hide in.

Types of dives. We dove channel lips or entryway openings in the atolls where the current was strongest, along walls that disappeared into the depths, plus steep ledges, overhangs, and small caves covered with soft coral anemones, schools of Damselfish, multiple varieties of





Butterflyfish, Gobies, Anthias,

Cardinal, Squirrel, and Soldierfish, not to mention occasional White Tip Reef Sharks resting on the bottom, sleeping in caves or swimming lazily about, Marbled Stingrays and more; on flat plains studded with hard and soft coral trees and bushes with octopuses. Virtually at all times, we were surrounded by schools of Surgeonfish (Above right), Triggerfish, Snapper, Fusiliers, and Parrotfish large and small. We finned up and down sea mounts where animals, most excitingly Manta Rays, congregated to be cleaned or to feed. I sighted a few varieties of nudibranchs and two varieties of shrimp one of which I could identify—the Barber

Pole or Banded Shrimp—and two Painted Spiny Lobsters. Every once in while, a Moray Eel of some type would pop up or out of its cave and startle us. Three of our dives included **wrecks**. I reached two of them, but half of us dropped down on the wrong side of the sea mount and missed reaching the third wreck because of currents that were too strong from our approach point.

There were two **night dives**. The first involved sitting on the bottom waiting for the nurse sharks to appear. There must have been twenty of them zooming around overhead in front of us, behind us, and between us. After a while, I started looking for other critters to photograph and found an interesting pair of snails in front of me, a beautiful Phyllida nudibranch nearby, an extremely large Mapfish hiding right next to me under a boulder, and a few Bluefin Trevallys and a Giant Trevally that kept circling through our group at a high rate of speed in search of food and leftovers.

The second night dive was at the end of the trip and involved attracting the Manta Rays to our boat. To do that, the high powered search light on the fantail of the mother ship was focused on the water at the stern to attract plankton. At the same time, the divemaster planted about 10-15 high powered



underwater flashlights in a semi circle on the bottom in order to enhance the planktonic attraction for the rays. We submerged and spread out behind the flashlights and awaited the action, which was almost immediate. Two mantas swooped in and began diving, swirling, pirouetting, somersaulting, rolling, and dodging each other, the boat, and us in an attempt to corral as much of the attracted nutrition as possible. It was astonishing. Eventually, 4-5 mantas were roller coasting through the lights and our strobes scooping up large gulps of plankton and having a grand old time. The speed, nimbleness, and agility of the animals was breathtaking.

Whale Sharks and Manta Rays were the biggest attractions of the dive trip. We were fortunate to see one whale shark, despite an entire morning being dedicated to finding them. We were not the only ones. There were at least 3-5 bother boats, loaded with divers, doing the same thing. Eventually, we found a juvenile swimming about at leisurely pace. We all donned our snorkel gear, and jumped in as

quickly as possible to catch up with this baby giant filter feeder, take photographs, and swim along with it as best we could. What a magnificent animal! Another bucket list check!

We had even better luck finding mantas. I began this article with what was not only my first encounter with a manta, but also the first encounter of any one of us divers on this trip. Not long after that experience, we motored to another sea mount where the mantas go to be cleaned by cleaner fish and shrimps (See slide show).

Once underwater, everyone kicked firmly trying to accelerate and hopefully find a good vantage point on the mount from which to view and photograph these magnificent animals without exhausting our



Nitrox. I was not any different and found myself towards the bottom of the mount, unwittingly a bit ahead once again of everyone else. Fortunately, this time my eyes were peeled on the mount and I was able to see the manta heading straight at me with mouth agape. And this time I had sufficient time to point my camera in the right direction and engage its video function; however, I couldn't seem to focus the camera quickly enough and the video that survived was viewable but too unfocused to add to the slideshow, post on Facebook, or include in this article. On the other hand, I was able to shoot other clips and photos successfully, so thankfully not all was lost.

Watching the mantas fly up the mount to be cleaned was like watching a crowd of consumers lining up at 10 a.m. to enter their favorite store and start shopping. If it weren't so unusual a sight for the average person, it might seem almost comical; instead, there is beauty and wonder about the process, as these gentle giants circle in to be cleaned, fly off, circle around, and repeat the process over and over again.It's really quite something to behold.

All too soon this trip came to an end. We enjoyed a send off party, complete with champagne, packed our bags, transferred our luggage and gear to the Dhoni, and were deposited back at the airport where this 10-day live aboard journey began. As suggested above, the captains, dive director, divemasters, chefs, stewards, crew, and engineers were terrific. Couldn't ask for better! All of my dive companions were equally so; however, I especially want to give a shout out to my new German and Aussie/ American friends whose company was an international delight. Many thanks are in order to Andreas, Bianca, Bruce, Emma, Isabella, Ivan, and Dr. Joe who helped me immensely with their photos, suggestions, support, good will, and companionship. It was a bucket list trip that was definitely worth the wait. If I weren't so long in the tooth, a repeat appearance would be in order, but as a poet once wrote, more or less, There are miles to go before I [hang up my fins]. Safe diving and safe living everyone, *Roll* P.S. The slideshow containing the photos and fully functioning video clips depicting the contents of this article and more can be found at this site: <http://www.divecommando.net> Once on the site, just click on the word Maldives.

Happy Memorial Day!



CLUB INFORMATION

Club Hotline: Call or text 617-804-5637.

Don't forget to visit the **club store** at

https://bit.ly/SSN-Store

for the latest in club swag.



Club Officers

and

Board of Directors

	Officers, 2021	
President	Rob Vice	413-265-1977
	robert.vice@gmail.com	
Vice President	Todd Alger	339-236-0736
	todd.alger@gmail.com	
Secretary/Newsletter	Rob Robison	614-546-9018
	robisonr25@yahoo.com	
Treasurer	Theresa Czerepica	617-884-0697
	klukom@yahoo.com	



John Blackadar	781-826-4696
Bill Burchill	781-733-4742
Doug Eaton	617-653-0225
Paul Greene	781-337-5304
Tom Guild	617-484-4204
Ken Hayes	617-462-3920
Tommy Lo	617-515-6109
Jay Theriault	617-620-9221
Chuck Zarba	508-660-2480
Doug Meyer, Alt.1	508-942-7630
Adrienne Murphy, Alt. 2	amarym31@yahoo.com
Matt Meyer, Alt. 3	508-947-7834

May 2021