

New Year's Day Dive

FORT WETHERILL, RI · We lucked out this New Year's Day with air temps in the mid-40s, light wind, and relatively calm seas. Light snow blanketed the ground as we dodged a bullet of a forecasted storm. The water temperature was not bad either - in the low 40s but the visibility was its usual Wetherill-clarity at approx. 2 feet.

20 divers braved the elements to collect the 10 shells required for the drawings. The food was outstanding, as usual, and the raffle was loaded with lots of goodies from as far away as Florida (thanks Rocco!).

(More pictures on page 5.)



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OLD COLONY AMPHIBIANS

*By Jesse Rathier,
submitted by John Stanford*

RI Senate Proposes Reefing Legislation

PROVIDENCE · Nicknamed Little Rhody, the nation's smallest state, Rhode Island, took a giant step forward this month when the senate proposed legislation to authorize the creation of man made reefs in the waters off the states southern coast. Democrat State Senators John J. Tassoni, Jr. with V. Susan Sosnowski and Christopher B. Maselli came together to co-sponsor Senate Bill S2441. This legislation would authorize the State of Rhode Island to accept custody of decommissioned warships from the US Navy and US Maritime Administration for the purpose of sinking a vessel to form an artificial reef.

Known as "reefing", project organizers envision obtaining surplus vessels from as far away as Virginia and towing them into Narragansett Bay. There they will be docked and prepared for sinking at a site somewhere within the waters of Rhode Island or Block Island Sound. USNS Hoyt S. Vandenberg Robert Brousseau, founder of New England Ships2Reefs (NES2R), Inc has teamed with Joe Weatherby, from ReefMakers, Inc who operates in New

Jersey and Florida. Together they have started promoting this first-ever project in RI.

ReefMakers played a key role in the preparation and deployment of the Hoyt S. Vandenberg off the coast of Key West, Florida in 2009. In an interview, Brousseau said, "I want to sink a ship here in RI. Joe (Weatherby) has actually made it happen elsewhere. That's why I chose him to help me navigate the political, financial and environmental hurdles we expect to encounter."

Brousseau and NES2R are beginning the process of seeking out and engaging all stakeholders who have an interest in the effort. Everyone from fishermen to educators to regulators will be asked to offer input into the project in order to extract the maximum possible benefit for the environment and the citizens of Rhode Island. When asked about similar projects undertaken in states out side of New England, Weatherby is quick to point out that a number of states including Florida, New Jersey and California all have aggressive reefing efforts that have shown big pay offs in terms of job



prez box

by Henry Cugno

Spring has sprung and the Tune Up Dive is right around the corner. Time to shake off the winter cold and look forward to another warm weather dive season. Of course, for the Winter Dive Club, it's the end of a dive season but somehow, it doesn't get mourned all that much.

If you haven't already done so, it's time to bring your regulator in for the annual tune up and look over the wet suit for Aqua Seal surgery. Gotta love the anticipation of warm weather. It gets people energized to prepare for spending time outdoors.

The Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) Fishing Show is a sure sign that the warmth will soon be here. Our affiliation with RISAA comes with a free booth at the show every year. This year's OCA booth was well manned and there were quite a few people that stopped by to say hello and talk about diving. Some even seemed serious about joining the club. Maybe Joel will loose the distinction of being the only OCA member ever "caught" at the RISAA Fishing Show.

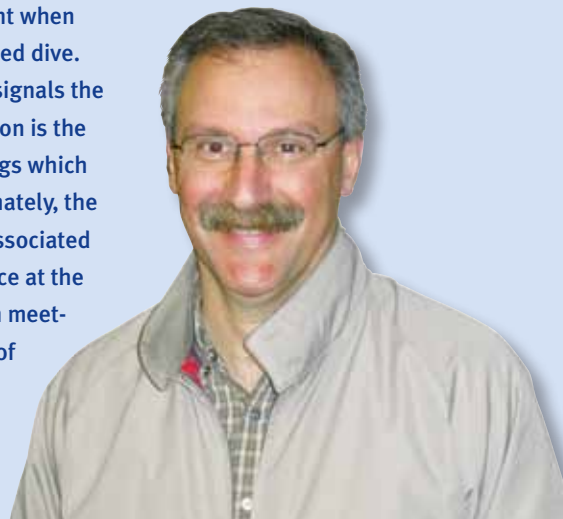
The Dive Planning Committee has wrapped up their planning sessions and the result is a very full schedule of dives. We even have some new twists this year. Look for the "North Shore " dives and the "Hooky" dives on the schedule (inserted into this newsletter). Another new twist is the rating of dives this year. They are rated in similar fashion to ski slopes. Novice, intermediate and advanced. We've talked about doing this for a long time and now it's part of the schedule. All members are encouraged to pay close attention to these ratings and take their certification level along with experience into account when deciding to make a scheduled dive.

The last event that signals the arrival of the new dive season is the start of weekly OCA meetings which began this month. Unfortunately, the rainy spring weather and associated flooding has kept attendance at the first couple of warm season meetings down. Hoping that all of you who experienced some hardship have recovered.

I'm looking forward

to this season more than most. Don't know if it's because of the tough spring we've had or because we have such a full schedule to dive this year. Just feel more anxious than normal. Maybe it's because we've had such great attendance at the winter meetings and I'm anticipating that this will carry through to all events. Maybe it's because it's a Blackbeard's year. Doesn't matter. Just hope to see all of you on, in and under water real soon. The saltwater kind.

Henry C.



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O.C.A. meetings are held every Thursday evening at 7:00 pm. Check the web site below for the location of the next meeting. Winter meetings are held the first and third Thurs. of the month from November 1 thru March 31.

We welcome your articles, notes, cartoons and photos for upcoming issues. Feel free to forward them to:

Old Colony Amphibians
P.O. Box 3742
Attleboro, MA 02703

or: bill@lanedesign.com

www.ocascuba.org

OCA CALENDAR

April 10

- 15** OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm at Kalipso Dive Shop in Smithfield, RI
- 22** OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, Midas Muffler, South Attleboro, MA
- 24** Kalipso "Clean-Up" Event, King's Beach Newport, 11:00 am (Saturday)
- 29** OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, Midas Muffler, South Attleboro, MA

May 10

- 2** Tune-Up Dive, Fort Wetherill, 10:00 am
- 6** OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, Midas Muffler, South Attleboro, MA
- 13** OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, Midas Muffler, South Attleboro, MA
- 14** Friday Night Dive, Fort Wetherill, 7:30 pm
- 20** OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm at Kalipso Dive Shop in Smithfield, RI
- 22** Spring P-Town Weekend, Saturday/Sunday, Horizon's Beach Resort, 508-487-0042
- 27** OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, Midas Muffler, South Attleboro, MA
- 28** Friday Night Dive, Fort Wetherill, 7:30 pm

Rhode Island Fishing Licenses

Who must buy a Rhode Island saltwater license? In order to fish recreationally in Rhode Island's marine waters, and in offshore federal waters, saltwater recreational anglers and spearfishers will need a federal registration, or a Rhode Island state license, or a state license from a reciprocal state. Under federal law, every saltwater angler must be registered. It can be done via the Federal Angler Registry (register online at www.countmyfish.noaa.gov) or through a state license. The Rhode Island license gives everyone the option. Anglers can register for \$7 with Rhode Island or use the Federal Registry. Either will be accepted.

Who is exempt from the license requirement? No license is required for:

- Children under the age of 16 years
- Permanently disabled or blind
- Active duty military on leave
- Holders of a Highly Migratory Species Angling permit
- Anglers fishing on a licensed party or charter boat

What about senior citizens? Residents over age 65 must obtain an annual license, but there is no fee.

Rhode Island License Fees

- Resident.....\$7.00 (annual)
- Nonresident.....\$10.00 (annual)
- Resident (65+ yrs).....No fee (annual)
- Resident/Nonresident 7-day license...\$5.00

How to obtain your license? The Rhode Island Recreational Saltwater License can be obtained ONLINE at www.saltwater.ri.gov (after April 15, 2010). The license will also be available in many area bait & tackle shops by mid-May. A list will be posted as soon as available.

The FEDERAL ANGLER REGISTRY PERMIT (if you do not obtain a Rhode Island License) is available online at www.countmyfish.noaa.gov The Federal permit is free in 2010, but will cost \$15-\$25 in 2011.

I am from MA/CT/NY. Do I need a Rhode Island license? Rhode Island will honor the licenses of all reciprocal states: Connecticut, Massachusetts (starting in January 1, 2011), New York, A Federal Angler Registry permit

I have a RI commercial fishing license. Do I still need a recreational license? An angler who is "fishing recreationally" is required to have a recreational license. If a commercial fisherman decides to go recreational fishing, he will be required to obtain a recreational license. Likewise, if he has a recreational catch aboard (of a species that is closed commercially), he must have a recreational license.

Dan Baker

DUXBURY, MA - Dan has been a member of the OCA since September of 1977 when he paid a \$3 initiation fee plus \$2/month to become a member. He was introduced to the club by John Garzia after starting to dive with John in August of '77. They drove from Foxboro out to Long Point, P-Town and back... in those days you could drive on the beach! They each dove three tanks and John was responsible

for teaching Dan how to filet flounder and later how to catch lobsters. Dan notes that he will be forever grateful to John for introducing him to 'REAL' diving.

Before that, Dan bought his diving equipment and jumped into the water in 1955 using a Northhill double hose regulator and a home-made 1/8 inch wet suit. He tested the wet suit in January at the Braintree Dam. It turned out to be

a very chilling experience due to a loose fit which he later corrected. Divers could not buy wet suits back then; only dry suits were available assembled.

Dan received his NAUI certification from M.I.T. (where he worked) in May of 1970. From then till he met John, he only dove occasionally from shore in Brant Rock, Marshfield and Corporation Beach, Dennis.

He interrupted his OCA membership for a

couple of years when he and Dot moved from Foxboro to Duxbury in 1986 due to the fact he could not attend meetings and be an active member.

Last summer John, Steve Gonslaves and Dan dove once a week all summer long, sometimes in Duxbury, but mostly in P-Town.

If I fish board a charter boat or head boat, do I still need a license?

No. If you fish aboard a LICENSED charter or head boat, you do not need a state saltwater license or federal angler registry permit. Licensed charter & party boats are required to keep their own trip logs, recording the number of anglers, catch, etc. on every trip.

What defines recreational fishing? An individual will be considered to be fishing recreationally if they are engaged in the process of angling or spearfishing, or if they possess equipment used for angling or spearfishing and are also in possession of finfish

I take some friends out fishing on my boat only once a year. Why isn't there a "boat" license? The whole purpose of the federal angler registry or a state saltwater license is to obtain an accurate count of fishermen. A boat license would only count the boat owner, but not provide the number of anglers who fished on that boat all year.

What happens to the money? All money collected from Rhode Island license fees, other than \$2 commission paid to the vendors, will be deposited into a restricted receipt account, mandated by law, and can be used ONLY for the following purposes: Administering and enforcing the recreational fishing license program, Managing Rhode Island's marine recreational fisheries, with particular reference to improving state-based fishery catch and effort statistics and stock assessments, Enhancing recreational fishing opportunities

The fees collected by the FEDERAL ANGLER REGISTRY will go into the federal general fund, and NOT paid back to the recreational fishery, so purchasing a Rhode Island license will be an investment in the future of the sport.

Accountability of the funds On an annual basis, RIDEM must prepare a report that details the number of recreational fishing licenses issued, the amount of license fee revenue received, the expenditures made during the prior year using that money, and how RIDEM plans to use the revenue during the next year. The report shall also include additional information relating to administration and enforcement of the program and the status of recreational fishing stock assessments.

This annual report must be presented to the R.I. Marine Fisheries Council, and RIDEM must conduct one or more public meetings to solicit input from recreational anglers and the general public. The Fisheries Council shall annually prepare an addendum to this report, setting forth the Council's recommendations for modifying the program.

This final report must be presented annually to the R.I. General Assembly.



Continued from front cover.

RI Reef Legislation

creation and documented benefits to the marine eco system. Asked if RI could expect similar benefit pay-offs in the often cold waters of New England, Brousseau said that the Yukon, a decommissioned Canadian warship sent to the bottom in San Diego, CA is also in a cold water environment. That project continues to pay off in terms of increased biomass and dollars. He also noted that all communities with ship-to-reef programs have reported the creation of jobs and sales tax dollars as ecotourists, recreational fishermen and SCUBA divers come from around the world to visit these sites. Weatherby also recalled reported success in places as far afield as Plymouth England, another cold water site of a ship-to-reef project. There, project organizers report approximately \$38 million (USD) in gross commerce with over 42,000 divers having visited the ex-HMS Scylla. That represents over 7,000 dive boat trips since 2004.

The process of identifying and transferring custody of a vessel coupled with preparing it to conform to EPA Best Management Standards and then sinking it in RI waters is expected to take approximately 3 years. The bulk of the funds contracted out will cover the cost of transport and will go toward pier services and laborers used for cleaning up hazardous materials including oils, fuels and PCB's found in items like electronic equipment. Engineers will also be hired to study ship drawings and open holes in the ship. These openings are essential for the even-keeled sinking of the vessel to ensure an upright settling on the ocean floor.

Said Weatherby, "the real significance in terms of job creation and tourism will come after the ship is sent to the bottom". After 'Sink-Day', there are no further costs to the project or the State. In fact, the State can expect to receive revenue from the site for the next 100 years!"

Asked why he is so passionate about the project, Brousseau explained; "I see two problems facing our fellow Rhode Islanders today that this effort will help improve. The first is our high unemployment rate and sluggish economy. The second problem is an environmental one. This project will focus world-wide media attention on RI, create jobs right here at home and the ship will provide a breeding ground for new marine life, both plant and animal, for years to come."

"My entire adult life has revolved around all things in and of the sea. I am fascinated by anything that involves the majesty of our oceans." A 28 year retired Navy veteran, Brousseau is currently employed by the US Navy as a research engineer. He also founded Simply Scuba, LLC, another RI based business, where he teaches SCUBA diving to the public. He is also the New England Course Director for the Handicapped Scuba Association (HSA). "I love to teach", says Brousseau. "Nothing is more gratifying than having the ability to show people the beauty hidden beneath the waves and experience the adventure

offered by the underwater realm. Teaching folks with disabilities is especially wonderful when I can help someone bound to a wheelchair on land, fly in the gravity free environment of the open sea. Beyond that, as a life long resident of RI, I recognize that the people of this state need help (job creation). This project is a win-win for everyone involved – it's good for the economy and the ecology of RI."

In closing, both Brousseau and Weatherby said they were marveled by the leadership and foresight shown by the bills sponsors and by everyone they encountered during recent visits to the Statehouse. "Without exception, everyone we have spoken to over recent weeks have been gracious and supportive." Brousseau added, "From Secretary of State Mollis, DEM Director Dr. Sullivan and all of the Senators who gave of their time for us to speak with them, everyone has shown great interest. However, in order for us to get this legislation passed, we need state and community support. We will create jobs and we will improve diving and fishing opportunities while filling local hotels and restaurants. The beauty is that the environment wins too. But to make this happen, Rhode Islanders will need to contact their representatives to voice their support. We have been very honored by the reception we have received at the Statehouse. Every Rhode Islander will be pleasantly surprised how accessible and eager our representatives are to hear from us. We urge all RI citizens to visit www.rilin.state.ri.us/Senate/ to locate and email letters of support to their Senator."

Author, Jesse Rathier is currently enrolled as a Business Management student at the Providence campus of Johnson and Wales University.

*Letters of support may also be sent to
New England Ships2Reef
P.O. Box 5138
Newport, RI 02841*



New Year's Day Dive



Photos provided by:
Connie Rogers,
Jim Brady
and Peggy Lane

Thank you!



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51st Annual Banquet

*Celebrating
51 years of diving
by John Stanford*



EAST GREENWICH, RI - On Saturday, January 30, 2010, we held the 51st Annual Banquet of the Old Colony Amphibians at the nautically themed Chelo's on The Waterfront overlooking beautiful Greenwich Bay. By my count we had 56 members in attendance. The night was typically cold and dark for a Saturday night in late January, but those who arrived early could still catch the last glimpses of daylight over the bay. The venue is fairly small so it fit our whole group easily but didn't seem too big and we had the whole place to ourselves (this Chelo's location is only open as a restaurant during the Summer).

During the cocktail hour we were entertained by the sounds of violin and piano music by Sandi Martineau and Ron Procopio, friends of Connie's. Everyone (from what I could see) enjoyed the hors d'oeuvres of cheese & crackers, stuffed mushrooms and scallops wrapped in bacon. As folks were enjoying their favorite libations, the banquet committee finished setting up the prize tables and side show. Promptly at 7:00 the buffet was served by the very capable banquet staff. Max provided background music through his iPod connected to the PA system and Janet played the slideshow consisting of slides taken by members at club events throughout the years. After dinner, Henry, Bill Lane and I shared emcee duties. After the votes for best pictures and artifact of the year were tabulated, we proceeded to present the awards. Member of the Year went to the lovely **Connie Rogers** for her tireless support and enthusiasm. New Member of the Year went to **Jim Cherubini** for his enthusiasm.

We gave out two Special Awards this year: "Grillmaster" went to **Jay Broulard** for always being the Captain of the Grill at club events. "First Mate" award went to **Deb McManus** for her support of various club events (especially the annual family day).

- Biggest Massachusetts fish went to no one.
- Biggest Rhode Island Fish went to **Ian**
- Biggest Massachusetts Lobster went to **Steve Gonsalves**
- Biggest Rhode Island Lobster went to **Rocco** for his monster
- Artifact of the Year went to yours truly
- Best Photos went to **Betsy and I**

We then gave recognition for years of membership for various members ranging from 5 to 50 years. We gave out little Brass Membership Pins suitable for wearing on your hat, lapel or wherever you like...

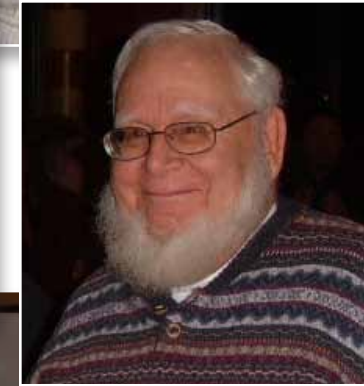
We then moved on to the infamous Foggy Mask awards. As always, these produced copious amounts of laughter. Just remember, no one is immune and there is no statute of limitations when it comes to the Foggy Mask. This concluded the evening's events.

I would like to take the time to express my deepest appreciation to the following people, without whom I would have been lost: (These are in no particular order.. well except Karen.)

- Karen Stanford**
- Janet MacCausland**
- Max Arias**
- Jim Brady**
- Terry Carragher**
- Bill Lane**
- Henry Cugno**
- Connie & Tom Rogers**
- The Staff at Chelo's**
- Dick Will**
- Charlene Mallinson and Louie Pitas**

Foggy Mask Awards

- Bob McManus** - Beer-enhanced thermometer
- Eric Lawson** - First Wreck & 'Drift' Dive
- Dick Will** - Silent Bars & Cheap Beer
- Jim Cherubini** - If I was a key, where would I be?
- Ian Campbell** - Ramp Etiquette
- Eric Alphonse** - Check 'yar' gas
- Bill Weedon** - Body shop award
- Rocco Santurri** - Diced onion police
- Bill Turner** - Any excuse to hug your buddy!
- Louis Pitas** - ~~Buddy~~... Body Line System
- Joel Deschamps** - Row vs. Schlepp



Photos provided by Jim Brady

Thank you Jim!





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