

Black Beards 2010

Wow!

NASSAU, BAHAMAS • On Friday, November 5th 2010, the trip that Ed Packhem had been talking about for two years finally got under way. 12 OCA members descended on the Bahamas using different routes. We were all in Nassau by Friday evening. The group included Ian Campbell, Jim Cherubini, Eric Alphonse, Bill Lane, Tom Gagne, Ed Packhem, Randy Shore, Joan and Wayne Wallace, Bill Weedon, John Garzia and me. Unfortunately, Rocco was a last minute scratch because of a cold that decided to turn into walking pneumonia. Rocco's set back wasn't the only thing making the start of this trip difficult. We all had been tracking the progress of hurricane Tomas and although, it didn't look like it was going to cancel the trip, it could impact our live aboard's course.

After checking into the hotel, Friday evening's activities included dinner at the Fish Fry, an area of Nassau along the water where there are numerous restaurants and clubs. We dined at fresco and watched a parade of tourists along the walkway getting chased by local vendors trying to sell their wares. Everything from jewelry to cigars was offered. The service at the restaurant was a little tough

Continued on page 4



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OLD COLONY SCUBA DIVERS ASSOCIATION

How I Spent My November Vacation

NASSAU, BAHAMAS • I travel often with my husband. We are still relative newlyweds so I often go along with his desires when it comes to picking out what to do and where to go. Since learning to scuba several years ago much of our time is spent on or in the water. Thank goodness we met sailing so being on the water is not a foreign place for

me. We booked with Blackbeard's Cruises with much optimism for a wonderful trip. I packed my books, my iPod, my knitting and my Texas. I was ready to enjoy my alone time on board and off.

More on page 7.

Or how I spent
6 days with 20 guys!
By Joan Wallace





prez box

by Henry Cugno

This will be my last Prezbox. Hard to believe that two years have gone by but I'll talk about that a little later.

Well this dive year is officially a wrap. We are into the Winter Dive Club season and the only thing left on the 2010 schedule is the Christmas party at the Weedon's. This was a season of ups and downs governed by the weather. Although the sun shined, the wind kept us from completing a full dive schedule. We also had some of the usual dive boats out of the game (mine included) which had an effect on the dive schedule. But, the OCA still completed most of the dives on the schedule and then some. Our reputation is intact. We are a dive club that does a lot of diving.

We had a great time on the water and off. P-Town, Winter Island, Friday Nights, Checker Club, Kill 'n Grill, Family Day and other well attended events are proof of that. Then we ended the season with Blackbeard's attended by twelve OCA members. The most ever for this trip (we missed you Rocco)!

During 2010, our membership continued to increase. We need to thank the local dive shops that we support along with the usual OCA Ambassadors for spreading the word about OCA. We welcomed the new

faces as we always do and enjoyed sharing our dive experiences along with the usual historical OCA stories. The new faces are still around so I guess the stories haven't scared them off. We also saw some old faces return to the club after being away for some years and that was as rewarding as seeing the new folks come in.

Things continue to look up for the OCA. Our New Year's Day Dive and banquet are just around the corner. There have been new boat purchases and old boats getting repaired and what are the odds that we'll have two windy seasons in a row? There's plenty to be hopeful for and look forward to. Let's not forget about the hearty souls in the Winter Dive Club who promise to report on dives through the winter - they'll keep us talking about diving until the next season comes along.

Now I'd like to reflect on the last two years I have spent as club president. It's been a blast! I have had more fun doing this than I ever thought it would be. Fun, friends and family are what this club is all about. We share the love of SCUBA diving but more importantly share our friendship and our families with each other. It's been that way since 1959. Truly something we should all be very proud of.

So, time to say a few words of thanks. First, thanks to the officers of the OCA. Connie Rogers, you've been a great VP and have continued to be the lead ambassador for the club. Terry Carragher, you make the rest of us think that your job as Treasurer is easy but running the money

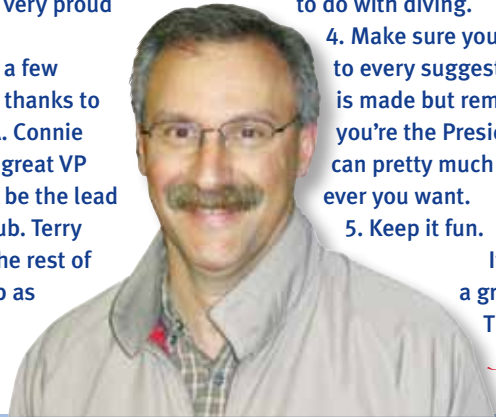
functions of any organization takes time and effort. Bill Lane, your organization as Secretary makes it easy to find and disperse information and although you have always been sitting on my left at club meetings, you might as well have been my right arm for the last two years. Both I and the OCA owe you folks a debt of gratitude for your service.

Second, thanks to you, the members of the OCA for continuing the tradition of camaraderie that has been instilled in this club from the beginning. It's kept us going since 1959 and is the core of what will move the club forward.

Since this is the last chance I get at the bully pulpit, I'm going to take this opportunity to offer some advice to the next person that holds this office (you didn't think I was going to continue getting mushy without taking some last shots, did you?). Here goes:

1. Use the gavel (it's fun).
2. Avoid committees. If someone has a job to do, let them do it.
3. Get rid of the Miscellaneous segment at club meetings (it really wasn't my favorite part of the meeting). It's kind of like all those emails club members like to circulate that have nothing to do with diving.
4. Make sure you listen to every suggestion that is made but remember; you're the President. You can pretty much do what ever you want.
5. Keep it fun.

It's been a great run. Thanks.
Henry



Boat Ramps Green River

*Well, take me back down where cool water flows, yeah. Let me remember things I love ...
... love to kick my feet 'way down the shallow water. And if you get lost come on home to Green River. Wellllllll! Come on home.*

Credence Clearwater Revival (John Fogerty)

My brother Chris and I took the opportunity on Memorial Day to launch my 14' inflatable boat "Lily Pad" (named after our Golden Retriever, Lily) from the Green River boat ramp in Newport, RI. It's about a quarter mile east of Kings Beach along Ocean Avenue. A stupid little sign hanging from a chain says "Private - keep off my rocks". But apparently it is a public ramp. Not suitable for a bigger boat, but perfect for an inflatable or kayak. There is ample parking just about 100 feet beyond the ramp near the bridge. But watch out for the signs between the ramp and the bridge that say "no parking either side."

We did two short dives on a single tank of air (each diver had their own aqualung of course). The first dive was at the arches at Gooseberry Island, and the second one at the Bird Island off of King's Beach. To get to Goosberry Island, take a left out of the Green River cove; to get to Kings Beach, take a right. Each is about a quarter-mile boat ride, easily accessible with a kayak or inflatable. That Bird Island at King's Beach smells really bad, so I wouldn't recommend it. But for advanced divers, you can get out to Seal Ledge easily from there, and there is great diving all along the South Shore of Newport. It was the first time we launched out of there, and what a pleasant surprise on a beautiful day. After the first dive, we just kind of drifted in front of the Goosberry Beach and took in the day. It's a great spot to eat lunch. Look out for rocks though, which are everywhere, but marked well on the GPS chartplotter.

Bill Weedon



My First Spearo!



CAPE COD BAY • A summer of firsts for me: my first speared fish (Tautog), first speared Bahama lobster (note: no one else on the trip speared anything... 'course it was just barely legal but legal none the less) and both while freediving! I'm hooked! *Bill L.*



And, my 2.25 bagged in Cape Cod Bay waters.

The Joe Memorial Dive 2010

Location **Fort Wetherill**
Date **10/24/2010**
Time **8:00am**
No. Divers **11**
Temp **50**
Air **50**
Vis **0**
Yes **Great fun!**
Yes **Great Food!**
And a moment of silence for Joe



A huge thank you to all that came and supported this Memorial Dive.

Alan



OCA CALENDAR

jan 11

- 6** OCA Meeting, Election of 2011 Officers 7:00 pm, Midas Muffler, South Attleboro, MA
- 20** OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, Midas Muffler, South Attleboro, MA
- 29** OCA Annual Banquet, Chelo's, Masthead Drive, Apponaug, RI (See flyer enclosed for details)

feb 11

- 3** OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, Midas Muffler, South Attleboro, MA
- 17** OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, To be determined
- 26** The Boston Scuba Show (See flyer back panel for details)

mar 11

- 3** OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, Midas Muffler, South Attleboro, MA
- 4-6** Boston Sea Rovers, Crowne Plaza Boston North Shore, Danvers, Massachusetts
- 17** OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, To be determined
- 27** The Boston Scuba Show (See flyer back panel for details)
- 31** Winter Dive Club ends!

...and don't forget that Summer OCA meeting schedule starts April 1.

OCA OFFICERS

- PRESIDENT **Henry Cugno**
- VICE PRESIDENT **Connie Rogers**
- SECRETARY **Bill Lane**
- TREASURER **Terry Carragher**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Joel Deschamps** 10-11
- Alan Reilly** 10-11
- Bill Weedon** 10-11
- Ian Campbell** 09-10
- Fred LeBlanc** 09-10
- Bill Turner** 09-10

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



but the food was good and we certainly witnessed much of the local color that becomes part of any travel experience. Although our evening was enjoyable, I was ready to get on the boat and on the water.

The next day, we made our way to Blackbeard's dock by noon. We boarded the 65' Morning Star, got our bunk assignments and stowed our gear. This motor/sailor would be our home, transportation and dive platform for the next week. The captain introduced the crew and let them say a few words about themselves. Captain Grayson was a Floridian that had been at Blackbeard's for 10 years – the longest tenure at Blackbeard's of any other crew member. First Mate Jamie was a very quiet English fellow who also had a captain's license. Engineer Andy was from our neck of the woods and the comic of the bunch keeping us entertained for the entire trip. Dive Master Tavia was a young woman from South Africa with a charming accent and personality to match. Our Cook for the trip, Jess, was another young woman from Iowa with a great personality and culinary skills that would keep our stomachs full and happy for the week ahead. You could tell from the start that this crew knew and liked each other quite well.

Along with the introduction of the crew came a briefing on our trip. Hurricane Tomas would prevent us from leaving at the normal time that afternoon. Instead, Grayson would give us a breathing lesson associated with free diving that afternoon, allow us to see more of the local sites that evening and shove off at 8am the following morning after breakfast. This would give Tomas enough time to move off and subside to a point where it would be safer to leave port. Some of us took advantage of the free diving lesson involving breathing techniques while others napped. Some of us went to the casino that evening after dinner. I stayed behind to talk with our crew and Red, who was the captain of Pirate's Lady, the sister ship of Morning Star. Red was our captain on the last Blackbeard's trip. He loved his cigarettes and I joined him for a smoke with a cigar that was purchased from one of the street vendors of the Fish Fry. The wind was still howling and I was beginning to wonder if we would really leave the following morning.

Sunday morning came and although it still seemed pretty windy, we left the dock on schedule. We made a long run east in some pretty heavy stuff. The seas weren't that big but the wind was blowing. This is where Grayson began to show his experience. He got us to three dive locations that first day where none of us thought we would see one. Hammerhead Gulch was the typical check out dive where the dive master sees what she's going to be dealing with for the

trip. The OCA had most of the boat but we shared it with some interesting folks. Paula and Tom were a couple from Maryland on their first trip away from home after having their second child. Jamie, was a retired Navy gentleman from Michigan traveling on his own. Bob was a photo journalist from



Capt'n Grayson freedives for some dinner.

the LA Times with more camera equipment than the rest of us put together. All would become good friends of the OCA by trip's end. The next dive was Flat Rock Reef, which was much like the first dive, and then we did our first wall dive. Pillar Wall gave us a peek at what the rest of the trip would be like. I've never done very much wall diving but I'm a big fan now. Although, this wasn't a very deep dive, we still got the notion of reaching the edge of the world where the ocean drops off to infinity. The rest of the trip would be punctuated with wall dives.

The weather on the second day improved but was still windy and somewhat overcast. I got four dives in that day. This was Bob's birthday. Bob makes it a point to have an exotic experience every year on his birthday. He doesn't celebrate with friends and family. He celebrates with strangers. So, after devouring Jess's birthday cake creation, we celebrated Bob's birthday with a night dive. I had passed on the fourth dive of the day in favor of making the same dive at night. The site, Through The Hoops, would be a dive of three; myself, Bob and Tom, who would be making his very first night dive. The rest of the boat would dive into some rum punch. The three of us jumped in and descended to the coral heads below as Paula



Jim Cheubini, Ed Packhem and John Garzia flying through the Washing Machine dive.

nervously watched her husband make his first night dive. The reports on the previous dive included accolades on the many swim throughs available so I started looking for some as soon as we reached the bottom. We saw much fish life including spotted morays, sleeping parrots and rays and we did find some swim throughs. I reached the entrance to one of them and started in thinking it would be the same as the others we had experienced but this would be a little different. Tom followed me in with Bob bringing up the rear. I made the first turn thinking that would be it but then came another and another and we were still inside the swim through. The further we went, the more I was hoping this was a swim through and not a dead end. Things were getting a little tight and I was concentrating

on a flutter kick to keep from stirring this up. Finally, I saw an opening which, although a tight squeeze, was our way out. That swim through was probably around fifty or sixty feet long and was exhilarating. When we got back to the boat, we were greeted by a very relieved Paula who had been watching our dive lights from above. She had seen them disappear for a very long time as we were going through the last swim through and was getting increasingly concerned. In the end, I had experienced one of the best night

dives ever, Tom had his first night dive under his belt and Bob stayed true to his birthday celebration ritual. We were true dive buddies now. Something I'll remember for a long time.

The rest of the trip included a variety of great diving. The conditions were also great. Visibility was surprisingly good given the windy conditions and water temps were in the mid to high 70's. The weather on the third day improved to what we all had

Continued on page 6.



We befriended four divers: Bob from LA, Jamie from Michigan and Tom & Paula from Maryland.



Tavia, Paula McGee, Eric, Ed, Henry, Tom McGee and John Garzia exhausted from feeding the iguanas.



Continued from page 5.

hoped. The sun was shining brightly, the temperature rose and the wind died. It stayed that way for the rest of the trip.

Cobia Cage was a dive on a fish farming experiment that is no longer in operation. The experiment is over but what remains is the structure used for fish farming for the Island School, a school on a completely self supporting island in the chain of Exumas. The structure is at the edge of yet another wall so this is two dives in one. Not like anything you will ever see anywhere else in the world. The Washing Machine was a drift dive that's more like an amusement park ride than anything else. It occurs between two islands and needs to be made at just the right time in the tide to get the maximum effect. Once again, Grayson's experience put us in the right place at the right time. We followed Tavia into the water commando style, jumping in all at once. She towed a tag line with a float that would be used at the end of the dive to gather us all together. Andy was the last one in and would be the safety net for anyone who might need one. This was

a wild ride as we flew through varying structure between the islands. Up, down, sideways and backwards, we found out why they call it the Washing Machine.

The dive ended on a small reef and by that time, we had traveled a couple of miles. Again, this was a unique experience.

We continued to dive on walls, reefs and even a couple of blue holes for the rest of the trip. We saw turtles, sharks, rays and a myriad of smaller fish life. Some of the reefs were silted over from the weather and others were clean. The crew took excellent care of us.

Like all good things our diving came to an end as we approached Nassau. The final day of diving included a blue hole and a pristine reef not far from port. It was the perfect way to end the diving portion of our trip but the trip wasn't quite over yet.

Shore night on these trips is either a forgettable or unforgettable experience depending on how much you participate. The crew was going to take us to their favorite watering hole but first decided to get us primed with some refreshment on board the Morning Star. This, somehow, led to the arrival of a disco ball on deck and the light show began. How we arrived on a disco theme is unknown but it seemed to catch on with some interesting results. Without getting into details (need to leave something to talk about at meetings), the party moved on to Crazy Johnny's. The name of the place should say it all. The only patrons were Blackbeard's crew and guests from Morning Star and Pirate's Lady. The crew tends to let their hair down at this point in the travel experience since they've all gotten to know us by now and have worked like dogs for the entire trip. They needed to cut loose and they did. Some of us left early and some of us stayed until closing but the crew went beyond that. Good for them. They deserved a good night out.

There was little evidence of the previous evening's festivities on the morning of our last day as the crew and breakfast were ready promptly at 7am. We packed our gear and said our good byes wishing we didn't have to. Back to the real world which makes us appreciate these trips all the more. So we scattered, once again, to make our way back home along separate paths. We will remember the diving, new friends we made and excellent crew of the good ship Morning Star but most of all, we will remember the good times we had together in typical OCA style.

I'm sure Ed Packhem won't let us forget about this experience and it won't be long before he starts talking about the next Blackbeard's trip. This trip seems to be getting more popular amongst the OCA membership. So, I'll be making my first contribution to the vacation club account at the next OCA meeting.

Henry

6 Black Beard's 2010 continued



Jim Cherubini returns from another spectacular dive.

Eddie rests his back on Iguana Island and reflects on the upcoming New Year's Day Dive this winter.



Continued from front cover.

Hurricane 'Tomas' was our first hurdle. The high seas and heavy winds kept me from reading those first few days, the sea spray was making things pretty wet! I did do a little knitting, many of the guys were wondering about my iron stomach as we bobbed along! Little did they know that I was taking Bonine every night! We were all huddled in the back of the boat during our transports from place to place, everyone quiet, trying to stay dry and warm. Luckily, by day 3 the sun was out shining and things were looking up!

Living aboard is a little like camping, tight quarters, living much of your day on deck with everyone else. There are not too many places to hide. The days started with 'rise and shine' at 7 am for breakfast and the guys were in the water by 8. I have a custom of kissing Wayne before he splashes and wishing him a good and safe dive. I'm sure that after the 5th or 6th dive it was getting old for some, others longing for equal treatment from their love one. Once out of the water we would review all that he had seen and relive the experience. It was this in-between time that I thought I'd find enough time to do some reading or maybe get ashore but the rolling entry into the water meant there was a rolling exit as well. I started out being Wayne's wife, but ended up being the boat wife. Who needed a zip or had left their gloves on the bow or their camera on their bunk...then when they came out I heard many a tale of underwater experiences. It was wonderful!

As soon as everyone was in the boat we were off again to a new dive spot. We did this 4 or 5 times a day. I went ashore once, finished one book, did a little knitting but mostly enjoyed getting to know the members of the group. The guys were great to me, talking to me about their families and work lives. I thoroughly enjoyed their diversity as well as their love for diving and respect for each other. I'm not sure I'd do this trip again, but I'm glad I went this time. Oh, I forgot to tell you, Wayne's taking me to Tuscany to see Andrea Bocelli for our next vacation....

Joan Wallace

FORT WETHERILL, JAMESTOWN • After a nasty Nor'easter 5 days earlier, our 26th Annual New Year's Day Dive was held under sunny skies and upper 40s to lower 50s temperatures. Unfortunately, the visibility wasn't so great caused primarily from a rough week of stormy seas. 12 divers braved the elements including two divers who saw our activities and signed up for the event.

Many thanks to the Board of Directors for organizing the event and special thanks to Bill Turner for his time, trailer and unlimited gung-ho OCA spirit! What would we do without Bill Turner!?

7 26th Annual New Year's Day Dive 2011



THE BOSTON SCUBA SHOW



The Underwater Club of Boston

Presents the 60th edition of **THE BOSTON SCUBA SHOW**

Saturday, February 26, 2011 - 9 am to 3 pm

Holiday Inn and Resort (always FREE PARKING)

Junction of Rtes 495 and 20

Marlboro, Massachusetts

Directed by Alan Budreau; assisted by The EMMY Award winning team of Linda and Kerry Hurd

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DIVING THE GREAT LAKES with Dallas Edmiston

Applaud the Paul Revere Spike Award to

John Blackadar and **The South Shore Neptunes Underwater Recovery Team**

Tickets at \$25 each will be available at the door on the day of the show, or in advance by writing to: Cecile Christensen, 2 Ocean Ave (1-H), Gloucester, MA 01930. Checks payable to Cecile Christensen

www.ocascuba.org



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