



New Year's Day Dive 2009

FORT WETHERILL, RI · 13 divers and many non-diving participants enjoyed a sunny but freezing start to the new year during our annual event. That northwest wind swung around to the southwest mid-afternoon but didn't usher in any warm tropic air that's for sure. Great prizes donated by generous local dive shops were raffled off to an audience of about 30+ ticket holders. Prizes included air cards, gift certificates, dive gear, hats, tee shirts and lots of dive parapher-

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ON THE LINE

vol 50 · no 1
jan · feb 09



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OLD COLONY AMPHIBIANS

Published in the East Bay Newspapers about our Vice President John Stanford, written by Ted Hayes.

the trajan

NEWPORT, RI · To the untrained eye, the scene that greeted John Stanford and Mark Munro 30 feet beneath Newport Harbor Saturday, Dec. 6, wouldn't have looked like much: A massive pile of concretion and timbers covered in algae, seaweed, barnacles and anemones that rose up eight feet off the bottom and faded off into the murky distance. But for the two hardcore wreck divers and maritime historians, the modest scene was pay dirt: They'd found the long-lost Trajan, a 125-foot bark loaded with lime that sank August 17, 1867. The Trajan, one of thousands of ships that have gone down in Rhode Island waters since the days of the colonists, had been all but forgotten in the 141 years since she was lost. The men's discovery that chilly December morning was the culmination of years of research, hard work and more than a bit of luck. "As soon as we hit the bottom I knew we'd found it," said Mr. Munro, an amateur shipwreck hunter who works as a technician at a nuclear power plant in Connecticut. "Ultimately, it's a mystery until you find it and when you close the page on that

mystery, it's just a good feeling." "It was a thrill, to see it all the way through from nothing to actually seeing her on the bottom," added Mr. Stanford, a Jamestown resident who'd heard stories of the Trajan for years and had always hoped to find her.

THE TRAJAN The divers' discovery of the Trajan revives an important, but often overlooked, part of Rhode Island maritime history. While searches for Revolutionary-era frigates dominate much of the discussion around Narragansett Bay wrecks, the Trajan has more in common with the thousands of other wrecks that dot Rhode Island waters than her more famous counterparts. Named for the Roman emperor Trajan, she measured 125 feet in length, was nearly 30 feet in the beam and drew 13 feet of water. Built in 1856 in the H. Merriam yard in Rockland, Maine, she was one of many vessels that transported freight up and down the East Coast, Cuba, New Orleans and beyond in the days when maritime freight played a key role

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The purpose of the Old Colony Amphibians is to further the sport of skin and scuba diving for the enjoyment of its members while at the same time promoting safety and sportsmanship.

OCA OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
Henry Cugno
VICE PRESIDENT
John Stanford
SECRETARY
Bill Lane
TREASURER
Terry Carragher

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Ian Campbell 09-10
Bill Turner 09-10
Fred LeBlanc 09-10
Jim Cherubini 08-09
Max Arias 08-09
Jim Brady 08-09

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:

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www.ocascuba.org

Henry's first letter to the Members of the Old Colony Amphibians.

prez box

by Henry Cugno



As I sit down to write my first Prez Box, I find myself thinking about the banquet that just began our 50th year. I think about the stories that were told by Everett Carpenter, Bob Cartier and Earl King on how the club began, the early days of the club and some of the dives that were made. I think about the adventures that these founders experienced while pioneering a sport that few people understood or even knew about.

Then I think about the OCA today. We create plenty of new stories each season and experience the same adventures that our founders shared. Although, our sport has seen plenty of changes in technology that

make it safer and easier to enjoy, one thing remains the same; the thrill of visiting the world under the surface of the ocean is still there. And the OCA visits that world often.

As we are proud of our founders and the history of the club, it's clear that they are proud that the OCA is still diving after 50 years. Rocco reminded me that we truly have something special. Any time one of us wants to go diving, another OCA member is there to go with them, and one of us always wants to go diving. That's why we've lasted as long as we have.

I also think about the fact that any club that has lasted as long as the OCA, has done so with strong leadership and that makes me realize, even more, the responsibility I now have as your new President. I have some big shoes to fill. So, I'll start by promising to try my best to do as good a job as the past Presidents that got us here. Many of them have become close

friends and I'll count on that friendship for advice from time to time.

It's an exciting time for the OCA in 2009. Thanks to Ian Campbell, we have a home. Even though we're spreading some of our meetings to local dive shops, it's nice to know we have a regular place to meet. Thanks to Connie Rogers, we have a growing membership – no pressure Connie, but you did get the Ambassador Award so keep up the good work. Thanks to the OCA Captains, we have plenty of boats to dive from and.....

.....thanks to the OCA family we have a thriving club that 'further the sport of skin and scuba diving for the enjoyment of its members while at the same time promoting safety and sportsmanship'.

I guess we're all lucky to be at the right place at the right time.

Wow! I can't begin to tell you all how thrilled I was, and still am, to receive a Lifetime Member Award. I can't believe I'm in the echelon with names like Ray Baril, Everett Carpenter, Bob Cartier, Earl King and Art Legere, Bob Demers, John Garzia, Steve Gonsalves, Don Marshall, Bud Memhardt, Rocco Santurri, Dick Will, and Bill Turner.

And to make the presentation even sweeter, it was awarded to me during the 50th Anniversary Banquet. In attendance at the function were some of our original charter members including Everett Carpenter, Bob Cartier, Earl King, Art Legere and Dick Will. I wish I had had the where-with-all to be able to put this small letter of appreciation into words when I received the award but quite frankly, I was stunned. Thank you **ALL** very much, **BILL LANE**

Ed Fava is looking for dive students - beginner and/or advanced - in order to fulfill the requirements for his NAUI Dive Instructor certificate. His eMail is emf@tcmil.us if you or someone you know is about to take a dive lesson.

WORTH WATCHING: *Sharkwaters*, Documentarian Rob Stewart dives into shark-filled seas to disprove fear-based stereotypes and raise awareness of the world's dwindling shark population. Excellent footage and story! I got it through Netflix. - Bill Lane

OCA CALENDAR

mar09

- 5** Winter Meeting at Giant Stride Dive Shop, Warwick, 7:00pm
- 7-9** Sea Rovers Convention
Fairmont Copley Plaza, Boston
- 19** Winter Meeting at Ian's Midas Muffler Shop, South Attleboro, 7:00pm 2009 Dive Event planning session immediately following an abbreviated meeting.
- 27** Beneath the Sea Expo, Meadowlands, NJ. For more information, check out: <http://www.beneaththesea.org/>

apr09

- 2** Summer OCA Meetings commence, 7:00pm every Thursday evening until November.
- 3-5** RISAA Fishing Show, RI Convention Center We'll have a booth there again to promote the club. If you are interested in helping to "man" the booth, please contact Henry ASAP.
- 19** Tune-Up Dive in conjunction with Giant Strides Earthday party behind the Eisenhower House, Fort Adams, Newport. Times and details to be determined.





From Bob Cartier's photo collection. OCA divers at Nubble Light in Maine, January, 1969.

Published in the Attleboro Sun Chronicle, 01.22.09 written by Mark Flanagan

Divers club getting better, not older.

The term "extreme sports" hadn't even been coined in 1959, but skin diving was one back then.

Famed ocean explorer Jacques Cousteau and engineer Emile Gagnon had invented the Aqualung 16 years earlier, but the idea of self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (SCUBA), finally setting deep-sea divers free from heavy suits and air hoses, caught on less than instantly.

Some sources cite a 1953 National Geographic magazine spread on skin diving and a French underwater movie released the same year as the starting points for public attention to SCUBA gear. National notice had surely arrived by 1958, when "Sea Hunt," a deep-sea diving-themed television show starring Lloyd Bridges, hit the air waves.

Months later, in 1959, a club for skin-diving enthusiasts in the greater Attleboro area formed — the Old Colony Amphibians. The bet from here is that some local folks wrote skin diving off as a passing fad and bet the club would never last. If they're still around, they can eat their words Saturday night. That's when the OCA will celebrate its 50th anniversary.

There'll be a lot of stories to tell at the half-century celebration at the Johnson & Wales Inn in Seekonk (cocktails at 6, dinner at 7), judging from a couple shared by retired Attleboro firefighter and longtime OCA member Earl King, when he dropped by a few days ago.

At the top of King's list is a 1973 dive when he and Arthur Legere, with a dozen other OCA members and six from the Boston Sea Divers, toured the wreckage of U-58, a German submarine sunk by the Navy off Point Judith, R.I., after it torpedoed the USS Black Point, a coal carrier, on May 5, 1945, in the closing days of World War II.

With limited visibility in

the 125-foot depths, King and Legere came up with the prize of the day, the sub's gyrocompass.

Another memorable dive was undertaken at the behest of state police, who called on OCA members to examine stolen cars disposed of in a deep quarry as part of an organized crime investigation.

The Amphibians club also became a valued resource for police and fire departments around Sun Chronicle country, who employed members in a wide range of search and rescue operations.

For non-divers — like this writer — the Old Colony Amphibians Web site provides a chance to explore the depths. It's chock full of photos from the annual New Year's Day dive and other activities, and includes a live mini-cam inside a lobster pot off the Maine coast.

The club continues to meet every Thursday from April to November in an upstairs conference room at the Midas Muffler shop in South Attleboro and twice a month the rest of the year. Membership had flattened

out for several years, but OCA reports 10 new divers joined last year.

And the adventure level remains high as ever. Newsletters posted on the Web site include a report on diving alongside right whales off Provincetown and a diving trip last year to the Bahamas — during hurricane season.

This club has reached a milestone clearly worthy of a grand celebration. It's been around for 50 years, but somehow the word "old" just doesn't fit our local band of undersea adventurers.

MARK FLANAGAN (mflanagan@thesunchronicle.com) is Opinion Page editor of The Sun Chronicle. He can be reached at 508-236-0335.



Continued from cover.

New Year's Day Dive - cont.

nalina. Bill Turner brought his trailer for keeping we divers warm while changing up and the illustrious hot dog cart for warming the dogs and our spirits. Thanks Bill for all the hard work you do to make this event such a success. Speaking of Bill, he, Andrzej and Eddie made the annual polar plunge after the scavenger hunt.

Thanks again to the dive shops below for their generous support:



Anderson's Ski & Dive





RIGHT Everett Carpenter, one of the club's founding fathers, gives a brief history of the formation of the OCA back in 1959.

January 24, 2009 at the
Johnson & Wales Inn.

The OCA 50th Anniversary Banquet

"I can't tell you what a thrill it is to see this club surviving after 50 years!" Everett Carpenter

The 61 OCA members and guests who attended the 50th Anniversary Banquet were treated to a historical summary outlining the inception of the club by Everett Carpenter. Following Everett's dissertation, Earl King and Bob Cartier entertained us with antics from the early days of club diving. Many past members – members whose names we've all read and talked about over the years but never met – also attended the function.

Following the short speeches, the annual OCA awards were given out including the illustrious Foggy Mask Awards. During the event, Connie Rogers presented a slide show from decades of club diving and events culled from photos provided by club members' collections.

All in all, an outstanding evening and huge thanks to Bill Turner for pulling it all together.



The Nelson Nedde Memorial Diver of the Year Award
Ian Campbell

The Gina Green-Dolan Memorial New Diver of the Year Award
Jim Cherubini

Largest Massachusetts Fish
Ian Campbell/8.3 lbs.

Largest Rhode Island Fish
Ian Campbell/17 lbs.

Largest Massachusetts Lobster
Steve Gonsalves/9.5 lbs.

Artifact of the Year Award
Earl King

Photo Awards
Southern Waters
Janet MacCausland

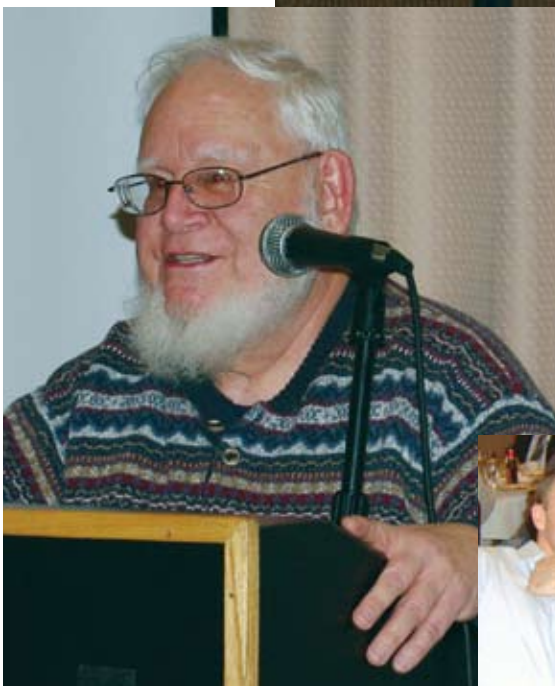
Above Land
Ian Campbell

OCA Ambassador Award
Connie Rogers

Lifetime Membership Award
Bill Lane



RIGHT Earl King describes recovering stolen cars in quarries and finding the gyro-compass on the U-boat U-853.



LEFT Bob Cartier tells stories of the early days under the water.

BELOW Jim Cherubini, Terry Carragher and Mary Shroth enjoying the festivities.



LEFT Newly elected president Henry Cugno addresses the banquet.

BELOW Janet MacCausland, Terry Carragher, Betsy Dake, Mary Shroth & Connie Rogers



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CLOCKWISE Art Legere, Everett Carpenter & Bob Demers rekindle old friendships; Connie Rogers receives the OCA Ambassador Award; Henry Cugno, Bill Turner, Rocco Santurri & Bill Lane hand out awards; Bill Lane receives a Lifetime Membership Award; Ian Campbell receives the Nelson Nedde Memorial Diver of the Year Award.



ABOVE Dottie and Dan Baker.

BELOW L to R: Ed Fava, Bob Riecke, Terry Carragher, Judy & Ed Packhem



5

LEFT Deb & Bob McManus



LEFT Deirdre & Bill Weedon

BELOW Bob Cartier & Dick Will



Foggy Mask Awards



Ed Packhem - The Trailer Master of Disaster

Jim Cherubini - Boxers, NOT Briefs

Ed Fava - Highest Altitude achieved on a tube without a pilot's license.

Marcy Bernstein - Most entertaining entry onto a tube.

Holly Riecke - Lowest speed achieved on a tube by any person

Max & Janet - Lost in 'inner' space.

Connie Rogers - From lobster remorse to lobster aggressiveness.

Kim Amaral - Successful scallop spotting by intuition.

Bill Weedon - Barnacle Bill, the King of encrustation.

Alan Reilly - Pond dive so good the bottom ate his fin.

Betsy Dake - Sell an 'R'?

Bill Turner, Bob McManus, Alan Reilly, Andrzej Kurowski - Slack Tide Diving (in a lake).

Rocco & Ray - Failure to enter an inflatable.

Henry Cugno - Actually used his boat this year... once!

The Trajan - cont.

in Rhode Island's economy and that of much of New England. At the time of her loss, the Trajan was carrying barrels of lime from Rockland to New Orleans. Lime, used extensively in plaster and mortar, is a dangerous cargo. Get it wet, and a chemical reaction could ignite the mineral and spark fire. Water won't put it out, and so in the days of the Trajan lime captains' only hope of saving their vessel was to snuff the flames by closing the hatches and killing the oxygen supply. That's exactly what happened as Trajan's cargo began to smolder one stormy day off Newport in 1867. According to an account written in 1871 by Newport writer Thomas Higginson, author of the local history "Oldport Days," the crew steered the Trajan from off Newport into Newport Harbor after noticing the fire, and fought a valiant but ultimately fruitless battle to save her: "I never saw anything seem so extinguished out of the universe as that great vessel, which had towered so colossal above my little boat; it was impossible to imagine that she was all there yet, beneath the foaming and indifferent waves. "In the coming years, the vessel's hulk would be dynamited, partially salvaged and, ultimately, forgotten. Then John Stanford showed up.

LONG LORE Mr. Stanford, an accountant for General Dynamics, spends most of his free time aboard his 28-foot Nauset Adventurer, searching for and diving on the hundreds of known wrecks that dot Rhode Island and Massachusetts waters. He grew up in Rhode Island, bought his first boat as a teenager, and over the years has compiled an impressive diving resume. He's visited the sunken German submarine U-853 off Block Island, found and recorded

shipwrecks modest and proud off Martha's Vineyard, and has visited Truk Lagoon, a southern Pacific lagoon where dozens of Japanese war vessels were sunk by the United States during World War II. Over the years, Mr. Stanford has compiled a formidable knowledge of Rhode Island wrecks, and the Trajan has long been one of them. Mr. Stanford first heard of her in the early 1980s, when he stumbled across an old chart listing the location of wrecks in and around Newport. A small spot on the chart showed a wreck just west of Goat Island, and through research Mr. Stanford eventually determined it was likely the resting spot of the Trajan. Further research showed that though others had searched for her, she had never been found or, more likely, found but never identified. For years, he and several diving friends searched for the wreck using rudimentary tools — mostly just a depth finder and long hours diving in locations they thought were the ship's resting place. The result? Nothing. But even those many failures brought their own successes. Though he and his friends, Al Langner and David Knibbs, didn't find the Trajan, they found other anomalies in the area, including a stone ballast pile which they believe could have been the remains of one of several ships scuttled by the British when the French sailed into Newport in 1778. "It was always something that we were looking for, but we never could find it," said Mr. Stanford. "But I always remembered it and thought, 'I'd love to find it.'" The search took a crucial turn in the late 1990s, when Mr. Stanford found several old newspaper clippings that alluded to the wreck and the fact that its submerged hull may have fouled the keel of a deep draft pleasure yacht in 1901. "Could this have been the Trajan? The evidence sure pointed that way," he said. He packed the knowledge away and decided to start the search anew one day.

HIGH-TECH SEARCH Last fall, Mr. Stanford contacted his friend Mark Munro with a proposition to search for the wreck. Like Mr. Stanford, Mr. Munro is a member of Sound Underwater Survey, a loose confederation of friends who live for finding and exploring old wrecks. He's also a techie, and owns sophisticated magnetometer and side scan sonar equipment. Magnetometers work by finding ferrous metals, such as iron, on the bottom, and side scan sonar takes "pictures" of the bottom by bouncing sound waves off the ocean floor and processing the sound of the returning echoes. Mr. Stanford's idea was to use Adventurer as a platform for Mr. Munro's equipment. "I said 'Sure, let's look,'" said Mr. Munro. Armed with an approximate search area, the two



set out in September to look for the wreck. It didn't take long to record a target, but at first neither could say for sure whether it was the Trajan. "We found something, but it could have been anything; there weren't the usual straight lines you'd expect to see on a wreck," said Mr. Munro. Looking at the data back at home in Connecticut, though, he became more and more convinced that they'd found the Trajan. "Once I overlaid the magnetometer (results) on the sonar image, and the age of the shipwreck, we decided we probably had it." There was only way to say for sure.

DISCOVERY AT LAST On Saturday, Dec. 6, the two donned drysuits and trailered Mr. Stanford's 13-foot inflatable to the Fort Adams boat ramp. After a 10-minute trip out to the site, they dropped anchor, put on their dive gear and followed the anchor line down to the bottom. Mr. Stanford went first. "I knew right away we'd found it," Mr. Stanford recalls. "The wreck is mostly lime concretion 114 feet long by 55 feet wide, which is what you would expect knowing what we know about her. There were timbers coming up. It's a pretty big field." Lobster pot lines hung off the pile, and where it met the muddy harbor floor, heavy ship timbers jutted out of the sand. Blocks of solidified lime that still retained the shape of the oak barrels that once held them littered the site, and the few fish around were all but oblivious to the visitors dressed in dry suits to ward off the water's 45-degree chill. The initial survey in September had yielded a strong magnetometer reading, and off one end of the wreck the pair found a small kedge anchor, about five feet long, that Mr. Stanford believes is probably one of the Trajan's auxiliary anchors. "Just seeing the lime was enough to confirm our suspicions



of what it was,” she said. “I was psyched. I was like, ‘Hey, after all these years we finally found her. Mission accomplished.’”

WHAT NOW? In keeping with Rhode Island law, the pair didn’t take anything from the wreck, and don’t plan to. Instead, they videotaped their dive, took measurements of the debris field and now hope to share their information with others devoted to preserving Rhode Island’s maritime heritage, including the Rhode Island Marine Archaeology Project (RIMAP) and the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission. “That’s really what this search was about,” said Mr. Stanford. “It’s just another puzzle in Newport’s seafaring past. We learned a lot about the lime trade, the local seafaring trade, and that’s enough.” “It’s a fascinating history, and this is one small part. Every piece gives you a better picture of what things were like, and we’re happy to add to that.”

LEARN MORE For more on the discovery of the bark *Trajan*, including side scan sonar images, magnetometer readings, an underwater video of the wreck site shot in December, and historical accounts of the vessel’s loss, see www.soundundersurvey.com/SUS/Wrecks/trajan.htm.



Joe’s Memorial Dive 2008

CHARLESTOWN, RI • Winter Dive Club members Joel DeSchamps, Ed Fava, Bill Turner, Alan Reilly, Andrzej Kurowski and Bill Weedon dove December 13th to memorialize Joe Pasquale and to fulfill their December Winter Dive Club quota. Reports from the dive include “cold,” “no vis,” but “great breakfast!”





ABOVE John Garzia prepares to enter Cape Cod Bay in mid-September.

RIGHT Steve Gonsalves shows off a... toilet.



New look for *On the Line!*

PROVIDENCE, RI • In honor of our 50th Anniversary, I felt it was time to update the design of our newsletter. This is my twelfth year producing *On the Line* including three design templates since 1997.

As OCA members, I welcome your feedback on this latest design to **your** newsletter. Let me know what you like and dislike and I'll try to accommodate your requests. You can eMail me at: bill@lanedesign.com

Now more than ever, I'm looking for your photos and articles of OCA events to fill 8 pages. Enjoy! **BILL LANE**

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**OLD COLONY
AMPHIBIANS**