

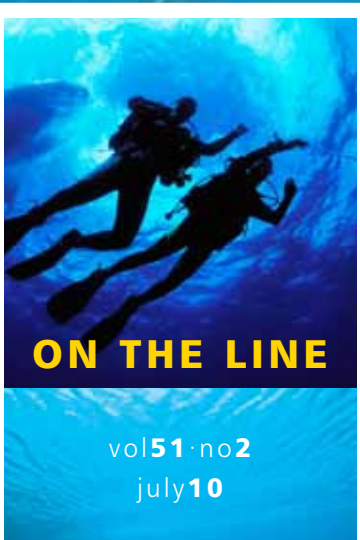
# Isla Mujeres, Mexico

*A letter  
from  
Ed Fava*

Dear Everyone,  
After almost two months back in the states, I have returned to Isla Mujeres, Mexico. I had a great time seeing friends and family in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New York and Washington DC. The weather was beautiful (even better than Mexico right now) and it was nice to have a little time off.

Nevertheless, I am thrilled to be back here and am looking forward to two and a half months of scuba, whale sharks and sunshine.

*Continued on page 4*



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OLD COLONY AMPHIBIANS

*Lobsters, Yard Sales &  
Birthday Celebrations*

## Spring P-Town

**PROVINCETOWN, MA** · The weather was perfect for diving and for shopping. Thirteen wives and significant others spent the day in town, exploring the yard sales and soaking up the festive atmosphere. While the women were busy shopping, the divers in the group were looking for “bugs.” Joel and Jim C., on Joel’s inflatable, did quite well in that department. We were surprised when former OCA member, Henry Maurer, his wife Kathy and daughter Amy dropped by. There was some reminiscing about the “old days” at White’s Village and how much nicer the accommodations are at Horizon Beach. The grill was lit around 6 pm and we enjoyed steaks,

chicken and the many delicious side dishes that were offered. After dinner we celebrated Kathy Reilly’s upcoming 60th birthday with a cake and a chorus of “Happy Birthday.” A good time was had by all. Several divers stayed to dive again on Sunday, hopefully to catch more “bugs!” A big “Thank You” to everyone who shared the weekend and helped make the gathering a success. We couldn’t do P-Town weekend without your help and support.

*Patti & Bill Turner*





# prez box

by Henry Cugno

*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  
**Connie Rogers**  
SECRETARY  
**Bill Lane**  
TREASURER  
**Terry Carragher**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**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](http://www.ocascuba.org)

We're in the middle of our dive season, all of our snowbirds are back and everyone is reporting on dives. What could be better?

We've added some different dives to the schedule this year to change things up a little. We've also taken some initiative on unscheduled dives to do something different. We get used to making the same dives every year and that's great because we all enjoy them, but it's also nice to explore something new from time to time. Keep your eye out for the "Hooky" dives on the schedule and the Rockport Shore Dives as well.

I was fortunate enough to be on Ian Campbell's boat one recent weekend when we visited the Westerly, RI reefs. I'd never done that before and enjoyed it very much. It's something that I'd like to do again. It was a spear fishing trip and we all came back with fish. Because of the current, we needed to drift dive with flags. Something else that I'd never done while spear fishing. It was fun to

plan and execute something new.

We've decided to add new things to the schedule in the past. Some of these experiments have even become regular yearly dives since they were so popular. The "Kill 'n Grill" is one recent example. When I stop to think about it, that's how all of our regular scheduled dives became regular. They started as an experiment and the experiment was successful.

It's important to note that any experiment should come with careful planning. We can't just jump in the water anywhere without understanding conditions that will affect the dive such as current, tide, wind, etc. The acquisition of local knowledge on the site from dive shops, people who have made the dive before, and written guides is also important. Just ask John Stanford how he prepares for something new and you'll get an idea as to why he has successful experiments.

Even though there's usually something new on a dive that you may have done many times, it's not quite the same as trying something completely new. It's like when we go on a dive vaca-

tion to a new location. You just need to make sure that you've done everything you can to keep it safe.

It wasn't done on purpose, but even our upcoming Blackbeard's trip will be different, leaving Nassau and heading to the Exumas. This will be my third Blackbeard's trip and, so far, each one has been to a different area of the Bahamas.

So enjoy the dive season. We have plenty of it left. Dive the regular sites and consider something new but always keep it safe.

*Henry*



## OCA CALENDAR

### July 10

- 22 OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, Midas Muffler, South Attleboro, MA
- 23 Friday Night Dive, Allen's Harbor, 7:30 pm
- 24/25 Winter Island Weekend, Salem, MA, Eric A./Bill T.
- 29 OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, Midas Muffler, South Attleboro, MA

### August 10

- 1 Kill 'n Grill, Ed Packhem's House, Details to be determined.
- 4 "Hooky" Dive Wednesday, TBD
- 5 OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, Midas Muffler, South Attleboro, MA
- 8 RI Wreck Dive, Details - TBD
- 12 OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, Midas Muffler, South Attleboro, MA

- 13 Friday Night Dive, Fort Wetherill @ 7:30, Rocco chairing
- 15 Block Island Dive, Ed Packhem & Bill Weedon chairing, details to follow
- 19 OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, Kalipso Dive Shop, Smithfield, RI
- 22 Family Day @ Wallum Lake, 11:00 am, Bob McManus chairing, rain date the 28th.
- 26 OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, Midas Muffler, South Attleboro, MA
- 26 OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, Midas Muffler, South Attleboro, MA
- 29 MA Wreck Dive on the Pinthas, John Stanford chairing, 9:00 am out of Green Harbor, MA

### September 10

- 2 OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, Midas Muffler, South Attleboro, MA
- 9 OCA Meeting, 7:00 pm, Midas Muffler, South Attleboro, MA
- 10 Friday Night Dive, Fort Wetherill @ 7:30, Rocco

## 2010 Winter Dive Club Banquet

On May 8 the Winter Dive Club held its annual dinner to celebrate braving the cold, icy, New England waters and diving into them. 20 members, spouses and friends gathered at Ranch Chico in Plainville to enjoy the food and each other's company. We were also "graced" by the presence of Alan and Kathy Reilly's granddaughter, Ella Grace. Who says there's no "young blood" in the OCA!! The food was delicious, the margaritas and beers were cold and everyone had a good time. A special thank-you to the winter divers for allowing Bill to participate in the festivities, even though he was unable to fulfill the diving requirements. You guys are the best!!!

And on a personal note, my kids and I would like to express our deep gratitude and thanks for all the cards, emails, phone calls and expressions of support after Bill's heart attack. We are so thankful for his quick recovery and know he can't wait to get back into the water again. The OCA has kept him involved and engaged, which has made this recovery period a bit more bearable. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your friendship and support.

*Patti Turner*



## Checker Club

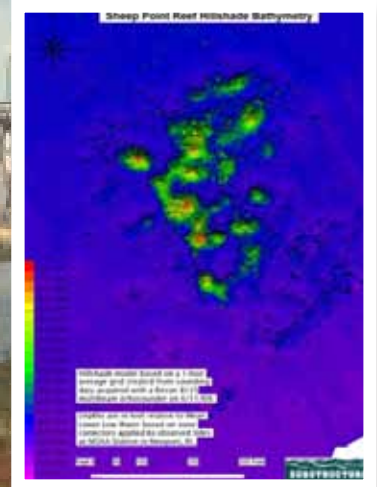
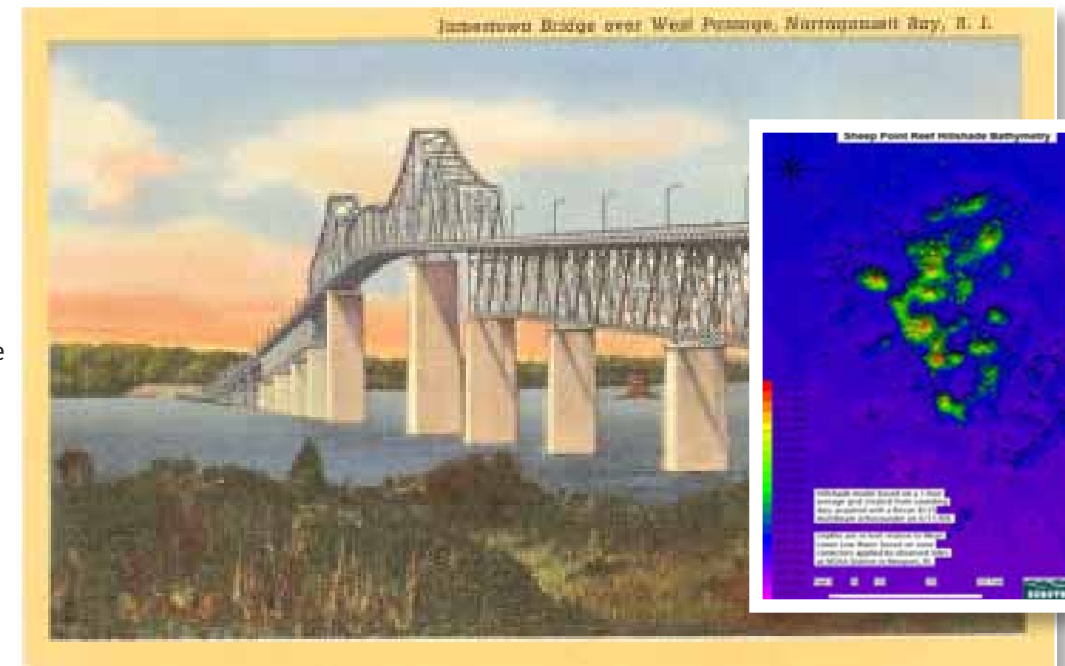
On Thursday, June 10 the OCA held its annual dinner meeting at the East Side Checker Club. Close to 30 members and guests attended. It was fun to catch up with the "snow birds" - Ray & Ann and Papa Doc & Bobbie, and just relax and enjoy each other's company. The party broke up around 9 pm, because the Checker Club rolls up their sidewalks early!! A good time was had by all!

*Patti Turner*

## The Old Jamestown Bridge

To the far right is a Bathymetric image of the Sheep point reef which was built from the Jamestown Bridge demolition debris.

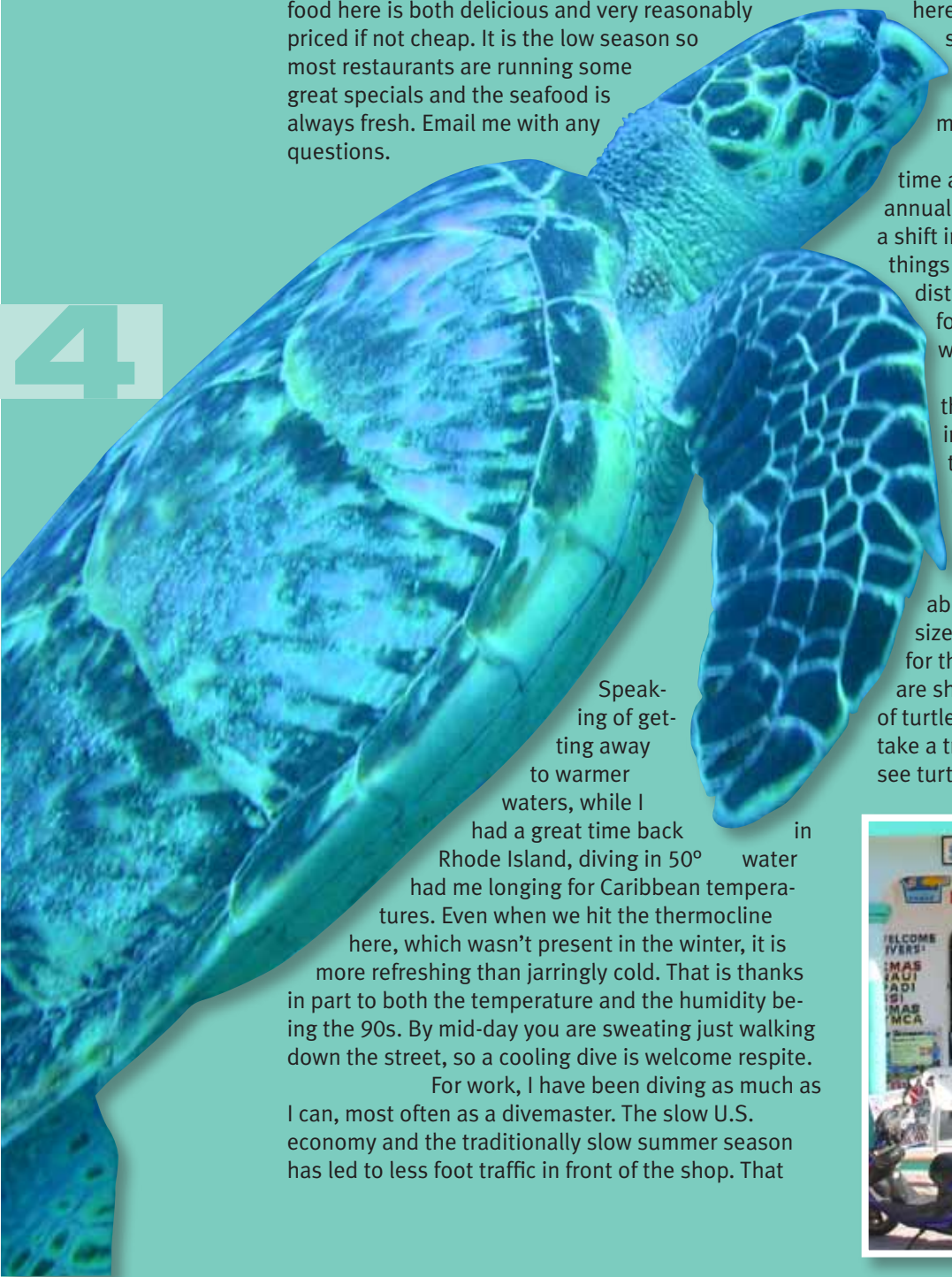
*John Stanford*



The first thing I want to mention is that I have talked with Bonnie and Ariel, the owners of the shop I work at, Sea Hawk Divers, and we have worked out a basic, 2 person, long-weekend vacation package for \$550 (not including airfare which you can find pretty cheap at Jet Blue or American Airlines). It includes three nights in one of their basic rooms, a two tank scuba dive and a whale shark trip for each person. It also allots \$100 for private transportation to and from the airport. You would need to arrange that transportation yourself, though it is pretty easy, and that amount can be significantly lowered if you take shared transportation.

As I said, this a basic package and can be amended for your preferences. A longer stay, more diving, fishing, snorkeling and alternate accommodations can be arranged. Please let me know what you would like and I'll get you a price. I'll also mention that food here is both delicious and very reasonably priced if not cheap. It is the low season so most restaurants are running some great specials and the seafood is always fresh. Email me with any questions.

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Speaking of getting away to warmer waters, while I

had a great time back in Rhode Island, diving in 50° water had me longing for Caribbean temperatures. Even when we hit the thermocline here, which wasn't present in the winter, it is more refreshing than jarringly cold. That is thanks in part to both the temperature and the humidity being the 90s. By mid-day you are sweating just walking down the street, so a cooling dive is welcome respite.

For work, I have been diving as much as I can, most often as a divemaster. The slow U.S. economy and the traditionally slow summer season has led to less foot traffic in front of the shop. That

has led to fewer than normal people stopping in and asking to get certified to dive (a trend that is carrying on from the slow "high season"). It has also led to fewer divers in general, but I get paid more when I teach a class, so that's where my head is. Though I've probably had less than 15 students since coming here, they have all been fun. Each time I teach a class I am feeling more certain that scuba instruction is something I want to continue to pursue full time. I love seeing people go from cautious novices to confident, certified divers over a period of just a few days. I love seeing the pride people have in their achievement and the gratification they take from seeing the beauties the underwater world has to offer.

Regardless of my passion for teaching, as I mentioned before, I am primarily divemastering. This isn't too much of an issue though, since I get to go diving and show people awesome things. The reefs here have a lot of life on them, so the same sites seem new each time I go. I may have said that before, but it is a point worth repeating. There is so much underwater beauty here, it blows my mind. I really hope it doesn't get old.

The diving itself has been alright this time around. Visibility has decreased due to the annual algae blooms, turning the water green, though a shift in current may take care of that. You can still things very well as long as they are close, but long distances have been greatly obscured. Making up for this are a couple of large visitors: turtles and whale sharks.

While you can see turtles here all year, they are usually small and solitary, and seeing two at in a single dive is a rarity. Right now turtles are swarming around the Punta Sur (South Point) dive site on the southern tip of the island getting ready to mate. I am told that in about a month it will be common to see 20 large turtles in a single dive in the area. I saw about 7 the other day, with a couple being the size of small cars. I love sea turtles so I can't wait for this. They are very calm and subtle animals but are shockingly fast when they want to be. Speaking of turtles, I recommend that anyone coming to Isla take a trip out the turtle conservatory where you can see turtles being raised in captivity to be released



back into the wild.

The big attraction, of course, are the whale sharks migrating north of the island. They are actually the reason I returned to Isla Mujeres for the summer. I led my first whale shark tour a couple days after getting back on the island and I was thoroughly impressed. On the way out we saw a ray at the surface as well as a couple of mating turtles. I think we intruded on their privacy as they took off once we got about 75 feet away. After about an hour of travel, we found a school of whale sharks.

Seeing their dorsal fin sticking out of the water you might think something more aggressive was around and a couple of the guests were nervous once they saw their massive size. Thankfully, they are filter feeders who prefer krill to humans.

I started leading guests in to the water two at a time and the whale sharks did not disappoint. They were close enough to touch and too massive to do justice to in words. Their tails alone stood five feet tall and looking at them it was hard to comprehend that they were real. While they would only stay close enough to see well for less than a minute, it was more than enough time to admire them. I don't know if I would call them graceful, as they seemed to move like a smaller animal trapped in an oversized body. At times they seemed awkward as they coordinated the various giant parts of their body, though, they did move skillfully around the humans in the water. Nevertheless, it all comes off as gentle and breathtaking, watching them carry on sucking down food as a swarm of boats and tourists descend upon them. They are definitely "bucket list" material for anyone who has not seen them yet.

As for a more general update, there haven't been any major changes or developments on



the island since I left, though it is campaign season in Mexico. With elections on July 4, the political machine is in full swing with the two major parties PRI and PAN duking it out with posters, banners, cars with loud speakers, rallies, t-shirts and payoffs. It seems like that if the money spent on the car wraps and t-shirts alone were spent on some social services, a lot more good could be done and probably a lot more public opinion shifted. Elections are big money here and corruption and cronyism is pretty evident. I actually hope the current PAN administration stays in power as they seem to have done a lot of good things on the island, improving infrastructure and recreational facilities, while I have heard only stories of lying and corruption about the rival PRI administration.

It is also World Cup season and with Mexico in the tournament national pride is at a fever pitch. You could hear the collective sigh of relief after Mexico beat France, giving them a chance to move on to the second round. I have been watching some of the games, though I have none of the passion that everyone else here has. If the United States does well, then that is good news to me, but soccer is a game I still enjoy play far more than watching.

That's it for now. I hope everyone is happy and doing well. Please email me at either emf@tcmail.us or thumperwilder@yahoo.com. You can also find me on Facebook as Ed Fava or follow me on Twitter as @scubadooba. Come down and see me. You won't regret it.

Yours truly,  
*Eddy Fava*

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From the The Florida Keys and Key West's Daily OnLine News, submitted by Rocco

# 50s More Deadly for Divers

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**FLORIDA KEYS** - Aviva Diodato, a visitor from Arizona, was on a dive trip out of Islamorada two weeks ago when things went horribly wrong.

According to the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, Diodato asked for assistance during her group's first dive of the day and surfaced early. She made it safely to the stern of the dive boat and was removing her gear when she started to drift. By the time Diodato was located 15 to 20 minutes later, she was no longer breathing and her heart had stopped. Paramedics pronounced her dead upon reaching shore.

Diodato, who was 51, was the third diving fatality in the Florida Keys this year. And like her, the two other victims, Carol Strickland of Tallahassee and Thomas Pickett from Texas, were in their 50s. In fact, Monroe County Medical Examiner's records dating back to September 2008, the time frame for which the office has reports logged on computer files, show that 10 of the 16 divers who perished were at least 50 years old. Both snorkelers who died during that period were also at least 50. In addition, a Free Press review of articles and Sheriff's Office reports on Keys dive deaths for the eight months between November 2008 and the last days of 2007 show that four of eight divers who died were at least 50 as were both of the snorkelers who perished.

Some dive shop owners say the reason that many of the diving fatalities in the Keys occur among older clientele is simple demographics of who's putting on a scuba tank these days. Middle-aged people are the ones who can afford the cost of a dive charter -- which can run up to \$200 a day when factoring in equipment, said Connie Boykin, manager of Ocean Divers in Key Largo.

"You have to take in the factor of cost. Consensus with us is that [our customers] are in their 50s," she said.

But statistics show that the average diver is younger than that. A 2002 Keys diving survey conducted by Wegeningen University in Holland, and used by the Monroe County Tourist Development Council, placed the average age of divers at 33. More broadly, a study published in late 2008 in the Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine journal found that in 2006 the average age of divers who purchased insurance from Divers Alert Network was 43.

Petar Denoble, M.D., research director for DAN, which is dedicated to the safety and health of recreational divers, says it is no mystery why most Keys dive fatalities in recent years are among those over 50. "They are a bit less healthy than younger people," he said. "They are also a bit less physically fit than younger people."

## Part of a trend

The Keys aren't alone in seeing more dive fatalities among the sport's older participants.

Denoble was among the authors of the 2008 study published in Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine in which researchers found that male divers who are older than 60 are four times more likely to die than male teenagers. Heart-related deaths were 13 times higher among divers over age 50 than those who are younger. The annual fatality rate for divers over 60 was 33 per 100,000 during the seven years of the study.

"We recommend that older divers adjust their participation in diving according to health status and physical fitness, maintain fitness with regular exercise and abstain from diving in conditions likely to require unaccustomed physical activity," the authors wrote.

James Loewenherz, M.D., medical director of the hyperbaric chamber at Mariners Hospital in Tavernier, said most diving deaths aren't the result of decompression, commonly called "the bends," but rather are caused by people inhaling too much water -- the same way snorkelers usually die. In many cases those big gulps of water have as their origin minor heart abnormalities -- the heart skipping a beat, for example -- which force the diver to overexert, Loewenherz said. In other cases, people who have swelling -- more common as you get older -- are susceptible to having their lungs inundated with fluid once they are immersed, which also leads to overexertion.

Denoble says chronic, and frequently unknown, cardiac problems are often at the root of diving fatalities. "They cause acute episodes that exacerbate underwater and divers drown," he said.

DAN suggests that all divers 35 and older have a physical examination annually.

## Precautions

Aside from that, Denoble, Loewenherz and local dive shops say common sense is the best way for all divers, young and old, to stay safe. A physical exam is not required to achieve dive certification, though dive schools do screen people's medical history before enrolling them in a course.

On the other hand, if a certified diver books an excursion with a shop, no health screening is typically required.

"They're certified divers. They have a right to dive," said Brenda Mace, owner of Conch Republic Divers in Tavernier. "We cannot nor should the dive operator be responsible for the health of divers. It is an extreme sport."

Boykin, of Ocean Divers, said a few times through the years she has refused a customer due to their physical condition. But such a move is extremely rare, she added.

DAN organized a workshop earlier this month to discuss reducing diving fatalities. But the ideas circulated were all geared toward individuals, not businesses.

Boykin said many accidents in the Keys are preventable. "The people who are having accidents are coming down here from a long winter up north, but they basically haven't done anything strenuous since winter onset," she said. "A 25-year-old can sit all winter and come out and dive, but a 50-year-old, they have to look after themselves."

## OCA By-Law Changes

**ARTICLE 4, SECTION 7. Release** All members and guests making club dives are required to fill out and sign an Old Colony Amphibian's diver information, assumption of risk, release and hold harmless agreement form once a year. In addition, all members must submit a copy of his/her C-Card to be kept on file in the clubhouse. **Passed by the membership.**

**ARTICLE 6, GOVERNING AUTHORITY, SECTION 2. Quorum** Five Eleven (11) members shall constitute a quorum for any regular or special meeting. A quorum must be present in order to take any vote that will affect the club or the membership as a whole. **Passed by the membership.**

**ARTICLE 4, SECTION 5. Obtaining Membership** Membership in the club is given only after the applicant has been approved by a 2/3rds majority vote, paid \$15.00 initiation fee plus pro-rate the remainder of the yearly dues. In the event an application for membership is denied, the dues and initiation fee shall be refunded. An applicant must attend a regular meeting and complete three (3) dives during an OCA sanctioned event or with an active OCA member in good standing before applying for membership. **Rejected by the membership. No change to current language which states: "An applicant must attend a regular meeting or a club activity before applying for membership."**



## Scenes from the Tune-Up Dive





[www.ocascuba.org](http://www.ocascuba.org)



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