



## Lobster Dive

**PLYMOUTH, MA** Brilliant blue skies, flat seas and warm temperatures greeted us the morning of our Lobster Dive. After a few motor mishaps, the OCA fleet rendezvoused at the Marianne Rocks off of Plymouth. To the average boater, it appeared as if a dive mission was taking place given our six boats plus a few non-member dive boats lined up along the coast.

Almost everyone was in the water by 9:00 am and those diving up current, unlike Connie, Mary and I, must have had great visibility in high-50° water. Since we were getting the silt of the divers up-current, we changed our dive plan and headed east and into clearer water. Our first dive, at this location, was filled with shorts and large eggers, a few flounder

*Continued on page 3*



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OLD COLONY AMPHIBIANS

**ROATAN, GUATEMALA** - It's "summer camp for divers" – that's what my friends who'd been to CoCo View (CCV) Resort ([www.cocoviewresort.com](http://www.cocoviewresort.com)) in Roatan, Honduras, kept telling me, but I wasn't quite sure what to make of that. So I decided to just wait and see until I got there.

I was lucky enough to be asked to join a group trip over a year ago by some friends I knew from online, but had never met in person. The rate was excellent – at less than \$1,200 for the week (plus airfare). I asked Connie to join me as my roommate, but when some last-minute family issues kept her from traveling, Connie arranged for Janet to take her spot as my roomie – and a better roommate I couldn't have asked for.

Due to last-minute flight logistics, Janet and I flew separately – I on Continental from Newark through Houston, and Janet on Delta from Boston through Atlanta. Once you get to Roatan, CCV makes it easy – you're greeted by their staff, you point out your luggage on the belt and then you just head out to their air conditioned bus for a transfer to the resort. They take care of the luggage – you won't see it again until it's in your room.

CoCo View Resort is on its own private cay about 200 yards south of the Roatan shoreline. The bus takes you to the Coco View Landing and you're met by a launch which will motor you to the resort dock, where you're met and escorted to the office to get your key. It's an easy check-in – and you don't even have to go inside. A staff member stands outside the office with a list, you give your name, they give you a key – not that that keys are really necessary. CCV feels so much like a tiny little town of its own that most people leave their keys in their doors the entire week so no one will be accidentally locked out (most rooms only have one key anyway).



*A non-diver's perspective on P-Town weekend by Patti Turner*

# Summer Camp for Divers on Roatan

*More on Roatan on page 5*



# prez box

by Henry Cugno

Since we're already halfway through the year, I'd like to take this Prezbox opportunity to mention some highlights of our fiftieth anniversary so far. There's quite a bit to be thankful for.

Even though this summer has not given us the best weather, the OCA is still getting most of the club dives in. They all seem to be well attended and we're having a great time. Just goes to show you that we never let things get us down or interrupt our diving.

Our weekly meetings have also been well attended and the reports on scheduled and non-scheduled events have kept the meetings interesting. The guest list is also a bit longer than I remember in recent years thanks to Ambassador Connie and Bill Weedon. If you haven't been to a meeting in a while then you haven't seen what our meeting place has become. Anyone who has been in the

club for more than seven or eight years probably remembers when we used to meet at the Scuba Center location across from Ruby Tuesday's in South Attleboro. At that location, we had plaques, photos, bulletin boards, white boards and other items decorating the walls of the basement where we used to meet. We only had these items donning the walls of the last Scuba Center location for a short while before it closed so we haven't seen our club memorabilia for some time now. Well, our regular meeting place at Ian's Midas Muffler shop has a new coat of paint and has been decorated with all of the club's history in the way of those same plaques, photos, bulletin boards, etc. The plaques have been updated so the place is a lot like the meeting room that I remember when I first joined the OCA eleven years ago.

It seems appropriate that we uncover and display the club's history in this, our fiftieth year. Speaking of our fiftieth anniversary, by the time you read this, WJAR Channel 10 will have given the OCA a "Coffee Cup Salute" during their morning TV news show in congratulations for our fifti-

eth season. Press releases sent out by Bill Lane, our secretary, may also have found their way into many local publications since they were sent out around the same time as the WJAR requirement.

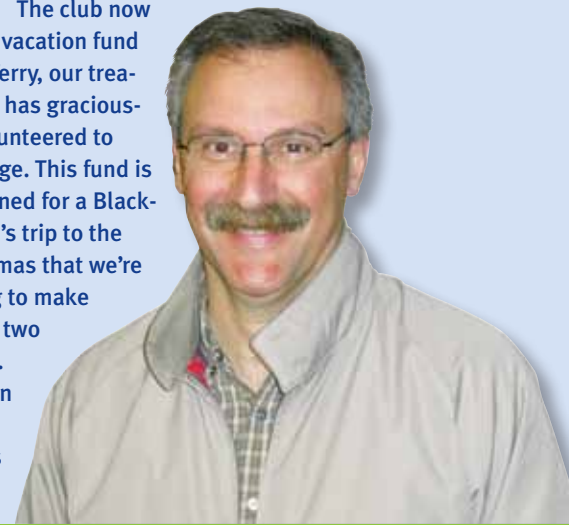
Our reputation for being a club that does a lot of diving is strong and growing. Many of the dive shops that we frequent are telling new divers and anyone who is looking for someone to dive with about the OCA. "They're a club that does a lot of diving!" Not many have found their way to a meeting or other OCA event yet but I know of a certain ambassador that keeps talking us up any time she meets someone who is a diver and not yet a member of the OCA so it's just a matter of time before we see some new faces.

The club now has a vacation fund that Terry, our treasurer, has graciously volunteered to manage. This fund is designed for a Black-beard's trip to the Bahamas that we're trying to make every two years. Chip in a few bucks

at every meeting and before you know it, you've got enough money for the trip. We're hoping this makes it easier for more members to take this trip. I've been on it twice and although it's a live aboard dive trip, it's the camaraderie of the OCA that makes it a great experience.

On the day of this writing, the temperature has hit 90 for the first time this summer. Hopefully, this is a sign that the rest of the season's weather makes it easier to enjoy our sport but if the second half of the year is anything like the first, we're going to get the dives in one way or another. Go diving, thank your captains and enjoy diving with your fellow OCA members.

*Henry*



## Thank you captains!

Time again for my annual reminder to all of us who don't own a boat.

Think about where the club and we would be without our friends who are kind enough to share their boats with us. I don't know about you but the thoughts of shore dives all summer is not very appealing. And that's an awfully long surface swim for scalloping at Winter Island without the aid of a boat.

My point?? Let's think about how much the price of gas, oil, insurance etc has increased in the last few years. And don't forget the cost of putting in at certain boat ramps and the cost of towing especially long distances. I joined the club in 1997 and the suggested gift was \$20. Ten plus years of diving later I see people still offering the same amount, sometimes less. I know that when you ask most of the captains they say that's fine, whatever. They are not in the charter business and can't "charge" us - it's just our way of saying thank you and in a very small way helping to share in the expenses. Call around to dive shops and see what it would cost to go out for two dives and keep in mind those two dives are half a day at best not a full day on the water like we usually do. Not to mention the entertainment and camaraderie!

So let's try and be a bit more realistic and generous this year when we thank the clubs life-blood.

*Terry Carragher*

Cap't Bill Turner & Frank Casagni



Cap't Alan Reilly with son Tim, Fred LeBlanc and Andrzej Kurowski.



Cap't Eric Alphonse and Louie Greenwood (hidden).



Cap't Bill Weedon with divers Betsy Dake, Charlene Mallinson and Jim Brady.

## Little Known Tidbit of Naval History...

The U. S. S. Constitution (Old Ironsides), as a combat vessel, carried 48,600 gallons of fresh water for her crew of 475 officers and men. This was sufficient to last six months of sustained operations at sea. She carried no evaporators (i.e. fresh water distillers).

However, let it be noted that according to her ship's log, "On July 27, 1798, the U.S.S. Constitution sailed from Boston with a full complement of 475 officers and men, 48,600 gallons of fresh water, 7,400 cannon shot, 11,600 pounds of black powder and 79,400 gallons of rum."

Her mission: "To destroy and harass English shipping."

Making Jamaica on 6 October, she took on 826 pounds of flour and 68,300 gallons of rum. Then she headed for the Azores, arriving there 12 November. She provisioned with 550 pounds of beef and 64,300 gallons of Portuguese wine.

On 18 November, she set sail for England. In the ensuing days she defeated five British men-of-war and captured and scuttled 12 English merchant ships, salvaging only the rum aboard each.

By 26 January, her powder and shot were exhausted. Nevertheless, although unarmed she made a night raid up the Firth of Clyde in Scotland. Her landing party captured a whisky distillery and transferred 40,000 gallons of single malt Scotch aboard by dawn. Then she headed home.

The U. S. S. Constitution arrived in Boston on 20 February 1799, with no cannon shot, no food, no powder, no rum, no wine, no whisky, and 38,600 gallons of water.

**GO NAVY!!!**

*Bill Turner*



Continued from front cover.

## Lobster Dive

one of which I caught bare-handed, and a couple of pesky dogfish.

For our second dive, Express Lane headed up beyond Gurnet Point to High Pine Ledge where Bill Weedon and his divers met us. The visibility here was much, much better and I scored 5 bugs without hardly trying. Unfortunately Mary lost her snorkel and I could not locate it during a brief underwater search pattern. I think the current got the best of the lightweight tube of plastic.

Unlike last year, High Pine Ledge is void of the underwater growth thanks to a few strong easterly storms. The local dive shop credits the storm for scrub-cleaning the ledge revealing the large boulders known for this site.

Reports prove that almost everyone got a few bugs and had a great time. *Bill Lane*

Cap't Tom Gagne with Rick Amaral



## 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:

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

or: bill@lanedesign.com

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

# OCA CALENDAR

### July 09

- 23** OCA Meeting at Kalipso Dive Center, Route 44, Greenville, 7:00 pm
- 24** Friday Night Dive, Ft. Wetherill, 7:30 pm Rocco & John Stanford
- 25** Salem Weekend, Salem, MA, Eric A. & Bill T.
- 30** OCA Meeting at Ian's Midas Shop, South Attleboro, 7:00 pm

### August 09

- 7** Friday Night Dive, Ft. Wetherill, 7:30 pm Rocco & John Stanford
- 9** Spearfishing Contest, Ian Campbell, TBD, 8:00 am
- 16** Block Island Dive, TBD, Ed Packhem

- 21** Friday Night Dive, (?)Ft. Wetherill(?), 7:30 pm Rocco & John Stanford
- 23** Family Day, Wallum Lake, Douglas MA Bob McManus, 11:00 am
- 30** Kill 'n Grill, Ed Packhem's House, Ed Packhem T.B.D.

### September 09

- 4** Friday Night Dive, Ft. Wetherill, 7:30 pm Rocco & John Stanford
- 18** Friday Night Dive, Ft Wetherill, Chair? 7:00 pm
- 19** P-Town Weekend, Horizon's Beach Resort

# Spooky Island



Gould Island is situated in the middle of the East Passage of Narragansett Bay. It was the site of much military activity before and during WW II as it was part of the torpedo testing program carried out by the US Navy. During the war it was also a Retrofit Facility.

As you near the Island after a short 20 minute run from Allens Harbor with one of our trusty club skippers, you will notice the abandoned and one not so abandoned building on the north side of the island (the one that gave the island it's nickname of Spooky Island). You will also notice a long line of what was once the main pier for supply and torpedo retrieval boats which has been reduced to a long line of pilings. This is the dive site.

We usually anchor inside these pilings. After suiting up and getting in the water, it is up to you as to where you want to go. Staying amongst the pilings will keep you in shallow (20') of water. You can follow these in an easterly direction out to the end but be wary of the current... as some of our members have found out the hard way.

Toward the end of the pilings, there is a profusion of collapsed steel beams which have become home to lobsters and the ever elusive lost anchor. If you head west you can follow the pilings right under the building.

Don't bother swimming out too far from the slope as it is just mud out there. Max depth at this site is about 40' but the better diving is at much less depth. Lobsters here are hit or miss, sometimes you can "bag up" and other times they are scarce. Vis is typically low as it is with other in bay sites.

*John Stanford*

**Roatan** - *Continued from cover.*

Our group had reserved all of the overwater cabanas – 3 buildings with 4 rooms each that you approach by a boardwalk, built on pilings just offshore. The rooms are large, high-ceilinged, bright, and have 3 ceiling fans and a balcony over the water (in fact, one day, Janet and I looked down from our balcony to see a trunkfish tooling around just below us!), complete with a large hammock and several chairs. There are air conditioners if you prefer, but also lots of windows and screen doors on the large French doors to the balcony, so if there's a good breeze blowing, one could easily go without. However, our first few days were a bit still and humid and our AC stayed on, particularly at night.

Before you can start diving, you have to complete a DM-led orientation dive, so we had to wait until Sunday morning to dive, although we could've snorkeled if we wanted to. Instead, we brought our gear out to the dive barn, unpacked and generally relaxed before dinner in the clubhouse. The repeat visitors were able to start shore diving immediately.

Meals are served buffet-style – and while not gourmet, they are very tasty and there are plenty of choices for all but the pickiest eater. Breakfast always featured scrambled eggs, eggs/omelets, pancakes and waffles cooked to order, bacon, ham or sausage (varied by the day) and fruit. Fabulous Honduran coffee, juice, iced tea and bottled water were always available. Lunch and dinner feature at least 2 entrée choices (plus veggies and bread), so there's always something to eat. Examples of our entrees included calamari, lobster, baked chicken, pork chops, steak, turkey, grouper (YUM!)... there wasn't a thing I tried that I disliked. Desserts were all homemade and delicious. Keep an eye out for the Tres Leches Cake. OMG!

First thing Sunday morning is the orientation, upstairs at the clubhouse. The first part covers how things run – timing, general resort information, etc. After that, the repeat folks left for a boat dive. The second part, for us newbies, consisted of a thorough orientation (with a great diagram) to the house reef and a thorough review of their night dive procedures, followed by a DM-led checkout dive that covered both walls adjacent to the resort, the wreck of the Prince Albert, just in front of the resort, and the "Front Yard" – the sandy area between the wreck and shore and the "bottle chain" that leads you back to the clubhouse. After that first dive, we were set loose to dive as much or as little as we wanted (I tended toward the "as much" side with a total of 21 dives in 5 dive days).

The daily diving schedule is pretty relaxed. There are 4 boat dives a day offered, plus as much shore diving as you want. The first boat leaves at 8:30am for a site usually within a 10-15 minute boat ride. There is a very thorough dive briefing by the DM, complete with fantastic laminated site maps and a review of what critters he'll be looking for. Five minutes away from the site, the captain blows the "get ready" whistle. Once we moored, the pool was open, we met at the mooring line and our DM led the dive, pointing out cool stuff as he found it (although you're not required to stick with the DM – just be back at the boat in an hour). The reefs are part of a National Marine Park since 1992 and are in excellent condition. Our DM, Jessie, found us seahorses, pipefish, burr fish, eels, flamingo tongues, squid, turtles, octopus... VERY cool stuff. Those of us with cameras were encouraged to hold back until all of the other divers had a chance to see the critters. We dove quite a variety of sites – very cool swimthroughs (Calvin's Crack and Mary's Place), wrecks (the Prince Albert and the Mr. Bud), sheer walls (Valley of the Kings, Minagerhea) and shallow reefs (Golden Chain Reef). You're then offered a drop-off dive on the house reef - either at CoCo View or Newman's Wall or on the wreck of the Prince Albert, so you can do a 2nd dive and swim back to the resort.

After the drop-off dive, you've got some time before lunch to do what you want, then lunch is served, a bit more "hammock" time and the boats go out again at 2pm. Another moored dive and the opportunity for another drop-off, for a total of 4 boat dives a day. Plus, you've got access 24/7 to tanks for unlimited shore diving. Nitrox is available either by the week or by the tank - sign out is on the honor system.

We did 2 dawn dives and I loved them. I honestly was too tired to do night dives and usually was in bed by 8:30 (!!!). On another trip, I'd probably dose myself up with some yummy Honduran coffee at least one night and get out for a night dive to try and catch the octos out and about.

Dive staff service is fantastic – both on the dock and on the boats. I found all of the staff incredibly friendly and helpful. All of the dive, boat and dock staff, as well as the food service staff speak impeccable English. I speak basically no Spanish and had no trouble at all, either at the resort or

on our off-gassing day while shopping in the West End. Especially in tourist areas, most prices are listed in US dollars.

There are a couple of additional trips offered – Janet and I opted to take a full-day 3-dive trip to the West End to see what things were like there. Additional cost was \$50 and it included a delicious picnic lunch and about an hour to explore the town of West End between the 2nd and 3rd dives. We spotted over 19 turtles (hawksbills and green) between our three dives. The diving on the North side of the island is

much different than what we'd been experiencing on the South side and it was fun to give it a try. The hour in West End was just enough time for us to reconnoiter for our off-gassing afternoon of souvenir shopping there the next day. Other options include a shark dive and dolphin dive/snorkel at additional cost and at other locations as well as jungle zip-line tours and dinner out at a local restaurant.

I'd been warned of hoards of mosquitoes and no-see-ums on Roatan. Maybe it was the time of year, or just that I got lucky, but I had virtually no issues at all with bugs. I used Cactus Juice (available here or at the on-site store) religiously, particularly on my feet, lower legs and arms and didn't walk around much in the sand and got a grand total of 3 bites the whole week – which didn't itch and were visible maybe 2 days. I've had worse issues with bug bites on my own patio at home.

My overwhelming impression of CCV is that not only is it a gorgeous place – both underwater and topside, but that it induces one to really relax. Everything is made easy for you – you have no responsibilities – in a lot of ways it's like being on a liveboard on land – it's eat, sleep and dive (but, being on land, your "cabin" is considerably bigger and more comfortable).

Because there are so many great places on my "bucket list" to dive, I rarely go back to the same place more than once. CCV will most definitely be an exception to that "rule." While I doubt I will match the record held by Harold (who was on his 74th trip!), I will most definitely go back.

*Betsy*



4



"How big is that thing?"

## 2009 MA Lobsters

5/17	Rick Amaral	8.5 lbs.
6/17	Steve Gonsalves	9.25 lbs.
7/22	Bill Weedon	11.2 lbs.
7/3-4	Jeff Davis	11.35 lbs.*
7/29	Steve Gonsalves	16.5 lbs.*

\*pending signed affidavit.



Steve Gonsalves shows off his monster at 16 pounds, 8 ounces.

Bill Weedon with his 11.2 pound creature.



"Looks like we get 'rselves a real-time lobster showdown here in Mass'er'chusetts."

# Lobster Wars



From *The Boston Globe*, June 17, 2009,  
by Steven Rosenberg

# Diver's death raises concerns.



Image by Janet MacCausland.

**GLOUCESTER, MA** - In the small, close-knit circle of deep-sea divers in New England, Paul Blanchette was a star. He had made 57 trips to survey the sunken luxury liner Andrea Doria, and last fall he was one of the first divers to reach the wreck of the steamship Portland, located in water 460 feet deep on Stellwagen Bank. So when he asked five friends to spend a day diving to the sunken ship Chester Poling, just outside Gloucester Harbor, they readily agreed. For Blanchette, 49, a Dracut resident who had been scuba diving for 37 years, the 90-foot dive would serve as a tuneup for more rigorous deep-sea dives planned in North Carolina, Long Island, and New Jersey.

But an hour after he slipped into the cold waters off the coast of Gloucester on May 18, fellow crew members began to worry. Thirty minutes later, David Cunningham dived into the water with other divers and searched the bottom for their colleague. A day later, Blanchette's body was found just yards from the wreck.

He became the seventh scuba diver who has died in waters off Gloucester and Rockport since 2002. The lure of easy access to beaches and the chance to swim among exotic fish while grabbing a lobster or two for dinner have made Cape Ann the most popular diving site in New England.

But Blanchette's death has many in the New England diving community wondering how such an experienced diver lost his life during a routine excursion. They are eager to hear the official cause of death from state officials investigating.

"A guy like Paul doesn't just have an accident like that," said John Ferrier, Blanchette's best friend, who talked to him the night before the fateful dive. "If he thought there was a problem, he would never push the limits. That's what's got us all stumped."

Ralph Kindred of Franklin dived to the Andrea Doria 25 times with Blanchette and is also baffled about his death. Blanchette used a special rebreather machine, which uses oxygen and recycles exhaled gas to allow divers to stay below for several hours at a time.

"There are a lot of people who are curious what took place," Kindred said. "People want to know for their own peace of mind what happened, so they can prevent it from happening to them."

Steve O'Connell - a spokesman for the Essex district attorney's office, which is investigating Blanchette's death - said that four Cape Ann diving accidents since 2002 were caused by cardiac-related issues and that the other two were listed as accidental drowning.

Diving certification is earned by attending classes at private dive clubs and organizations; there is no government oversight. Most divers are certified for recreational diving, allowing them to dive as deep as 60 feet. Others, like Blanchette, become certified for much deeper diving, sometimes hundreds of feet below the surface.

According to the Divers Alert Network, a North Carolina nonprofit that provides emergency medical advice and tracks diving injuries and deaths, there are between 1 million and 2 million active certified divers in the United States. Each year, the group reports, about 84 divers die in the United States and Canada.

Dr. Petar J. Denoble, the group's research director, says the most common causes of death are drowning, cardiac-related issues, and arterial gas embolisms, which occur when gas bubbles lodge in arteries that supply blood to the brain.

Although most divers say the sport is as safe as skiing or bicycling, they acknowledge that a combination of factors - from getting tangled in an abandoned fishing net to becoming exhausted from swimming in rough currents - can lead to tragedy.

"It's inherently dangerous; if you don't take the proper training, death is imminent," said Todd Randall, president of the North Shore Frogmen's Club, based in Beverly.

During an underwater expedition last year to a sunken German U-boat off Block Island, Randall was supposed to spend just 30 minutes on the ocean floor, but spent an extra half-hour inspecting the wreck. In order to resurface safely, divers must make decompression stops to eliminate gases like nitrogen from their blood. On that day Randall's wrist computer broke, and he misjudged his stops, leading to joint pain and a case of the bends.

"They had to call a helicopter, and they brought me to a hyperbaric chamber, and I spent eight hours in there. I had symptoms for a good month after that," Randall said.

Divers say age is another factor contributing to deaths at sea.

"You got an aging population of divers," said Ferrier, 58, of Saugus. "There's a bunch of us that are out there and over 55, and we worry about our health and try and stay in shape, but you never know."

Vicky VanDerwerken of Rockport wonders if her husband, Steve, might still be alive if he did not go scuba diving Aug. 16, 2005. "Steve didn't drown; he had a heart attack," she said.

While Blanchette's friends wait to learn the cause of his death, few say the accident will prevent them from returning to the water. Cunningham hopes to honor his friend and mentor by placing a plaque on the bottom of the ship where Blanchette was found.

Ferrier went diving on a recent Sunday and said he thought of his friend while underwater. "Paul wouldn't want anybody to stay out of the water," Ferrier said. "He'd say it's a great day to dive."

Steven Rosenberg can be reached at [rosenberg@globe.com](mailto:rosenberg@globe.com).

## Underwater fatalities

*Divers who died off Rockport and Gloucester:*

James Willing, 41, of Gloucester. Died off Rockport on July 26, 2002.

Anthony Kalinowski, 50, of Belmont. Died off Gloucester on Feb. 9, 2003.

Stephen VanDerwerken, 53, of Rockport. Died off Rockport on Aug. 16, 2005.

David Lenardis, 43, of Wilmington. Died off Gloucester on April 29, 2007.

William Spencer, 42, of South Boston. Died off Gloucester on July 26, 2008.

Patrick Collins, 40, of Belmont. Died off Gloucester on Aug. 2, 2008.

Paul Blanchette Jr., 49, of Dracut. Died off Gloucester on May 19, 2009.

*Source: Essex district attorney's office.*

## North Carolina outtakes

Images from Janet MacCausland's recent trip to the Outer Banks.



Collecting Sand Tiger teeth on Hutton, NC



7





Calvin's Crack, Roatan. Betsy Dake



Henry and son Mike prepare to dive during the Board of Directors Dive at King's Beach.



Joel arrives 'ready-to-go!'



Our June 25 meeting at the Checker Club.



Carlene watches on as Max and Jim suit up for the dive



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



OLD COLONY AMPHIBIANS  
p.o. box 3742  
attleboro.ma 02703