



October 2007  
Vol. 48 · No. 4

# On the Line

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OLD COLONY AMPHIBIANS

## PREZ BOX

The season is winding down, but don't forget that we still have several weeks of warm water left to go. Water temp in the bay doesn't drop below 50° till late October. This site shows a seasonal temperature graph of Narragansett Bay: <http://omp.gso.uri.edu/doee/science/physical/cycle1.htm>

We've certainly had a great summer. I believe I'm correct in saying that only one scheduled dive was cancelled due to weather, a Friday night dive where we had thunderstorms. Otherwise our dives this year have enjoyed terrific weather.

I'm going to take the podium and pontificate a bit. Remember my opinions are mine alone, not an official position of the OCA.

We had an interesting discussion a few weeks ago at the meeting following the RI wreck dive. Strident comments were made, such as "Nobody should ever dive the U-Boat without a pony bottle" and others. This got me thinking about diving safety, things we do to prepare for the unexpected

*Cont. on page 3.*

Beautiful the weather greeted this year's Fall P-Town Weekend - finally. Seems like we've paid our dues of rainy, windy, cold and nasty weekends in P-Town. Thanks to Bill Turner's, Bob McManus's, Jeff Davis's and Eric Alphonse's boats, 13 divers dove Saturday!

Bob shuttled his family over to the beach on the point before returning to accommodate his boat load of divers.

As predicted, the wind picked up in the afternoon so it was a wet ride back to Pamet. Almost everyone got some good size bugs including a 8.55 pounder caught by Bob and Jay got a 7.33 pounder.

We had 30+ people at the cookout as well as 2 drunk kayakers who stumbled into our party! (No lobsters got away...)

## Fall P-Town Weekend

Thanks to all who brought side dishes and desserts and for the help with the clean up after the feast!

Only Jeff took his boat out Sunday with Steve G. and Bill W. Jeff landed a 15 pounder and later a 13 pounder.

As always, a good time was had by all and hope to see you there in the spring.

**Bill T.**

**Important News!**  
Don has sold the property currently housing the Scuba Center. As of October 20th, we will not be able to meet in the basement of the Scuba Center. Ian Campbell has graciously offered his Midas shop in South Attleboro, MA for our meetings until a new location has been secured. Therefore, starting October 25th we will meet at our regular time at Ian's Midas shop. Coincidentally, our winter schedule of 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month until April 1, 2008 starts on November 1st.



Left: Janet holds a piece of baleen on one of her many whale watches.  
Right: All right you two. Remember where you are...!  
Bottom: Jeff's monster!



# Sunday RI Wreck Dive Report

Hello everyone. Yesterday I chaired a RI Wreck Dive. The spot for the day was the U-853 off Block Island. We only had two members (Ian and I) signed up so I invited two friends to join us. When I first joined the club 14 years ago, if anyone had mentioned the U Boat, members would be crawling over each other to sign up for the dive. Now we had just the two of us. Oh well, I guess times change.

The forecast was calling for light winds so we headed out on Adventurer for the 1 hour run from my mooring in Jamestown. The forecasters were off in that the wind was already blowing 13 knots with a good deal of chop. It was still a nice comfortable ride out to the site though.

There was one other boat on the mooring tied onto the conning tower so we took the mooring tied into the bow. Ian was going to drop to the bottom and then finish out with a topside tour. I had planned to penetrate the square hatch into the crew's quarters with my buddy Al staying outside by the hatch in case I needed assistance. The water was warm and we had about 15' of visibility.

Upon entering the sub, I found the visibility to be fantastic as it usually is if no one has been there already. I swam around the entire compartment and then poked my head into the forward torpedo room. All too soon it was time to head up to the safety stop. With the topside condition still choppy and inshore visibility on the low side we decided to call it a day and head home.

*John Stanford*

## COMMENTS ON THE NEW LOBSTER RULES

It would seem that these new lobster rules of maximum sizes for the legal taking of lobsters will affect primarily scuba divers and draggers. I want to look at this from the divers' point of view.

The DMF has, in recent years, put in some rules affecting divers that are really ridiculous and serve only to discourage the sport of diving and not serving any other purpose. The rule to have numbers on our tanks is one. Who can read them when you are underwater? And on your flag? Who can read them from anything farther away than 20 to 30 feet?

Diving is a sport, similar to golfing, skiing, and hunting for example. By the DMF's own records the lobsters taken by divers are less than 2% of the total lobster catch. For such a small percentage why do you want to harass the divers in such a great way? Very large lobsters are not caught very often and when we divers catch a big one, it is a big deal. I have been diving and catching lobsters since 1962. In that long period I have caught two especially large ones, an 11 pounder in 1965 and a 21 pounder in 1975. Underwater I have seen and picked up some large ones but they were eggers and therefore not takable.

I have often heard from friends the comments like: "You get all your lobsters free! That is so very far from the truth. Add a \$22,000 boat and trailer, \$3,000 of diving equipment, the gas, air fills, licenses, and other costs and the price of the catch goes to over \$50 a pound!!! It would be very much cheaper to buy them at the fish market if all we wanted was to get them!

Our dive club awards a prize every year for the largest lobster caught by a member. Our club promotes diving and good and legal behaviors in the pursuit of diving. Putting smaller and smaller sizes on the lobsters we can take sure puts a crimp in this activity.

What the DMF should do instead of coming up with these new rules to discourage divers is to do the opposite and make it easier. The state should realize that the divers bring a lot of money into the economy of Mass and this could be increased by many thousands or even millions. For example look at what the northern New England states do with the fresh water fishing industry. ME, NH, & VT all have many lakes that attract the fisherman. What do these states do? They sell non-resident fishing licenses at anywhere from \$50 to \$80. The fishermen come, fish, stay in motels and other paying accommodations, and leave their dollars behind when they leave with their fish.

Mass could do the same with lobster licenses and sell non-resident permits, thus attracting many to come and stay for a week or two, catch a few lobsters, leave their bucks behind, and go home very happy.

For example our dive club has a P-Town weekend twice a year. We go and stay for two or three nights in a motel in the P-Town area, dive lobster, go out on the town, eat and have a great time. 20 or so members and their wives and some children leave about \$10,000 in the local economy every year. There is another dive club from another town that does the same thing. I have made calculations and can support these figures.

The 20 club members represents only half of our members because the other half of our members are Rhode Island residents and don't come because they can't take lobsters. Think of this seriously because our club alone would leave another \$10,000 in the P-Town economy if they could get non-resident licences. Think of these kind of gains rather than think about new and unreasonable laws that govern our sport.

These observations also can be applied to the Mass north shore areas like Cape Ann and the south shore areas like Scituate and Marshfield. Thank you for listening and I hope that you will think about it seriously.

Yours truly,

**Richard B. Will**, 205 Metcalf Rd., North Attleboro, MA

August 27, 2007

*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 **Ian Campbell**  
Vice President **Bill Turner**  
Secretary **Bill Lane**  
Treasurer **Terry Carragher**

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Henry Cugno** 06-07  
**Fred LeBlanc** 06-07  
**Janet MacCausland** 06-07  
**Connie Rogers** 07-08  
**Alan Reilly** 07-08  
**Rick Amaral** 07-08

**www.ocascuba.org** O.C.A. meetings are held every Thursday evening at 7:00 pm at the Scuba Center in South Attleboro, MA. 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 1062  
Attleboro, MA 02703

or directly to Bill Lane, editor of *On The Line*:  
bill@lanedesign.com

## PREZ BOX

Cont. from front cover.

and redundant systems.

Insurance companies manage risk by assessing the probability of bad things happening and then applying dollar premiums in proportion to the probability of risk. It seems to me that we as divers should take a similar approach to our management of diving risk. In other words, what are the most likely bad things that might happen while diving and what are we going to do, behavior or equipment-wise, to deal with that risk.

Diving risk has some constants, and a lot of variables. Variables include things like depth, current, potential obstructions and entanglements, shore or boat dive, objective of the dive, personal experience/ability level and more. In my view, the number one risk of diving in New England waters is entanglement in lines. Between lobster pots and fishing line, particularly in places like Castle Hill, the likelihood is high that at some point one will get caught up in something. I therefore consider the most important piece of redundant equipment to be my knife. I always carry two in New England. Even in the Caribbean I always have a knife. I know some divers that carry two knives plus snips. Not a bad idea.

The deeper one goes, the higher is the risk of an air consumption problem being a critical issue. I'm not talking about an equipment failure, but rather a circumstance that makes one stay longer than planned at depth and therefore causes an over-consumption of air and perhaps an over-stay of bottom time limits. This might be an entanglement, a buddy issue, or just inattention to bottom time. In my opinion, an unexpected over-stay of bottom time is a relatively high probability risk that should be planned for. Based on this concern, in my opinion, risk management calls for bringing along more air as one goes deeper. One needs to have enough air to handle the potential over-stay, plus a safety stop or even an unplanned deco stop. It's one thing to come back from a dive at Ft Wetherill with 500 psi remaining in one's tank; that's a good dive. Returning from a planned dive profile on the U-boat with 500 psi in a single tank means that person had essentially no contingency plan if he/she overstayed the dive plan. In my opinion, it's a higher priority to have extra air volume than a redundant air source. Obviously, a pony bottle adds another layer of safety and redundancy, but in my opinion, unless it's a larger sized one, the equipment failure risk it addresses is lower on the probability scale than just plain needing extra air.

Risk management is a personal issue but one that every diver should consider. In doing so, I feel that one should think carefully about the risk probabilities involved in their dive.

Most members know, the OCA Board of Directors is required to meet at least 4 times a year. Subject matter for meetings covers any issues identified by our members during the course of meetings or dives, plus any concerns that the board has.

We met a few weeks ago; the following is a summary of our meeting.

1) Seems like each year there is discussion regarding how to get members to pay their dues on time. Each year there is talk about new tricks to make this happen. A year ago we moved the dues payable date to

April 1 in the hope that this would help. It didn't. The latest suggestion was to create a "late penalty" of \$10. In the end we decided to leave things as they are. We are a club, not the IRS. If members don't want to participate, it's really their decision. Our by-laws have provisions for members who are in arrears, so we decided to leave well enough alone, and enforce the provisions of the by-laws if and when needed. As of now we only have 4 members in arrears, which is not too bad.

2) Another annual problem is the Winter Island campout and getting members to pay their part of the camping fee. We have recurrent problems "chasing" people for weeks after the fact. The new policy is that the camping fee of \$30 per night, per party is due the second meeting before the Winter Island weekend (fee due by July 26, the trip this year is Aug 4/5). This does not preclude people who want to sign up at the last minute, but the camping fee will be due immediately upon signing up for people who sign up after July 26. People who attend Winter Island ( and P-Town-Pamet) should be aware that boat captains incur launch fees, so remember this please when helping out with costs.

3) We reviewed the issue of which club positions are exempt from dues. This is currently Secretary and Treasurer. We see no reason to make any changes.

4) Increasing club membership is the hot topic this year. It's natural to have turnover in any club, as members move on to different locations and priorities in their lives. We've had more people leaving than joining however in the last few years, and we all want to change that and at least keep the membership more or less stable. Right now that means getting more members. Best strategies include talking up the club to dive classes, which is underway at the Scuba Center, but we need folks to do this at other shops. Distribution of our new club brochures to dive shops and at diving events is ongoing, which a few members are actively doing. We need all of our members to talk up the club at the shops they frequent and at diving events.

As part of this discussion we got into many stories of members initial experiences in the club. Some stories were good, some were not. The bottom line is that new members in the club need to be treated with concern and friendship. New members don't know our culture, they don't know how our boat dives are handled and they likely don't know the dive sites either. Many of our members dive solo, especially on night lobster dives, but new members are likely not comfortable doing that. New members who attend their first club dives need to have their needs assessed and they need to be paired up ( if that's what they want) with a club diver who knows the site. This points up the need for dive chairs to do a more active job of coordinating the dive. This means doing boat assignments with forethought as to who is experienced and who isn't, and making appropriate assignments. Members going on club dives need to remember to show up on time, or communicate with the chairperson if going to be late, otherwise their boat assignment may not be there when they arrive!

Dive Safely! *Ian Campbell*

## Winter Island 2007



Don't go in there, you!

# CALENDAR

## October

- 19 **Friday Night Dive - rescheduled from 10/12**  
Fort Wetherill, 7:30  
Henry Cugno
- 20 **Last OCA Dive Meeting**  
at our current location. See notes on page 3.
- 25 **First OCA Dive Meeting**  
at our new location. See notes on page 3.
- 26 **Halloween Night Dive**  
Spooooky Island, 6:30  
Ian Campbell

## November

- 1 **OCA Winter Meeting Schedule Commences**  
We meet 1st and 3rd Thursday until April 1.
- 4 **Winter Dive Club Commences** with a dive at Joe's Memorial Plaque site.

## January 2008

- 26 **OCA Annual Banquet**  
Hose Co. Number 6, Pawtucket, RI.  
Details to follow.



Connie, our newest lobsta' maniac, caught 2 bugs off of the Gurnet during our Marshfield Lobster Dive. She was so excited for two great reasons: one – because SHE nabbed the buggers by herself, and two – she wanted to treat her Dad to a fresh, New England feast.



Guess who?!?

Uh oh Ian, look out.

## FROM THE DOGHOUSE

Have you noticed that more and more manhole covers are about 1" to 2" below the surface of the pavement?! Is the pavement rising or are the manholes sinking?!??  
**Seadog**



<<First>><<Last>>  
<<Street>>  
<<City>>,<<State>><<Zip>>



www.ocascuba.org



Old Colony Amphibians  
P.O. Box 1062  
Attleboro, Massachusetts 02703