



Sounding

Newsletter of the South Shore Neptunes

Calendar 2021

2/2 General Meeting 7PM Zoom
 2/7 Club Dive 9AM at Clubhouse
 2/9 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom
 2/16 Evening Program: Zachariah Whalen, videographer for YouTube channel stellar underwater adventure vlog, Johnathan Bird's Blue World, on Black water Diving in Hawaii
 2/28 Club Dive 9AM at Clubhouse
 3/2 General Meeting 7PM Zoom
 3/9 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom
 3/13 (Sat) Club Dive 9AM at Clubhouse
 3/16 Authors' Book Talk 7PM Zoom, Dangerous Shallows, In Search of the Ghost Wrecks of Cape Cod, by Eric Takajian & Randall Peffer
 3/21 Club Dive 9AM at Clubhouse
 4/6 General Meeting 7PM Zoom
 4/11 Club Dive 9AM at Clubhouse
 4/13 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom
 4/20 Evening Program:
 4/25 Club Dive 9AM at Clubhouse
 5/1/Clubhouse Cleanup
 5/4 General Meeting 7PM Zoom
 5/8 (Sat) Club Dive 9AM at Clubhouse
 5/11 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom
 5/12 BSC Meeting 7PM
 5/18 Evening Program:
 5/23 Club Dive 9AM at Clubhouse
 6/1 General Meeting 7PM Zoom

ANNOUNCEMENTS, ACTIVITIES, & REMINDERS

- **Annual Banquet 2021 - Canceled due to COVID restrictions**
- **Underwater Rugby hours:** Tuesday nites 8-9:30 PM at Westwood HS pool.
- **Club General and Board Meetings** are now being held **on Zoom** until further notice. **See Club Facebook page** for pics and brief write ups. **Please note: All other Club activities and programs listed on the Calendar or not,** which are in conflict with the stay-in-place quarantine, **are also CANCELED until further notice.**
- **Bay State Council:** The Council's attorney is awaiting the response of the plaintiff's regarding the beach access suit.
- **Newsletter:** To help add interesting content to the newsletter during these unusual times, please send me (robisonr25@yahoo.com) any first hand accounts, stories, photos, or both about your exploits as a Neptune for potential publication. Photos or clippings enhance stories, so please include them if you can. Don't forget to provide contact info in case I have questions.
- **Don't forget** to visit the **club store** at <https://bit.ly/SSN-Store> for the latest in club swag.

DECEMBER/JANUARY CLUB DIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Sober Up Dive, Pleasure Bay (Boston Harbor), January 1, 2021.

Divers: Todd Alger, John Blackadar, Jason Brown (MetroWest guest), Joe Kilcommons, Lee Moore, Adrienne Murphy, Peter Ninh (guest), Rob Robison, Chuck Zarba. **Support:** Kathy Blackadar, Theresa Czerepica, Paul Greene, Charlie Matthews, Doug and Matt Meyer, Jay Theriault, and Mike Vaughan (guest).

Neptunes Sober Up Dive, January 1, 2021. *Story & photos by Rob Robison*

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Calendar 2021, cont.

- 6/8 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom
- 6/12 (Sat) Club Dive 8AM at Clubhouse
- 6/15 Program TBA
- 6/19 (Sat) Club Dive 8AM at Clubhouse
- 7/6 General Meeting 7PM Zoom
- 7/11 Club Dive 8AM at Clubhouse
- 7/13 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom
- 7/20 Program TBA
- 7/25 Club Dive 8AM at Clubhouse
- 8/1 Duxbury Outing (tent)
- 8/3 General Meeting 7PM Zoom
- 8/8 Duxbury Outing (rain date)
- 8/10 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom
- 8/14 Club Dive 8AM at Clubhouse
- 8/17 Evening Program TBA
- 8/29 Club Dive 8AM at Clubhouse
- 9/? BSC Treasure Hunt TBA
- 9/7 General Meeting 7PM Zoom
- 9/12 Club Dive 8AM at Clubhouse
- 9/14 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom
- 9/21 Evening Program TBA
- 9/ 25 Club Dive 8AM at Clubhouse
- *10/2 Neptunes Flea Market
- *10/3 River Run
- 10/5 General Meeting 7PM Zoom
- 10/12 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom
- 10/17 Flea Market Rain Date
- 10/19 Evening Program TBA
- 10/24 Club Dive 8AM at Clubhouse
- 11/2 General Meeting 7PM Zoom
- 11/6 (Sat) Club Dive 9AM at Clubhouse
- 11/9 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom
- 11/16 Evening Program TBA
- 11/28 Club Dive 9AM at Clubhouse
- 12/5 Club Dive 9AM at Clubhouse
- 12/7 General Meeting 7PM Zoom
- 12/12 Club Dive 9AM at Clubhouse
- 12/14 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom
- 12/21 Elections
- 2022
- 1/1 Sober Up Dive Pleasure Bay
- 1/4 General Meeting 7PM Zoom
- 1/11 Board Meeting 7PM Zoom
- 1/16 Club Dive 9AM at Clubhouse
- 1/18 Evening Program TBA
- *Note: Tentative dates for the 2021 Boston Sea Rovers Annual Clinic

Nine socially distanced and appropriately masked South Shore Neptunes and guests, supported by 8 hearty souls, braved the chilly waters, 37° - 40°, depending on whose dive computer you believe, in Pleasure Bay (Boston Harbor) for the first lobster dive of 2021. Two legal lobsters were caught, one each by **Doug Eaton** and **Joe Kilcommons**. **Peter Ninh** and I found a 5 pounder (Above) that was a fraction too large to keep, plus Peter extracted what



he thought was a keeper from its hole but quickly discovered it was an egger and released it. **Chuck Zarba** experienced the same problem. Sigh! We swam on and found a monster hiding in a very large hole using its considerable claws (Left) to protect the opening. Other Neptunes dive teams discovered it, too. **Adrienne Murphy** lost a fin she had borrowed to replace the one she lost on the River Run in October.

After the dive we held an impromptu mini feast of banana bread and hot chocolate, supplied by **Theresa C** (Thanks!!), and chocolate chip cookies (Thanks, Chuck!), along with some Bailey's Irish Cream to enliven the hot drinks, courtesy of **Doug E.** (Thanks Doug!) P.S. More photos from the New Year's Day surface activities can be found on the club Facebook page. Additional underwater photos from the PLB dive are included in the Parting Shots section of the newsletter.



Lost Fin Recovered! Sunday, January 10, 2021. Story by *Doug Eaton*; photos by *Chuck Zarba*

On Jan. 10th **Chuck Zarba** and I returned to Pleasure Bay in search of a

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Happy Diving

From

JOHN & KATHY BLACKADAR

lost fin from the Sober Up dive. We decided to turn the dive into a trifecta: a fin dive, a bottle dive, and a picture dive. We got two of the three—the fin(No photo) and some bottles. When I headed out to

take the picture of the big lobster we had seen the weekend before, my pressure hose started leaking at the swivel, so I ended my dive. While Chuck was out looking for bottles, I headed in and met Chuck on the beach. We loaded up our gear and headed home, after having enjoyed a great day of diving.

Icebreakers: The Saga of Lost and Found and Lost —Again! Circleville (OH) Dive Center, December 23 & 27, 2020. Story by Rob Robison. Photos by **Brent Bautista , Laura Kelley, and Rob**



Chuck's bottles before (Above) and after (Right). Photos courtesy CZ photography



The loss. December was a strange month, not that January 1, 2021, began differently.

First, Neptune **Rich Bowers** lost his weight pouch in Hathaway's Pond on Cape Cod, and it was fortuitously

recovered by local dive stud, **Bill Jeter**. Then, two of us lost our weights in a Circleville, Ohio quarry, as well. Read on to find out more.

Former Columbus Sea Nag dive buddies **John Skobel, Brent Bautista**, and I agreed to meet at the Circleville Dive Center on a bright, sunny, and relatively warm morning with air temps in the 40s, Weds., Dec. 23, at 10:00 AM, to dive the popular South Quarry. Although a few feet shallower than normal because of the drought, it offers more objects of interest and usually a greater abundance and variety of aquatic life to enjoy than the North one.



While we were gearing up, another former Sea Nag, PADI dive instructor, and close dive buddy, **Rick Blaine**, made an appearance. Unfortunately, he can no longer dive due to health issues. Anyway, he helped us zip in and assisted with the balky second three-finger mitt a couple of us experience difficulty

donning. Then, it was time to walk down the short stair steps to the water, inflate our BCs, slide on our fins, and kick our way underwater to the flatbed staging platform at 15' for a group photo, before beginning the circumnavigation of the quarry.



Pool table

We headed south in a counter clockwise direction, making obligatory

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stops at the billiard table, where some of the ash remains of deceased dive buddy Donn Ellerbrock were deposited underneath a few years ago, floated past the catamaran, found the toilet rat in its usual position, and made the turn east toward the two sunken boats near the Southeast corner. The first one encountered is still nearly hidden by overachieving underwater vegetation. There was no sign of the catfish hiding beneath the vegetal growth, a frequent haunt, so we moved on to the second one, a small runabout north of the flora-encrusted boat.



Leaves or sea creatures?

Oops!

We continued our dive past the tub ladies until we came upon the branch guideline leading to the sunken Red Cross Mobile Unit. I approached it to take photos through the open glassless window. Once finished, I started to move away and snagged on something. Turns out it was one of my weight pouches, which

unbeknownst to me had pulled out of its pocket and was now on the bottom of the quarry, also unbeknownst to me. In all probability, it was within a few feet of where I was photographing my dive buddies. Anyway, I became too light, thought it must have been because the part of the quarry we were diving in was a bit too shallow for me in my drysuit, couldn't stay submerged, surfaced, and



returned to the entry point. Brent and John continued on with the dive and eventually Brent sighted the catfish hidden deep under one of the school bus axles. My luck to miss that! Other than that mishap, it was a good dive—40°, 10 - 12' vis, 20' max depth, 36 shortened minutes of dive time. Back on dry land stowing my gear, I noticed the weight pouch was missing from its rightful place in the BC pocket, and immediately understood what had happened. What a bummer!

Another occasional Tuesday eve diver, Laura Kelley, met us at the quarry just as we were finishing up. We all drove to Gibby's, the local watering hole magnet for their area-famous burgers, ate lunch together, and quaffed a couple of beers with good friends, just like old times. It was an absolutely delightful way to end the late morning early PM dive experience.

Saturday, December 26, I headed to a local dive shop to refill my tank and discovered it was closed through the weekend, as was another that I like to use when in Columbus. John Skobel suggested trying a third, which was



Rob, Laura Kelley, Rick Blaine, John Skobel, Brent Bautista. Photo courtesy LK photography



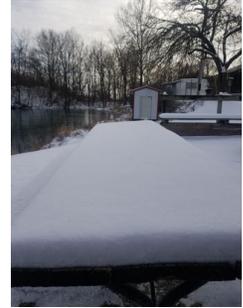
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open. So I drove up the outer belt to Aquatic Adventures for a fill. While waiting, I discovered the shop had extra weight pouches for sale that fit my Aqualung model BC. So, I purchased one, plus a couple of 1lb. soft weights—one pounders are very hard to come by—to help readjust the free weights I had on hand to make the recovery dive the next morning possible.



Icebreakers, Recovery, and Loss

Sunday, Dec. 27. We were back at the Circleville Dive Center Quarry around 10 AM, having been assured by the dive shop owner that four consecutive days of subfreezing temps would not have frozen the quarry. I'm certain he was just as surprised as we to find out the entire quarry was frozen over. We tested the ice, and luckily it was not frozen completely solid. It was only about 1/8" thick, which we could break through relatively easily. The forecast for the day was a warming one with the high expected in the mid 40s. As a matter of fact, the early morning temperature had risen from 25° around 8 AM to nearly 30° by the time we had suited up.



Ready to go, we started down the metal stairs to the water. As Brent, John, and I were getting in one by one, David Humphrey, a diver who joined us that I had not met before, accidentally dropped a couple of small weights on the other staircase leading into the water, which left him light. That coupled with the fact that the dive shop he used had mistakenly forgotten to fill one of his two tanks, leaving him with about 40 cubic ft. of air, instead of 80 in his small doubles pack, meant he needed to stay behind. We couldn't risk something happening to him under the relatively thin ice.



Our goal for this short dive, given the icing conditions, was simple: search, recover, and return, without sight seeing. So down we went, following the tech guideline to the sunken aluminum Red Cross Mobile Unit. Slowly approaching and peering through the 7 foot haze to the heavily silted bottom beneath window sill, we sighted the weight pouch I had left behind unintentionally just a

Click one the image to see a short video clip of what the ice looks like from underneath. Video clip & photos courtesy BB photography & Rob

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few days prior. John snatched it off the bottom, and Brent carried it all the way back on our exceedingly brief but successful 12-minute dive.

On reaching the flatbed trailer platform, I veered off a little to the right, as we slowly floated toward the surface and tested the ice with my head. Thunk! I waited a second, 'cause it was a hard slightly painful thunk, although I did not see stars, and all of a sudden there was what seemed to be a loud Crack! The ice split above me. I broke through, saw the exit stairs, dropped back down and swam to the exit hole we had made prior to the dive.

Before exiting, I also swam over to the staircase where David had inadvertently dropped his two weights but could not find the one of his two that was still missing. Too much digging around the area had stirred up the silt to the point where it was impossible to find anything. I hope he has recovered that weight by now.

Meanwhile, as we were packing up and stowing our gear, a couple of tech divers showed up and went diving in the 38° water, two degrees colder than the 40° experience we had enjoyed on Dec. 23, to practice their skills. We visually followed their bubbles as they swam slowly around the quarry, realizing that by now the eastern side had completely thawed from north to south and that there was open water at both ends, too. The air temperature had reached 44° - 45°! The bright sunny day didn't hurt, either.

Special thanks to Brent Bautista, John Skobel, and David Humphrey for accompanying me on this successful recovery dive. Also, Laura Kelley and Brent Bautista should be thanked for kindly lending me their photos and video clip for this article and its companion predecessor.



Staging pavilion

PARTING THOUGHTS...

For the Library

The Last Battle off the Atlantic: The Sinking of the U-853, by Capt. Bill Palmer, is the story of the last German U-boat sunk by US forces off the East Coast of the United States at the close of WWII. It also details the search and discovery of the boat and its final resting place off Block Island in Rhode Island Sound. John Blackadar has purchased a copy for the club library along with a companion DVD of the story. Check with John if you would like to read it or watch the DVD. Also, you can purchase the DVD (\$20) and the book through Amazon for \$30.00, plus shipping, or you can order it and the DVD directly

from Capt. Palmer via his publishing company: *William Palmer % Thunderfishbooks (sic), 956 Old Rock Hill Road, Wallingford, CT 06492-3964.*

& SHOTS

Here are a few remaining photos from the Sober Up Dive in Pleasure Bay.



L-R. Lost shoe fin, skate, oyster on tunicates

CLUB INFORMATION

Club Hotline: Call or text 617-804-5637. Let's Go Diving

Visit the Club swag store: <https://bit.ly/SSN-Store>



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