



Air Bubbles



The Newsletter of the North Shore Frogmen's Club

Volume 52, Number 4

April 2010

President's Message, April 2010

03/23/10

We have moved. The club has taken up residence at the Portuguese American Veterans of Foreign Wars (PAVFW) in Peabody. Last week was our first date, and so far so good. The next three weeks will see if we advance from shy hand holding to the exchange of rings. I thank Tony Vieira who offered the PAVFW as an alternate home. The move was prompted by the failure of the Beverly Golf and Tennis Club (BG&TC) to open as scheduled.

As many of our long term members will know, this is not the first time the Froggies have changed venue. In the almost twenty years I have been a member we have had to move at least six times. I say had to move because every move we have made has been triggered not by some heinous act perpetrated by us, but by either a problem with the location of our host, e.g. BG&TC, or a by spat with the landlords, e.g. Palmer Cove Yacht Club (PCYC). Speaking of PCYC, they have kindly offered to re-host us, an offer that remains on the table. For myself, while the Chukchi, Kalmyk and Nukak peoples seem to find the nomadic lifestyle to their taste, I think it's a pain in the glutes. So, in the coming weeks the members that attend the meetings will have the chance to decide where our home should be.

As I said, the places in play are PCYC, PAVFW and BG&TC. PCYC was our home for many years and offers the accommodation and beverages that tend to suit the Froggies, plus the chance to dive Salem harbour from their docks in the winter. The PAVFW also has a large function/meeting room, a bar and on occasion food. Also, Tony is a member, which I consider a recommendation on its own. News reports say the BG&TC will open this week, but even assuming this comes to pass, questions remain as to what will happen when golf season is over.

So please, come and take a closer look at PAVFW, then when we take a vote on the club location you will be able to make an informed decision and have a say on the future of your club.

Graham Smith



Coming Club Events

NOTE CHANGE IN MEETING VENUE FOR APRIL 1 and 8 TO PEABODY VFW POST

April 1: Presentation on diving in Raja Ampat, Indonesia, by Club members Roslyn, Amy, Mary & Ray



April 8: Fred Dion of Backscatter East on "The Latest Cameras and Digital Tricks."



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**2010 NSF CLUB DUES
ARE NOW OVERDUE**

Deadline for submissions
to the May 2010 issue
of *Air Bubbles* is
Thursday, April 22
Please have all articles and
information to the Air
Bubbles editor by that date.

Raja Ampat, Indonesia

Presentation RESCHEDULED for April 1, 2010

OK! We'll try this yet once again. Our presentation is now twice rescheduled, and sure to go off this time.

Come see the pictures from our trip to Raja Ampat, Indonesia with Jonathan Bird last November. Our slide show presentation will give a tiny glimpse of what an amazing dive trip we had. We lived onboard the beautiful MSY Seahorse where our two major decisions for the day were what to have for breakfast, and shall I do the night dive? With the option to do as many as 36 dives, all of us logged close to that number, though only two onboard did them all. The reefs were full of living creatures, including Wobbegon sharks and manta rays, sweetlips fish and soft corals, pygmy seahorses and nudibranchs.



Please come to our presentation on **April 1** to see the best of our pictures.
Amy, Roslyn, Ray and Mary

Fred Dion of Backscatter East

Presentation RE-scheduled for April 8, 2010

Fred Dion will be our guest speaker on March 18. Fred was the owner of Underwater Photo Tech in Derry, NH, until his shop recently joined forces with Backscatter of Monterey, CA to become **Backscatter East** at the same location, still selling a wide variety of underwater photography equipment.

Fred's topic will be **"The Latest Cameras and Digital Tricks."** Bring your questions for a Q&A session.

Air Bubbles – April 2010

Meeting Summaries

25-Feb-2010

Meeting called to order: 8:09 PM

Attendance: 3 officers, 15 members

Guests: Ron Blaise, Peter Ernst

Secretary: Minutes read and accepted

Treasurer: report read and accepted.

37 paid members

Committees:

- **Membership:** more interest in facebook

- **Website should be up and running by the end of March**

- **Program Committee:**

- Mike Lees scheduled for next wk

- Boston Scuba Show this weekend.

- Mary went to BSC mtg last night.

Vin Malkoski of the MA DMF has offered to go to any dive club's meeting to talk about new salt water fishing license. If you dive and catch flounder, you will need one. Maybe April or May?

- **Air Bubbles:** deadline was Monday, hope to get it out next week.

Announcements: Paul visited Bobby at the Rehab.

Old Business: Easter Egg dive, Sunday after Easter (April 11). John Sears is asking if anyone has a kayak if they can help.

New Business: Boat dive planning. Jes is thinking late March maybe, try to fill up a boat, probably Cape Ann Divers, maybe Poling and USS NH, but up for discussion. This is a good time for scallops. Both Cape Ann boats are out now; one has room for 6 other has room for 18.

Dive Talk:

- Lewis was in Florida, got some good dives in – did a bunch of the reefs, did Spiegle Grove in the Keys. 71°F.

- Sat – Vinny, Markus, Genci and Dan T and some others from Atlantic Divers, at Fort Sewall. Vinny dove wet for 42 minutes. 20' vis, 36°F water temp

- Sunday 11 club dive to Fort Sewall vis 20'. Tony got about 18-20 scallops in middle of the channel.

General Discussion:

- There was a restaurant in

Marblehead that crashed into the sea in 1910. Vinny found a plate in 2 pieces and bottles that may have come from that restaurant. Curtis brothers Blue Label Ketchup bottles. Curtis brothers became Birds Eye Foods. The bottles stopped being produced in 1950s.

- Underwater photo society was tonight. Membership still open; they usually meet on the last wed of every month. \$45 membership fee.

- John McColley is out of the hospital from his skiing accident, and home in N. Reading.

- Mike's Moments

- Orca at Seaworld killed it's trainer. Third time this whale has killed.

- Seal came out of water got on side of the road in Salisbury

Raffles: Dollars Box: Mike Denner

Mystery Prize: Tony Vieira

Bug Bag: Peter Ernst

04-Mar-2010

Meeting called to order: 8:10 PM

Attendance: 4 officers, 17 members

Guests: Harry VanGeenHoven, Sr.

Secretary: Minutes read and accepted

Treasurer: report read and accepted.

39 paid members.

Committees:

- **Membership:** 2 applications: Ron Blaise has been diving since 1960, was Viking rep in 70s; Peter Ernst, divemaster. Motion to accept both proposed, seconded and passed

- **Program Committee:**

- If BG&T available, Indonesia presentation 3/11/10 and Fred Dion of Backscatter 3/18/10.

- 5/13- Faith Ortins presentation on Antarctica

New Business:

- **BG&T rep said they will be open next week, but they said same for this week.** Graham said he received calls from Palmer Cove YC, they'd be interested in us going there. There used to be a number of co-members of frogs and Yacht Club. Palmer's cove members and board of directors need to vote us in – the old guard are probably gone. BG&T will they

open? Banquet could be in jeopardy. We need to 1) figure out if BG&T is viable for now and the year. If not PC sounds viable venue.

- **Other meeting options?**

- Boston Yacht club in Marblehead?
- Spear Post in Beverly, near Cabot theatre.

- Peabody VFW

- anyone with contacts could look for a new spot.

- We should try to stay at BG&T if we can. We'll give them benefit of the doubt but need to do some research.

- Now may be our time to get in someplace while things are slow.

- Ice dive last weekend called off; now scheduled for this weekend. Meet at dive shop at 8am.

- Jess is planning to have Froggy clothing made – any artistic people think about designing a new logo.

- Salem News had a color picture of a Froggy winter dive.

Dive Talk: Susan – Cozumel – took group from Andover High. They had New England conditions for checkout dive. One night dive, two boat dives/day. One girl bit through her reg at 60' and started choking. She went back in. On the last dive saw 2 sharks and a moray eel.

General Discussion:

- Susan – next Wed night scuba water polo.. Lawrence 7pm with group from Northeast Scuba \$10, let Susan know if you are interested.

- Scuba Diving is now a Boy Scout merit badge.

- East Coast Divers will have a make-your-own-fins-and-mask day on 4/18 for \$15 charge that will be based on Fred Calhoun's book. Bring old sneakers that will be ruined.

- SSNeptunes will teach how to sharpen a dive knife at their meeting on 4/20 in Quincy.

- NEAquarium invited us April 11th whale watch; and white water rafting Deerfield river

- Mike's moments

- Shark tagging, off Chatham, one

shark went to Carolinas, 1500' dive in Nov VA Beach, Dec Tampa, Jan Daytona - followed water temps and food supply

-Rogue wave off Barcelona hit cruise ship, 2 people died, this area has waves like this a couple of times a year

-NOAA's law enforcement, first thing new person in charge did was shred his files - fired

-Drug that is found in 90% streams 2.5 ppm turning 1 out of 10 male frogs into female full functioning reproductive. EPA allows 3ppm for human consumption

-Aggressor fleet new destination Baja Mexico, Whale dive Nov-Dec, lots of itineraries, great white whale dive

Raffles: Dollars Box: John Marren
Mystery Prize: Graham Smith

11-Mar-2010

Meeting called to order: 8:03 PM

Attendance: 3 officers, 14 members

Guest: Keith

Correspondence - postcard from Annette, give kudos to Mary for great job with Air Bubbles

Secretary: Minutes read and accepted
Treasurer: report read and accepted.

43 paid members, 39 officers, life, etc. Bob, Annette/Pat motion to make them honorary members. After April 15, email Annette & Pat let them know if you are going to their place in VT in July.

Committees:

-**Membership:** website is funky, email link is not working. As soon as we get permanent residence, will do follow up with people who were interested last year. People are still interested

-**Program Committee:**

-Meg to follow-up with Mike Lodise re Fred Dion's presentation date.

-Usually have picnic in Sep. Several clubs are planning to have their picnic same weekend as BSC Treasure hunt (26Sep Stage Fort Park) Our picnic is usually the 3rd weekend of Sept. Do we want to

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have our on 26th also? Motion made seconded and passed to have joint club picnic

Announcements: Article in today's paper on BG&T, doesn't say much about when it may open.

-**Old Business:**

-Website - Old website was closed down; Markus made a backup. He is working on new website.

-Tony and Jess planning boat dive with Cape Ann divers Sunday, March 28th, \$75/2dives Poling, scallops, New Hampshire?

-Club meeting venue:

-Tony scouted new location, Peabody VFW. Second person in charge said it should not be a problem. It has plenty of parking, big function room, food, drink, open all year, could possibly accommodate us for the banquet. Some members will check it out.

-Palmer's Cove still on the list. - Can we talk with Palmer's Cove, check it out.

-If Peabody looks good this week, may start there soon.

Dive Talk: Laura, Tony went to Ft Sewall, horrible vis. Laura found intact china soap dish. Jack was there Laura found scallops for Tony. Water temp 41°F. Saw spidercrab. Jack got 6-7 scallops and pipe

General Discussion:

-Al took buoyancy course with Ed Hays; Ed will be in Fitchburg on April 3 at Andy's Sports Shop. Bring mask fins and wetsuit.

-Gas pipeline probe exposed previous unknown shipwrecks in Baltic Sea. Some may be middle ages others from 17-18th century. Just outside Swedish territorial waters. The hulls are fully intact, 328'+ depth

Raffles: Dollars Box: Peter Chapman
Mystery Prize: Tony Vieira
Bug Bag: Adam Hartnett

18-Mar-2010

New location at Peabody VFW Post

Meeting called to order: 8:03 PM

Attendance: 3 officers, 15 members

Guests: 1 - Keith

Secretary: Minutes read and accepted

Treasurer: 44 paid members, annual report to MA done for 2009

Committees:

-**Air Bubbles:** deadline Monday!

-**Program Committee:**

-We should have an **Activities Chairperson** to track events

-**Easter egg dive 4/11** - John Sears is asking for help distributing eggs for dive at Cressi Beach at Stage Fort Park; anyone have a kayak to use to help? Party at Dodie's afterwards.

Old Business:

-**Website** - Markus has the backend done, April 1 can kick off new website

-**Buoyancy class** - 8 people signed up. We will meet at Barnes and Nobles 10:15-10:30 Northshore Mall morning of 3April. GUE course - started by cave divers.

-**New venue**

-**Thank you Tony for setting this up!** Plenty of room for our weekly meetings.

-Comment that it would be nice to have a sign or email or something letting people know to use the side door.

-BG&TC under new management. Vinny planning on contacting mayor, see if BG&T will be open year round. There is a cost associated with VFW \$60/month; bar profit can count towards what they want to charge. We could offer once a quarter or so do a special event that we charge \$5 (as we did in BG&TC on a few occasions). Remember to bring cash for the bar, no credit cards. We will be here for 4 weeks total for trial period. 4/8 will be last trial meeting time.

New Business:

-**Raffle prizes:** Vinny went to Undersea Divers to price 100 cu ft steel tank to raffle off over the course of the year.

-Raffling off Fill cards could be a good option.

-Digital camera with housing is a possible raffle.

Dive Talk: Markus - Disney World

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aquarium \$175. None of the money to Disney; goes to their wildlife funds. Usually 2-12 people per dive. Pretty cool dive. 25' depth, 6million gal of H2O. Off times can get in quickly. Summer, usually month or more wait. Sunday –White beach 10am

General Discussion:

Next ultimate Frisbee game – April 14th 7:45 at Lawrence Y, \$10, if interested let Susan know. Bring your gear.

Raffles: Dollars Box: Shon Dubois

25-Mar-2010

Meeting called to order: 8:03 PM

Attendance: 4 officers, 17 members

Guests: 3 guests: Skip from Discover Diving and Finatics Dive Club, along with Steve and Paul

Secretary: Minutes read and accepted

Treasurer: four more paid members this week!

Committees:

Air Bubbles: received Jack's article and president's message. Hope to get AB out by next meeting.

Correspondence: Blessington's trophy company is going out of business, selling to Crown Trophy about Dec 1st

Old Business:

-Vinny emailed the Beverly mayor re status of BG&TC and their plans for the year. Bar is opening this week, golf course open when weather allows. Waiting to hear from mayor.

-We are meeting at the Peabody VFW for 4 wks (through 4/8/10) on trial basis. We could try Palmer's Cove Yacht Club, who has courted us.

-There is a Knights of Columbus in Lynnfield that could be checked out.

-Question whether it is okay to have different summer and winter venues. The thought is probably not. Good to have a place to do presentations/events.

-It is getting to the point that we should decide soon about our "permanent" meeting location.

-Dodie requested that we find a volunteer to make chowder for the Easter Egg party as she is having surgery tomorrow and probably

won't be up to it. Shon offered to make the chowder.

-Buoyancy class – time changed, starting at 10am Fitchburg. Meet at B&N at 8:30 3Apr – Andy sport shop equipment show and tell and GUE buoyancy class.

-Jess is hoping to get simple logo for t-shirt design. Once he gets a good collection from people, will bring them here and see about putting in an order. Anyone who wants to can submit designs.

New Business: It was noted that we haven't seen the basket for speaker donations (discretionary fund) lately. Question about charging for presentations; we shouldn't charge admission for members' presentations. We could have a voluntary donation.

Dive Talk:

-Club winter dive at White Beach on Sunday, the vis was horrible. A journalism student at BU interviewed us. She's seen us in Marblehead

-**Jesse & Adam** were in Mexico, Puerto Vallarta, a big cruise port. 3 days of diving, not cheap. On the first dive saw giant manta. Vis was 10-50'; once below 40' vis improves. Saw some spiny lobsters. El Moro (next day) vis 60-80', morays everywhere, little surgy. 3rd day saw orange & purple morays. Lot of small rays and puffer fish every dive. Charter company offered steel 100' din tanks and weight integrated BCs. 68°F water, needed full 7mm and hood. Can be touristy but not at the same time.

-**Harry, Paul** and Harry's father were in Bonaire last week at the Divi Flamingo with Undersea Divers. Great crew, spectacular diving. Dive masters spotted frog fish. Paul got picture of peacock flounder with a box fish in its mouth. Reef diving great, lot of hard coral, not as much soft coral. Harry improved in his photography during the week by taking lots of pictures and getting to know the equipment. - Jim Manning

liked to do pre-dawn dives; Paul joined him and they had tarpon following them around. Saw a few octopi. Spotted morays out then, too. - Dove the Hilma Hooker. Saw lots of barracuda. Great opportunities for photography.

-**Jesse** is organizing a dive this Saturday at the Gloucester breakwall, 10am meet at the lighthouse. Anyone welcome. Park at bird observatory. Jess found some brass nails last year.

General Discussion:

-Anyone interested in diving Hatteras, 2nd or 3rd week in Aug contact **John Ferrier**. Need 7 people. They use the same house and boat every year. Good wreck diving.

-**Jim and John F** got notice from SUDS in Somerville, going to St Lawrence July 16th week. If they get enough people they can have 2 boats (1 boat is full and there are alternates). \$400.

-We almost had a presentation with Capt Bushy tonight; Todd set it up, but didn't tell us.

Raffles: Dollars Box: Jack Munro
Mystery Prize: Mary Howard
Bug Bag: Jim Follis, Jack Munro

DO YOU WANT TO GO WINTER DIVING??

Tony Vieira is our Winter Dive Coordinator for the 2010 winter diving season. Please contact Tony if you would like to dive in the cold with other club members!

(constable.a.vieira@comcast.net or 978-569-9352)

Dives will be on Sundays. Check with Tony for planned time and location for each weekend.

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April				1 8:00 PM Meeting PRESENTATION	2	3
4 Sunday Dive	5	6	7	8 8:00 PM Meeting PRESENTATION	9	10
11 Easter Egg Dive/Party	12	13	14	15 8:00 PM Meeting	16	17
18 Sunday Dive	19	20	21	22 8:00 PM Meeting	23	24
25 Sunday Dive	26	27	28	29 8:00 PM Meeting	30	
May						1
2 Sunday Dive	3	4	5	6 8:00 PM Meeting	7	8
9 Sunday Dive	10	11	12 BSC meeting	13 8:00 PM Meeting PRESENTATION	14	15
16 Sunday Dive	17	18	19	20 8:00 PM Meeting	21	22
23 Sunday Dive	24	25	26	27 8:00 PM Meeting	28	29
30 Sunday Dive	31					

2010 Activities List

- **Apr 1, Thur** **Presentation:** Raja Ampat, Indonesia slide show (see page 2)
- **Apr 8, Thur** **Fred Dion of Backscatter:** "Latest Cameras and Digital Tricks" (see page 2)
- **Apr 11, Sun** **Easter Egg Dive, and Easter Egg Party at Dodie's**
- **May 12, Wed** **Bay State Council** of Divers meeting in Quincy, 7:30PM
- **May 13, Thur** **Faith Ortins:** Diving in Antarctica
- **May 15 & 16** **DUI Rally and Demo Tour in Gloucester**
- **Jul 12-18** **Vermont diving WEEK with Pat & Annette**
- **Sept 26, Sat** **BSC Treasure Hunt** (see page 5) **and Club Picnic**
- **Dec 11, Sat** **Annual President's Banquet at Beverly Golf & Tennis Club**



2010 DUI Rally & Demo Tour

Come on Down and See What's Up

Stage Fort Park, Gloucester, MA May 15-16

Test dive DUI Drysuits, Dive Wear and Accessories

Things to bring:

C-card, regulator, mask, snorkel, BC, fins, weights, tank
Credit Card and/or driver's license (for DUI to hold while
you have the test equipment)

Wear bathing suit or lightweight clothing for modesty
while changing

\$10 per day advance purchase, \$15 per day on-site
purchase

Event Schedule:

Saturday

9AM Registration opens, demo dives begin
11-2 Barbecue lunch
4PM Last diver in the water
5PM Event ends for the day
6PM Catered Dinner & Presentation

Sunday

9AM Registration opens, demo dives begin
11-2 Barbecue lunch
3PM Last diver in the water
4pm Event ends

About the Event:

When you arrive, check in at the registration desk and
present your certification card and driver's license or credit
card. We'll fit your regulator with a drysuit hose and then
you will set up your BC, regulator and weights so you are
ready to dive.

Then it's off to each station where the DUI Crew will fit
you with ZipSeals, DiveWear insulation with boots and
your choice of 130 different DUI drysuits to test dive.
You'll get RockBoots and a Weight & Trim System to try,
if you want. We have drysuit hoods, wet and dry gloves,
and even extra fins if yours don't fit with Rock Boots.

At the water's edge, you will be assigned a guide who will
show you the basics of how to use the drysuit and take you
for a dive! You will not go below 40' and you will only do
what you feel comfortable doing. After returning the
equipment, have some lunch ... then do it again!



Northeastern University
Marine Science Center

Annual Riser Lecture

Dr. Robert Paine

Professor Emeritus of Zoology,
University of Washington
Friday, April 16th, 2010, 4:30 PM

430 Nahant Road, Nahant, MA 01908
Call Carole McCauley for more information
or email mcsinfo@neu.edu

Phone: 781-581-7370 ext 321

<http://www.marinescience.neu.edu>

VERMONT CAMPING AND DIVING WEEK

with ANNETTE and PATRICK

JULY 12 to 18, 2010

If you would like to go to Vermont for this diving
and camping week with Patrick and Annette, don't
forget to contact them AFTER APRIL 15 with the
dates you would like to go.

If you need more information, ask around and find
out who went last year, events and happenings.
Seems they had such a good time they've decided
to make it a week instead of a weekend!

**Welcome our
Newest Club Members,**

Ron Blaise

And

Peter Ernst

who were voted in on 3/4/10.

**Please greet Ron and Peter
when you see them at a meeting
or out diving.**

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Blind Man's Bluff

USS Seawolf (SSN 575)

By Sherry Sontag & Christopher Drew

Retold by Jack Munro

At this time *Seawolf* went back to retrieve the cable tap pod, which weighed several tons, and was 18 to 20 feet long. The crew and a lot of higher-ups thought it was like sending a Model T to do the job. The year was 1986, and it was 28 years since the *USS Seawolf* had been commissioned. But *Seawolf* was one of the few boats that were equipped with skegs (retractable skis that held the boat off the bottom). The bottom had a lock out system allowing three divers on close-circuit umbilicals with hot water, to go out there, work, then go back to the chamber. Most of the work was in the 450 to 600 ft water range and they saturated down to do their work.

For this mission near the Sea of Okhotsk, they were at 450 feet, which is not really deep for a submarine to operate in. They purposely stayed away from the surface (because they were in a hostile area) and set up on the bottom. This was almost a fatal mistake, because two storms on the surface converged to form a cyclone right over their work site. With the divers delayed, the boat started to move, even with 400 plus feet over them. At first, slight rolls, then big enough that the skegs moved off the bottom. One of the divers lost his balance and fell under the skeg he was near and by sheer luck, was pulled out by his fellow divers right as the skeg came back down with a crash. This was enough for the divers; as they made their way back to *Seawolf*, the boat's movements and stirring up of the bottom was making life dangerous.

Inside *Seawolf* alarms were sounding all over. In engineering, water intakes were taking in sand and mud as much as water vital for cooling the reactor, turbine generators, pumpers, etc. At this point, loss or interruption of cooling water could cause a scram on the reactor and would result in complete loss of power. The boat was moving so badly that by now the skegs were burrowing themselves into the bottom making the situation even more dire. With two anchors out, they were trying to free the boat from the bottom, even blowing tanks and rocking the boat forwards and backwards (reverse).

The crew on *Seawolf* knew if they came to the surface by accident, as they were in Soviet waters, the consequences would not be good. After several meetings with the Captain, officers and chiefs, it was decided to let go of the anchors, then blow the tanks and take their chances with the Soviets which they figured would not be out in this type of weather. Many hours went by before they got the boat moving and got into deeper water, alarms still going off, machinery and reactors barely holding on. When they were finally loose, they realized the Gondola in *Seawolf's* belly, "huge clamshell" (used to retrieve pieces from the bottom) was damaged. But how bad was it?

The boat was so loud, with sand in every piece of machinery, that sooner or later they would be detected. Not too far from the Sea of Okhotsk, making only about 6 knots, they were detected. Active pinging from a Soviet vessel's sonar continued for 24 hours without let-up, then stopped. For whatever reason, the Soviets gave up, and *Seawolf* continued back to base. When in dry dock, they saw the damage was worse than depth charges. Lots of pieces of missing superstructure, the Gondola was dangling along with other pieces of metal, along with hundreds and hundreds of pounds of sand which became souvenirs to the crew. The shipyard workers were never told how the sand got into the diesel engine, lube oil system, pumps and vital machines. "No awards were given, no formal recognition of the men's brush with death." Officials in Washington had found out via satellite that the Soviets had found the cable tap in Okhotsk. At first, the crew was suspected of intel leaks, later it was proven that Ronald Pelton, former NSA employee, had sold out to the Soviets.

Not long after this last patrol, the *USS Seawolf* was decommissioned.

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There were other earlier cable taps starting back to 1976 & 1977 made by the *USS Seawolf*, some highlighted in the excerpt below. Other spies, Aldrich Ames and John Walker Jr., who with other family members, sold secrets to the Soviets for 18 years, were all finally caught. Their hardware secrets not only helped the Soviets build better submarines, but also put our boats, crews, and divers in grave danger.

More stories will be coming out in the future about this and other adventures that will be stranger than fiction.

Excerpt from "Subs, Spooks, & U.S. Navy Divers" United States Navy Divers

Much of the material relating to Submarine Development Group remains classified to this day, but with the publication of books such as Blind Man's Bluff and the Silent War several interesting facts about saturation diving have come into the public domains. Early submarine disasters and the related rescue efforts drove the Navy's need to dive deeper. As a result, NEDU (Navy Experimental Diving Unit) became the subject-matter experts on saturation diving and human performance at depth. By 1962, the Navy was involved in saturation diving with the Man-in-the-Sea project and in 1964 with Sealab I. The same year the Deep Submergence Systems Project (DSSP) was formed. But here is where it gets interesting, when, also in 1964, DSSP becomes an asset of Naval intelligence. Why was intelligence dabbling in submarine rescue?

In 1965 Sealab II had successfully saturated divers at 205 feet of sea water, demonstrating that they had moved passed the R & D stage and that saturation diving was now an operational capability for the Navy. The same year, naval intelligence came up with a highly classified plan, now known as "Sand Dollar" to recover Soviet missiles and parts from the sea floor. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) had approved DSSP to develop depth recovery capabilities for intelligence collection - and with that came funding.

With that approval, 1965 became a very busy year for deep diving. In July the submarine *USS Halibut* was reclassified and modified for DSSP operations. A new "phantom" bathyscaphe was built in absolute secrecy by DSSP, using the *Trieste* as a cover. And from 1965 to 1968, twenty-eight helium-oxygen saturation dives were made at NEDU to depths of 825 feet.

But why were they modifying submarines? The Navy could not very well place a salvage ship with a saturation diving system in Soviet waters without attracting undue attention. After all, this was the Cold War period.

From 1965 to 1967, *USS Seawolf* was refueled and upgraded to the new submarine quality assurance requirements, set in place after the *USS Thresher* (SSN 593) tragedy. She also became the flagship of Submarine Squadron Two. *USS Seawolf* was cut in half to be fitted with other equipment and to allow for the installation of a new section that would house divers who were trained for saturation diving.

In 1967 Submarine Development Squadron FIVE was established. At Naval Submarine Base, San Diego, California, and Bangor, Washington, included deep submergence rescue vehicles and diesel and nuclear-powered research submarines, as well as surface support ships. DSSP, under the supervision of Commander Jack Tomsky, developed the MK 2 MOD 0 Deep Diving System, and in 1968 the DDS was put aboard the *Elk River* (IX-501) to support Sealab III. The same year a record-breaking excursion dive to 1025 feet was made from a saturation depth of 825 feet at NEDU.

From 1969 until 1971, *USS Halibut* underwent modification at Mare Island Shipyard to support saturation divers. The chamber was hidden in plain sight, disguised as a DSRV attached to the rear deck of the submarine. In addition, in November, 1970, *USS Seawolf* transited the Panama Canal, changing her homeport from Groton, Connecticut to Mare Island Naval Shipyard in Vallejo, California, for conversion to a special projects platform.

In October, 1971, *USS Halibut* departed for the Sea of Okhotsk to tap into Soviet communications by placing

Air Bubbles – April 2010

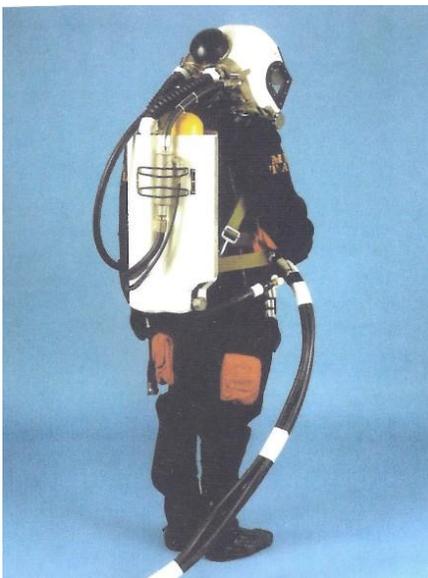
a magnetic induction unit over the cables running along the seabed, and then in August 1972, she departed on her second collection mission. Quoting from Blind Man's Bluff, a temporary cable running back to the sub allowed them to listen in on Soviet military conversations for a month. The intelligence information was "pure military gold".

In 1975, *USS Seawolf* came under the exclusive direction of Submarine Development Group ONE, and NEDU's principal focus became saturation diving systems and procedures. Between 1976 and 1977, *USS Seawolf's* divers, working at 400 feet, successfully tapped into Soviet communications cables in the Sea of Okhotsk, east of the Soviet Union. In 1978, *USS Parche* (SSN 683) ran the same mission profile under the code name "Ivy Bells". Between 1978 and 1980, *USS Parche's* divers also tapped into a cable in 500 feet of water of the Kola Peninsula, and on a later mission divers would work at 600 feet in the Barents Sea, north of Russia near Murmansk. Back at NEDU, divers completed a 37-day saturation dive to 1,800 feet of sea water in the Ocean Simulator Facility.

In the summer of 1980, *USS Parche* returned to the Okhotsk for divers to plant new taps and retrieve pods, and then to the Barents in the fall with the same mission. The collection pods, reportedly 20 feet long, 3 feet wide, and weighing 6 tons, were like large tape recorders that collected the communications passing through the undersea cables which had to be periodically retrieved by the divers for download.

From 1987 to 1991, *USS Parche* was in Mare Island Shipyard for an extensive refit and to have a hundred feet added to her hull, just forward of the control room and sail, to house "research and development" equipment. The R & D function included intelligence gathering and underwater salvage. Reportedly, the *Parche* was able to support overt intelligence-gathering operations by extending a remote grapple through a hatch in the keel to salvage relatively small items from the ocean floor such as missiles, nuclear warhead satellites, etc.

But during this same period, it was not just about the submarines. The submarine rescue ships *Pigeon* and *Ortolan*, with their Deep Diving Systems, were still actively involved in saturation diving. In the mid-eighties, the *Elk River* was being used to train saturation divers before they disappeared "up north" to the Dev Group Detachment and to become part of a Sea Comp Team.



Anyone interested in more details about this operation can talk to me or e-mail me at john.munro@verizon.net. The entire story would run 20 - 25 pages. I also have more pictures if anyone is interested in seeing them. *Jack Munro*

The BSC Treasure Hunt

The Bay State Council Treasure Hunt is scheduled for Sunday, September 26 this year for a change of scene. Please come, try it out and see how you like the date change.

This fun event will be held at Stage Fort Park in Gloucester, from 9AM to approximately 4PM, rain or shine. It is a wonderful chance to meet a lot of other SCUBA divers, dive for “treasure”, and win some great prizes. All for a nominal fee of \$10 (plus \$1 if you participate in the snorkeling event).



The Bay State Council of Divers

Supporting and promoting the recreational diving community in Massachusetts.

The Bay State Council of Divers (BSC) is a diver’s advocacy group. The BSC monitors local, state and federal regulations that may affect the recreational diving community in Massachusetts. When required, the BSC represents the interests of the diving community in these matters.

The BSC serves as a liaison between dive clubs and dive stores to promote recreational diving activity in Massachusetts. All divers are encouraged to support the BSC with an annual contribution of \$5. Your contribution will allow the BSC to continue to be a strong advocate for the recreational diving community in Massachusetts. For more information see the new BSC website at <http://www.baystatecouncil.org>.

**Diver
of the Month
for April 2010
Tony Vieira**



42 Water St.
Beverly MA
978-927-9551
DIVE@underseadivers.com

**2010 Hours:
Tue-Fri 9-6, Sat 9-5, Sun 9-3**

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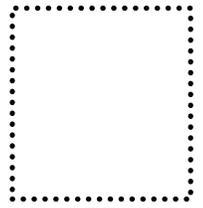


EASY DIVER
"J" Dock, Cape Ann Marina
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Gloucester, MA
978 525-3432
www.easy-diver.com
info@easy-diver.com



**Member
of the Month
for April 2010
Mary Howard**

The North Shore Frogmen's Club Inc
PO Box 3604
Peabody, MA 01961-3604



Upcoming Events!

- April 1: Presentation: Diving in Raja Ampat
- April 8: Presentation: Fred Dion
- April 11: Easter Egg Dive/Party
- May 13: Presentation: Faith Ortins



**WANT TO DO SOME WINTER DIVING? Contact Tony Vieira.
SEE PAGE 4**

Meetings on **April 1 and April 8, 2010**
of the **North Shore Frogmen's Club**
will be held at 8PM at the
Portuguese VFW Post in Peabody
at 103 Tremont Street
Peabody, MA 01915-4209

Parking is available in their lot.
Enter via the side entrance closest to Fulton Street

Stay tuned for updates on new location beginning April 15.