
Air Bubbles

The Newsletter of the North Shore Frogmen's Club

Volume 41, Issue 10

December, 1999

President's Message

Dear North Shore Frogmen & Company

Already I can appreciate the time, effort and energy officers, committee members, web site organizers, Air Bubbles publishers and contributors spend on the success of our club.

Thank you very much, Dave, for a year of presidential leadership. Paul, we miss you. Mary in your fifth year of officer service and Candi in your second, thank you for staying on board. Your experience will guide us as we put our best effort into representing and working with all of you.

Dale Findlay and I have been storming for ideas and we welcome your input. We expect to have a wonderful year, filled with lots of activities and an increase in volunteer service within our club, so we can all share the experience and be part of the rewards that come from team work.

I would like to appoint Dave Metrano for Member of the Month for December. He set a wonderful example this past year as our leader. Diver of the month goes to Mary Howard, for her dedication as Treasurer for the past four years.

Happy millennium year and thank you!

Linda Marshall, President
Dale Findlay, Vice President

CONGRATULATIONS

ROB FALK

MEMBER OF THE
YEAR
1999

CONGRATULATIONS

RIC STAMEGNA

DIVER OF THE YEAR
1999



Recipe Corner Spicy Tomato Soup

This will add a little bite to your winter dives!

1/4 cup onions, chopped
 1/4 cup carrots, chopped
 2 tablespoons butter
 couple pinches of parsley
 4 cups of tomato juice
 pinch of white pepper
 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
 bay leaf
 salt to taste
 1/8 teaspoon thyme
 2 cups consommé'

Sauté' onions and carrots in butter. Add the rest EXCEPT the consommé' and simmer about 1 hour. Strain this mixture, add the consommé' and heat again.

Dave Metrano

Deadline for next Air Bubbles

The deadline for submissions to next month's Air Bubbles is January 20th. I NEED ARTICLES! I'd love some more great trip reports or dive reports.

Please E-mail to me at 2830783@msn.com preferably in Microsoft Word or simple text format. For those folks not on-line, please submit any handwritten material at one of the weekly meetings.

Meg Doyon

PIZZA PARTY!!!

The North Shore Frogmen will be hosting a pizza party for all members and guests on Thursday, December 30th.

Hope to see you there

Member of the Month

December

Mary Howard

Diver of the Month

December

Dave Metrano

Happy Holidays

Gary, Jake and I would like to wish all Froggies and divers everywhere a happy and safe holiday season.

Meg Doyon

Wreck Diving by Rob Falk

Although I had been diving for almost 10 years I had no interest in wrecks. I hadn't even given them much thought. Exploring reefs, watching fish, hunting lobsters, finding and recovering lost objects, that's what diving was for me.

Over the last couple years I had concentrated on diving education and recently became a PADI instructor. Aside from the times when a student does something real dumb, my pulse has been pretty steady when I go diving. In fact, it often drops-I find diving to be a form of relaxation and meditation.

One day while I was wandering around at Northeast Scuba in North Reading, Jeannie Rahilly mentioned that John McColley had just begun a lecture on wreck diving. She suggested that I sit in, to see what it was like to lecture a PADI specialty class. Since this was something I had not yet done, and nowhere special to be at the time, I sat down and took some notes.

John was talking about the various reasons that divers might choose to explore wrecks, and where they might be found. He discussed various hazards and how to avoid or deal with them. He discussed the various techniques used for mapping, planning entries, and penetrating the wrecks. It sounded like a lot of work, but it began to sound interesting-in a theoretical sort of way.

John then discussed the wreck of the Chester A. Poling and the wreck of the New Hampshire, two wrecks that can be found just off the Cape Ann shores. The New Hampshire is an antique wooden ship built in the mid 1800's -in fact, built with copper spikes that were forged at Paul Revere's foundry. It burned and sank in

1922. The Chester A. Poling, on the other hand was a modern freighter that broke up in the stormy waters off Gloucester 22 years ago. While the New Hampshire is nothing but a skeleton lying in some 30 ft. of water, the Chester A. Poling is intact-well partially intact since half of it was lopped off and fell into deep water some distance away. But the part John was talking about was one half of an oceangoing freighter sitting upright on the sand and some 100 ft. beneath the surface of this ocean.

Later that evening John showed his class how to use wrecks reels. He had his students marching around the dive shop laying out line behind them and then taking it back up on their way out. "What the heck," I thought, "this looks like it could be some fun ." So I grabbed a reel and gave it a try. It was kind of fun.

John and his class were planning to survey and penetrate both wrecks later in the week. It turned out my weekend plans had been canceled so I decided to go along on the on the boat just for fun. There was space available, and going out on the Extremis with Jeff Hannigan and Faith Ortins is always a good dive. Diving on the Chester A. Poling-not in it-was also always good fun.

My curiosity started to get the better of me, as the day of the dive approached. I decided to make it official and enrolled in the course. I would survey and run lines on the deck of the Poling, draw a map, and later in the day, penetrate it.

The Chester A. Poling is like a box of chocolates... and today what we found was a relatively dark and dim existence on the surface of the wreck, at 90 feet or so. Despite the water feeling calm and clear, it was just a dark twilight on the deck. My buddy, a diver for only a few

months, was overwhelmed by narcosis and a feeling of claustrophobia. First he dropped his reel, and then wound mine up like a bowl of spaghetti. I was breathing hard through my old Sherwood, as I measured the distance from the mooring line to the stern, and then across the deck and over the cat walk. Carefully, I made notes on my slate. Later, on board Extremis – we would look at the slate and laugh.

Apparently, my penmanship suffers at 90 feet and 43 degrees Fahrenheit. No worries, experience will overcome that.

Although we had originally planned a “Double-Poling” the gloom and doom lighting had contributed to some diver jitters. A couple classmates who penetrated the wreck did not like the experience at all. This was interesting; people who had long lusted for the inside-the-hulk experience could now not wait to leave the claustrophobic site, and head for some open water. I, on the other hand, grew more intrigued; what was it about the inside of a rusted out freighter that sent grown men back to the shallows after weeks and months of anticipation? I would have to find out on another day. We were off to the New Hampshire.

Imagine if you will, a wooden ship with the deck removed, and then cut right down the centerline – the way you would cut a lobster prior to pan roasting it. The ribs of the great ship are just laid out to each side of center. Nothing much beyond wood decay and hundreds of great copper spikes. In each little nook and cranny of the wreck there is sea life abounding: lobsters, crabs, shrimp, lumpfish, sculpin and more. But we weren't here to observe nature today. We were here to practice laying lines on a wreck. I tied off to one of the ribs and proceeded to swim slowly along the wreck, holding my reel and my flashlight in one hand, using the other hand to wrap the line every few feet so that it would

remain in place. My buddy would follow me, with thumb and forefinger encircling my trailing line. When we reached one end, we turned.

Now my buddy lead, unwrapping the line as he proceeded and I followed, winding it back up in the reel, holding the flashlight, maintaining buoyancy, checking my gauges, winding the reel, slowing down to not hit my buddy, maintaining buoyancy, holding the light... you get the picture? I got the picture of how this might be all the more difficult at 100 feet in the dark, with wreck not only below, but also on both sides and above you.

Next, John was asking us to pick our way along the wreck. No kicking – just a smooth glide as we gingerly found small, dead spaces on the wreck to hold with just a thumb and forefinger. Pick...glide...pick...glide. We were told that while inside a wreck, one wrong kick would turn gin clear water to midnight dark soup. Our dive day ended, and we booked a return trip with Jeff and Faith. At this point I was...curious. That's all, a little curious.

December 11 began ominously: sustained winds out of the north west at 30 to 35 miles per hour, gusting to 50. We met at Beverly Port Marine – all of us planning whether we'd go for waffles or pancakes since we were all up and out on this blustery no-dive winter morning. Next thing we see is Faith loading gear on the boat – we're going. Jeff says “well let's at least go out and see!”

All was calm until we got outside of the harbor, and we began to see 1 1/2 to 2 foot seas. But, when we got to the Poling, it was really no worse (except for the occasional huge roller). As long as we suited up in the cabin, out of the wind, and dropped to the granny line as soon as we got in, the dive should be a nice one. We got

geared up – and in. John descended ahead of me with some advanced open water students. I would make my descent with another buddy in 13 minutes. At the bottom, we would re-buddy, and I would penetrate the Poling. At the appointed time, I back rolled from Extremis, gave the OK sign and immediately dropped through the chop to the granny line at 20 feet. My buddy arrived momentarily, and we began our descent to the Poling's deck.

John was ready for me. He had already laid the line. He gave me the OK sign and I returned it, and he turned and headed into the...dark...hole in the deck. And disappeared. I took hold of the line and began to follow into the deep...dark...hole in the deck. Immediately I realized that in my (note to self: excitement) haste, I had neglected to do a buoyancy check and I was grossly negative. I started to adjust it, still holding the line with one hand. The pony bottle altered my usual balance, and I barrel rolled. It then dawned on me (rapid breathing) that it was really, really dark and I had not even taken my light out of my pocket. I backed out of the hole. (Hyperventilation) I got my 3B's together (buoyancy, balance, and breathing) got my light out and turned it on. Much better. This was going to be cool!

I looped my fingers around the line and headed on in.

And, here is where the story ends. I won't describe the feeling of being inside the wreck: floating slowly through the hallways – eerily dark and clear, and motionless – immune to the surge and currents outside...the cloudy swirls of silt that drift off of everything inside – after any movement at all...looking out the portholes into the open water. I'll stop now. I can't do it justice. I know this, because others with much

more experience and eloquence have tried and failed before me.

I wanted to scuba dive since I was 5 years old. But, after watching hours of Jacques Cousteau and National Geographic specials; after reading reams and reams of various dive adventure stories: fiction, non-fiction, and fiction represented as non-fiction, I was never moved to explore a wreck. Nah... I like pretty reefs and fish. Listening to divers talk about wreck penetration made me think that perhaps one needn't be sane to dive. Not interested. Just wanna catch a lobster. Paul Blanchette would bring broken tea cups from the Andrea Doria to a Froggies meeting, and I'd think "he went WHERE, and did WHAT, for HOW LONG, to get THAT?" Check please! I'll be leaving now. Wrong, wrong, wrong.

In case you have ever wondered whether or not wreck diving would be the least bit interesting, here's the deal: No photograph, movie, book or video; no description, story, or account comes close to describing the sheer adrenalized heart pounding excitement, exhilaration and wonder of entering a sunken wreck with light and reel in hand. Go do it, and then we'll talk.

Rob Falk

**Don't Forget About Freddie's Secret Spot
www.northshorefrogmen.com**

NSF members can visit Freddie's Secret Spot on our website. This message board can be reached from the main page of the website, by choosing 'message board'. When prompted for 'Group Registration Code' enter 1958.

This forum is a great place for general dive discussion or to post photos, stories, for sale and want to buy messages.

Enjoy!

Rob Falk

Scuba Diving Trip to Puerto Rico by Marianne D'Aquila

This past Thanksgiving I gave thanks underwater off the South Western side of Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is a beautiful Island with the Atlantic Ocean on the Northern side and the Caribbean on the south. Puerto Rico has been known as one of the most diverse islands in the Caribbean. It is a place where you can find both dazzling coastal resorts, cool mountain inns, open air eateries serenaded by island frogs and most importantly, superb diving.

Our game plan was to dive all four sides of the island during the week we were there. Hurricane Lenny quickly changed that plan and instead of diving we body surfed in the 82 degree Atlantic off Puerto Rico's gold coast in Dorado. After one night in the Casino, I knew we had to get underwater as soon as possible. After a few calls we quickly found that most of the diving was spoiled but we should try the south western side. After three hours of driving, a few exclamatories and a quickly setting sun we found a fishing village called La Parguera . There was only once decent hotel in the village, and I figured this would be the only dive I would see on this trip. To our surprise, when we pulled in a big red dive flag was painted on the wall of the hotel. The dive shop was across the street and we could see the Caribbean and our dive boat from our room.

Paradise Scuba and snorkeling center took care of us for the next three days. Parguera has between 12 to 15 reefs and a variety of depths and marine life. We dove the Beril or Wall, which goes down to 60 feet then drops down to 1,300 feet. The visibility can exceed 100 feet but I was happy with our 75 feet of vis. Divers can choose to go as deep as they want within their training. The phosphorescent bay boasts

incredible bioluminescence, which was prevalent, anywhere you choose to do a night dive. The Pinaculos or Pinacles are huge coral formation which you can swim through and experience an array of vivid colors. The marine life is abundant. We saw sea turtles, barracuda, moray eels, huge queen angel fish amongst many other tropical life. It is not unusual to see Manatees, nurse sharks and dolphins in these waters.

The boat was comfortable with 3-8 divers. They served us lunch everyday and Puerto Rican beer after our night dive. Most of all, the captain and owner of the shop became our friends and gave us tee shirts and extended an unusual level of hospitality. I highly recommend Paradise Scuba center in Parguera for anyone visiting Puerto Rico for diving . Ask for Luis and tell him Mariana de la Northshore Frogmen in Massachusetts sent you.

Letter from Rob Falk

Dear Froggies,

I'm touched and honored by your naming me Member of the Year, and more than a touch chagrined about the "find." When I got home, I told my wife about the awards. She suggested that you all might have saved yourself some paper and plaques by simply naming me "Most Unusual Member." Thanks again.

Rob Falk

New Year's Day Dive and Party

There will be a New Year's Day dive at Back Beach. Plan to meet at 10 am at Back Beach. Frank and Dodi Carvalho will be hosting a party at their house beginning at 1 pm. Please do not show up earlier than that, or they may be sleeping!!

Day	Date	Event	Place	Time	Add'l Information
Sunday	January 2, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Thursday	January 6, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	
Sunday	January 9, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Tuesday	January 11, 2000	Night Dive	Back Beach, Rockport	7:00 PM	
Thursday	January 13, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	
Sunday	January 16, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Thursday	January 20, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	
Sunday	January 23, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Tuesday	January 25, 2000	Night Dive	Back Beach, Rockport	7:00 PM	
Thursday	January 27, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	
Sunday	January 30, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Thursday	February 3, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	
Sunday	February 6, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Tuesday	February 8, 2000	Night Dive	Back Beach, Rockport	7:00 PM	
Thursday	February 10, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	
Sunday	February 13, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Thursday	February 17, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	
Sunday	February 20, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Tuesday	February 22, 2000	Night Dive	Back Beach, Rockport	7:00 PM	
Thursday	February 24, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	
Sunday	February 27, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Thursday	March 2, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	
Sunday	March 5, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Tuesday	March 7, 2000	Night Dive	Back Beach, Rockport	7:00 PM	
Thursday	March 9, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	
Sunday	March 12, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Thursday	March 16, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	
Sunday	March 19, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Tuesday	March 21, 2000	Night Dive	Back Beach, Rockport	7:00 PM	
Thursday	March 23, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	
Sunday	March 26, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Thursday	March 30, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	
Sunday	April 2, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Tuesday	April 4, 2000	Night Dive	Back Beach, Rockport	7:00 PM	
Thursday	April 6, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	
Sunday	April 9, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Thursday	April 13, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	
Sunday	April 16, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Tuesday	April 18, 2000	Night Dive	Back Beach, Rockport	7:00 PM	
Thursday	April 20, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	
Sunday	April 23, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Thursday	April 27, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	
Sunday	April 30, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Tuesday	May 2, 2000	Night Dive	Back Beach, Rockport	7:00 PM	
Thursday	May 4, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	
Sunday	May 7, 2000	Club Dive	Burger King	9:30 AM	
Thursday	May 11, 2000	Club Meeting	Knights of Columbus, Wakefield	8:30 PM	

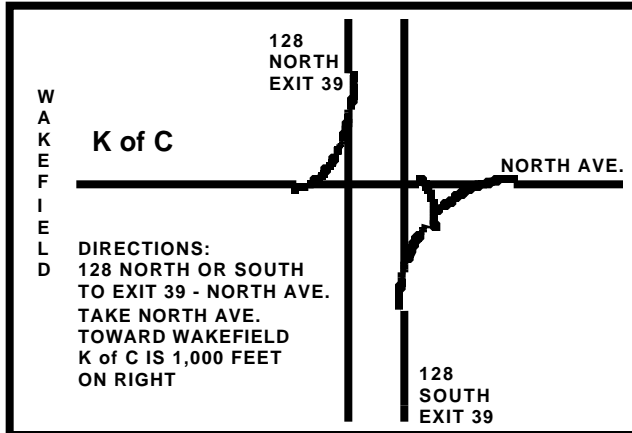
Club dives are held every Sunday morning at 9:30 AM – meet at the Burger King on Rt. 128.

Night dives are held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month – meet at Back Beach at 7:00 pm.

Club meetings are held every Thursday evening at 8:30 PM at the Knights of Columbus in Wakefield.

Guests are invited to attend the meetings! **Directions:** 128 North to Exit 39 – take a right onto North Ave or 128 South to Exit 39 – take a left onto North Ave. Follow North Ave. for about 1,000 feet.

K of C is on the right, immediately before blinking light.



***North Shore Frogmen's
Club
P.O. Box 3604
Peabody, MA 01960***