



Air Bubbles



The Newsletter of the North Shore Frogmen's Club

January 2021 (Oct, Nov, Dec 2020 and Jan 2021 Review)

(New) President's Message

By: Bill Werner

Welcome NSF Club Members to 2021! This means we survived the longest year ever, figuratively! The pandemic has upset virtually all our normal routines, especially those involving close, indoor, social interaction...as you're all aware of course. Throughout the last 10 months, the officers and participating members made the best of the circumstances by holding online meetings, presentations, movies, raffles, and more on Thursday evenings. These ZOOM meetings would not have been possible without the technical expertise and dedication of Ellen Garvey and Daryl Findley. President Susan Copelas conducted the meetings with enthusiasm and good humor. She had unusual obstacles to overcome to attend these meetings but she persevered! We also held several park meetings on pleasant evenings in Beverly. To keep this brief, Mary Howard, Ray Porter, Vinny and Vange Egizi also deserve kudos for all of their dedication and hard work.

Starting the New Year, we will have to continue with remote or outdoor meetings, at least for the first 3-6 months. We are currently organizing activities to engage club members. We will continue to hold meetings via Zoom. Please sign in to the meetings to say hello. For the earliest part of the year, outdoor activities will consist of various scheduled hikes and, for those so inclined, winter diving. As spring weather warms our days, we will schedule canoe and kayak excursions and more diving. We are pushing back traditional indoor activities such as Saint Patrick's Day and Easter parties until either we can again enjoy them indoors or gather outdoors in comfortable weather. Warmer weather will also allow us to schedule picnics, brewery outings, and outdoor dining. We will contact PCYC to offer our services for our traditional float cleaning and other assistance requiring divers. PCYC has been very supportive of our Club for decades but it will likely be months before they will allow us in for meetings.

As the year progresses, we all hope to get back to a more normal existence. With this hope, we are planning to have our Annual Vermont trip in 2021. Annette agrees! Susan is tentatively planning to host "Celebrate Women Divers Day" in July. We also plan to participate in Sea Rovers, which is rescheduled to October this year. We will be planning activities and events throughout the year. Please feel free to offer input and participation.

Member Recognition

By: Bill Werner and Susan Copelas

October Diver of the Month: **Jim D'Urso** for providing the dive boat for club members to get in the water

October Member of the Month: **Vinny Egizi** for his constant support and event-organizing

November Diver of the Month: **Dodie Carvalho** for her multiple dives in Cozumel despite high winds and pounding waves

November Members of the Month: **Vange Egizi** for her endless effort with Air Bubbles and co-chairing the Holiday Banquet

December Diver of the Month AND Members of the Month: **Susan Copelas** for diving in Cozumel and passing out hundreds of meals there, and for her extraordinary effort this past year keeping the club active.

Good Luck Bill Werner! Thank you Susan Copelas!

President's Banquet and Awards

By: Susan Copelas

What a year of FIRSTS!! The first time we substituted the photo contest for a wonderful online photo gallery. This first time we had an outdoor movie night, the first time we had an at-home pizza party, the first time we had elections online and the first time we had our president's banquet remotely. WOW! WOW! WOW!

One of the good things about this year was we had more speakers than we have ever had, more movies/videos, and we even had a couple of game nights. We all worked together to be creative, keep members engaged, and bring ocean conservation and awareness to the meetings' forefront. I really missed not meeting in person at the banquet and presenting the awards for DOM and MOM, and of course the grand awards of DOY to Daryl Finlay and MOY to Ellen Garvey. But, I think we all enjoyed the creativity of the evening with the gourmet dessert boxes, raffle baskets, festive attire (first place to Bill and Beth Wimsatt), wonderful background screens (first place to Vange and



Vinny Egizi) and the photo tour: Through the Years. Members still gathered, we still celebrated and we honored those listed below for their service to the club. Thank you all for your participation in the outdoor activities, the online activities and the planning. I now pass the baton to Bill Werner and look forward to supporting the activities that are scheduled this coming year.



Awards Presented:

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>DIVER OF THE MONTH</u>	<u>MEMBER OF THE MONTH</u>
December 2019	Daryl Findlay	Ray Porter
January	Jack Monroe	Dodie Carvalho
February	Mike Garvey	Dylan Langelier
March	Dodie Carvalho	Jack Munro
April	Alexine Raineri	Daryl Findlay
May	Adam Hartnett	Ellen Garvey
June	Dylan Langelier	Colleen and Joe Maletz
July	Dylan Findlay	Vange Egizi
August	Jules Pinheiro	Bill and Beth Wimsatt
September	Brianna Upton	Mary Howard
October	Jim D'Urso	Vinny Egizi
November	Dodie Carvalho	Vange Egizi
December	Susan Copelas	Susan Copelas

Diver of the Year - Daryl "Fin" Findlay

Member of the Year - Ellen Garvey

Life Members- Linda Piehl Connors and Maggie Maggio

2021 Slate

President - Bill Werner

Vice President - Ray Porter

Treasurer - Mary Howard

Secretary - Dylan Langelier

Air Bubbles – Vange Egizi

Technology Specialist - Daryl Findlay

Membership - Bill Werner, Susan Copelas, Ray Porter, and Dylan Langelier

Upcoming Events

By: Ray Porter



Wednesday, January 20th - Bay State Council of Divers Meeting

Thursday, January 21st - NSF Meeting and Speaker Night (Speaker - TBD)

Thursday, January 28th - Undersea Diver's Photo Society Meeting (Speaker - Daryl "Fin" Findlay)

Saturday, January 30th - Long Island Film Festival (Get Tickets for Remote Participation Online)

Thursday, February 4th - NSF Business Meeting

Sunday, February 7th - NSF Winter Dive with Heated Tents and Food - Breakwater site in Gloucester
(Meet Onsite at 9:00AM, Dive at 10:00 AM – Rain Date: Sunday, February 21st)

Thursday, February 11th - NSF Meeting (Speaker – Lynn Funkhouser)

Thursday, February 18th - NSF Meeting (Speaker or Film – TBD)

Thursday, February 25th - Undersea Diver's Photo Society Meeting

Sunday, February 28th – NSF Winter Hike at Harold Parker State Park & Outdoor Social at Mary's House (Meet at Ranger Headquarters at 10:00 AM, More Info to Follow Regarding Social)

Thursday, March 4th - NSF Business Meeting

Sunday, March 7th - NSF Winter Dive with Heated Tents and Food – Dive Site TBD (Meet Onsite at 9:00 AM, Dive at 10:00 AM – Rain Date: Sunday, March 14th)

Thursday, March 11th - NSF Meeting & REEF.org Book Club Soul of an Octopus (Call Susan Copelas for Details)

Saturday, March 13th – Glass Blowing at Diablo Glass School in Boston – \$95 P/P - More Info to Follow

Thursday, March 18th - NSF Meeting (Speaker or Film TBD)

Sunday, March 21st - Outdoor Event – (TBD)

Thursday, March 25th - Undersea Diver's Photo Society Meeting



Glass Blowing with Master Artisan Ellen Garvey

Making Glass Snowflakes Saturday, March 13th \$95.00 p/p
Stay tuned for more info and RSVP early to save your spot!

Lynn Funkhouser Presents on February 11th



Lynn Funkhouser is an internationally published, author, photographer, ocean advocate, lecturer, adventuress, and leader in dive travel. She has been diving & photographing in the Philippines 2 to 3 months a year, every year, (except 2020) since 1975, diving over 264 islands. Lynn was a consultant on the John G. Shedd Aquarium's (Chicago) \$49 million, WILD REEF exhibit of Apo Island (Philippines). In 2016 she led the National Geographic team to photograph 8 areas of the Philippines. Lynn was inducted into the inaugural Women Divers Hall of Fame, 2000, which includes pioneers, leaders, innovators and world record holders in the international diving community. As an environmentalist, Lynn is committed to making a difference on this planet through her images and presentations.

New Years Day Dive and Party 2021 with the North Shore Frogmen

By: Bill Werner

With our ongoing COVID 19 pandemic, we decided that it would not be safe to hold our traditional New Year's Day Dive and indoor party. We decided to hold an all outdoor event and, therefore, plan to deal with unpredictable winter weather. As we looked at long range forecasts, 2 weeks out, the weather was predicted to be cloudy, rainy or snowy, and in the mid-30s. We decided to set up popup tents and use propane heaters to warm divers and party participants. We also decided to provide hot soups and chili and snack food brought by members. The event was billed as bring your own beverage and chair. We solicited volunteers to provide the necessary paraphernalia. We also had to decide on a site we could dive and host a picnic. The Club was hoping to use Loblolly Cove and one of our members, Dodie, pursued getting permission from Rockport for us. Unfortunately, the conditions we would have had to deal with were too restrictive. Therefore, we decided to site our picnic and dive at Stage Fort Park on Cressy Beach.



New Year's Day the weather turned out to be beautiful: sunny and relatively mild. Considering the weather was rainy and windy the day before and the day after, we felt very fortunate. We had 6 divers in the water: Jack, Ricardo, Dylan, Daryl, Greg, and Bill. Jack made his 21st consecutive New Year's Day Dive...in a wet suit...in 40 degree water. Dylan and Greg also dove in wet suits: their first New Year's Day dive in cold water. Daryl loaned Dylan a heated vest. Unfortunately, Jack and Greg did not stay for the picnic. Both were too cold after their dive. We missed them at the picnic! Cressy Beach is not the most exciting dive site but the water was calm, the visibility was great, and the sun was shining. There wasn't a great deal of marine life to see. Moon Snails were fairly common, hermit crabs, tunicates, and sand dollars were also present. The other divers may have seen more. You'll have to ask them.

Including divers, we had about 2 dozen Froggies and friends at our picnic. The first Froggies to arrive helped set up tents, propane heaters, tables, and stoves. The clam chowder (canned) was never used with everything else being set up. Vinny and Vange brought chili with all the fixings. The chili was a hit! Vinny was thoughtful and saved the last 2 cups of chili for the last divers out of the water. There were also many sides of cookies and other snacks. Ray, among the other activities he was involved with, also kept an eye on the divers in the water and assisted them with dive gear. Many other members helped in various ways.

The picnickers safely mingled and socialized with masks and some social distancing. We did have a number of members and past members we haven't seen in awhile...one a long while; back from the 80s or early 90s. It was great to see the turnout we had. With the great winter weather and bright sunshine, it appears everyone had a great time. The picnic wound down around 2:00 pm and we broke down the picnic. I think we should plan more picnics like this to get people out and about and mingling socially and safely!

Thank you Bill for all your hard work planning such a fun event!



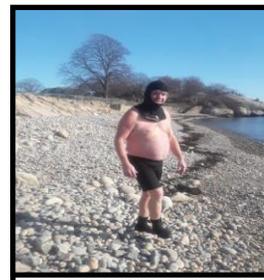
Jack



Ray and Daryl



Dylan and Greg



Greg (Before)



Greg (After)

Winter Hike

By: Vinny Egizi

On Sunday, January 17th, ten Froggies and friends (Bill, Ray, Mary, Vange, Vinny, Alexine, Ricardo, Daryl, Amy, and Judd) met at the Assabet River Wildlife Refuge, in Stow, MA, for a terrific hike, which was organized by President, Bill Werner and did not disappoint. After a delayed start (because Vinny and Vange got lost), we saw many large trees, which had been chopped down by local beavers; we meandered around the remains of the Devens Army Base ammunition bunkers; discovered the ruins of a 1700's bar (Rice Tavern); and tested our balancing skills as we traversed several flooded sections of the trails by balancing (and sometimes falling off) slippery rocks and logs. Some Froggies, with true amphibious footwear, simply trudged or sprinted through the water, and Daryl even came to the rescue by carrying someone piggyback style across the perilous flood waters. After the 5.6 mile hike, we enjoyed some relaxing tailgate style socializing with hot chocolate and a variety of Sam Adams. It was a great way to kick off 2021!

Thank
You
Bill!



Froggies Have Been Busy

October 1st – Brewery Night at Back Beat in Beverly



Steve Leverone, Ray Porter, Mary Howard, Mike and Ellen Garvey, Mike and Dawn Denneler, Vange and Vinny Egizi, Dylan Langelier, John Marren, and Bill Werner enjoyed yummy food, good beer, and great (loud) jazz music....oh yeah, and awesome fellowship!



October 8th – “Big Pacific” Movie Night

The club watched a few episodes of the popular PBS series that focused on everyday life in the Pacific Ocean and how the quest to multiply spawned interesting, unusual behavior.



October 15th - Paul Cator Deaton Presentation: “Show Down at Tiger Beach”

By: Susan Copelas

Starting as a movie grip at the dawn of his career, Paul Cator Deaton has become an award-winning Writer, Producer, Director and Cinematographer. He is based in Galveston, and works all over the world. PCD engages in productions ranging from commercials, music videos and documentaries to TV programs and full-length motion pictures. His work has appeared on ABC, NBC, CBS, PBS, BBC, MTV, CMT, HBO, VH1, ESPN, Fox, The Discovery Channel, Animal Planet, HBO Documentaries, The Amazing Race, Nickelodeon, Showtime, TV2 Caribbean, Austin Music Network, Warner Brothers, Paramount, Tri-Star, Veronica Broadcasting (The Netherlands), ARD German Television, Planete TV (Poland), Beatty Satellite (Saudi Arabia), Proxima (Bulgaria), Caribbean Broadcasting Union, the Travel Channel, DirecTV, Comedy Central, E! Entertainment TV, Bravo, Ocean in Google Earth, and at the United Nations. Paul's work has garnered several industry accolades, including Best Music Video at the 2004 Austin Music Awards at SXSW, a Bronze Telly, Communicator Awards, Videographer Award, Aegis Award, numerous Gold and Silver Addy Awards, and an Addy Best in Show Video. His Showdown at Tiger Beach has been an official selection at several international film festivals, and won Best Documentary Short at two of them. He was one of the original three filmmakers selected to produce for Ocean in Google Earth, producing pieces for the Red Sea, Mediterranean, Western Indian Ocean, Great Barrier Reef, the Philippines, the Coral Triangle, and Gulf of Mexico/Caribbean Sea focus areas. Deaton is a member of the Television Academy, The Explorers Club, American Advertising Federation, Boston Sea Rovers, National Association of Underwater Instructors, Underwater Archaeological Society of Chicago, and the Historical Diving Society. He was honored by Rotary International with a Paul Harris Fellowship in 2004. In addition to his Film/TV Production capabilities, PCD is a popular speaker and emcee, making appearances at international events. With Elena Kobrinski and Monica Gephart, he founded the Reef Renaissance Film Festival® in 2012. He is a NAUI SCUBA Instructor, TDI certified in Nitrox and Rebreather Diving, and was certified in Global Shark Biology, Biodiversity and Conservation by Cornell University and the University of Queensland, Australia.

October 22nd - Business Meeting

October 24th - Comedy Night at Giggles



October 29th - Photo Society – No Meeting

November 5th – Presentation by Faith Ortins

By: Vinny Egizi

On November 5th, the Froggies, Friends, Family, and Guests were treated to a wonderful presentation, by Faith Ortins, on the Galápagos Islands. Faith has been a long time Froggie and presented many times on diving and traveling to many different parts of the earth. As always, she did not disappoint and captivated the attention of all who attended the Zoom video presentation. The Galápagos Islands is a volcanic archipelago in the Pacific Ocean. It's considered one of the world's foremost destinations for wildlife-viewing. A province of Ecuador (one of thirteen countries that straddle the equator), it lies about 1,000 km off its coast. Its isolated terrain shelters a diversity of plant and animal species, many found nowhere else. Charles Darwin visited in 1835, and his observation of Galápagos' species later inspired his theory of evolution. Faith shared images from multiple expeditions to the islands and discussed how and why its ecosystems are so unique. As one of four offshore groups of islands in the Eastern Pacific that are famous for its big animals. Galapagos is only one that is easily explored on land as well. It is no doubt a bucket list destination for many divers and trekkers. Faith Ortins has spent most of her adult life in the ocean. Starting as a scientific diver and volunteering for public safety diving operations in the 1980's, Faith became a technical diver and dive store owner with thousands of dives over her 38 year diving career. She worked with DUI to develop some of the first women's dry suits while still a dive retailer and led DUI's sale team for 15 years. She created the DUI DEMOTOUR, which promoted local diving while allowing divers to test dive DUI products. She now manages Blue Green Expeditions while continuing to work with key DUI dealers throughout North America. She has led expeditions around the world- many to the most remote places on Earth including multiple expeditions to both poles. A frequent presenter at dive shows and conferences, she is a 2010 inductee into the Women Divers Hall of Fame.



November 12th – (Social) Meeting





Vacation with the Froggies?

Look for a survey that will be forthcoming shortly asking divers, and non-divers, if they might be interested in participating in a liveaboard or resort experience with the NSF!

November 19th – David Attenborough’s: “A Life On Our Planet” Movie Night

In his 93 years, Attenborough has visited every continent on the globe, exploring the wild places of the planet and documenting the living world in all its variety and wonder. But during his lifetime, Attenborough has also seen first-hand the monumental scale of humanity's impact on nature.



November 26th – No Meeting – Happy Thanksgiving!



December 3rd – Meeting

December 5th – President’s Banquet

December 10th – “My Octopus Teacher” Movie Night

2020 Netflix Original film directed by Pippa Ehrlich and James Reed which documents a year filmmaker Craig Foster spent forging a relationship with a wild common octopus in a South African kelp forest.



December 17th – Pizza Night Social

Thank you Susan for honoring this Froggie tradition by having pizzas delivered to members’ houses (during a snowy Nor’easter) while we met on Zoom!!



December 24th – No Meeting - Happy Holidays!



December 31st – No Meeting – Happy New Year!

2021

Year-In-Review in Photos

By: Susan Copelas & Dodie Carvalho



2020 New Year’s Day Party at Dodie’s



Solid chocolate scuba diver – gift in Cozumel



Dodie and Susan in Roatan



Suited up in Cozumel



Ron, AKA shore support, as Annette, Susan, and Dodie dove the CT River looking

2021 Dues Are Due Now!

By: Mary Howard, Treasurer

Please note that your North Shore Frogmen's Club membership dues for 2021 are due and are payable at this time.

NSF Annual Dues are as follows:

- Single membership with Bay State Council of Divers: \$47
- Couples' membership with Bay State Council of Divers: \$73
- Associate membership with Bay State Council of Divers: \$26
- Single membership (w/out BSC): \$42
- Couples' membership (w/out BSC): \$63
- Associate membership (w/out BSC): \$21

Dues are payable:

- By check to North Shore Frogmen's Club, PO Box 3604, Peabody, MA 01960
- By PayPal via the Club's Website membership page (at bottom of page)
 - <http://www.northshorefrogmen.com/membership.php> (plus a \$1 service fee)



RIP

It is with great sadness we announce that Edward Rougeau, father of long time Froggie and friend Annette Spaulding, has recently passed away. Annette let us know that he passed peacefully, with his meditation music playing, surrounded by many fabulous, caring staff of the Beaumont Rehabilitation Center in Worcester, MA. The club sent a flower arrangement on behalf of all NSF members and we hope to share our condolences in person at this year's VT Dive Week, which Annette is excited to host, assuming COVID allows us to do so.

Meeting Minutes Summaries

By: Daryl Findlay

October 1, 2020 (actual)

Social Meeting at Backbeat Brewery in Beverly.

October 6, 2020 (virtual)

DISCUSSION: 1) Membership: Ray will co-chair committee and need process to grant access to Membership page. 2) Giggles outing on 10/24 at 7:00 PM in outdoor tent. 3) Access to PCY probably won't occur until 2021. 4) Photo Contest will be electronic, JPG, and 4-submission max. 5) Need 2020 Year in Review Photos. 6) Election Night – November 19th ? Voting will be done virtually. 7) Award ceremony virtual or actual?

October 8, 2020(virtual)

ATTENDANCE: 3 Officers, 2 BOD, 1 Member. DISCUSSION: None. MOVIE NIGHT: Big Pacific.

October 15, 2020 (virtual)

ATTENDANCE: 3 officers + 2 BOD + 6 members + 3 Visitors. DISCUSSION: 1) Six Spots left for Comedy Night on 10/24. 2) New member, Bobby Geoschaes, unanimously voted in. PRESENTATION: Paul Cater Deaton presentation on Tiger Beach (video was black and white, designed like a Sea Hunt episode).

October 22, 2020 – (virtual)

ATTENDANCE: 3 officers + 2 BOD + 6 members. DISCUSSION: 1) Comedy Night on 10/24. 2) Conception Dive Vessel fire report has come out and indicates faults were found with the vessel 3.) Annette Spaulding is presenting on Nov 17th for the South Shore Neptunes. 4) Discussions about diving in Galapagos and Cuba, along with liveboard trips. 5) Susan talked with PCYC about physical meetings, but they are limited to 25 people and they want that to be used for their members. 6) Scholarship Report: Ray said that a framework needed to be set-up. 7) New Officers are being sought for next year. Anyone can be nominated that has been a member for one year. 8) Photo Gallery for President's Banquet - Mary will create a Mail Chimp flyer. Daryl will assemble the actual Photo Gallery. RAFFLE – Vinny won. PRESENTATION: Three videos: 1) Fort Wetherill, Rhode Island on Mantis shrimp, 2) beluga whales from Jonathan Bird's Blue World, and 3) one from Vinny.

October 29, 2020

No meeting – Photo Society.

November 5, 2020 (virtual)

ATTENDANCE: 3 officers + 2 BOD + 6 members + 31 Visitors. PRESENTATION: Faith Ortins on Galapagos.

November 12, 2020 (virtual)

Social Meeting on Zoom.

November 19, 2020 (virtual)

ATTENDANCE: 3 officers + 4 BOD + 5 members. DISCUSSION: 1) Jim and Linda D'Urso connected from their new house in Plymouth and gave a tour. 2) Susan and Dodie described their recent trip to Cozumel. Susan dove some cenotes (vertical caves) and saw sting rays in the ocean. 3) Susan noted the Cape Ann Museum Lighthouse exhibit in Gloucester, MA. 4) John B. Williams was voted in as new member. He is a noted and active diver and has been involved in a coral restoration project. 5) Ray gave an update on the scholarship program, which will be separate from normal club funds. He is still getting documentation together based on existing scholarship programs, and hopes to be listed in Gloucester soon. 6) Banquette is Saturday December 5th. We will have gourmet dessert boxes that need to be pre-ordered and picked up from Vinny's house. Raffle tickets and

member gifts can also be picked up there. 7) Officers – there are a few nominations but all positions are still open. Nominations will close Saturday November 21st. 8) Elections will take place thru December 3rd. A voting survey regarding the next officers will be sent out including DOY and MOY. RAFFLE: Cozumel dive flag won by Jim Smith. MOVIE: David Attenborough's: A Life On Our Planet.

November 26, 2020

No meeting – Thanksgiving.

December 3, 2020 (virtual)

ATTENDANCE: 3 officers + 3 BOD + 4 members. DISCUSSION: 1) New Officers: President – Bill Werner, Vice President - Ray Porter, Treasurer – Mary Howard, Secretary – Dylan Langolier. 2) Banquet: Pick up dessert boxes, raffles, and pay for dues at Vinny's between 2:00 - 4:00 PM. Ellen is working on a list of raffle prizes and Fin will put on Facebook. Raffles are 8 for \$10 or 20 for \$20. Fin will send another email as a reminder. 3) Historical Dive Society Membership is \$60 for a year membership. 4) Bay State Council meeting was on 12/2. Susan was impressed and the meeting was informative. The Rockport lawsuit was mentioned. A judge is looking at the suit to see if it is frivolous. Will the club help the legal costs? There will be an update in late January. 5) Undersea Diver Santa photos are on Dec 12th. 6) Next week we are showing My Octopus Teacher. RAFFLE: dive flag face mask" won by president-elect Bill Werner. VIDEO: Sea Hunt episode.

December 10, 2020 (virtual)

ATTENDANCE: 3 officers + 3 BOD + 1 member. DISCUSSION: 1) Pizza Night was discussed. Susan wants to pay for people's pizzas to be delivered for the 12/17 annual pizza meeting. Fin will send out an email based on the criteria that Susan provides. 2) About 19 people attended the President's Banquet on 12/5. 3) We can have the New Year's Day party at a beach. Maybe we can dive at Loblolly Cove in Rockport. 4) Bill Werner is planning a January hike in Stow, MA. MOVIE: My Octopus Teacher.

December 17, 2020 (virtual)

Annual Pizza Meeting.

December 24, 2020

No meeting - Christmas Eve.

December 31, 2020

No meeting – New Year's Eve.

Trapped in a Tinderbox - The Conception Final Inquiry

Submitted by Susan Copelas, from the October 22, 2020 periodical *Undercurrent*
When traveling on a liveaboard, please ask and check what safety procedures they have in place.



Dear Fellow Diver

The National Transportation Safety Board members met October 20 to report on the tragic 2019 Labor Day fire aboard the California liveaboard dive boat MY Conception, which claimed 34 lives. While it is highly possible that the fire started among the passengers' equipment batteries that were being charged in the vessel's salon area, they could not confirm that. They could not discount the unsafe disposal of cigarettes, matches, etc., in a nearby garbage receptacle. NTSB Chairman

Robert Sumwalt said, regardless of the fire source, the 33 passengers and one crew member below decks probably could have escaped if the blaze had been detected early.

They confirmed that the fire had begun in the salon area of the fast burning fiberglass-over-plywood vessel (a common construction material for many sport craft). It went undiscovered for too long because, contrary to U.S. Coast Guard regulations, no crew member was awake and performing roving patrol duties, so there was no one to stem the fire before it got out of hand. Tourist vessels such as the Conception are required to have a permanently roving crewmember at night while passengers are aboard, whether at sea or at the dock. Before departing, the Conception's operator allowed passengers to overnight aboard while the vessel was still dockside. Neither night was there a roving crew patrol. The NTSB cited both the boat's captain, Jerry Boylan, and Truth Aquatics Inc. for failing to provide a roving watch. Thirty-two passengers and one crew member slept below decks in a crowded bunk room, arranged to include as many people as possible. Their exit was via a curved stairwell or an emergency hatch that was far from accessible; it was positioned over a top bunk and led into the same area as the stairs. NTSB member Jennifer Homendy described how she had encountered extreme difficulty when she tried to exit the bunkroom of Conception's sister vessel Vision, via this emergency hatch exit; she suggested a lifejacket would have further impeded her.

The night of the fire, four of the crew of five were asleep in quarters on the top deck. They were awakened only by the crackling noise of the fire, which had already engulfed critical areas of the boat, so it was both impossible for them to either fight the fire or rescue the passengers and the fifth crew member below. There were no smoke detectors in the salon where the fire took hold. Smoke rises, so the smoke detectors in the bunkroom would not have been triggered until it was too late. Some divers, trapped by the fire engulfing the salon, had put on their shoes before being overcome by smoke, indicating they were aware of the fire and were unable to escape, contrary to earlier speculation that they had died in their sleep. Furthermore, the PA system to the bunkroom in both the Conception and the Vision had been disconnected, so even if the fire had been caught earlier, the sleeping divers could not have been notified. "It is amazing we have an unattended room (the salon) with batteries charging in it, a griddle, two burners as well as a refrigerator, and we have no regulation that requires smoke detectors," NTSB Vice Chairman Bruce Landsberg said. An NTSB member recommended that all passenger areas in such craft should be fitted with interconnected smoke detectors, including, in this case, the salon. The NTSB agreed that the perceived 30-year "safety record" of the boat's owner, Truth Aquatics Inc., was, in fact, nothing more than a record of good luck. The NTSB censured the owner of the MY Conception noting that the crew had no proper safety management system; they had failed to provide a safety briefing before the vessel left port; and the crew had neither regularly practiced safety training nor held fire drills. Despite the company's vessels being moored within feet of the company office, the owner, Glen Fritzler, had claimed that he had not been on board for a long time. While admitting that fires do happen aboard vessels from time to time, the NTSB said it was the duty of the captain and the owner to mitigate the risk. A board member noted that since there was no escape from a vessel at sea, a fire aboard always needed to be discovered early if the passengers and vessel were to survive. It was clear that Truth Aquatics Inc. had ignored required safe practices for some time with all its vessels.

Years back, on the Conception's sister vessel, the MY Vision, a battery recharging issue had caused a fire. It was apparently reported to Fritzler by both the passengers who tossed the offending battery over the side and the captain of Vision. A fire extinguisher had then been deployed to fight fires, but when asked about it, the owner denied knowledge, despite the damaged area of that boat being repaired. The NTSB was also critical of both Truth Aquatics Inc. for its failure to keep proper records and the U.S. Coast Guard for its lack of oversight regarding the use of roving night patrols. It called on the Coast Guard to develop and implement an inspection program to verify that roving patrols are conducted as required. This reporter was surprised that no one mentioned the FSS Code or International Code for Fire Safety Systems, a set of international treaties organized by the International Maritime Organization under the SOLAS Convention that are designed to reduce the risk of fire and aid in emergency response aboard commercial vessels. NTSB Chairman Robert Sumwalt said, "The Conception may have passed all Coast Guard inspections, but that did not make it safe. Safety comes at a price. You may conclude that people lost their lives through negligence of the highest order by the U.S. Coast Guard, the Conception's owner, and its captain.



Got Hoodie?

The Froggie sweatshirts are a big hit. If you have one and are wearing it, you are making a fashion statement. If you are not, there are still a few left. Please contact Mary or email officers@northshorefrogmen.com

The North Shore Frogmen's Club

Currently has virtual meetings and presentations, via Zoom, every Thursday, except the last Thursday of the month. Meetings begin at 7:30PM. There are also occasional, outdoor, social events and weekly Sunday dives. Contact officers@northshorefrogmen.com for info.

Welcome New Members!

John B. Williams
& Bobby Geoschaes



Next Air Bubbles – April 15th

Please submit newsworthy items by March 31st to Vange Egizi at vangiemaagain@yahoo.com

