

Bay State Council of Divers

Meeting Minutes for February 13, 2008

Meeting held at the SSN's Clubhouse, Quincy.

Meeting called to order at approximately 7:45 PM. (*Minutes taken by Mary Howard*)

Attendees:

Matt Bell	MBD
Michael Prange	NEADC
Al Bozza	NEADC
Jodi Burnham	CDC
Bryan Burnham	CDC
Ted Maney	Salem State College
Wally Westphal	
Victor Mastone	MBUAR
Matthew Lawrence	SBNMS
Vin Malkoski	MS DMF; Boston Sea Rovers
Michael M. Ezekial, Jr.	
Jim Walker	SSN
John Molis	SSN, MBD
Theresa Czerepica	SSN
John Blackadar	SSN
Roy Chamberlain	SSN
Angelo Correnti	SSN, BSC President
Paul Adler	East Coast Divers
Carl D. Yngve	SSN
Paula Carver	SSN, MBD
Mary Howard	NSF, BSC Secretary
Jeanine Fabian	SSN
Joe Geyer	SSN

Clubs and organizations represented include:

South Shore Neptunes (SSN)
North Shore Frogmen (NSF)
Mass Bay Divers (MBD)
Cape Dive Club (CDC)
Boston Sea Rovers
New England Aquarium Dive Club (NEADC)
Massachusetts Board of Underwater Archeological Resources (MBUAR)
Massachusetts Division of Marine Fishers (MS DMF)
Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary (SBNMS)
East Coast Divers

OLD BUSINESS

Flag law issue: Nothing new has been happening, nothing has changed since last summer; the 2008 diving season is coming up and we will see what transpires. It would accelerate the issue if

someone was arrested. At this point there is nothing to do unless divers are hassled. Angelo will stay in touch with the attorney, Steve Coren. It was noted that the law is still on Nahant books even after the litigation years ago, though they do not enforce it.

Wally asks that we monitor the Gloucester Times newspaper site to keep an ear out for what is going on up in Gloucester as the local newspaper prints the information.

Bay State Council Treasure Hunt:

The BSC Treasure Hunt Dive is scheduled for Sunday, May 18th. The events are scheduled to start at 9AM with registration and go until about 4PM. Entrance fee is \$10. The event will be basically the same as last year. John Blackadar and Roy Chamberlain will speak with dive representatives at the Sea Rovers show. Wally will speak with manufacturers at Beneath the Sea, making sure he doesn't try to get prizes out of the same people that John and Roy already got prizes from at Sea Rovers.

There is a need more safety divers for this year's event since we didn't have enough last year. Wally Westphal says there are plenty of young strong experienced divers in CDC and MetroWest we could look at. Any diver who will do this needs to talk to and dive with John Blackadar before the event. Contact Roy Chamberlain if you have any volunteers for this; he can forward information to John.

The question was raised again this year about whether there should be prizes for first, second and third place in the snorkel event?

Paul Adler says he will have a good team this year.

NEW BUSINESS

Sea Rovers Show:

Vin Malkoski: Bob Talbott will be headline speaker for the evening show, with Chuck Davis Jill Heinerth. There is a program on Friday morning for high school kids on careers in marine science. Exhibit hall opens at 9AM on Saturday morning.

They will again have the kids' room on Sunday, so bring your children.

The Bay State is in need of people to help with their booth both days. Please consider spending some time at the BSC booth.

New BSC Website:

Michael Prange has begun work on a new website for the Bay State Council, something that has been needed for some time. **Thank you Michael!** See the preliminary info and website design he brought with him. He described the progress he has made to date. He would like to include dive club listings and dive shop listings with links to the appropriate websites on the front page of the site. A few major joint events also would be on the front page.

Michael would like to gather a mailing list (each club should forward primary emails contacts to Michael) to dispense and forward information on a regular basis.

The website needs a name. www.baystatecouncil.org is available.

Send all materials and thoughts via <http://baystatecouncil.org/Suggestions.html>. Mary will send an email tonight asking clubs represented on the BSC contact list to forward their website and contact information to him ASAP. Mary will also send pictures from last BSC Treasure Hunt.

BSC GOALS FOR 2008

Artificial Reef Project:

For the past 6-10 years we have been trying to get a reef project together. Things get side-tracked and we haven't made a lot of progress to date. We would like to keep working on the project. John Blackadar and Jim Walker will make sure they get out with the Quincy Police and their boat and camera this year.

Paul Adler asked what are the criteria for an artificial reef site? We need to find a site where there is very little life already there, since we do not want to adversely impact any healthy ecosystems.

The BSC had done searches to find preliminary sites a few years ago. There were several sites targeted. 1- Site off of NEU had a lot of life and was close to shipping channel. 2- Then went out to SW of 3 ½ fathoms ledge. The depth was 100-110ft depth and we found a scallop bed on the bottom. 3- Next thought is to try to get to an area where there is already a wreck. Currently looking at a site off the coast of Marshfield with what is believed to be only a sandy bottom, where the Pinthas is, 4-6 miles out. Jim Walker and John Blackadar have talked to the city of Quincy Police Department which has an underwater robotic camera and an old coast guard cutter which can be lent out to do community work, which this sort of falls under. Ted Maney, Vin Malkoski, Holly Martel-Bourbon, Roy Chamberlain, John & Jim were to be the ones to go out to do this. The camera can cover more area than individual divers. Area may not have heavy life, so may be a good location for a multi-media site, to add cobble, reef balls, etc. to where there is already some form of reef. This would be something that would make our waters nice for the future. Jim Walker says that Bobby Gillen (Quincy) wants to cooperate as much as he can. The Pinthas is in approximately 90 feet of water. Question was raised about how close a wreck could come to the surface; some places they cannot come closer than 50 feet. In other areas it may be less. We would need to get a preliminary site identified, then do permitting work, then get whatever together to sink. Permitting costs can run as high as \$100,000.

At this time NARAD and Navy are not giving ships away because of the price of scrap at this time.

Divers themselves have to decide that they want an artificial reef in Massachusetts badly enough to do what it takes to make it happen. Florida has more extensive economic drivers than Massachusetts because of 12 month dive season.

The first step is to get started this year, get out there and see what we find.

Promoting the Diving Community:

There is a need to get new blood into the SCUBA Diving Community. To do this there needs to be promotion of the Council, the diving industry, etc. Somewhere along the line, can the Council and the Clubs take this on?

The South Shore Neptunes are going to try to come up with a lot of side events that will get family members involved.

Another approach is to try to get the individual diver back into the water. Different clubs have different bases for diving. SSN established themselves around competition, this is or has been their driving engine. Angelo had the idea of a year-long scavenger event. Categories: most unique find; photo competition; spear fishing; beach clean-up. Different items would have various levels of points decided by a committee, which would give you a total number of points. The idea is to get people back into the water over the course of the year. Not everyone would be expected to enter something in every category, but the hope would be to get Neptunes back in the water with a competition.

Another idea is to go into the schools. In the past SSN has had introductory scuba with Quincy, at high school level. Club members would speak with kids and parents and then offer a bonus for joining the club after certification.

Michael Ezekial from Florida: We have the same problem with loss of divers. Adaptive scuba for disabled vets and others has been one way for us to get new divers. The people who are disabled need dive buddies who would also need to be certified.

John Blackadar took the presidency of the Neptunes this year because over the past few years club has been fading. He has talked to dive shops and feels we have to get together, start diving together. He asks that we go back to our clubs, get an events agenda, then see if clubs could do some of the events together. For instance a pumpkin carving contest; could we get the clubs to do this together? Also note that other club members are invited to any events. Maybe paintball day or a Baseball game day to get families involved. The Neptunes have decided to again have third Tuesday meetings which will be speaker meetings. On March 18 they will have a mortgage adviser. Frank Dudas, of NEDU (navy experimental diving unit) will speak on April 15. Council and clubs and dive shops should all work together.

To that topic, the below events will be held by other clubs:

Al Bozza of NEADC – Great American Fish count in July and the tropical fish hunt in RI are their two major events. NEADC is putting some of their key dates on a magnet to hand out at Sea Rovers.

Mass Bay Divers is booking their calendar at a meeting on March 23 and will keep these dates in mind.

The North Shore Frogmen's Club is having their 50th Anniversary event on March 29 in Salem. All are invited to attend.

Each club could pick one major event to push to the group.

Paul Adler noted that dive shops have to have a part in the promotion of diving. Historically shop owners don't trust clubs because clubs have requested discounts and used that to pit shops against each other. Shops are trying to make money too, so don't keep trying to get discounts. You have to get the owners to trust divers, the Council and clubs. He asked that clubs talk to their memberships about that. Also, give shop owners a list of area clubs, ask them to recommend to students that they join a club that is convenient so you can keep diving.

OTHER BUSINESS

New Bedford Oceanarium:

John Blackadar: The Oceanarium needed \$700,000. They are in process of trying to get more money, putting on fundraiser events, etc. The sphere all set up, props being made, petting area is

in process. They have some really great people working on this project. When it gets to the proper point, they will have a night for the dive community/industry to come to see it. This Oceanarium is for the kids. John says they will try to get some pamphlets put together to distribute.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission: Angelo sits on the committee. Not much to do with recreational fishing, mostly commercial fisheries. Technical committees. Public hearings are coming up about lobsters, which really pertain only to commercial lobstermen.

Mass Division of Marine Fisheries: A question was brought up about **Lobster licenses**, whether there were any changes, and where are the licenses? The lobster limits for our area will not be changed this year. The licenses are late going out. After the meeting, Vin Malkoski forwarded this message:

“There has been a delay in the printing and mailing of non-commercial lobster permit renewals this year due to the addition of a reporting requirement and supporting harvest map on the annual catch report. The Division of Marine Fisheries (*Marine Fisheries*) anticipates that renewals for 2008 will be mailed by the end of February 2008.

“Non-commercial lobster permits for 2007 will remain valid until March 31, 2008. Note, MA residents can renew permits for 2008 online at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.

“Contact *Marine Fisheries* licensing at 617.626.1520 for more information.”

MA BUAR: Victor Mastone - concerning the wreck which has shown up at two locations in Wellfleet. They do not know what it is or what the dates. It is probably a schooner from post Civil War. It is on federal property so Victor does not have jurisdiction, but they are not allowing anyone to take any of it. Victor is going to go see it next week.

Still working on the lighthouse search for the original **Minot’s Light** (see minutes from previous meetings).

Stellwagen BankNMS: Matthew Lawrence - Two seats have opened up on the Sanctuary Board; they are looking for someone to fill diver’s seat and heritage seat. They have received quite a lot of applications from divers, even from people in this room.

BSC Updates:

The Council’s Membership list is not to be given out to anyone for any reason for personal gain. All requests for such a list should go through Angelo.

Treasury: The Council treasurer couldn’t be here tonight, but Angelo has come with a prepared report.

Before the flag laws issue the Council had about \$500 in its account.

Approximately \$7300 was raised from donations for the Dive Flag issue.

\$3000 was used to retain Steve Coren, Esq. for the dive flag issue

\$285 went to Sea Rovers for the booth at the show

\$150 went to East Coast Divers for a tank to raffle at Sea Rovers. (The president picks a different dive shop every year so as not to favor any one shop.)

\$200 for meeting expenses.

\$78 for trophy for 2007 Treasure Hunt.

There is currently \$4900 in flag law fund which will stay there until needed or flag law issue is finalized.

ACTION ITEMS

Mary to send email requesting dive clubs to forward website and contact information to Michael Prange for website. (Done 2/13)

Mary to send out contact information of officers and area reps to Michael for website content. (Done 2/17)

Mary to forward BSC Treasure Hunt article and pictures to Michael for website. (Done 2/17)

Michael will work on including the new information he receives and will ask for input from others on the Council. When he asks you, please check out the website and give him feedback.

Next meetings:

April 9 – Looking for volunteers and safety volunteers for BSC Treasure Hunt Dive. Also help with prizes. Hoping to have updates and dates for reef project. Calendar events.

May 14 – Finalize things still pending for Treasure Hunt Dive event.