

# Bay State Council of Divers

## Meeting Minutes for April 29, 2009

Meeting held at the SSN's Clubhouse, Quincy, MA

Meeting called to order at approximately 7:35 PM. (*Minutes taken by Mary Howard*)

### Attendees:

Paul	Adler	East Coast Divers
John	Blackadar	SSN
Al	Bozza	NEADC / BSC VP
Butch	Bradley	Burlington Scuba
Jim	Brady	OCA
Bill	Burchill	
Jodi	Burnham	Cape Dive Club
Roy	Chamberlain	SSN
Steve	Coren	Attorney
Shawn	Cormier	NEADC
Angelo	Correnti	SSN / BSC President
Theresa	Czerepica	SSN
Jim	Estabrook	United Divers
Derick	Gentile	Mass Diving
Ted	Hotz	SSN
Mary	Howard	NSF / BSC Secretary
Vin	Malkoski	MA DMF / Boston Sea Rovers
Ted	Maney	Salem State College
Victor	Mastone	MBUAR
Deb	Osborn	SSN
Mark	Potter	Mass Diving
Michael	Prange	NEADC / BSC webmaster
Richard	Tharin	MWDC, NEADC, Cape DC
Jim	Walker	SSN
Michael	Walls	The Dive Locker
Carl	Yngve	SSN

### Clubs and organizations represented include:

Boston Sea Rovers  
Burlington Scuba (shop)  
Cape Dive Club  
The Dive Locker (shop)  
East Coast Divers (shop)  
Mass Diving (shop)  
Massachusetts Board of Underwater Archeological Resources (MBUAR)  
Massachusetts Division of Marine Fishers (MA DMF)  
New England Aquarium Dive Club (NEADC)

North Shore Frogmen (NSF)  
Old Colony Amphibians (OCA)  
South Shore Neptunes (SSN)  
Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary (SBNMS)  
Salem State College  
Triton Marine  
United Divers (shop)

## **“Dive Industry Meeting”**

**This meeting was held to get representatives of SCUBA dive shops and other members of the diving industry together with divers to brainstorm about ways for us to work together to support each other.** We acknowledge that the industry is in distress, and that if we could all work as a unit, this might be helped.

**Paul Adler** made some introductory remarks:

Paul thanked the shop owners who could make it tonight. He noted that people are not diving in New England as much as they used to. People are still diving, but often they get certified and then only dive on vacations in warm water. He would like to have more diving opportunities in New England. Clubs and shops are both having these problems. Dive shops are disappearing, closing their doors. 64% of sales of SCUBA equipment have been online. Paul is asking that shops recommend that their new divers join clubs in the area, and therefore continue to dive locally. He also recommends that clubs suggest that their members go to local shops for equipment rather than going online. Some shop owners are leery of clubs because they recommend specific shops or suggest online sites for purchases.

**Jim Estabrook** agrees. Divers use shops for rentals, repairs and service; but they buy goods online. That reduces the income of the shops.

**Richard Tharin** noted that it is not any better on the west coast.

**Angelo Correnti** remarked that in most cases it is hard to get a young kid involved in SCUBA because of the cost, especially given the current financial situation. The industry has out-priced the young. He noted that the Neptunes do not recommend any specific shop, and do not recommend buying online. When they purchase raffle prizes, they buy from all the shops. They also discourage going out of state.

**Al Bozza** suggested that clubs should put an article or notice in their newsletters, stating that to save the diving industry, members should please support their local shops, and don't consider the savings of buying online. NEADC does not canvas shops for donations.

**Jodi Burnham** said they regularly have an article in their newsletter. She will send to me and I can forward to others.

**Jim Brady** noted that the OCA have a couple of meetings a month at two different dive shops. That way members get to see new gear and see the shops. This exposes members to different shops. Roy Chamberlain asked how they got people to show up at the correct location for the meetings, and was told it was not a problem; members know to check the website.

**John Blackadar** noticed that SSN members are diving less, and his club is trying to promote more diving and more diving events. They are also trying to promote more use of the local shops. In his own business, he has a policy that “if you buy equipment from someone else, I will install it, but if you have a problem after a year, I’ll charge a service charge.” Shops may be reduced to doing this if they lose enough business.

John noted that if not for the BSC half the wrecks would be closed to divers and half the beaches would be closed to diving. Last year, the BSC was fighting the flag law issue in Gloucester to protect local diving. He would think every dive shop would want to be at the BSC meetings to support local diving. He wondered why there weren’t more divers participating in the BSC Treasure Hunt?

**Mark Potter** said that shops had not received copies of the BSC Treasure Hunt flyer. Also, divers are not in the water yet. Why wasn’t the flyer emailed out to the shops?

**Vin Malkoski** noted that the BSC treasure hunt has been running for a lot of years, so how don’t they know about it?

The new BSC website has listings for shops, clubs and boat owners, and space for each to give a brief description of themselves, but there is not a lot of participation. The clubs all have the same opportunity to contribute information about their clubs. If anyone wants to contribute, they are welcome to do so, but they have to do it!! If you aren’t listed and want to be, contact the BSC webmaster. (Check the site for your listing at [www.baystatecouncil.org](http://www.baystatecouncil.org).)

**Al Bozza** said that a lot of people don’t know the website has been updated. It is now really good.

**Michael Prange** (webmaster) tries to put events on the calendar regularly, so send him information on events that you want other club members to attend. You can make the website calendar part of your calendar, so you will automatically know of new events. Or we could have an email address ( [announce@baystatecouncil.org](mailto:announce@baystatecouncil.org) ), emails would first be vetted through the officers, then forward to the group. This suggestion was readily accepted by the group as a great idea. Michael verified with people at the meeting that everyone wants to be on the email list for forwarding information.

**Paul Adler** noted that we hashed out a lot of things that have happened in the past, but now time to go forward. He asked for ideas from meeting attendees, asking that clubs and shops get together, work together.

**Butch Bradley** said that some of the oldest members of their shop’s club bringing in gear for service that they purchase elsewhere even though they keep members as close as they can through the club. He believes in working with other shops as do others, and has sent folks to

other shops. On the other hand, it is tough for people out there. They have club meetings every month, even had 18 divers for their New Year's day dive.

**Al Bozza** runs the tropical fish "rescue" for the NEADC. They have about 150-160 people show up. They try to promote the event within the dive shops and other clubs, asking that they list this dive as *THE* club dive for that weekend. Al is trying to get all the clubs to participate in major events, to link the groups together.

**Roy Chamberlain** did a survey in the SSN Club and found out that only 50% of members read emails. **Richard Tharin** noted that the subject line of email should be distinctive. **Vin Malkoski** recommended that if you are not getting emails, you might check your email filters to make sure you are not automatically discarding emails that are addressed to large lists. Communication is a common theme; email works for some, mail works for others. We need to make sure that the Council has updated information. Shops and clubs both need to make sure we have updated contact information.

**Mark Potter:** The biggest thing is marketing. He can add any flyer to his advertising.

**Angelo:** There is a lot more information coming in through the council. There was the flag law issue. We are trying to get an artificial reef project going. Angelo sits on the fisheries board. Education, trying to get divers in the water and keep them in the water, to keep diving available for our children. We, as clubs, need to have members diving; without that, shops will go out of business.

**Steve Coren:** The BSC needs to establish identity and purpose, so need to:

- Get a list of email addresses for all the clubs
- Get a list of email addresses for all the shops
- Produce a Newsletter for the BSC with a small committee. It was noted that is very hard to do a newsletter, takes a lot of work.

**Paul Adler:** "Newsletter" could be just a short paragraph on the website.

**Vin Malkoski:** at that point we have a bunch of great ideas, so now:

- Go to the website – if your club is listed, send a paragraph/description to the webmaster
- College Clubs should also be on the list
- Shops, make sure your information is on the website – send a paragraph
- Get new shop information on the site
- Do something or stop complaining

### **BSC Treasure Hunt:**

**Mark Potter:** We need to focus on the Treasure Hunt on May 17 – What can dive clubs and dive shops do to promote this event

**Angelo Correnti:** Last year we had about 60 divers in the water, and we had great prizes. We try to push for more participants every year. Paul had about 6 people from his shop, but Sea Rovers won the snorkel event again last year. This event has been on the same Sunday of the same month for the past 25 years, so the fact that it exists and the timing of it should not be a surprise to anyone. The reason for the timing is that parking is free at this time of year, and the food stand is open, thereby making the “facilities” and food both available. And the weather is good more often than not. **John Blackadar:** We have safety divers in the water, others can help with safety. Event is set up so every diver has a chance to win good prizes. Divers go into water, find marked items, and get raffle tickets. Anyone who works the event gets tickets, except Angelo. Dive shops can donate prizes if they would like and we do get stuff from manufacturers. Wayne of Divers Market is 100% behind it. We thank the donors of the big prizes.

### **Dive Flag Poster – Dive Flag Law Update**

Another ongoing project is making a poster with dive flag and the Massachusetts dive flag law. We will be able to have small ads for 4 or 5 clubs. We now have four commitments from clubs, SSN, NSF, NEADC and BSC. We decided to have this be only clubs, not shops, so as not to advertise one shop over another. Best thing available for the poster is to print it on vinyl, outside banner material. It is meant to be posted at dive shops, boat sales places, boat ramps, etc.

Steve Coren: Update on the dive flag issue in Gloucester. We were in constant contact when the issue active. Patrick Scalli goes to breakfast every Sunday with the Harbormaster to keep an ear on what is happening. The Gloucester “law” is not legal, but we cannot do anything until someone is arrested. It is the lobstermen who are behind the problem. At the final selectman’s meeting we were invisible. The best way to deal with the problem is to go through the courts. If law enforcement does anything to you, contact BSC who will contact attorney.

### **Other Information:**

- Victor Mastone is putting something together to find some wrecks. He will be looking for the brass plaque that was put down for the lightkeeper that was lost at Minot’s light on June 14, June 28. If you want to attend, that would be fine. As you know, Minot’s light today is not the original. In April 1851 the old light went down with 2 men. Coast Guard got GPS of the bridge when they dropped the marker, but not where they dropped the marker. This is an archeological site, so we are not taking anything. Plan is to map wrecks to that other divers can enjoy them. Victor is on the Protected Area board – so if you have any complaints, he will be happy to listen to you.
- On May 19, Frank Dudas will come to SSN meeting to talk about what is going on in SCUBA diving. He is a diving medic, and has the newest scoop on newest dive tables.
- Major Dave Roberts, army nurse, would like to get clubs to donate old used gear for soldiers to play underwater rugby in Iraq, they have a pool, but they still need masks, boots and fins.

- If you are interested in being on the Board of the BSC, give your name to one of the Board members for submission at the next Board meeting on May 13.

**May 13 – Board meeting**

**May 17 – BSC Treasure Hunt Dive & Snorkel Event**

**June 10 – BSC open meeting**

**Sept 9 – BSC open meeting**

**Dec 9 – BSC open meeting**

Meeting adjourned 9:34.