

Newsletter - Triton's Call

NASJAX SCUBA DIVING CLUB

7 November 2018

www.nasjaxscubadivers.org



Dive Equipment Check Out Area

Cozumel, Mexico

President's Waves

Greetings, divers!

Our November meeting was the last official dive club meeting of the year. There will be no regular December meeting as we will hold our annual Christmas party instead on December 13th. Note also that the first meeting next year will be on the second Wednesday, January 9th, rather than on the day after New Years.

Looking back over the past year I marvel at our club's incredible breadth and experience. Our divers have been all over the world. Sharing our dive travels with each other keeps the sport fresh with us, even for those of us who have been diving for many decades. Several people missed this month's meeting for the best possible reason: they were out diving. As I write this we have two of our divers in Bonaire and another in South Africa. I am proud to be a part of this club.

We confirmed our nominees for the 2019 club Executive Board. Evan Ball, Vanessa Wood, and myself will remain on as Treasurer, Vice President, and President, respectively. Craig Stoops will be the new club Secretary, relieving Glen Akins from his years of dedicated service to the club. Thanks again for the terrific work you have done for us, Glen!

Chet Tomlinson noted when diving at some of Florida's western springs that the aquifer has risen to very high levels, submerging the stairs leading into Devil's Den. The training platform normally at 20 feet is now at a depth of 33 feet. Most of us are familiar with the Florida spring system and it is interesting to realize how much these old dive sites can change in a short period of time.

This month I spoke to the club about money. We take in funds in the form of membership dues each year and make a bit on many of our raffles. We use this money to pay for our website and for food at occasional club get-togethers outside our regular meetings. In order to maintain a non-profit status at the end of the year, we offer Christmas gifts to each dues-paying member who attends our annual Christmas party. In addition to the great food, fellowship, and fun we hope to brighten your holiday season this year with a little something extra in your Christmas stocking.

Be safe! See you at the party.

Monster Molgneux

Upcoming Dive Trips and Events

- Our annual Dive Club **Christmas Dinner** will be Thursday 13 December at the Naval Air Station Jacksonville River Cove Conference Center (former Officers' Club). Social gathering will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the River View room followed by a buffet dinner at 7:00 p.m. We'll arrange special event base access for those that aren't military retirees or DOD employees. Dinner will be the Beef and Reef Buffet. The menu includes Roast Beef, Crab Legs, Steamed Shrimp, Baked Fish, Seafood Newberg, Salad, Garden Veggies, Rice or Potatoes, Iced Tea/Coffee and dessert. Cost will be \$30 per person. You have to pay for your own sodas (\$1 each) and alcoholic beverages. We've sold 27 dinner tickets so far.
- For those that want to pay for their Christmas Party tickets you can mail a check to Evan Ball 11149 Bently Trace Lane E., Jacksonville, FL 32257

Royal Caribbean Enchantment of the Seas Cruise/Dive Trip, January 4 - January 7, 2019 If you are interested in going on this cruise/dive trip, Bill Davis and Kim Walther are the points of contact. Craig and Arvilla Stoops are on this dive trip also. Monster and Annette might go on this one. I readdressed Kim's original email that she sent to Monster and I October 11. It has all the details about this trip. Here's a shorter summary of it.

Friday January 4: Day 1: Depart Port Canaveral, 4:00 p.m. - can board around 10:30-11:00 a.m.

Saturday January 5: Day 2: Nassau, Bahamas, 12:00 p.m. - 11:59 p.m.

Sunday January 6: Day 3: Coco Cay, Bahamas (Little Stirrup Cay) 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Monday January 7: Day 4: Arrive Port Canaveral, 7:00 a.m. - can disembark around 8:00 a.m.

Dive Club Executive Officers' Reports

Safety Officer - Ben Story Ben recently emailed three safety related stories. You can check your incoming email traffic to read these in detail. They involved drinking and diving, BC wear and maintenance and Whale Shark almost swallowing a diver. Ben also attended a dive meeting in Georgia. An instructor from the Commercial Dive Academy gave a very

interesting presentation on diving. The instructor said has been bent (DCS) 22 times! He doesn't dive anymore. I wonder why! Ben talked to him about giving a presentation to our dive club in the future.

Treasurer - Evan Ball We have \$1,774.02 in our dive club account. A lot of this is Christmas party/dinner money. Subtracting this from the above total, we are left with about \$900 for the upcoming dinner gifts and to carry over into the next year for expenses.

Webmaster - Sharon Green www.nasjaxscubadivers.org
Sharon said we had 638 website visits this past month. She said this was first time viewers.

Secretary - Glen Akins This is my last newsletter as the JAX Dive Club secretary. I hope everybody enjoyed the newsletters I sent out the past year. Craig Stoops will succeed me as the club secretary. I've been a member of our dive club for about 23 years. I've been the club's president two different times and recently the secretary. Our dive club is doing outstanding now. We currently have 45 members of which a lot are new and some younger. We also have newer members serving as club officers. This is what we need and important for our club to succeed. I'll still be at the monthly meetings, but won't have to do any pre-meeting preparing or taking notes like I've done the last three years. I'll just be chillin-out like everybody else!

Vice President - Venessa Wood Venessa couldn't make list night's meeting. She's at her sister's house in Venice, Florida enjoying retired life.

DIVE REPORTS

#1 Mexican Great White Shark Dives - October **Marshall Gross**

Marshall went on his annual sojourn to the West coast of Mexico recently SCUBA diving. He wasn't able to make it to last night's meeting due to diving in Bonaire. He told me all about his Great White Shark dive trip at the October Executive Board meeting. Marshall flew first class from Jacksonville to San Diego, California, where he boarded a "live aboard". There were 20 divers on the boat. Dives were set up with four cages off the stern of the boat. Each cage had one diver in it for 30 minutes duration. While in the cages, divers could watch and film great white sharks swim around and up to

the cages. Two cages were at 14 feet below the surface and two more were at 40 feet. Marshall said the 14 foot cages were the best, because the crew fed the sharks on the surface and the sharks stayed shallow. Up to 80 pound tuna swam in the area and he watched one great white take in a whole tuna with only the head showing as he swam by. Marshall made 28 dives this trip bringing his total number of dives to over 10,000! Marshall thought he found a diver on the dive boat at least his age, maybe older. When he asked him how old he was, he said, "70 years old." Keep trying Marshall, but as time goes on it's going to get tougher to find another diver older than you. The food was great as well as the crew's service. Luckily, they had very good weather as a hurricane came through the area immediately after they left. On the return to Jacksonville Marshall sat in the first class section again. While sitting in his big comfortable first class seat, who did he see boarding the plane, Major Nimock. Major had been in San Diego on business. Marshall wouldn't trade seats with Major. Like Marshall says, "live the good life, you can't take your money with you."

#2 Orange Sink - October Vera and JJ Thomas

Vera and JJ dived Orange sink recently and were surprised at the low visibility in the sink. Entering the water and in the first few feet visibility was about five feet. At about twenty feet visibility was about three inches. Vera said, "low visibility was due to just junk in the water. Nothing specific like silt." She also recommended anybody diving Orange Sink to use a "line" and treat it like a cave dive because of the physical nature of the sink and very low visibility.

#3 Ginny Springs and the St. Mary's River - October Ben Storey

Ben and his daughter spent the day at Ginny Springs snorkeling. They enjoyed their father/daughter outing until Ben saw a large Cottonmouth snake swimming under the water near him. To make matters worse, it was near where the spring run empties into the Santa Fe river and visibility gets bad. Ben lost sight of the snake and made a quick exit of the area.

Ben also made a dive in the St. Mary's river. He found some large megalodon teeth, about 45 small sharks' teeth and a mammoth tooth. He also found a tooth that he's not sure if it's a bison or camel's tooth.

#4 Blue Grotto and Devil's Den Springs - October Chet Tomlinson

Chet dived Blue Grotto and Devil's Den recently and said the water level was very high at both springs. In fact, at Devil's Den the water was half way up the entrance stairway. At Blue Grotto there is a lot of algae in the spring basin due to the sunlight, which makes it grow. Chet said, once under the ledge and into the cavern the algae pretty much disappears because there's no direct sunlight.

Dippy Diver Award - For minor diving offenses. No nominations this month.

Coprolite Diver Award - For more serious diving infractions. No nominations this month.

This Month's Raffle Winners: No raffle this month.

Members present at the 7 November 2018 dive club meeting:

Glen Akins, Evan Ball, Bob Carmichael, Bill Davis, Howard Feingold, Ed Fite, Sharon and Richard Green, Monster and Annette Molyneux, Elmer Osborne, Rick Reckert, Billy Schofield, Ben Storey, Vera Thomas, Chet and Dawn Tomlinson, Mark Vogel and Kim Walther.

First Time Visitors to our Dive Club: None

Upcoming Events and Holidays

11 November - Veterans Day. For all of you military veterans out there, thanks for your service.

14 - 17 November - DEMA Show in Las Vegas, NV. This is the annual Diving Equipment and Marketing Association event that brings dive industry professionals together from around the world. Also open to Master Divers and Instructors if you register with DEMA first.

22 November - Thanksgiving Day

24 November - Amigos Dive Center Swap Meet & Festival. Located near Ichetucknee Springs - Free Food, Music and Fun.

7 December - Pearl Harbor Remembrance

13 December - NASJAX SCUBA Diving Club Christmas Party at NAS Jacksonville.

25 December - Christmas

9 January 2019 - Our first Dive Club meeting of the year. It will be at the Mandarin Golden Corral and start at 7:00 p.m.

NASJAX DIVE CLUB OFFICERS for 2018/2019

President - Monster Molyneux

Vice President - Venessa Wood

Treasurer - Evan Ball

Safety Officer - Ben Story

Secretary - Glen Akins 2018/Craig Stoops 2019

Web Master - Sharon Green

SCUBA Diving & Snorkeling Accidents, Near Drowning or Death

I recently ran across the following article, while on my computer. I believe most of our divers would be interested in this. I thought I had just about heard of every kind of lawyer, but I didn't know some law firms specialized in SCUBA diving and snorkeling accidents. Looks like you can pretty much sue for any incident/accident involving diving or snorkeling. What I copied and pasted below is basically an advertisement from a law firm looking for clients.

Hundreds of people are injured in SCUBA diving & snorkeling accidents each year in Florida alone. Being a PADI certified Open Water Diver and a marine engineer, board certified maritime attorney Keith Brais with the law firm of Brais Law Firm is in a unique position to help snorkelers and divers of all types, both recreational and professional, in the event of an accident causing injury, near drowning or death. The lawyers at the law firm of Brais Law Firm with offices in Miami, Boston, and Houston are here to help. Unfortunately, the nature of scuba diving & snorkeling is such that accidents lead to substantial injuries and many times death. These accidents are often preventable and are a result of poor judgment, faulty or poorly maintained equipment, improper signaling, inadequate training or inadequate supervision. These types of shoreside excursions are particularly appealing to cruise ship

passengers when visiting foreign ports. To ensure the safety of their SCUBA divers and snorkelers, dive companies must follow standard policies, procedures, and U.S. Coast Guard regulations. All too often SCUBA diving and snorkeling companies fail to follow standard procedures and cut corners on safety. In such cases, the law places a heavy burden upon the dive companies by presuming them negligent unless they can prove that their failure to follow such safety procedures in no way contributed to the accident. Brais Law Firm's attorneys have the requisite knowledge to identify when dive companies fail to follow safety regulations and the experience to vigorously prosecute such claims. Brais Law Firm has experienced attorneys familiar with handling numerous types of scuba diving & snorkeling injury/death cases including accidents resulting from:

- Out-of-air emergencies
- Dangerous water conditions
- Inadequate supervision
- Inadequate training
- Boat run over
- Faulty or improperly maintained equipment
- Improper Use of Decompression Tables
- Diver operator negligence
- "Dive buddy" negligence

If you are injured by a SCUBA diving or snorkeling accident, you may be entitled to payment for your medical bills, future medical expenses, lost income as well as pain and suffering. The attorneys at the law firm of Brais Law Firm have the experience to protect your rights, the compassion to serve your needs, and the skill to obtain the compensation you deserve. To reach our lawyers you may call 1-800-499-.... Contact us to select and complete a form for a free evaluation of your case.

Here's some cases this law firm has represented:

- **Diver Dies While Working on Docked Vessel at Old Port Cove Marina**
The Florida Fish and Wild Life Commission are investigating the death of a male diver that occurred Tuesday early afternoon in North Palm Beach. Per...
- **Key West Diver Run Over by Charter Fishing Boat**
A diver was severally injured when a charter fishing boat ran him over. The incident occurred off the White Street Fishing Pier in Key West last...
- **Federal Court Hears Shark Bite Negligence Claim Under Its Admiralty Jurisdiction**
A Federal trial court has found Admiralty jurisdiction existed over a negligence claim concerning a SCUBA diver bitten by a shark. The diver alleged she was told by the operator the sharks wouldn't bite her,

it was safe to feed them. (I read this one and the diver won the lawsuit).

- **Florida Key's Dive Company Sued for Crewmember's Wrongful Death**

Our firm has filed a wrongful death lawsuit on behalf of the family of a Florida Key's dive boat crew member who lost his life. On the night of...

- **Brais Brais Rusak Represents North Carolina Man Who Nearly Drowned at Sandals Grande Antigua Resort**

The resort injury attorneys of Brais Law Firm have brought a lawsuit on behalf of a North Carolina man who nearly drowned while snorkeling on a...

- **Brais Law Maritime Attorneys Settle Hookah Diving Drowning Case**

The Brais Law Firm have been retained to represent the estate and family of drowned recreational diver...

I also want to add an update on Canadian filmmaker and diver Rob Stewart's diving death and his family's pending lawsuit.

Normally, we hear or read the initial accident report and never see any followup information, but I found this. Rob Stewart died last January, while filming "Sharkwater Extinction" at the *Queen of Nassau* wreck off the coast of Islamorada. Stewart, 37, was diving to 229 feet on his third dive of the day. Accompanying him was dive organizer and instructor Peter Sotis. Both were on rebreather equipment from Sotis' company, Add Helium. They surfaced together with breathing difficulties and Stewart disappeared from the surface while the *Pisces* crew assisted Sotis. The Coast Guard found Stewart's body three days later, 300 feet from its last known location on the surface.

Stewart's family has since filed a **wrongful death lawsuit** against Sotis, his company, the crew, Horizon Dive Charter and the boat owner!

Diver and Filmmaker Rob Stewart's Autopsy Results

Both men ascended from the dive at a greater-than-normal rate, it rules out decompression illness because the dive crew successfully treated Sotis with oxygen and he fully recovered based on that treatment. That would not have been the case with decompression sickness. Oxygen is usually administered in cases of decompression illness, but it only reduces symptoms and limits the damage of the underlying cause. It doesn't treat the DCS itself.

Since both men were diving with rebreathers and the same mixtures, the report concludes that they both likely suffered the same condition. The difference is likely that while Sotis suffered while boarding the dive vessel, Stewart suffered in the water. This caused him to lose his breathing loop and sink. The report concludes that Stewart suffered an acute case of hypoxia or lack of oxygen. This led to a shallow-water blackout. The report does not speculate on whether faulty equipment, an inappropriate gas mixture or just bad luck caused the hypoxic episode. Regardless of the cause of death,

Stewart's loss is a tragedy for his friends, family and ocean-loving community at large.

Also, every time I've been diving I've had to sign an "indemnity" (hold harmless) form. This supposedly protects the dive charter and crew from law suits. In all my reading nobody mentions being protected from a law suit or not being sued because they had all divers sign "indemnity" forms. This means they probably don't stand up in court very well.

JAX Dive Club T-Shirts for Sale

Our Dive Club now has four different colors of t-shirts for sale for only \$15 each. We have all sizes. If you would like one, contact Venessa Wood. We've added lime and sapphire blue colors to our line of shirts.



