

# THE DECEMBER 04 BULLETIN

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### FROM THE PRESIDENT

In “looking forward” it is often helpful to look back to where we have been. The past four years of serving as your president have been quite an adventure. The following list includes some of the more important things that the organization has accomplished.

The Southern Open Derby, one of the oldest FSDA competitions, has grown to be a major event. It's new title is “The Southern Open Derby State Championship”. It includes the Shutter Open Photography Tournament.

We brought the “National Free Dive Championship” back in the year 2001. Over 100 divers came to Tarpon Springs from all over the United States to compete.

The scope of the “Southern Open Derby State Championship” was expanded to include a “Youth Division” and a “Top Female Diver” award category. In 2004 over fifty sponsors helped to support this event.

The web site “fsda-wcc.com” was developed to provide extensive information for the FSDA divers. The site includes information on upcoming events, results of past events and club news. Issues of importance to divers and links to a variety of information sources are provided.

The FSDA has committed it's support to 'Divers Rights' activities and the FRA by getting the message out to the membership. Our voice is being heard.

We have honored long term FSDA members over the past two years with "Lifetime Achievement Awards". Ray Odor was the 2003 recipient, and Art Pearson the 2004.

We can look back on our accomplishments with a feeling of pride. But as we look forward it is important to realize that the same enthusiasm and energy is required to keep moving ahead and improving our organization. It has the potential to be even more exciting and effective. Our new President John Schmidt has the experience, capability and energy to lead the way to a bright future. Lets all give him our support.

Thanks to everyone for your all of your support over the past four years.

"Good Diving" Dave Shelton



## SUNCOAST REEF ROWDIES

T'is the season to be Thankful! Rowdies have counted our blessings as we recover from Charley, Francis, Ivan and Jeanne and we are indeed blessed. We certainly hope that next year will not be so destructive to our beautiful paradise.

It will always be the season to keep our beautiful paradise beautiful. Nannette Holland shared some excellent information from the Florida Wildlife Research Commission. with her program, "Eyes On The Bay." She urges us all to "be their eyes" and help report invasions. You are probably aware of some of the aliens in our waterways:

- Green mussels & zebra mussels both can be found clogging intake pipes at several power plants in Tampa Bay and were probably released in ship ballast water,
- Caulerpa, a small enoligated to oval frond plant that overgrow corals and seagrass is found from Palm Beach County to Fort Pierce and was probably released from someone's aquarium or ballast water,
- Carnivorous Jellyfish (or Big Pink Jellyfish) that reach 3 feet in diameter with tentacles that can stretch to 70 feet were found in huge numbers in the Gulf of Mexico in 2000.
- Etc, etc.

A few hints: don't top off the gas tank of your boat and let it drain out in the water (it adds up), don't throw filleted fish carcasses or unwanted catfish to pelicans - exposed fish bones and catfish spines can cause the birds severe internal injuries, wear polarized sunglasses to reduce surface glare to allow you to better see those manatees before you hit them and of course you are already aware of not disturbing sea turtle eggs. Nanette, the Public Outreach Coordinator of the Tampa Bay Estuary Program, St. Petersburg, can bring much more extensive information to your club members with great handouts and pictures.

Although the hurricanes spoiled a lot of our diving opportunities, Steve and Ruth were able to find some magnificent shells for the club competition. Steve's Triton Trumpet took "Best Shell," and his collection placed first, Pat Fridette's collection was 2<sup>nd</sup> with her great shells and Ruth's placed 3<sup>rd</sup>. Steve's unusual find of a weather balloon took the man-made artifact first place. Your entrant doesn't have to be the biggest to win, though, look at Lori's tiny (but complete on both ends) fossil bird toe bone - first place for the natural artifact category.

A little bird told me that there were a lot of really great photos entered in our Rowdie photo contest. We have the usual photo categories as well as black and white (I still have to try that one) and creative computer shots (fun). Winners will be revealed at our holiday party – Congratulations in advance!!! In between the gala party fun, fantastic food and fab awards we will be awed by the winners of the last Ocean Pals Poster Contest. Rowdies will also collect for CASA as we reach out to others who can use a little help in a time of need.

Another opportunity for fresh water photos will be in January with Manatee's posing as our models – let Ed Z know you can be one of our star photographers. In February we plan to use Ginnie Springs for our studio. Lets Go Diving!! Sonia



### **It's A Blowin' - Bunnie!!**

Wow! With all the Hurricanes this past summer, it's amazing we all didn't just blow away!! We long time Floridians have never seen anything like this – and never want to again! There's been damage, but we're dusting ourselves off and getting back into the flow. We hope everyone is fine and pray we don't have another season like this again anytime soon!!

Four Bunnies, Pat F, Brynn, Lisa T. and Betty, went on the Isla Mia liveaboard to the Abacos in July. It was one of the best trips ever with beautiful diving spots and perfect weather. Our ladies did a lot of photography and checking out new and old dive spots. The two highlights of the trip were swimming with a congregation of porpoises (at least 20 or so) and diving on a new feeding station where Betty had a moray and big lobster take fish right from her hand. Plus it looked like hundreds of tropicals in this spot in the middle of nowhere. Pat does a fantastic job organizing this annual trip. The perfect weather was hard to fathom considering all the hurricanes. Brynn made the best conch fritters. Lots of pictures were taken, and hopefully will render some nice awards at judging time.

Lisa T joined Camille and Dick for Fantasyfest again this year in Key West. It was a scream! On parade night, they found Lynette & Ernie and Chuck and Jarry. They were dressed as hippies and probably just pulled some old clothes out of the closet! They looked great and Lisa has pictures!!

Art Pearson is quite a diver and boat captain. Not only did he find the best fishing spot ever, but he told Lisa T that there was a lobster way back hidden in the ledge cracks and that she probably wouldn't find it. Well, when Lisa T got to the bottom, the big guy had moved out of the ledge and was waiting for her to wrestle him. He was huge at 8.5 lbs!!

Mike Yagmin's boat, "Main Squeeze," is up and running. Lisa T made the maiden voyage in October. The boat now has a bigger engine, which really kicks up the speed. This time Mike took them all to Clearwater where they loaded up with fish! So many fish that it was painful to even think about cleaning them. Help was solicited from family and friends. Mike's son and grandson are old enough to be on the boat, and they are so cute, they tried to help the girls back into the boat with the fish. These boys are definitely going to divers!

Lisa T got her Master Diver Certification through Ocean Sports this year. Finally Al offered an advanced program for her. Roy (the instructor) was patient with Lisa and he made the program fun. He's a great instructor, so anyone needing refresher or other classes should see them.

Connie and Patti B spent a month in Key West, catching some nice mahi-mahi and yellow tail snappers. Once the water cleared up, a little lobster-catching became tolerable. They had some

incredible visibility in the Atlantic, but the Gulf remained fairly "soupy." While there, they had Key West resident Bunnie, Camille, over for a lobster and mahi-mahi dinner. Visitors included Ron and Holly and Buddy Stokes. Of course they brought their entire bead-making setup - just in case there was a moment unclaimed. Except for having to return home to examine storm damage and also figuring out how to get all their garage sale goodies home, the trip was perfect! They returned home in time for an incredible Art Harvest show. They have just been accepted for South Florida's oldest art festival, the 55th Annual Beaux Arts Festival of Art in Coral Gables in January. Get busy, girls!

Rita ended the dive season with Thanksgiving in Key Largo. She dove the Spiegel Grove once again and can't believe it's only been down there just two years now. A lot of big fish have moved in and lots of schooling fish too. She also was lucky enough to dive the Duane in zero current. No bull sharks on it this time, but lots of big barracuda hanging out on the crow's nest. Great for photography! Rita has been diving with a great little dive operation, [www.hmsminnow.com](http://www.hmsminnow.com). The boat is a six-pack, which caters to the individual divers. Rita wanted to do a wreck and a reef each day, and the dive boat was very accommodating. On the third day, they dove The Bibb - a little visited wreck because it's so deep. The Duane and the Bibb are identical 327' Coast Guard cutters that were sank near each other in 1987. The Bibb settled on its starboard side in very deep water. The beam is only 42' wide, so your entire dive is going to be deep, therefore, plan accordingly. When descending the mooring line, you don't even see it until 70' down. By the time you reach it, you're already over 100'. You have to be very conscientious of your depth the entire dive, but can see most of everything at an even 110'. The Bibb's crow's nest extends out over the sand at about 124'. It's well worth the effort - very few people dive this wreck and it is spectacularly covered with blooming gorgonians and hydroids. Unlike other wrecks and reefs in Pennekamp that are showing abuse from too many fin kicks, the Bibb is untouched. Makes for fabulous photos!! But, unfortunately, this is a very short dive so don't try to take in the whole wreck at one time. Be careful, and then do your second dive at Molasses Reef, just a mile away. You can do your "surface interval" while diving there because the reef is so shallow, but very pretty.

Mary T says Gulf diving is yielding large Gags, Snapper, Hogfish, and Slipper Lobster. You don't have to go deep. One weekend, the spearfishing was great in just 26 to 35 feet of water. The viz was not terrific, but do-able with 20 - 25 ft viz. The only problem was the 4 to 5 foot swells that weren't predicted and made for a rough day in the boat!

Betsy & April Hoaglin donated a 4day/3 night vacation in their condo in Marsh Harbour, Abaco Bahamas to the WCC banquet -- it was quite a success. They will be donating it again for the Seabunnie Banquet in March! Everyone should start getting excited about it now. Their web site is [www.abacocondo.com](http://www.abacocondo.com)

Lisa B, Scott and their boys are heading to Maine to have Thanksgiving with her family on the farm and 40 people at one table. It will be a blast.

It's been one great year for celebrating birthdays! So many ladies turned 50 this year we couldn't keep track of them. We won't tell you their names, because they still look like they're 39. Happy Birthday to our 50 year olds!!

Betty is hosting the annual Cookie Party/Toys for Tots in December at her house. Our ladies are always very generous with gift giving for needy families. And we love cookies too!

Our Seabunnie Banquet will be in March. We are considering various locations: Wine Cellar, Clearwater Yacht Club, Bon Appetite, Cove Cay Clubhouse, Kissin' Cussins and the Bellview Biltmore Hotel (before it gets torn down by developers!!) We are looking for members to get involved, check on other locations and come to the meetings!

Meetings are twice a month at Cove Cay. We need members to get involved and keep this club active. We can't have a CLUB without U !!!!

Reminder: Dues are due no later than January 30<sup>th</sup>!! We need your dues so we can start planning the Bunnie Banquet!

The waters are getting colder, so that means Manatee season! We all love snorkeling with these gentle giants! But just a few simple reminders to all boaters out there – Be Careful!! Some simple suggestions from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission: scan the water and look for swirls resembling a large footprint, a repetitive line of half-moon swirls, a mud trail, or any breaking of the surface by a snout or a tail. Additional precautions: stay in marked channels; wear polarized sunglasses; use poles, paddles or trolling motors when in proximity of manatees; and give manatees a wide berth because they may be traveling with a calf or other adults.

We wish everyone a Happy, Healthy and Safe Holiday Season!

#### Bunnie Board Results:

Grouper: Eileen Morris - 7 lbs, Lisa Tatro - 12.75 lbs, Lynn Jones - 12.8 lbs, Sandie Curran - 20 lbs, and Mary Taylor - 21.5 lbs.

Hogfish: Lisa Boing - 2.5 lbs, Lisa Tatro - 2.7 lbs, Eileen Morris - 3.4 lbs, Sandie Curran - 5 lbs, Lynn Jones - 10 lbs, Mary Taylor - 15 lbs.

Snapper: Sandie Curran - 3 lb, Lisa Tatro 3.25 lbs, Lynn Jones 3.14 lbs, Lisa Schmidt - 4.9 lb, Mary Taylor - 10.5 lb.

Sheepshead / Triggerfish/ Flounder: Lisa Tatro - 2.3 lb Sheepshead, Lisa Schmidt - 2.9 lb Sheepshead, Mary Taylor - 7.5 lb Triggerfish

Amberjack / Barracuda / Cobia: Lynn Jones - 26 lbs Amberjack

Lobster: Adrienne Butler - 2 lbs, Mary Taylor - 3 lb, Lisa Tatro - 8.5 lb,

Save Our Seas: Sandie Curran - 3 pts, Mary Taylor - 4 pts, Lynn Jones - 4 pts, Lisa Tatro - 10 pts, Rita Fitzpatrick - 14 pts, Lisa Boing - 17 pts.



Submitted By:  
Bill Hardman

### The 2005 St. Pete Open

The 2005 ST. PETE OPEN will be held August 19th, 20th and 21st at the Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort, 6800 Sunshine Skyway Lane, St. Petersburg, FL . [www.holiday-inn.com/marinacove-ss](http://www.holiday-inn.com/marinacove-ss)

The staff at the Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort has promised to be more accommodating for our tournament. We have a lot more rooms at a better rate. There will be no reason to leave the venue after the weigh-in. Stay and party or relax. Wake up and go to the awards ceremony. We are very excited about the much larger and better venue.

### The Norm Wyman/Poppa Taylor Award

The 2004 Norm Wyman/Poppa Taylor award goes to our beloved Dennis O'Hern. He has busted his butt to protect our fishing rights. Most of his time his efforts went un-paid - in fact, all of his time was pro bono. Not only did he go out of state on many occasions to fight for recreational and commercial single attended fishing, but he gave up job opportunities while taking the fight to the offshore glutens.

Dennis also was the 2004 SPUC Secretary and he did a great job. I could not have succeeded in my 2004 SPUC Presidency without his help and his personal drive. He never waited to be told what to do. He saw a problem, we discussed it and away he went like Don Quiote.

All the SPUCs are very proud of our Denny and we appreciate all he does to make our club one of the best spearfishing clubs in the USA.

### Costa Rican Tuna Boys

The months of October and November has seen a few SPUCs head south to Costa Rica for fish - Yellowfin Tuna to be exact. Chris Gardinal, G.R. Tarr, Gerry Guerra, Papa "Smurf" Guerra, Gary Sanchez and a few others boated some of these ballistic missiles. They all came back safe and what stories they have told. (Oh, what stories that have told. And we believe every word).

### SPUCs Win West Coast Council

Once again we won the WCC spearfishing tournament series. Thanks to all those who showed up and participated. There was a lot of gamey competition from all clubs and now we can look forward to Three Peat in 2005.

## **Ocean Pals Contest 2004-2005**

*The Posters Are Coming - deadline is Dec 21, 2004.  
We recognize that "Students Can Teach Adults!"*

### **POSTER CONTEST *THEME:***

### **"Hard Shells and Soft Bodies"**

Clams, Mussels, Oysters, Scallops, Snails, Octopus, Squid, Cuttlefish & Nautilus

Ranging in complexity from the simple, headless sessile clam to the intelligent, jet propelled octopus; mollusks represent a large varied group of invertebrates. Mollusks have adapted to nearly every kind of environment on earth - on land and in the sea.

Discover another world as you learn about the shell-less mollusks, many of which are masters of camouflage. Read about mollusks with their strong developed muscular foot used to carry around their protective shell and others who have a paralyzing toxin in their saliva. Did you know that mussels are the fastest filter feeders and clams are the slowest? And can you imagine a snail with a tongue like a chain saw? Each and every one is an important part of our earth's ecosystem and must be protected.

### More information we gave the teachers:

Over 95% of all animals are invertebrates. This year, Ocean Pals would like to focus on a select few and show how they contribute to the overall balance of the ocean's ecosystem and in need of protection. Mollusks are a diverse group of animals found both on land and in water. Most have soft, unsegmented bodies and a muscular foot. Many have shells, some of which are highly prized by collectors. A few mollusks are valued for the pearls they produce, while many others are savored as delicacies. Mollusks are also important to the ecosystems in which they live, providing food for many creatures and shelter for some who live on are inside the mollusk shells. The bivalve mollusks, such as clams and oysters, can be important environmental indicators: as filter feeders, they collect many of the toxin humans' dump into the water. Many mollusks are endangered due to habitat degradation, over collection or the introduction of invasive species, including other mollusks such as the zebra mussel.

You too can learn more and find out what we can do to prevent further destruction, by visiting the following web sites:

USGS: <http://geology.er.usgs.gov/paleo/mollusks.html>

Animal Diversity Web – University of Michigan:

<http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/accounts/information/Mollusca.html>

National Association of Environmental Educators: <http://eelink.net/EndSpp/Esmollusks.html>

AMNH: [http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/hall\\_tour/spectrum/28.html](http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/hall_tour/spectrum/28.html)

Carnegie Museum of Natural History:

<http://www.carnegiemuseums.org/cmnh/mollusks/about.htm>

**Students all over the US have been putting their findings into a poster to show the world how we can act NOW to recognize and help protect these Hard Shells and Soft Bodies. We are anxious to see the newest artistic efforts by our Florida students.**

**Sonia Smith, Director, Ocean Pals, S.E. Region**