

THE MARCH 04 BULLETIN

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

The FSDA will proudly host three separate State “Championship Tournaments” the first on the schedule is the Freediving event which will be held on April 15 at Bayport Florida. Check the **TOURNAMENT** page on the web site for the registration, waver, and entry forms. They can be printed from the site. I challenge all of you freedivers to put a team together and compete. The FSDA will be sending three teams to the National event which will be held in Hawaii in July.

The FSDA also invites all members to participate in the two other “State Championships” which will be hosted on June 25,26,27 as the 42nd “Southern Open Derby” They include the “Southern Open State Spearfishing Championship” and the “Southern Open State Photography Championship”. Last year over 130 spearfishermen and 30 photographers competed. We plan to limit the total to approximately 165 participants to insure an equally great prize table. It will also allow the ordering of the proper number of T-shirts for the participants.

In view of the limit, I strongly recommend that you pre-register to insure a spot. All the necessary forms and rules are available on the **TOURNAMENT** page of the web site. Remember that all participants must be members of the FSDA so send your dues in now. However, the registration form provides for payment in the event that you may not have not done so. Lets all pre-register to let Tom Morris, John Schmidt and Lisa Tatro know how much we appreciate their long hours of effort to make all of these events so exciting.

Be sure to review the **CALENDAR** page in the web site on a regular basis. Print out a copy as a reminder list. Note that it also includes events such as the “St Pete Open” and “Spearboard” Tournaments. The FSDA enthusiastically promotes your participation in them.

Dust off that equipment and get in shape gang! It’s going to be an exciting year.

Dave

FROM THE EDITOR

Thanks for visiting the FSDA web site. . Be aware that the Tournament information, such as rules, wavers, and registration is on the TOURNAMENT page of the site. The schedule of events is on the CALENDAR page. Return to the HOME PAGE and click on any of the buttons to access them. Visit the site on a regular basis to check for special announcements and changes.



SUNCOAST REEF ROWDIES

The Rowdies want to thank Bobbie Jo Roe for such an excellent “African Safari Show” last month. She did an outstanding job with the narration and the pictures were fantastic. What a fascinating place to visit. We also thank the other club’s members who came. If by some chance you didn’t get to see her show, you need to check with her and see if she will be showing them some place else. I know that she has been talking to the South African tour guides about other diving around Africa, so if you are interested be sure to call her to check it out – she wants to go back!

Congratulations go to Bobbie Jo who was selected for our Bunny Lauser Diver of the Year Trophy and Steve Kisco, who’s high of 33 competition points was recognized with the Len Favel Trophy. Both were presented at our Holiday Party December 6th, 2003. It was a lovely evening at the Wine Cellar – didn’t every one look fantastic with clothes on! ☺ Pat Fredette came up with some great prizes and certificates for the winners of our contests – thanks Pat. There are some contest categories that we all could do more on!

How can one guy have all the luck? Ken took the most wins at our Super Bowl party – and I had to talk him into going! Thanks for a good party again, Pat – we all had fun!

Fort Desoto was the destination for our Kayak trip January 17th. What a nice day it turned out to be! Eight kayakers turned out for the paddle around the Fort area in the inside protected area of Soldier’s Hole and Mullet Key Bayou. It is well marked and a guidebook put out by the Park Staff notes special things to identify as you go along the mangrove areas. They mentioned the manatee also but we didn’t see any of those until our trip to Crystal River.

Can you believe around 30 manatee were spotted at Crystal River February 21st? That is the most manatee our club has ever encountered in all the years we have been going up there to swim with them! Lots of babies in this group too. The interaction was great. Some nibbled on Bobbie Jo’s fins and one almost ploughed her over by swimming right at her. Lori had to laugh at guy almost jumping out of the water when a manatee thought his bare foot was fair game to munch on. Sara had to do the splits just to avoid one swimming underneath her. Lots of people and sediment made it difficult to get clear pictures but a good time was had by all. Thanks for being the designated trip planner and barge driver Ed!

March 6th, Saturday we will be going around the Wauchula area to hunt for the elusive fossils hoping to find the BIG one. Have you checked out the size of the shark teeth that Steve and Ruth have been wearing? On April 17th we will do a shark tooth dive boat expedition in the Venice area. We are hoping the winter weather has washed out some great finds in both areas.

Get your reservations for the big Beneath The Sea dive and travel show March 26, 27 & (Ocean Pals Sunday) the 28th, 2004. Have you seen the BTS Photo Contest winners? WOW!!

<http://BeneathTheSea.org>.

Mark your calendars for May 8th. Bob Bourke will be our dive master/instructor for a DIR dive at Blue Grotto. DIR means Do It Right! A great refresher for all the things we forget as we think we know it all!

Also reserve the next weekend, May 14, 15 & 16 for Ocean Fest at Lauderdale. I had great help last year and will welcome extra help this year with our Ocean Pals booth. Our nine- (9) National winning posters will go on display then as well as the other seven regional winners.

Come on by!! Sonia



SEABUNNIES ARE AT IT AGAIN!!

If you think it is too cold to go diving, you haven't seen our Seabunnies!! Eileen got the year off to an early start on January 2, braving the cold for a prosperous dive in the gulf! She came up with a 7-pound Grouper and a 3-pound Hogfish. Her husband, Tom shot several groupers & a hog. So ladies -- the 2004 competition has begun! Way to go, Eileen! As of this writing, Mary T has not dove in yet, but she won't hold out for long! There's just too much fish out there! She also has some big plans this year, diving the Dry Tortugas and Cayman!

Everyone knows Rita doesn't do cold water, but she also can't stay out of the water for long (or she gets cranky!). So she's going to Fiji (the "soft coral capital of the world") for her birthday in March. She'll have a report for you when she returns!

Many Seabunnies ended 2003 with great dives and dive stories! Michele finally got her Caribbean trip in! Last minute problems in past years caused her to miss Curacao and Cayman. But she did get to Aruba this year and absolutely loved it! I bet we're gonna' find her jetting around the Caribbean a lot more now!

Patti B went out gulf diving with hubby. She got so excited over catching a big fish, that she dropped all her gear! It sunk to the bottom and they had no air left to go and try to find it. Sure enough, they went back the next day and found everything!! So, I'm booking Patti to give a presentation to our group on "search & recovery" techniques!!

Rita usually ends the dive season late November, so she had Thanksgiving on the "Spiegel Grove" in Key Largo. She has become very familiar with that wreck lately! But she did venture further on down the Keys for the long weekend. The weather kicked up and 10' seas cancelled dives in Looe Key. But the next day, the seas calmed down and they were able to dive the "Thunderbolt" in Marathon. Rita was supposed to dive this wreck as part of her advance certification back in '88, but bad weather cancelled it. She never got the chance to go back and she worried the same thing was going to happen this time. But they did get to dive and it was an awesome wreck. Sitting upright in 115 feet of water, the Thunderbolt is totally intact and recognizable as a nice wreck. It is heavily encrusted with a variety of encrusting sponges and gorgonians. At the bow, her massive cable-laying wheel, now encrusted with coral and filled with schools of silversides, dominates the scene. Black jacks and bar jacks frequently come by. The broad bridge sits amid ship, with the wheelhouse still totally intact and highly entertaining to enter. It is loaded with barracuda. Penetration of the wreck was made possible prior to her sinking, through the removal of her doors, hatches, and inner entanglements. An opening at the base of the superstructure (center main deck) yields a staircase, which leads up to the wheelhouse. Swimming up the staircase is a fascinating thrill. The Thunderbolt's two large bronze propellers sit

silently aft. Beginning life as the “USS Randolph” in 1942, she began and lived as a US Army cable laying workboat. The 200 foot research vessel Thunderbolt got her final name by serving as a stationary focal point for lightning strikes. Researchers from Florida Power and Light (FP&L) used 2 jet engines to blast ionized gas into the upper atmosphere, attracting large numbers of lightning strikes on the poor boat. Following the lightning research (in the early 1980s), she was to begin a new career as an underwater surveyor vessel. Unfortunately for her (but fortunately for the diving community), she sank at the dock in Miami Harbor. Members of the Middle Keys diving community bought her in 1986 and paid to have her cleaned and prepped as an artificial reef. She was scuttled in 115 feet of water on March 3, 1986. Next time you’re in the Keys, make sure you dive this fascinating wreck!

Above water, we were all very busy during the holiday social season. Lisa B again hosted her annual Christmas party and everyone had a great time.

Christmas was celebrated with Betty Tucker's annual Cookie Party. Not only did the Bunnies bring lots of cookies and tons of calories but each one also brought a gift for a needy child. These gifts were then taken to the Salvation Army, which served as the center for the distribution of donated gifts to needy families in the Clearwater area. Betty reported that there were over forty gifts and the Bunnies' generosity had to be greatly appreciated by the many children and parents who received them. Many of the Bunnies also reported that they had shared other gift drives through their churches, workplaces and community involvements.

The Seabunnies first meeting of the year was held at the Suncoast Seabird Sanctuary. The non-profit Sanctuary is one of the largest wild bird rehabilitation centers in the United States. For over 30 years, the Sanctuary has been dedicated to the rescue, repair, rehabilitation and release of healthy indigenous wild birds. Founded in 1971, the Sanctuary is world-renowned for its innovative rehabilitation techniques, and the first facility to breed Eastern brown pelicans in captivity. Similar to a human hospital, it is equipped with emergency facilities, a surgical center, recovery areas and an outdoor recuperation area. Display areas feature permanently injured birds that have been given a home at the Sanctuary. At any given time, visitors can view in excess of 600 wild birds. The healthy offspring they produce are released back into the wild.

The weather was colder than expected for our visit. We served wine and sodas, chips, dips, cheeses and salmon. Many Seabunnies attended with friends and family: Lisa T, Cathy, Pat, Sally, Brynn, Mary B, Patty, Sandie, Leslie and Ralph Heath from the Sanctuary and the entertainment "Jimbo" was great (as he always is - enthusiastic). We had a short meeting all bundled up under the stars on the deck by the beach. The night was clear and the sounds were keeping us moving. I hope we can do it again when the weather is sure to be nice and we can have more of the girls out. It's a beautiful place over looking the beach up on the third deck. They invited us back any time.

Many thanks to Debbie P and hubby Frank for hosting the Annual Judging Party! This is always a “not to miss” event!! Many talented Bunnies participated in the competition, and here are the results:

Best Shell Collection: 1st – Lisa S; 2nd – Mary T; 3rd - Betty; and 4th - Brynn

Best Shell: 1st - Mary T - Hairy Triton; 2nd - Lisa S - Ivory Cone; 3rd - Brynn - Angular Triton; 4th - Betty.

Artifacts: 1st - Mary B - Turtle Bones; 2nd - Lisa S - plates and mask; 3rd - Brynn - Bottle, glass and snorkel; 4th - Mary T - fishing rod.

Photography - Top-side prints and slides: 1st - Sally R - dockside sunset; 2nd - Paula T - boats at low tide; 3rd - Lisa S - Dog on boat; 4th - Mary B - girl on kayak; and 5th - Pat F - sunset and boat.

Standard & Wide-Angle Prints: 1st - Lisa B - eel and purple sponge; 2nd - Lisa S - snorkeler; 3rd - Peggy L - brittle star; 4th - Pat F - soft coral; and 5th - Lisa T - diver in silhouette.

Macro Prints: 1st - Lisa B - shrimp in anemone; 2nd - Lisa T - trumpet fish; 3rd - Lisa S - star fish; 4th - Pat F - Green rock anemone; and Peggy L - Toad fish.

Fixed Focus: 1st - Rita - soft corals and diver; 2nd - Mary T - Lobster; 3rd - Betty - grouper; 4th - Pat F - diver; and 5th - Mary B - eel.

Digital & Creative Prints: 1st- Mary B - Sunset; 2nd - Sandie C - Storm; 3rd - Peggy - Eileen & Grouper; 4th - Lisa S - Blue heron.

Standard & Wide-Angle Slides: 1st - Lisa T - Minnows in Silhouette; 2nd - Mary B - Jacks; 3rd - Lisa B - Nurse Shark; 4th - Lisa S - Trigger Fish; and 5th - Pat F - Soft Coral.

Macro Slides: 1st - Lisa T - Eel; 2nd - Lisa B - Pike Fish; and 3rd - Pat F - Arrow crab with diver.

Mark your calendars for this year's banquet! It will be held at the Cove Cay Country Club March 20th starting at 6:30p. Cocktails, Dinner, Awards, and Dancing – what more do you want? Reserve your space before March 10th!!

The Seabunnies have big plans for 2004. The second meeting of the month will actually be an “activity” instead of a formal meeting. Many events are planned, scuba and non-scuba related: wine tastings, cooking classes, beads and ceramics, just to name a few. We will feature presentations on The Great Barrier Reef, Cuba Scuba, shell collecting and cleaning, equipment maintenance, exotic travels, and possibly a speaker who was on an expedition to the Titanic!

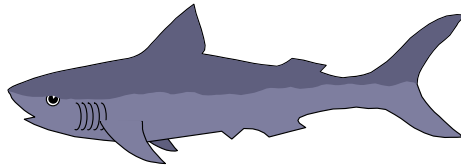
All this for members and their friends and family! So, that reminds me – in the immortal words of our Treasurer, Pat F: “Dues are due!”

Dues, including FSDA dues.....\$ 35.00

Spearfishing competition..... 5.00 (optional)

Photo, shells, artifacts, SOS competition.. 5.00 (optional)

Make check payable to the SEA BUNNIES, and mail to Pat F asap!



TAMPA BAY SPEARFISHING CLUB

Started in Nov. 2003 as a way to get novice and intermediate diver spearfishermen and women together. We wanted a venue where diving fishermen of varying caliber could meet, get to know one another and go spearfishing.

We meet on the second Thursday of every month at Aquatic Obsessions from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm.

We have 18 members at this time and we are hoping to increase that number in the coming months. We also joined and were accepted as a club by the F.S.D.A./W.C.C. on January 14, 2004.

To join our club the only requirements are you should have a junior certification or higher, possess some semblance of mental stability and be sponsored by an existing member of the club. Yearly dues are \$40.00 with \$15.00 of that going to join the F.S.D.A./W.C.C.

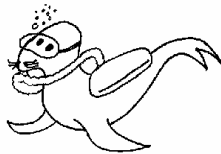
Our Goals for the year are to increase our membership, finish our club t-shirt, organize our own in-club tournaments finalize our charter and by-laws, have our web site up and running and get out and do some spearfishing with not just our members, but members of the other F.S.D.A./W.C.C. clubs and have fun.

Kevin Schryver, Pres.

John Morrison, Vice Pres./ Treas.

Bill Murphy, Secretary

Bill Hardman, Grand Poobah



SunCoast Seals:

The Seals have had some great activities over the last quarter from officer changes to our new website, www.SCSeals.com thanks to Dr. Will Webster. The awards banquet was held in Clearwater where a new member of the club shared top honors with seasoned members. Bill Harshman was awarded the Sportsman's Ship Award for 2003 and I couldn't think of a better person to start the year off with a 95 ½ lb Amberjack to set the bar for the 2004 Seals Competition. Dr. David Shelton's annual labor of love earned him Captain of the Year and Free Diver of the Year, while Scuba Diver of the Year went to Mark Huffman. Trophies were secured from Liz Karcher and were prints of her Gyotaku art. The Top Grouper was 53 ½ lbs and went to EJ Barrett who just took up a job in the Corn Islands off of Nicaragua running a small dive resort. A SunCoast Seals record was broken with a Hogfish hitting the 26.0 pound mark and top honors for lobster were secured with an 11 ½ lber.

The top honors for the WCC competition will be a great mark to strive for in '04" and the Seals can't wait to get things going. We'll be hosting the first event schedule for May 8 in Pasco County and we look forward to participating in all of the events this year.

The 2nd Annual Spearboard Open will be the first big tune up for most of us and our days at work will be filled with visions of hogfish and grouper from time to time, but keeping safety first will be our priority. Stay safe and dive smart and we hope to see everyone at the shoots and all of the great socials planed for 2004!

Dan Addison "Shooter Dan"
www.Spearboard.com



Submitted: Bill Hardman SPUC Superbowl Party & Feast Was A Blast!

We had a good time and according to our records we had just over 135 people attend. It was good to see other FSDA leaders and members like Art Pearson, John Moldt, Adrian Butler and other of our FSDA friends. Everything ran real smooth. Yeah right! We ran out of beer half way through the game, ran out of plates, over cooked some food on the serving line, kids couldn't use any wheeled toys on the floor, etc.... But the good news is that none of the problems mattered.

Members and non-members chipped in and solved each and every problem. **Gary Sanchez and Bing Gwong** (a non-member) jumped up and volunteered to go get plenty of emergency beer and plates to make it through to the end of the party. **Paul Kerr** kicked serious butt – I mean he cooked his butt off. He had great helpers like **Ritchie Zacker and Chris Gardinal**. Oh, and Chris & Paul went out and shot some of the fish the day before. Another big asset for me was non-member, **Iaasic Lathrop**. **Iaasic** helped me get supplies and he worked in the kitchen from the start to the end. **Iaasic** is always helping out, from the Island Party, the volunteer room at the St Pete Open to this party. Great job **Iaasic**. **Charlie Hogge and Wayne Butts** were great bouncers (door hosts). They only had to bounce out three five year old troublemakers! Big thanks to **Bic Benedict, Bob Dyer, Scott Hooker and Scott's lovely wife** who not only sold shirts and other apparel, but they

took over the game boards for the whole game. Other members volunteered to do the boards but that fell through and BAM, this group came through and did a great job. Oh yeah, **Frank MacCallister** showed up early and thank God he did, or we may not have got the building. **Leon Vasques**, what can I say? Mr. Electronics was great. He brought in his communications crew and they showed everyone the meaning of sound system professionals. Big Thanks Leon... Some Tampa Bay Spearfishing Club and A.O. Dive Club members helped out too. Thanks to **Kevin Schryver, Cliff Davis & Joe Lamy** for filling in when they saw a need. Hey, Hey **Paul Renner – Mr. Kissin Cuzzins**. Paul always helps us arrange the food and set up the party. We could never do it without Paul's help and superb food management skills. And last but surely not least. **Dennis O'Hern**, my SPUC Secretray, did what he always does. He stepped up and covered anything I couldn't get covered. I am very fortunate to have such a great junior officer. Dennis is always showing his leadership abilities and he never has to be asked to do a thing. Thanks Buddy! I hope I didn't forget anyone. I know others helped set up chairs and offered their help and to all you I say "thanks".

Legislative Update

Things are happening and happening fast. The FSDA made a good decisions to help financially support the volunteers who go to the public hearings and workshops in an effort to represent ALL spearfishermen and women. Some of those who took many days off work to represent divers and spearos are: **Denny O'Hern, Rich Taylor, Paul Kerr & Jason DeLaCruz**.

PLEASE READ.....

Your legal right to take grouper in the Gulf is now being decided by others. If you wish to continue to enjoy grouper fishing as you do now, you will have to let the Gulf of Mexico Marine Fisheries Council know what you think about the proposed restrictions as outlined in their Secretarial Amendment 1. This is a 290 page document that discusses different ways to reduce the commercial and recreational impact on red grouper. Proposals in this document range from recreational red grouper take from five per day to two, to even a possible recreational grouper closed season. This Amendment even states that the gag grouper fishery may be targeted by commercial longliners in an effort to make up for a 10% reduction in their red grouper quotas. To get a copy of the Secretarial Amendment 1, contact **Mr. Phil Steele at (727) 570-5305** or email Phil.Steele@noaa.gov.

You only have until April 20, 2004 to voice your opinion in regard to your interest in your fishery. If you wish to express your concerns send your letter to: Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council, The Commons at Rivergate, 3018 North US Highway 301, Suite 1000, Tampa, FL 33619-2272

What's Going On?

Ritchie Zacker won SPUC Freedive Spearfisherman of the year for 2003 and **Bill Hardman** (yes I do sometimes shoot fish) won SPUC Scuba Spearfisherman of the year.

All the SPUCs want to welcome the newest member of the FSDA, The **Tampa Bay Spearfishing Club**. This new group of spearos will add more excitement and friendly competition to the WCC and the FSDA. They just officially joined in January and they are already a strong and involved force in our FSDA.

Gear Up For the 2004 St. Pete Open

Dates: We will once again put on the St. Pete Open at the former Tierra Verde Resort and the Mirage Waterfront.

August 20, 21 & 22, 2004. Rain Date is the following weekend.

Rooms: If you have not signed up to get on the waiting list for a room at the Tierra Verde Resort for the tournament, please call Bill Hardman at (727) 344-3483. Room availability will be tight so please sign up soon if you are interested.

Whats New With The Open! The restaurant and banquet rooms are now under new ownership and Francine Fabrizio, the Event Director of the Mirage Waterfront has showed us most of the 2.5 million dollars worth of renovations. We have a cleaner cooler location and she promised plenty of staff for food and drinks on every day of the St. Pete Open 2004. **See Ya at The Open!**