



FROM THE PRESIDENT

The FSDA Southern Open and Shutter open Derbies are the top items of the upcoming activities. The winners of these tournament events will truly be the “State Champions” The FSDA officers and volunteers have been hard at work with the preparations for making these events a big success. They have spent endless hours visiting the local dive shops and sponsors. The contributions to the prize table has been impressive.

A Big Thanks To!!!

The Ballyhoo Bar and Grill for once again making their facilities available for the registration, captains meeting, weigh-in and prize ceremony. These facilities include the restaurant, parking lot and the popular open air “back yard” party area.

Dean Young for creating our 2003 FSDA Derby Logo and “T” shirts – Great job – Best ever!!

The key persons (as always) Tom Morris, John Schmidt, and Lisa Tatro. They and many other volunteers have stepped forward to insure an exciting event. The divers are sure to be happy with the prize table selections.

Our sponsors are too many to acknowledge here. Be sure to thank them for their generosity as you do business with them. They are listed in the Bulletin, and our web site FSDA –WCC

Be sure to make an effort to dive in this years Derby. Just hope for good weather!!! Hope to see everyone there. “Good Luck” to all of you!!

--David--

FROM THE EDITOR

The FSDA has invested considerable funds in the development of web site WWW.FSDA-WCC.COM All of the Bulletin information is now on the site in full color. It includes a calendar of events, club articles, tournament schedules, entry forms, results, photos, weather, and links to other sites of interest. Tom Morris and John Schmidt have put a lot of effort into working with the designer to develop a “first class” site. Information is kept current and can be accessed at any time, from any where.

Now that this facility in place the hard copy distribution will be limited to those members who do not have internet access. They will also be sent to the competition sponsors, as they display them.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Southern Open Derby	9/19,20,21
Shutter Open Derby	9/12 thru 9/21
WCC Awards Banquet	12/5



Summer with the Bunnies

And what a summer it has been! We’ve been diving, fishing, and just having a Good Time below and above water! What a month for AWESOME ENCOUNTERS with bottlenose dolphins! Eileen had the first contact with a lone male dolphin who longed to meet a fair Sea Bunny Personal Chef, who might

change his boring routine of seafood and sushi. They frolicked in the sea together. The next week, Lisa S and Mary B met the very same dolphin accompanied by his 3 playmates. They experienced their frolic at arms length for what seemed an endless time. Truly a once in a lifetime adventure to share such a close encounter with these awesome, gentle creatures!!

Speaking of Awesome Encounters, Rita and John dove the Similan Islands and Richelieu Rock in Thailand where the Manta Rays can't get enough of you! Our first dive of the trip, and John's 50 th dive, we had a Manta Ray stay with us for our entire 40-minute dive!! Considering what a "newbie" diver John is, this was a fabulous experience to happen so early in his diving career!

The Andaman Sea is full of awesome creatures: clownfish, lionfish, mating cuddlefish (love was in the water!), harlequin shrimp, mantis shrimp, leopard sharks, ghost pipefish, giant clams and sea snakes! (Yes -the poisonous kind!!) Keep your eyes open and your mask clear!!

Paul a Lisa T was excited to dive the 1st WCC (she was the only lady). She was diving with SPUC's Paul Kerr and Charlie at about 130' and she planned on showing them up. She was able to land the biggest fish on the boat. On the way in, Paul decided to make one more dive (but offered that dive to Lisa, which she reluctantly refused). Paul came up with a ton of fish! By that time they were already pushing the time limit (what a surprise!) and were racing the boat hard when it broke down--in the shipping channel!! Well the two SPUCS exhibited their best mechanical skills to get them out of the channel. Paul made cheeseburgers while they decided what to do. Trying to make contact with WCC members was difficult (borderline of cell phone tower), and Lisa couldn't reach anyone. Finally, they got Charlie's wife at the weigh-in who passed us on the way to other SPUC's for help. Well, they thought they were doing favor when they had Sea Tow radio us! Big Problem--Paul didn't have Sea Tow insurance (big mistake). After hours of hanging out in 2 passing storms and seas up to 10', we were comforted to know that Jason and Vicky Delacruz would come to our rescue in the horrible weather. Thank you both again! Lisa got home around 3AM. Paul has since been given a Sea Tow membership, but we wonder if Lisa will ever dive with him again!!

Lisa T and Peggy L participated in the Narcosis Tournament. It was beautiful day of diving, but not the best viz for photography. Lisa T's camera failed her that day, but Denny came through with last minute availability of his Nikonis. Lisa rushed down to take 10 minutes of pictures before racing back to get in the weigh-in line. Peggy took some great pictures and she got some good prizes. Our boat captain Ron Wagner took 1st place!

Several Sea Bunnies escaped to the Bahamas for a five day liveaboard. Lisa T, Betty, Pat, Patsy, Brynn participated in photo and shell collecting. Betty and Brynn got some beautiful Trumpet Tridents and other shells. Lisa T got a picture of an Octopus held up in a hole, and some cool night dive pictures, and lots of pictures of Fairy Basselets (did you know they swim upside down?). And Brynn -- what a cook!

She made us a batch of fresh conch fritters. I don't think Lisa's hands will ever heal from skinning the conchs! They saw many large fish, grouper, and many colorful (turquoise) parrotfish. We enjoyed diving the open caves filled with minnows (rumor has it that there's a picture out there of a diver with Doug's moon in the background LOL). The men saw the usual Hammerhead, but the ladies missed seeing him. Maybe next time!

Mary Taylor has been diving the gulf constantly and keeping us informed on conditions. The water was a comfortable 85 - 87 degrees bottom temperature at 60 feet. Viz was almost top to bottom. Hogfish and snapper are still plentiful. Grouper are scarce. You may have to go deeper than 60 ft for grouper. No sea lice or jelly fish where she was diving off of St. Pete. A few helmet shells were spotted, as they seem to appear in June. She found her first ever Tritons Trumpet, and couldn't resist adding it to her shell collection.

Earlier this summer, Mary T was diving the Keys and said she definitely needed a wet suit. Wear a hood if you expect to do multiple dives. Big Black Grouper are there. You will see them if you hunt slowly and drift dive with the current. Hogs are not in schools, but you can get them in sizes from 4 to 7 lbs.

A long weekend had Mary T in the Middle Grounds! Water temp is 78 degrees until you get to 50ft., then the water temp dropped to a cold 67 degrees. Viz this past Memorial Day weekend was 30 to 50 feet.

Saturday's surf was flat as a pancake. Grouper were not plentiful. Snappers are really big and playing in the sweet spots. The occasional big Hogfish provide great potential for a nice catch. In "the grounds", just diving in "the Grand Canyon" makes it worthwhile even if you don't spearfish.

Sandy and Dan and spent Sunday and Monday out about 30 miles off Clearwater. The seas were flat and viz was practically top to bottom. She was very comfortable in her polartek. She shot several large grouper -- the biggest this weekend was 12 .6 lbs. (the previous Friday was 14 lbs.) and most were in the 10 lb range. Snapper are everywhere some nice Hogs, but not many sizable ones.

Rita & John jetted off for a quick long weekend of diving in Curacao. Everyone knows of the fantastic diving in Bonaire - but don't forget about the sister island - Curacao.

This island has the same easy shore diving accessibility as Bonaire - but none of the dive travel specialists will tell you that! The shore sites are marked with a red rock and mapped in the guide books. Most sites have a shaded cabana area where you can suit up. Shore entry is easy and the books tell you exactly what to do. There are beautiful walls and luscious reefs. We all know that Bonaire offers the most pristine reefs in the western hemisphere, but there is not much to do if you're not diving. Curacao is a great place to go if you are with a non-diving partner, as there are beautiful beaches, sightseeing, golf, tennis, casinos, fine restaurants, shopping, the aquarium, and much to do if you're not underwater!

Vicky Jensen just got back from diving in the Keys with her sister...no sea lice in Tavernier, thank goodness! No wet suit needed. They dove about 30' all three days and it was perfect. But Betsy H had a terrible sea lice problem on her Keys dive. The Sea Lice were everywhere!! If you've ever experienced sea lice, you know the horror!

A couple things to remember before diving during sea lice season -- use suntan lotion before going in the water or buy a special lubricated protection lotion to help protect the skin. Also rinse off with salt water as fresh water activates them to be buried into the skin. Do not rub the skin. If you get them, look them up on the web for lots of helpful information.

Did you ever want to just go where ever the wind took you? Rita and John shared a once in a lifetime dream of chartering a bare-boat 46' Bahia Catamaran in the British Virgin Islands. With a few friends sharing a four-cabin sailboat, they set sail from Tortola and sailed wherever the wind took them! They explored the famous Norman Island (Robert Lewis Stevenson's inspiration for "Treasure Island"), looked for treasure in the caves, and sang "Yo Ho Ho and a Bottle of Rum" - all while consuming the famous BVI drink "Painkillers" (made from British Pusser's Rum). Being an avid diver, wherever they moored, Rita put mask on, stuck her head in the water and found a reef. They would dive everywhere they found underwater life. But, of course, the most majestic dive of all is "The Rhone." We have all dove artificial reefs - wrecks that were purposely put down so we scuba fans can dive them. But there is something spiritual about diving a wreck that is there due to an unfortunate twist of fate.

In fact, a section of the Rhone is called the "cathedral" because the standing "ribs" of the hull give you the feeling of being in church and looking out through stained glass windows. Sunk in 1867, the crew of the Rhone (a 310' sailing vessel with steam driven cast propellers, a very unique ship at that time) saw bad weather coming. Captain Woolley took the ship out to sea to try to avoid it, but to his horror, they actually hit a hurricane head-on. The captain dropped the anchor in a effort to stabilize the ship, but the line broke which left the vessel to the mercy of the seas. When you're diving down on the wreck, you look up through the crystal waters and see the huge boulders of Black Point Rock off Salt Island, on which this helpless ship was continuously bashed. You say a silent prayer for the 120 lives lost on that faithful day, October 29th... Well over a century later, we get to marvel at the beautiful life that has spawned from that tragedy, and give thanks. Do put The Rhone on your diving "to-do" list. Come pay your respects to one of the world's greatest wreck dives.

Locally, Patti B had just a few hours to take her friend from Wisconsin out for a shallow dive. She says folks from Wisconsin are very easy to please; as long as the temperature of air or sea is above 40 degrees, they're in Heaven! So they went to 30 feet of water, dove in good visibility for about an hour, saw a nurse shark, hogfish, under-sized groupers, loads of nudibranchs, nice shells, two turtles on the surface and a family of dolphins. Everyone was thrilled!!

Have you been diving on the east coast lately?? Well call your dive operator first before you book! Rita was in West Palm Beach over the 4th of July weekend and the water is COLD!! There has been some strange up-welling of Atlantic water in the gulf stream which has caused extreme thermoclines! While the surface to below was running in the 80s, at just 20' above the reef that water was extremely cold! You could see the thermocline before you got to it, enough to just brace yourself. Rita popped through just long enough to see her temperature gauge drop down to 72 degrees. Not being a cold water diver, she popped back up again to the warmer water. Other divers did risk staying closer to the reef, and they reported temps of 67 degrees! This was July! What's happening?? Blame it on Mars! If you're looking for warmer east coast diving, go to Key Biscayne!

This is a beautiful area, south of Miami and north of Key Largo, that no one knows about. Flat seas, and healthy coral. The elkhorn coral here is the healthiest of all of Florida. Rita celebrated her 700th dive in these 84 degrees water.

We Seabunnies do have a life outside of diving and have been doing some "top-side" adventures too! Our annual Poker Run, held on June 10th, was hosted by Paula T and husband, Lee, of Crystal Beach., and a good time was had by all!! It began with a champagne breakfast, including hot waffles and strawberries, plus the first card toward our prize winning poker hands. With bellies full, we bladed, biked and walked the Pinellas Trail to Betty Tucker's home where we again feasted on tasty fare, and received another poker card. In our vain attempt to burn more calories than we consumed, we proceeded to Adrienne and Dave's for a brunch blowout. We slogged back for a final rendezvous at the Red Fish Blue Fish restaurant in Palm Harbor. Thank you to all our hostesses and hosts and by the by, kudos to Paula T for her stellar performance in the Dunedin Midnight Run on July 4th!

A returning, by popular demand., was another Pottery Painting Party. Eileen, Lisa S, Debbie, Peggy, Adrienne, Rita and friends all painted beautiful pottery on Aug 7th.. You didn't know we had such artists in our group, now did you?? Of course, some of the inspiration may have come from the fine wine we were consuming, but I'll never tell!!

Congratulations to Paula A! She had the tremendous opportunity to fly out to Scotland and compete in a world-wide bag-pipe tournament! Who would have thought our Greek Seabunnie would be a Champion bag-pipe player??!! We are all so proud of her!

Our Bonnie Board (competition) is quite full: Grouper: Lisa S - 8 lb, Lisa B - 10 lb, Lisa S - 12 lb, Sandie - 14 lb, Lynn - 14 lb, Mary T - 25 lb. Snapper: Lisa T - 2.5 lb, Mary T - 3.5 lb, Lisa B - 4 lb, Lynn - 4 lb. Hogfish: Lisa T - 2 lb, Lisa B - 4 lb, Lynn - 4.6 lb, Mary T - 8 lb, Lisa S - 12.5 lb. Amberjack / Cobia: Lisa T - 18 lb. Lobster: Lisa Tatro - 1 1/4 lb, Mary T - 4 lb.

Happy Birthday to Paula A. 9/9, Patti B. 8/21, Mary B. 10/27, Karen 7/30, Michelle 8/4, Cynthia

9/19, Eileen 7/1, Terry 7/1, Connie 8/12, Charlotte, 8/15, Tara 9/18, Gale 8/18, Mary T. 8/21, Paula T. 9/24.

We Seabunnies are LOOKING GOOD!-

Rita Fitzpatrick



The 2003 St. Pete Open

"The World's Largest Spearfishing Tournament"

Congratulations to all the participants of the 2002 St. Pete Open. We had over 300 shooters and participants who came from as far away as Alabama, Texas, South Carolina, and all over Florida. The following is a list of the First Place winners:

Grouper- Paul Renner 72.8 LBS Carbo
Snapper- Chad Palan 37.8 LBS Cubera
Amberjack- Sean Gucken 88.6 LBS *

*** New Tournament Record**

Hogfish- Scott Hooker 17.5 LBS
Cuda/Cobia- Dan Richards 31.0 LBS Cobia
Lobster- Rich Taylor 11.2 LBS
Sheepshead- David Shelton 7.5 LBS
Women's- Sheri Daye 43.2 Agg. Wt.
Junior's- Michael J. Penny 30.2 Agg. Wt

The 2003 Open went off without any problems! Yeah Right! Well it did go pretty smooth thanks to proper preparation and a good volunteer crew. There were many who went beyond the scope of volunteering and we want to say THANK YOU:

Bic Benedict the new **SPUC Apparel Chairman** and his lovely wife did a great job selling our 2003 cool looking T-shirts. **Ken Jones** stepped up and ran the sodas, coffee & donuts station. **Rickie Zacker** went out early and got the coffee. **Gerry Rice and Kissin Cuzzins** donated the coffee and did the brewing of the hot bev. **Paul Renner and Kissin Cuzzins** donated the ice and helped get all the volunteer's foods set up. **Dennis O'Hern** did a lot. From the waterproof box giveaways, to helping Bill Hardman's employees set up the Registration books, Dennis did it all when asked. And who can forget the work he did on our website – excellent jobaroooney!

Carrie Renner of Big Fish Apparel went beyond the scope and worked hard to get the artwork right and then to get it to everyone who needed it. **Michelle**
SPUCS (cont)

Taylor and her Sister once again they jumped in and helped out with the weigh-in. And she helped keep Rich sane during his Presidential tenure.

Diane Gardinal got everyone and everything covered with her new digital camera. **Frank McCallister**, fixed our past computer problems and the software worked great. **Joan Browder**, not only does she do almost everything in the registration arena, but she starts organizing our registration before anyone else starts to work on the St. Pete Open. And she even has to but up with our **Treasurer, Paul Kerr** on a daily basis -that's a tough job Joan – We love ya Joan - great job! **Paul Kerr**, you did such a good job buying prizes with Rich that we finally decided to let you sign the checks (ha, ha). Once again, **Vicki DeLaCruz** put together one great Power Point display at the Awards Ceremony. It's a lot of work. She puts it together after the weigh-in, while most of us are sleeping or drinking. We don't know how you did it but you topped last year's presentation. Super-terrific job! P.S. please help Bill Hardman out and volunteer to do it in 2004) please, please, please. O.K. I groveled enough! **Rich Taylor**, you worked hard and you led by example – good job Rich. **Bill Hardman**, you lazy bum, you did nothing. (Oh we forgot) we finally found a good use for your fast talking verbose style. New record – the Awards ceremony done in 2 hours and 5minutes. **Kip Ransom** and his tireless crew did a great job of weighing in fish and trying to be stern and just. **Isaac Lathrop, Dennis DeRouin and Kevin Schriver** worked hard to get jello & beer and other refreshments to the volunteers and the participants. Many

members got new advertisers this year and kept many of our original advertisers. God Job Goes Out To: **Dennis O'Hearn, Bob Dyer, Sam Jones, Paul Renner, Wayne Butts** and of course – **Jim Zumwalt!** Many others helped out and we all appreciate everyone's efforts.

Next Island Party-Oct. 4th

This party is free food and beverages to all 2003 St. Pete Open participants, advertisers, volunteers and helpers. Check out our site at: www.spearfishingspuc.org. for more details. P.S. You don't need a boat to get to the Island. We will have a water taxi service.

Winner of the 2003 "Please Come Get Me Award"

This is the first year that this award has been given. [Rescue me, I broke down, where is Paul Kerr?, he broke down! O.K. who's gonna get

him.] Well, now no one needs to get him. Paul Kerr won a one year membership to SEA TOW. This new award was given to Paul, because not only is it a pain to get him all the time, but he's our good ole buddy and we don't want him stranded. Congratulations Paul.

WCC Results

SPUCS won! Enough Said! They challenged us, we said O.K. and we went a shootin'. Seriously though, it was fun to compete with the other clubs. It was refreshing to see some new faces. Some new SEALS members showed up at every tournament, it was good to see some young feisty shooters jump in and shoot up every tournament. And some new SPUCS competed for the first time. The mixing of divers on different trips and on different days reminded me what these tournaments are all about. Competing for sure – but getting to know our fellow club members and those of the other clubs. Tom Morris and John Schmidt did a good job trying to manage the new rules and the new scoring format. Great Job Guys!

Submitted By: Fiesty SPUC



REEF ROWDIES

The Rowdies shuffled the deck and dealt out the new officers for the 2003-2004 year. The winners are: **President: Sonia Smith, Vice President: Ed Zuranski, Secretary: Pat Fredette, and Treasurer: Lori Smith.** A royal flush for sure! The rest of the winning game players are: **Competition: Steve & Ruth Kisco, Safety: Bobbie Jo Roe, Hospitality: Eileen Miller and Editor of our internet home page: Ed Zuranski.**

I think we need to make Jon Lynn our official photographer for the club. Although you can see most of his shots of our shark tooth dive on our web page, you should ask him (or us) to show you the photo CD disk he graciously passed out complete with music. Thanks Jon.

As tradition with the Rowdies, we have two raffle drawings on election night – one for the tickets that evening and our final grand finale raffle drawing of the year. The bouncing box of tickets popped out the night's raffle winner: **Sonia Smith.** Wow! Well I knew I better not do the big drawing the same way or they would all lynch me, so I had one of them draw out that magic ticket. The winnnnnneeeer is – **Sonia Smith!!** What can I say? (That helped pay for a new pair of split fins!)

Come join our club – the odds are way against me winning again next year.

There were two big trips taken since our last article. The Isla Mia lured Pat Fredette, Ernie Sigmon and Christine to the Bahamas. The weather was great, nice and calm after all the storms we had here, and this year they stayed an extra day going to another island further south with a great wall for crystal clear diving. I could add a comment about the snoring contest, but I wouldn't do that – would I?

Everyone enjoyed the great food as usual and lots of excellent diving. I hear that some of the Bunnies who went found some really nice shells too.

Turtles everywhere, all sizes of spotted morays, many lobsters with one “brazen bloke out strolling” mocking us - safe before the season began, beautiful live coral and even two nurse sharks bunking together under a ledge - what a treat! Bobbie Jo Roe, Lori Smith and Sonia Smith went to West Palm Beach for a three-tank day of diving 6/28. After all the rain we had, we left with a prayer that the trip wouldn't be in vain and our prayers were answered by excellent weather and a great dive operation with Koller's Reef. I really enjoy drift diving and the current was just right to make easy diving and not too much struggle if you wanted to turn back for that special photo.

We added a trip to “City Place” for dinner and “up-scale” window shopping. Then we decided an Air Boat ride would be another special treat at the Loxahatchee Everglades on the way home. Unfortunately with the high water, the gators we wanted to see were hiding more in the grasses. Quite a weekend!

Key Largo diving has been postponed until 9/05 - hoping that no hurricanes sweep close by.

Keep in touch – we are on the web! <http://home1.gte.net/bgedz>

Let's Get Wet, Sonia

