

# THE SEPTEMBER 05 BULLETIN

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**SEABUNNIES**

### **Summer With the Seabunnies!!**

**Here we go again! Another summer and it's a blowin' !! We have hurricanes and a horrible case of red tide! Sure has limited our diving and beach fun! But our Bunnies persevered and had some good times!**

**Peggy Gatliff organized a Shark Tooth Dive with Florida West Scuba School in Venice on the Hammerhead boat off Venice Beach. Lisa B, Peggy, Tony, Tony's niece and two kids, Frank Pernicano, and Dave Butler were aboard for four hours in the water fanning the gravel for megladon teeth, dugong ribs, tiger shark teeth, and ear bones.**

**Mark Renz from Fossil Expeditions came along and added to the information of their finds, but the best find of all was the "Suntan Terrace" on Nokomis Beach where Adrienne, Debbie Pernicano, Vicky Jensen, and Scott, Trevor, and Derek Boing were found! Not to mention their pack of doggies! They actually had a drum circle at sunset and belly dancers and crowds of people gathered for the celebration of the setting sun. The best spent money was on the new blender with a spiket for margaritas at the tiki bar! Thank you Gatliffs.**

Since we all love east coast diving, trip leader, Deb Holtz put together a great plan for the upper Keys. Despite a well organized trip, our group of eleven Bunnies and their guests watched as Hurricane Dennis approached the Keys that weekend. As a last ditch effort, Lisa Tatro and Lisa Boing headed out at 2am Thursday morning from Pinellas County to Key Largo and caught an 8am charter on the Scuba Doo to the 510-foot Speigel Grove wreck before the hurricane came.

As both of them pulled down the buoy lines, the current was ripping, but Lisa T. managed to get down to 80 feet, camera in hand, and wrapped her legs around the wheel house to take a few shots. The ship was an awesome sight as Lisa B. stayed at 50 feet to inspect the plaque giving honor to those who helped sink this large, yet laying on its side, artificial wreck. Huge schools of black grouper swam in the deep blue catching a bite of bait.

Lisa B. got in one more much easier dive on the Benwood wreck and taking photos of a couple of sharks and a large midnight blue parrot fish milling around. Upon getting back to the boat, they both passed on an afternoon dive as the lack of sleep and breakfast, combined with Dennis's wrath was upon them.

When they returned to the Ocean Suites, Mary Bergin had arrived and they took in some sushi before retiring at a lovely condo on the water. Mary diligently hit the homework and while the Lisas indulged in some early naps.

25 mph wind from Hurricane Dennis made diving on Friday impossible so Mary headed back up Route 1 while the Lisas made the most of the slow moving hurricane and took in some shopping and a couple of tiki bars on the way home. When life hands you a lemon – make a margarita!

On Monday, Lisa B.'s husband come in to to her he had heard that the Speigel Grove had uprighted. She didn't believe it until she found it on the internet! It was true!

The minute Rita heard the Speigel Grove was upright, she was frantically calling all her favorite dive shops in Key Largo. Even though the dive site was closed for a short time – authorities wanted to make sure the ship was stable – all dive operations were booked solid for diving on it. Finally, Rita was able to secure two spots on a six-pack. But only to her horror, when she called the day before leaving to check on sea conditions, she found out the dive operator booked her for the wrong weekend!! Rita was afraid if she didn't dive the wreck now, it was gonna' tip back over to its side and she will have missed it!! So that operator found another six-pack boat who just happened to have a cancellation! The "Dual Porpoise" was booked for Saturday afternoon on the Grove. Relieved, they set out for the keys!

The boat ride out to the Grove on Saturday was calm, exchanging dive stories with some good ol' boys from Georgia who do mostly cavern diving. Rita talked about the dozen (or so) dives she has already dove on the sideways Speigel Grove. But an upright Speigel Grove is a whole different dive they were all looking forward to doing. The Dual Porpoise pulled up to the bow mooring line and the current was ripping. They had to hold on to the line as they jumped off the boat. Hand over hand down the mooring line trying to conserve air in the ripping current and get down as fast as they could. Then down to 50' and looking – where's the wreck? Sure enough, there behind them – was a standing Speigle Grove – it didn't even look like the same wreck! The wreck is much deeper now with the deck starting at about 79'. Experts say the reason it stood up is while it was on it's side, the currents caused a ridge in the sand beneath it, where they tied lines in a previous attempt to try to upright it. With the shifting currents and strong tides caused by Hurricane Dennis, the Grove just nestled itself into that ridge and snuggled itself in an upright position. It is definitely a different dive, as Rita didn't even recognize it when she got down! They checked out the front compartments, before going around the side, going in and finding the hallway that goes down the length of the main deck. This wreck was originally set up to be sunk upright and all their preparations are still there. The guidelines down the hallways are intact. The rooms are clean for good exploring. Keep in mind debris shifted so some stuff is hanging down and some passageways lead to dead ends. Rita used up all her bottom time inside the forward main deck. The next day, Sunday morning, she was booked with another dive operation for another go-around on the Grove. This boat was late getting to the Grove and sure enough there were numerous boats already on the wreck. They dive operation was so upset that the only open mooring

was the stern, and it is much deeper than the bow. Rita was happy since she dove the bow the day before. This time, no current and the line down to the wreck was easy going. They finally reach the landing dock at the stern and were already at 100'. The ease of diving this vast open area was much appreciated as the viz was beam to beam (about 80'). The cranes crossed over top and were an excellent photo opportunity as they were covered in growth. They worked their way around as much as they could at that depth, but it wasn't until they made it midship and found the bronze plaque dedicated to the organizers of this artificial reef. Now, Rita finally believed it was the same dive!! She highly recommends booking a dive trip to this wreck as soon as you can!!

Mary T wasn't gonna' let red tide get her down. She took off and dove the Middle Grounds one week. It was good to see clear blue water with lots of American Red Snappers, Hogfish, Grouper, and AJs. All is alive and well in the Grounds and, as always, everything was big. She came back with lots of fish. Groupers weighed 15 to 20 lbs each, Hogs 10 to 15 lbs each, Snappers 6 to 12 lbs each, and AJs 10 to 25 lb

In between hurricanes, Rita took off for the Caribbean. Even though Rita has been to the Cayman Islands numerous times, this was her first time staying and diving the East End. The diving on that side is outstanding! Just picture the complex walls that you find in Cozumel, combine that with pristine coral found in Bonaire, and the visibility of Cayman waters - that's what diving the east end is all about! Because that part of the island is so off the beaten path, there is only one dive operation, Ocean Frontiers, <http://www.oceanfrontiers.com> specifically dedicated there. So when you're diving, it's just your group in the water (unlike the crowded waters of Cozumel). The walls were fantastic with canyons, tunnels, swim-thrus, arches, all dropping off to 6000'+. Unfortunately, she didn't have camera (technical problems) but the photography opportunities were superb! Even the shallow second dives were phenomenal - exploring tunnels filled with schooling tarpon!

She stayed at a 2bedroom/2bath oceanfront condo at Compass Point. The dive boat was docked below and she just had to walk out of the condo wearing swimsuit and step on the boat. The gear was already on and set up. They even provided the towels! After leisurely diving, she just walked off the boat! They took care of her gear - washing, storing it and bringing it back on the boat the next day! This was a true vacation! The water temp was a consistent 82 degrees. Seas were flat.

Remember, Grand Cayman was severely hit by a Class 5 Hurricane Ivan last September. We all saw the pictures of what a Class 4 Hurricane Charlie did to Punta Gorda and elsewhere in Florida. And you know that the whole island of Grand Cayman was closed to visitors for months after Hurricane Ivan. Well, I'm happy to report -- the island doesn't look too bad considering what it's been through!! I'm not going to make light of it -- there is damage -- many hotels are still closed and will be for some time (all construction materials have to be shipped in). But most hotels are all up and running! Seven mile beach is as beautiful as ever! The turtle farm is fine and "Hell" is still there! Downtown Georgetown still bustles with tourists (there were four mega-cruise ships when I was there). The roads are cleared, but you will still see fallen trees throughout the land. All debris have been hauled off to landfills (remember Hurricane Andrew??) but those areas are in the interior and fenced off.

What surprised her was the villages. Most all the locals' homes were fine - maybe a little roof patch-up here and there. But the huge mansions were a different story! You know multi-millionaires like to hide their money in Cayman, they also like to built huge mansions there too. It was astonishing that they would spend all that money to built these 8,000+ sq feet vacation homes, but not install hurricane glass or shutters! I'd drive down the road and see these enormous homes that were perfectly intact, except that ALL the windows were blown out! The roofs, columns, all exterior were fine - but the interior is lost because of cheap windows! Not very smart!

She is happy to report -- all the reefs are fine. But the diving remains fantastic! If you haven't made your vacation plans for this year, or you're thinking about next year - think about the East End.

The SeaBunnies had their 5th Wednesday get together at Rusty Bellies. It was a *great* get together with 25 Seabunnies and friends!

We welcome our newest Sea Bunny Member Claire Mulcahy! Lisa Tatro brought Claire to her third function at our latest fifth Wednesday, and we voted her in. Lisa B has been hard at promoting the Seabunnies club and enticing new members and getting former members to get active again. This has been a great year so far!

Upcoming events are a fossil expedition again with Mark Renz. More details to follow at our meetings, on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday each month.

**BUNNIE BOARD:**

**GROUPER**

|             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| Lisa Tatro  | 6.1 lbs |
| Lynn Jones  | 6.5 lbs |
| Mary Taylor | 50 lbs  |

**HOGFISH**

|             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| Mary Taylor | 3.5 lbs |
| Lisa Tatro  | 5 lbs   |

**SNAPPER**

|             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| Lisa Tatro  | 3.2 lbs |
| Mary Taylor | 5.3 lbs |

**SHEEPSHEAD / TRIGGERFISH/ FLOUNDER**

|            |                |       |
|------------|----------------|-------|
| Lisa Tatro | (Trigger Fish) | 2 lbs |
|------------|----------------|-------|

**AMBERJACK / BARRACUDA / COBIA**

|             |    |        |
|-------------|----|--------|
| Mary Taylor | AJ | 18 lbs |
|-------------|----|--------|

**LOBSTER**

|             |               |       |
|-------------|---------------|-------|
| Mary Taylor | (Slipper Lob) | ¾ lb. |
| Lisa Tatro  | (Slipper Lob) | ¾ lb. |

**SAVE OUR SEAS**

|                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Mary Taylor      | - Total points = 1  |
| Lisa Tatro       | - Total points = 3  |
| Lisa Boing       | - Total points = 5  |
| Rita Fitzpatrick | - Total points = 14 |



**SPUCS**

**The 2005 St. Pete Open  
"The World's Largest Spearfishing Tournament"**

**Congratulations to all the participants of the 2005 St. Pete Open! We had 250 shooters and participants who came from all over Florida and many parts of the country to be a part of the tournament. Several legends of the sport including Jay Riffe and Ditmar Biller came from as far as California to be a part of this years event.**

**We even had a reporter from one of the largest European spearfishing magazines fly all the way from Greece to cover the story!**

**The following is a list of the first place winners:**

**Grouper- Chris Hill- 91.2 lbs**  
**Snapper- Chad Palan- 18.1**  
**Amberjack- Ken Jones- 82.7**  
**Hogfish- Douglas Strott, Sr.- 16.7**  
**Cuba/Cobia- Jeff Steele- 54.3**  
**Lobster- James Ravioli- 8.8**  
**Sheephead- John Hermes- 7.6**

**Freediver's- Chad Palan-130.3 points**  
**Women's- Sheri Daye- 44.3 agg.wt**  
**Junior's- Gina Hedrick- 31.8 agg wt**

**The 2005 St. Pete Open went off without any problems! Well Almost! Well it did go pretty smooth thanks to preparation and a great volunteer crew. There were so many who went beyond the scope of volunteering and we want to give a HUGE THANKS to all of them! We would also like to thank our very generous sponsors who helped make the 40th annual tournament a huge success!**

**As usual, the 2005 St. Pete Open was full of big fish stories and the stories of the one's that got away. What tournament wouldn't be great without big fish stories? Some of the stories that were told were of people going out more than 100 miles by boat trying to get a big fish. Some people driving across the state trying to find their top fish and one guy that drove 30 minutes from his house and walked to his spot and was done by 8:15 in the morning and claimed a glass trophy. I heard that he got to the tiki hut at noon to start some early drinking activities.**

**For the second year in a row the St. Pete Open had another world record fish shot in it. Last year a world record mangrove snapper was shot during the tournament and this year it was a monster black margate that Gary Sanchez shot. Way to go Gary!! Sundays award presentation was heavily attended and saw the distribution of nearly 50 thousand dollars worth of trophies, prizes and gift certificates!**

**The St. Pete Underwater Club also raffled off the St. Pete Open's original artwork painted by famed wildlife artist Thomas Krause on Sunday and gave all the proceeds to the Fishing Rights Alliance to help promote and defend the rights of all spearfisherman.**

**In addition, the new tournament location at the Holiday Inn Sunspree resort, near the Skyway bridge proved to be an outstanding new venue for both the tournament and the competitors. Many participants turned the event into mini vacations as the resort was filled to near capacity with competitors and their families. Now that we have the kinks worked out of our new tournament location, expect next years tournament to be even bigger and better!**

**Next Island Party-?**

**This party is free food and beverages to all 2005 St. Pete Open participants, advertisers, volunteers and helpers. Check out our site at: [www.spearfishingspuc.org](http://www.spearfishingspuc.org) for date and time.**

**P.S. You don't need a boat to get to the island. We will have a water taxi service.**

**New SPUC Officers for 2005 and 2006**

**President: Dennis O'Hern**  
**Vice-President: Scott Hooker**  
**Secretary: Ritchie Zacker**



### SUNCOAST REEF ROWDIES

Competition time is here! We have been preparing since August 1, 2004 through the end of this month – September 30, 2005. We are a diverse group and not everyone competes in everything. We have Shells, Fossils, Spearfishing, Man-made artifacts, Save our Seas and Photography categories.

We really haven't made a big group effort for the "save-our-seas" category – this is one we could improve on guys!!

What great finds will be entered with the fossils found in the water of the Brandon Shell Pit, diving off Venice, or the Peace River. Our first trip to go to the Peace River had to be abandoned because the water was too high – so plan "B" - off to the Brandon Shell Pit we went. We make an interesting group in all kinds of sun gear. Bunnies joined us on this one. I know Pat found a nice horse tooth.

Shells we find all over from the Gulf to the Bahamas. UNGH – you have to clean them up.

Red tide was devastating this year. This certainly affected the spearfishing. It killed everything in its path. Steve and Ruth will have some entries, I'm sure. They have reported mass killing of everything from Goliath Grouper to crabs and coral. It is terrible.

This year we will see how the new photography rules for competition have worked out. What's new this year? It's the expansion of digital photography from one small category to designating digital as a type of photography along side of 35mm photographs. Rowdies have been taking pictures all over: we went to crystal river with the manatees, Ginnie Springs in the caves/caverns, drift diving over to Boynton Beach, and of course, out in the Gulf. (Lori and Ed are going to Boynton Beach a second time this month – what a time for me to get a virus that won't go away!) I'm sure there will be some Southern Open Derby photos entered and Pat's Isla Mia trip to the Bahamas in July this year offered many great "photo ops." Some of us have had other trips that might yield photo entries also. You can just do "top side" if underwater isn't possible. Almost all of us enter photos.

Judging for all but the Photography will be in October – the suspense goes until our December Holiday and Awards Banquet to see all those winning photo entries.

If you are interested in any of these activities – join us. If you just want to dive with a family oriented group – join us. If you want to have a dive/travel related program each month – join us. We are a really nice group of people – join us!

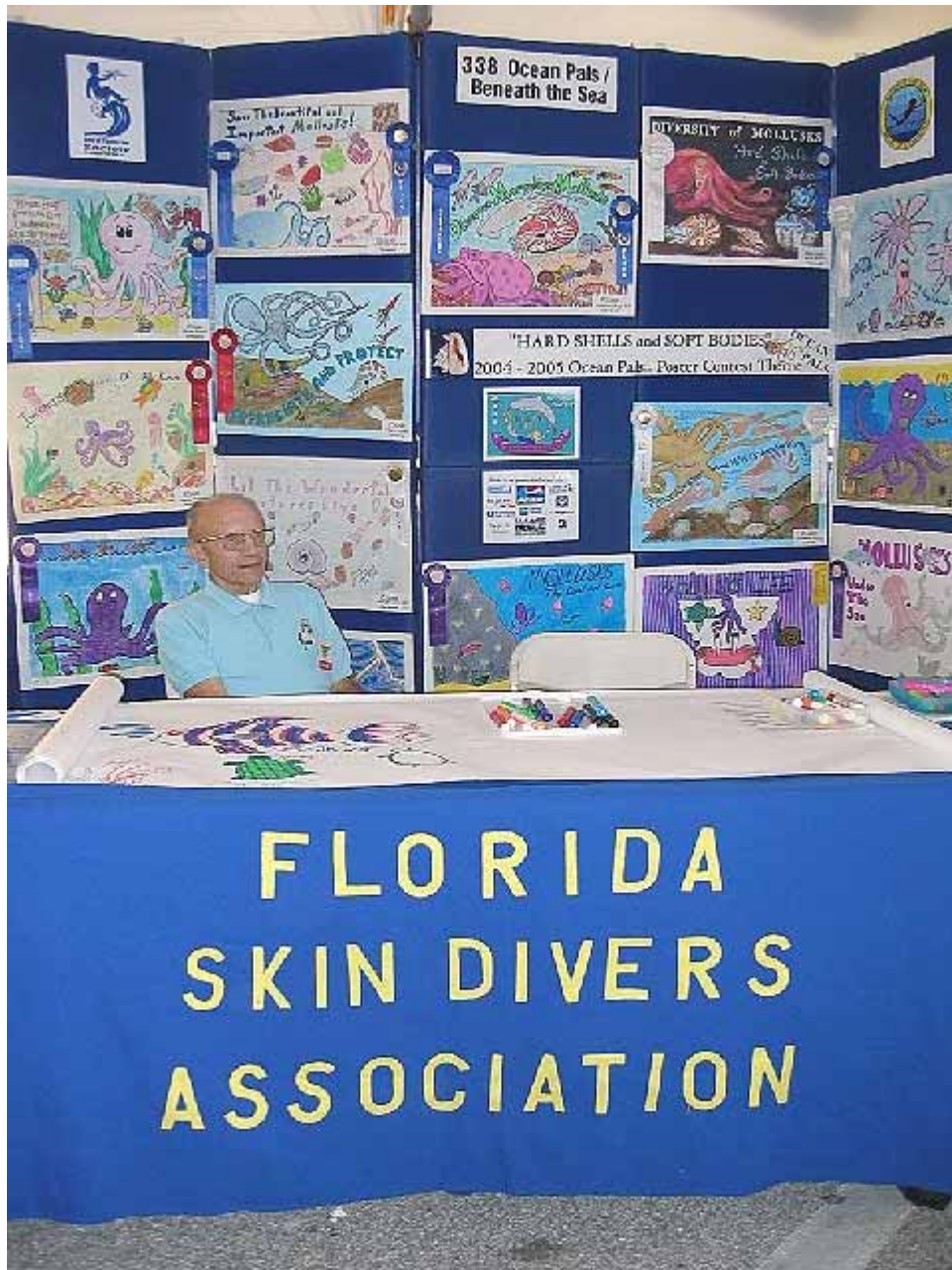
Let's get wet!  
Sonia

### OCEAN PALS 04/05

The following photos are of the Ocean Pals Poster Contest for 2005. Sonia and Ken Smith coordinate this affair for the FSDA. The photos were taken by Sonia. The event was held in Ft Lauderdale.



**KEN SMITH AND ARTIST GUY HARVEY**





1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE NATIONAL - 1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE FLORIDA  
GRADES 3-5 CHELSEA MARIE HILL -CLERMONT



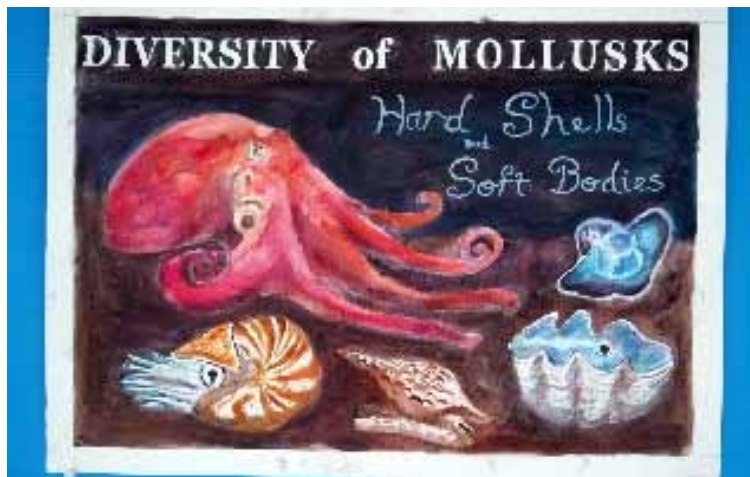
1<sup>ST</sup> NATIONAL - 1<sup>ST</sup> FLORIDA  
GRADES 6-8 ADRIANE PAGE HILL - CLERMONT



1<sup>ST</sup> NATIONAL - 1<sup>ST</sup> FLORIDA  
GRADES K-2 PEYTON NEWELL -GRANT



**3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE NATIONAL - 3<sup>RD</sup> FLORIDA  
GRADES 6-8 SUZANNAH BEINER - SEBRING**



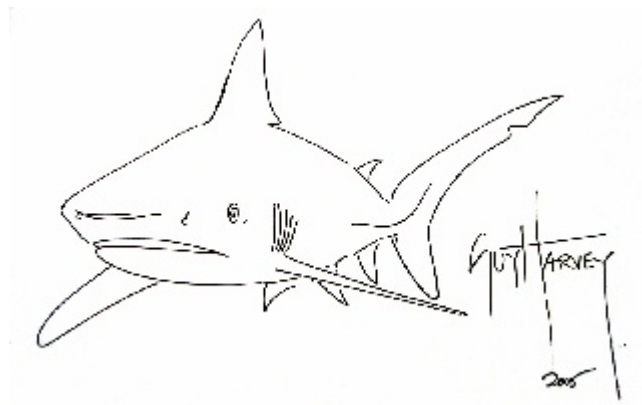
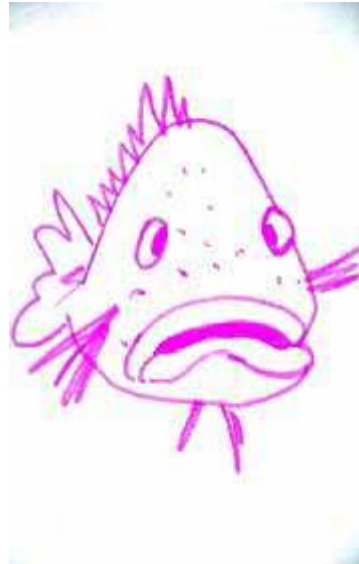
**3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE NATIONALS - 3<sup>RD</sup> FLORIDA  
GRADES 9-12 CARRIE HUNTER - PENSACOLA**



**3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE NATIONALS - 3<sup>RD</sup> FLORIDA  
GRADES K-2 EMMA Di PAOLO - MELBOURN**



**PATRICK CHEVAILLER**





RYAN ALEXANDER

A great Learning  
Activity — as an  
Art teacher I really  
learned to appreciate  
the Wonder of Mollusks  
Keep Up the Good  
Public Relations  
Fabrizio  
Fiorini  
11/10/11