

THE SEPTEMBER 06 BULLETIN



SEABUNNIES

Lisa B turned over the gavel to Deb Holtz the year to head the Seabunnies. Lisa did an outstanding job injecting a lot of "fun" into our group! Deb is continuing on and offering a lot of diving for our members. We've changed our meeting place and time. Now an hour earlier at 7:00p on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at Johnny's Italian Restaurant, 2907 State Road 590 # 1, Clearwater, FL 33759 (South side of 590, Between 19 and McMullen). The meetings are great - good food, good wine, and good company! Lisa is updating our website - check us out: http://www.divefsda.com/Sea_Bunnies.htm

The first Seabunnie dive of the year, May 6th, was on Mike Yagman's boat diving in 62 degree water! Ouch! But everyone had fun!

The Seabunnies welcome our newest member - MaryBeth Welch - Joined in June 06. And she immediately signed up for the Boynton Beach dive in June.

Mary T is our "fish" as she is rarely out of water. She reports that local Gulf waters from Egmont Key to North Clearwater are pristine! It's some of the very best local summer spearfishing she has experienced in years. Clean blue water at 70 feet and deeper. Shallower diving is almost as good. Lot's of fish activity on the reefs and wrecks. The Bait Fish action on the ledges equals big Grouper & Snapper. Most Hogfish are small..... please let them grow. The Gulf water temperatures now are about 87 degrees, very comfortable wearing a skin. She is also happy to report that she is starting to see live shells! Hallelujah!!! She is leaving them to propagate and states after last year's major Red Tide kill, she will not be collecting any live shells again.

Lynn J has been diving quite a bit and reporting good fish! She even "caught" an anchor for her "Save Our Seas" entry. Keep it up Lynn! Many Seabunnies participated in the Southern Open Derby! Winners were Sandy C and Lisa S for spearfishing and Lisa T, Rita F, and Deb H for photos.

Rita took off for another exotic location for her birthday in March. She and John flew on "the world's longest commercial non-stop flight" on Singapore Airlines from Newark to Singapore (via the north pole) for 18 hours 45 minutes. She was numb from the flight, but reports service is excellent and bags arrived intact! Singapore is a beautiful country, a very contemporary city, very ahead of it's time. Magnificent food and shopping and everybody who drives, drives either a Maserati or Lamborghini! After a couple of days enjoying the high life (eating "drunken shrimp" and drinking Singapore Slings), they flew to Tioman Island for a few days of diving. Tioman belongs to Malaysia, but is off the coast of Singapore. It was the setting for the supposedly mythical magical island of Bali Hai from the 1958 Hollywood movie 'South Pacific'. In the 70s the Time magazine selected Tioman

as one of the world's most beautiful islands. Other than the airport area, there are no roads on the island. The coastal villages are connected by a sidewalk - literally - and islanders either walk or bike from village to village. The "resorts" are just small groupings of "chalets" - little wooden buildings with a bed and bath, and if you're lucky - an air conditioner! You climb the stairs to go to the restaurant built up in the trees. A very unique island! Diving was superb! 75' visibility, no currents, flat seas. The underwater topography was mostly large boulders covered with hard and soft corals. The boulder formations offered great swim-thrus and unexpected creatures inside. They saw many giant clams, huge seafans, clownfish, unicornfish, black tip sharks, and even a small coral cat shark was spotted on a night dive. Excellent diving!

Mary T and friends went up to the quaint little town of Steinhatchee for scalloping. Scallops were not as plentiful as previous years, but they were good eating! You'll have to ask her what they did when the boat ran out of gas! Fun story!

There's a new wreck in town, and of course, Rita had to dive it. The 888' long decommissioned aircraft carrier, The Oriskany, was sunk 27 miles off the coast of Pensacola this past May, and by July 4th, Rita was celebrating her 800 logged dive on it. After years of preparations and numerous clearances, the ship was laid to rest at 212' and much fanfare. This is undoubtedly Pensacola's newest tourist attraction. See article: <http://www.pensacolajournal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060709/NEWS01/607090332&SearchID=73250232647971>

The tower of the ship is at 60-70' with the flight deck at 145'. You can safely dive this wreck and stay down a good length of time just exploring the tower. This ship was thoroughly cleaned for penetration and you can swim through all the rooms and look at all the equipment. The vis was 50' that day and 76 degree water, quite comfortable with her new 5mm suit! Rita did bounce down to the flight deck and beyond, only to be teased because there is so much ship down there! But the depth is not for the foolish! You must plan your dive and dive your plan! Pensacola is an 8+ hour drive from Tampa/St. Pete, but this ship is well worth the effort. There are numerous websites that talk about it's history, and you actually feel it when you descend on the dive and are greeted by the American Flag flowing on it's beam. This wreck makes a memorable entry in your dive log and you should make plans for a visit soon!

Adrienne and Dave went down to the Keys to do some lobstering, and found themselves in the middle of a Poker Run for the Keys Bike Week! They were probably the only people without a motorcycle that week! But they caught a ton of lobsters!

Out of the water, the club has been keeping up the "Fifth Wednesday" tradition! Eileen hosted a healthy cooking class teaching our Seabunnies some scrumptious dishes! Tara, Lisa B, Charlotte, Rita and Paula "toasted nuts and pinched tails" and drank wine! By the end of the evening, our ladies sat down to a wonderful dinner consisting of Tropical Salad, Shrimp Butler over Pasta, Steamed Broccoli and Light Cheese Cake Parfait. Thanks Eileen!

Paula T and hubby Lee live near the water in Crystal Beach and hosted a "Green Flash Party" on the Fifth Wednesday in August. Even though a hurricane was hovering nearby, Seabunnies and friends enjoyed a beautiful sunset over the gulf. Many photos were taken to try to catch the "green flash." Fun was had by all!

Sally hosted a meeting at her house and we viewed her underwater Red Sea photos from a few years back. Sally is a magnificent photographer able to capture the true beauty of the area. We all want to dive the Red Sea now!

Upcoming events include the annual “Casinoween” party, hosted by Adrienne this year. It’s a murder-mystery theme: “The Munsters & Adam’s Family in Las Vegas.” We will all be in character ready to solve the murder! Sounds like great fun!

BUNNIE BOARD

FISH / LOBSTER

<u>Fish Category</u>	<u>Weight in pounds</u>
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Grouper

Lisa Schmidt	12.02
Lynn Jones	14.2
Lisa Tatro	15.0
Eileen Morris	16.5
Mary Taylor	32.8

Hogfish

Lisa Tatro	2.1
Lisa Schmidt	7.0
Mary Taylor	14.0
Lynn Jones	16.4

Snapper

Lisa Tatro	3.6
Lynn Jones	4.0
Lisa Schmidt	4.04
Mary Taylor	17.8

Sheepshead / Triggerfish/ Flounder

Lisa Tatro - Sheepshead	2.75
Lynn Jones - Triggerfish	3.4
Lisa Schmidt – Triggerfish	3.98
Mary Taylor - Triggerfish	4.8

Amberjack / Barracuda / Cobia

Mary Taylor	- AJ	16.8
Lisa Schmidt	- AJ	25.56

Lobster

Mary Taylor	2.8
Lisa Tatro	3.0
Lynn Jones	3.8

SAVE OUR SEAS

Entries are in Points

Lisa Schmidt

Anchor	4
2 spear shafts	2
Total Points = 6	

Rita Fitzpatrick

Fishing Line	1
Clothes Pin	1
1 beer can	1
1 Two pound dive weight	1
1 Fishing Line	1
1 Hook	1
1 Sinker	1
2 more beer cans	2
Total points = 9	

Lisa Tatro

50' of shredded ship tow rope	4
25 green balloons in a group	3
Olympus digital camera in housing	2
Total Points = 9	

Mary Taylor

Deflated party balloon with 4 ft of ribbon	1
Spear Shaft	1
Pepsi Can	1

3 spear shafts	3
Boat Hook w/ long wooden handle	3
Dive Fin (XXX Large)	3
Fishing net w/ handle	2
Total points = 14	

Lynn Jones

Fortress Anchor	4
Tin can	1
Glass Bottle	1
Boogie Board	4
Four weights (1 point each)	4
2 aluminum cans	2
Spear band with wish bone	1
6 foot raft	3
Another 6 foot raft	3
Total points = 23	



SPUCS

**The 2006 St.Pete Open
"The World Spearfishing Championships"**

Congratulations to all the participants of the 2006 St.Pete Open! We had one of our largest tournaments ever with the one of the richest prize table's ever seen. There was almost \$60,000 of prize's, trophies, and gift certificates. You know its good when theres \$50 prize's left after everyone already picked.

Congratulations to the following first place winners.

- Grouper- John Schmidt- 78.86 lbs**
- Snapper- Julian Cruz- 16.98**
- Amberjack- Rick Hampton- 94.94 tournament record**
- Hogfish- Doug Strott,Jr- 16.24**
- Cobia- Sasa Bratic- 30.24**
- Lobster- John Hermes- 7.6**
- Sheepshead- Ritchie Zacker- 11.64 tournament record**

Freediver's- Nole Karcher- 49 points
Women's- Sandy Curran- 34.2 agg.wt
Junior's- Tom Nahon- 33.8 agg.wt

The 2006 St.Pete Open was banging!! With the new stage added for all to see all the big one's weighed in and watch Scott Weber hoist monster after monster for one heck of a show. Everything went really smooth thanks to preparation and a great volunteer crew. We would like to give a HUGE thanks to all that volunteered and gave some sweat and blood to make the 41st St.Pete Open one of the best. Also without the very generous sponsors. It couldn't be great. Thanks you to all.

As usual the SPO was full of big fish stories and everyone saw a large amount of big grouper and amberjack brought in. For the second time in St.Pete Open history two tournament records were broken. Rick Hampton came in with a monster 94.94 lb amberjack to claim one of the new records and Ritchie Zacker came to the scale's with a enormous 11.64 lb sheepshead breaking a 34 year old record by 2.51 lbs. Wow!!! Ritchie also was part of the winning U.S National Freediving Spearfishing Team down in Pompano Beach in July. After 20 years of hunting for his first trophy in the SPO. John Schmidt brought in the winning grouper not only to end his streak of non glass SPO tournaments but was also crowned world champion with the overall top fish. Way to go John.

Next Island Party-?

This party is free food and beverages to all the 2006 St.Pete Open participants, advertisers, volunteers and helpers. Check out our site at www.spearfishingspuc.org for a 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 2006 and 2007

President: Scott Hooker
Vice- President: Ritchie Zacker
Secretary: Howie Scarboro



ROWDIES

It's hard to believe that autumn is here, with the 90 degree weather hanging on. My northern friends tell me the leaves of green are about to burst into the awesome crimson & gold that we don't get to see down here! Are you longing for a "changing seasons" trip?? Maybe that only happens to us "transplants".

How about that SOD!! Along with all of the hard working people behind the scenes that make this contest a reality, we would like to commend our own Rowdies: Ken Smith, FSDA Treasurer, and Joe Pizano, computer programmer. Their hours of work go way

beyond the actual hours of the contest and award ceremonies. A BIG Thanks, guys! Rowdies always enter the Shutter Open part of the SOD and want to thank all of the sponsors for all of the great prizes donated for the contest.

Pat Friedette did it again! She won the Rowdies big grand prize drawing held each July. Congratulations, Pat. (She won in 2004 also – I don't know how many other ones.) This big drawing is held on officer election night . . .aaAAAND THE WINNERS ARE: (drum roll) . . . President: Sonia Smith, Vice President: Ed Zuranski, Secretary: Pat Fredette, and Treasurer: Lori Smith. Thanks for all your dedication guys!!

Can you visualize your favorite boat? Well, I have a special spot in my heart for the Main Squeeze! Every time I hear that name, beautiful visions come of my first experiences diving after moving to Florida - the long, lazy relaxing diving with great friends. Thanks, Mike - the Squeeze is my favorite boat!

Ed Z. went on that last Squeeze trip also. His goal was “to bring ‘em back alive”! Tropicals are his game of choice. He was a successful big game hunter and with his technique he did bring them back alive. You need to remember they are shy and don't get frustrated and resort to chasing them into your net – patient coaxing works and without the stress they survive so much longer!

Bobbie Jo had quite an exciting adventure kayaking amongst chunks of ice (Yes, ICE) from the Columbia glacier, the second largest tidewater glacier in Alaska. She says the scenery was pastoral as they paddled along forested shores with chunks of ice in the surprisingly clear water. She was advised never to paddle into anything but the smallest pieces of “brash” (small pieces) ice as the hidden bottom may be 5 times greater than what you see on top. It would be possible to tip the kayak gliding over some of the ice chunks – a very cold dunking! “I have never seen blue of the intensity we witnessed in these floating chunks of ice that surrounded us - what a thrill! You don't know which way to look or point your camera as you are surrounded on all sides by this magnificent sight.”

We didn't go diving in China & Tibet last May but it certainly was a great trip in the upper altitude. With Chinese food, a great slide show (compacted to a mere 30 minutes) and with soothing Chinese music for background the Rowdies had an evening of enjoyment in September. Of course that left leftover Chinese food to eat for a week!!!

I wish to thank the FSDA for the Special Achievement plaque awarded to me at the SOD Awards Ceremony. Thank you again.

Meetings the 1st Tuesday 8 PM at Dixie Hollins High School
And the 3rd Tuesday we have a social meeting at chosen restaurants
Call 727-522-8276

Let's get wet!
Sonia