



Anne Judge, Membership Director
 The Scuba Sports Club
 2 Pine Mountain Road
 DANBURY CT 06810

September Meeting

8:00 pm, Wed, September 10

Robert Schragger and
 Peter Riekstins

present their

Adventures in

Bali and Komodo

at

Whitby Castle Restaurant

at the Rye Golf Club
 330 Boston Post Road
 Rye, NY

See page 7 for more details.

Sea Swells

LOG

The monthly
 newsletter of
 The Scuba
 Sports Club

September 2003

the anchor line

The Competition Within



President
 Soliman
 Shenouda

"Once you accept second place when first place is achievable, you will live it the rest of your life."

This phrase always comes to my mind when I start a challenging new project or assignment. The effort ahead can easily dampen enthusiasm, the burden of the many tasks involved can lull the zeal, and one can easily be contented with second, third or even last place.

But what keeps enthusiasm alive and regenerates energy is love of the work and the support of colleagues. A shared team desire for excellence is the road to first place.

In recent years we have faced some difficulties in the club. Declines in membership, reduced member participation in club activities, and low attendance at general meetings were clear symptoms that called for major changes in management.

In response, we first defined a vision for the club. Our vision is an imaginary club that meets or exceeds members' expectations.

Second, we translated this vision into goals. These goals were

- Relocation to a nicer place that provides a suitable meeting area and is located within the I-287 corridor;
- Interesting, well-known speakers for the monthly meetings, planned well in advance;
- A dive schedule tailored to members' interests;
- A newsletter with interesting, informative topics and regular monthly columns;
- A variety of social programs that are affordable for the whole family;
- Educational presentations and workshops on dive safety to increase awareness and safe behavior;
- Increased social interaction among TSSC members, particularly new members;
- Stronger public relations to rebuild club membership; and
- A balanced budget.

Your club officers and directors are pursuing these goals. This year is not easy for them. These tasks require harder work and more time. I know that we have set very ambitious goals for ourselves, but we are determined to accomplish them. We are going to evaluate our achievements and modify our performance accordingly.

WHAT I EXPECT FROM YOU AS A TSSC MEMBER is to take an active role. I expect to hear your ideas and critiques. I also expect a small part of your time to help us help your club.

2003 Dive Schedule

Date	Day Boat & Port	Dive Description	Class [†]	Cost	Contact
Sept 7	Sun Sea Hawk, Freeport, LI	G&D	A	\$60	Bill Kilgallon
Sept 20-21	St. Lawrence Seaway	Wreck Diving Weekend	A	TBA	Gregg Macaulay
Oct 4	Fort Wetherill, RI	Beach Dive & Picnic	C	Free	Rick D'Amico
Oct 25-26	Cape Ann, Mass.	Scallop & Wreck Dives	C/B/A	\$65	Bob Bak
Oct 25-Nov 2	Salt Cay, Turks & Caicos	Caribbean Diving	C/B/A	\$375**	Lada Simek

* Local dives are in Long Island Sound and may be to Parsonage Point (4'-20'), the *Maine* (25'), *Glen Island Steers* (65'), *Celtic* (60'), *Condor* (70'), or *Poling Brothers #2* (50'), or may be to another site the captain knows.

** Salt Cay Divers will provide 15 dives for \$375. Food, lodging, and transportation are additional. See past newsletters or contact coordinator for details.

† Dive Classification: This is an indication of the expected difficulty of each dive—but remember, any dive can be more difficult than expected, depending on conditions at the time! These are only to be used as a guide. All divers must come equipped with the appropriate equipment, in proper working order, as required by certifying agency as minimum equipment.

A: Be prepared for an advanced dive to depths of 130'. These are usually wreck dives in difficult conditions, including cold water; low visibility; significant currents, and wave heights over 3'. The diver should be self-sufficient and very experienced in these adverse conditions. **B:** Be prepared for an open-water intermediate dive to depths of under 80'. Cold water and low visibility are to be expected. Currents & wave heights are possible. Appropriate for beginning divers, divers new to Northeast diving, and divers who love lots of relaxed bottom time.

For Sale: Bonaire Divi Flamingo Beach Time Share, studio unit 716 on ground floor for week 18 in May. Sleeps 6 on two beds and one sofa bed. Kitchen with patio area that opens to swimming pool. Dive boat dock. 21 weeks to use (last 5 weeks can be accelerated). You can use this unit to trade for other timeshares via RCI. \$2000. Call Tom Matonti at (212) 780-3713 (work) or (718) 680-1912 (home).

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 Keep up to date on club news.

► **Recent Club Activities** 3
 Chasing scallops on Cape Ann, canoeing on the Delaware, and praying for calm weather in North Carolina—our divers have been busy.

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 Do you know what you should about diving fresh water?

► **Coming Events** 7

calendar highlights

► **TSSC September Meeting** . Sep 10
 Bob Schragger and Pete Riekstins on their adventures in exotic Bali and Komodo. See page 7.

► **Cape Ann Trip** Oct 25-26
 Your last chance this year to join TSSC in search of scallops and fun! Contact Bob Bak.

► **Saint Lawrence Seaway Trip** Sep 20-21
 Enjoy warm, clear water and lots of wrecks. See June's newsletter (on our web site) or call Gregg Macaulay.

► **Fort Wetherill Dive & Beach Barbecue** Oct 4
 Always fun—a laid-back, free dive with friends. See page 7.

► **Salt Cay Trip** Oct 25-Nov 2
 Enjoy "diving the way it used to be." Details in the May Sea Swells Log, or contact Lada Simek.

► **Holiday Party** Dec 13

TSSC Directors' Meeting Highlights

August 6, 2003

Beach Cleanup: Rick has this planned for Saturday, September 20. Besides the sites mentioned at the last meeting, other sites were suggested: Schuyler in the Bronx near the Throggs Neck Bridge; City Island, in co-operation with Captain Mike; Parsonage Point Island. Rick will confirm that there are no insurance issues.

Rescue course: Rick contacted Lifeguard Systems and reserved the weekend of October 10-12 for the course. Directors agreed that TSSC will cover the cost of instructor accommodations, up to 200 dollars. Rick will start collecting deposits.

Dive schedule: Bill reported 3 members are signed up for August 9 dive; August 24 local dive canceled; 8 members signed up for the seal dives August 16-17; 7 members signed up for the St. Lawrence dives September 20-21.

Credit Cards: Bob Bak will pursue the use of Paypal.

Program changes: Due to schedule conflicts, Mike Emmerman's presentation, originally scheduled for September, will be swapped with Bob's and Pete's presentation and will occur in November.

Public Relations: Judy, in coordination with Vadim, Bill and Bob Bak, will distribute 250 updated flyers. More flyers will be mailed in October.

Social Activity: Lada is leading a canoe trip on the Delaware River, Saturday, August 23; we hope Zsa will resume her responsibilities as social director this month.

Membership Report

I'm happy to report that we have continued to gain members through this summer.

Back in July, **Louis Picchione** of Hawthorne joined us. **Pat DiBurno** of Harrison and **David Galvin** of South Salem joined at our last meeting, and **Joseph Pascarelli** of Chester and **Mark and Donna Mays** of Weston, CT have joined since then.

Louis, David, and Joseph are brand new divers, so let's get them out there diving! Louis indicates that he wants to dive anywhere and everywhere; Joseph is interested in

Nominate Your Favorite Diver of the Year

Every year at this time we ask our members to select nominees for TSSC's Diver of the Year Award. One nominee will be selected and honored at the awards ceremony during the Beneath the Sea show in March. An award will be presented and the person will be written up in the Beneath The Sea program book.

The criteria for nomination as diver of the year are that the diver must

- support safe diving with the club,
- provide service to the club, and
- provide some form of service to the community.

Both the nominee and the member making the nomination must be members in good standing with dues paid up to date. The nomination must be made in writing and provide examples of how the diver meets each of the above criteria.

The selection will be made by sealed ballot at the December directors' meeting. Each of the directors will receive a copy of the written nominations and using these and their own personal knowledge vote for the nominee.

All written nominations must be received no later than November 30, 2003. Please mail nominations to our past president:

Ben Brush
137 Harmon Drive
Larchmont, NY 10538

or send email to brushdiver@aol.com.

Freshwater Diving

1) Wood and metal submerged in fresh water deteriorate

- at the same rate as objects submerged in salt water.
- at a rate slower than objects submerged in salt water.
- at a faster rate than objects submerged in salt water.
- at a rate dependent on the density of the submerged object.

2) Divers in local freshwater lakes should be most concerned about

- sediments and silt.
- hydrogen sulfide.
- boat traffic.
- cold.

3) A neutrally-buoyant diver in fresh water will have to _____ his or her belt in order to maintain neutral buoyancy in salt water.

- remove weight from
- add weight to
- keep the same weight on

4) Which of the following is *not* an exotic (invasive) species introduced to our local fresh waters?

- quagga mussels
- Japanese shore crab
- zebra mussels
- milfoil

5) To use the U.S. Navy dive tables for fresh water,

- use the apparent depth.
- add 3% of the depth to the apparent depth.
- add 2% of the depth to the apparent depth.
- decrease time limits by 3%.

Education and Safety Director

fresh water
different depths
Most depth
a marine
weight
sink the diver
some lakes is
with zebra
Unfortunatly, lately many have be-
come to qu-

Just Say Yes — No Ifs, Ands, or Buts

Fort Wetherill
Jamestown, Rhode Island
October 4, 2003

During the 20-plus years that I've been a director for this club, I've heard all kinds of excuses as to why some folks just won't get out there and dive. Realizing that there are all kinds of excuses, I'm going to declare our Fort Wetherill dive on 4 October as our "No 'Yes, But's' Dive." I'm even going to make a pre-empive strike at some of the excuses that are floating around out there.

Yes, but I like diving in warm water...
Great—this is the time of year when the water will be at its warmest, so what better time to come along?

Yes, but I like good visibility... Well, this is also the time of year when visibility will be at its best; I've had 25-foot visibility there, which is pretty good for a shore dive.

Yes, but I can't afford to dive... Well then you're in luck. There is no charge to get into Fort Wetherill, and we'll be bringing our own food for the picnic after.

Yes, but it's a long ride... That's why some of us will make a breakfast stop in Old Saybrook, CT, which is about the half-way point, on the way out there.

Yes, but I prefer shallow dives... Great!!! Most of the diving in the coves at Fort Wetherill is less than 30 feet in depth.

Yes, but I prefer deeper dives... There's an island at the end of the peninsula that separates the coves where a diver can go to at least 80 feet.

Yes, but the traffic back from Rhode Island will be murder... That's why we're doing this dive on a Saturday. That way we'll miss the horrid traffic that this area sees on Sunday afternoon and evening.

I think the message is clear. Fort Wetherill is a dive for all reasons. See you there!!!

For more information, email me at usamabio@aol.com, or call (203) 368-2778 weekends or (631) 444-0467 weekdays.

Rick D'Amico
Trip Coordinator

September Meeting

8:00 pm, Wed, September 10

Whitby Castle Restaurant
at the Rye Golf Club

Robert Schragger
and
Peter Riekstins

present their

Adventures in Bali and Komodo

Club members Bob Schragger and Peter Riekstins, both talented underwater photographers, recently traveled to Bali and Komodo aboard the new Peter Hughes liveaboard the *Komodo Dancer*. Come witness their adventure through the eyes of their cameras.

The presentation portion of our meeting will begin promptly at 8:30! You're invited to enjoy dinner at the Whitby Castle Restaurant before the meeting. Please allow at least 60 minutes.

Directions to Whitby Castle

at the Rye Golf Club
330 Boston Post Road, Rye NY
(914) 777-2053

From I-287: Get off at exit 11. Stay in the right lane and at the end of the ramp turn right onto Route 1 south (Boston Post Road). Stay on Route 1 for approximately 2.7 miles, going through 8 sets of lights. The Rye Golf Club and Whitby Castle are on your left. Turn into the Golf Club driveway and Whitby Castle is straight ahead.

From I-95: Get off at exit 19, Rye/Playland. Immediately take the first exit to the right, signed Rye/Mamaroneck/Harrison. At the first stop sign go left toward Rye/Mamaroneck. At the next stop turn right on North Street, following signs for Mamaroneck and Route 1 south. After .3 mile you will merge onto Route 1. Follow it for .7 mile, turn left into the entrance of the Rye Golf Club. Whitby Castle is straight ahead.

From the Hutchinson River Parkway: Take exit 23 onto Mamaroneck Avenue in the direction of Mamaroneck. Just after the slow-down lights (approx. 1 mile), go straight onto the on ramp for Route I-95. Stay left for I-95 North. Follow as above.



THE SCUBA SPORTS CLUB

P.O. Box 644
Rye, NY 10580

<http://BeneathTheSea.org/TSSC/>
TSSC@BeneathTheSea.org

OFFICERS

President Soliman Shenouda
Vice President Bob Bak
Treasurer Paul Dengler
Past President Ben Brush

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Executive Director Vreni Roduner
Dive Operations Vadim Ternovski
Education/Safety Rick D'Amico
Enviro/Legislative Rick D'Amico
Membership Anne Judge
Newsletter Anne Judge
Planning Bill Kilgallon
Program Michael Prange
Photo Steve Dicosola
Wreck Diving Jeff Pagano
Director-at-Large Gregg Macaulay
Public Relations Judy Klotz-Simek

LEGAL ADVISOR

Robert Schragger

FOUNDER

Armand Zigahn

CO-FOUNDER

Soliman Shenouda

Submissions to Sea Swells Log may be made in electronic or paper form by the 20th of the month. Electronic submissions (email) are preferred and should be sent to

SeaSwells@BeneathTheSea.org

Submission of paper copy should be sent to

Anne Judge
2 Pine Mountain Road
Danbury, CT 06810
Fax (208) 485-4641

Please call or email to confirm fax receipt. For information send email to SeaSwells or call Anne at (203) 778-3584.

And We Did Some Diving, continued

the day quite a few of us made our way up to Beaufort to do some shopping, and then we were back to the pool.

On Thursday night, Zeke and I prepared a pasta dinner that would feed an army! or at least a group of disappointed divers. (We hadn't made it out to the wrecks again that day.) We had pasta with meatballs and sausage, garlic bread, salad, and ice cream for dessert. Even though we didn't make it out diving that day, we had some fun. A few of us made a picnic lunch and headed to New Bern, where we spent the afternoon touring Tryon Palace, the estate that Governor Tryon had built just before the American Revolution as the state capitol. We had our picnic in the park next to the entrance to New Bern, and then headed back to finish the tour of the gardens.

Oh, did I forget to mention that Condo 109 had pancakes every morning. Monday thru Friday? Zeke made it up before the sun and prepared a hearty breakfast for us all to start the day! We had syrup from Vermont, and fresh fruit as toppings. One day we had fresh blueberries in them, and another day, corn fritters made with leftover sweet corn. We started out strong every day.

On Friday we made it back into the water, and we spent the rest of the afternoon packing up. Some of us made it to the Texas Steak House that night, and some of us went to the Sanitary Restaurant (a landmark in the town). On Saturday we went our separate ways home—the end of a very full week!



Left, it sure sounds like a lot of their time was spent eating! Here TSSC takes over the picnic tables near their condos. Top right, Bill Kilgallon smiles for the camera. Right, skies like this were an all-too-common sight that week.

Photos by Z. Petryszyn

Take a Ride, continued

sight! The manta came right over Zeke, and as the form passed over, he reached up and grabbed hold of the back fin and was off! Now dive plans are great, but when wonderful things happen, you just go with the flow. I didn't hand the camera over, and I didn't go for a ride, but I watched this beautiful creature fly through the water with his passenger, as if he did it every day. He circled back and Zeke dropped off, only to have the manta circle back again for more attention. Zeke stroked the back of the underwater bird, as Michael Prange and Paul Dengler shot video, and I continued to snap as many pictures as I could. He circled close to me on one of the passes so I was able to stroke his left wing as he glided by. I was delighted to see this on video later.

Both Zeke and I were out of bottom time, and I was nearly out of air as well; the excitement was such that I was breathing faster than I normally would. As we ascended along the anchor line, our friend continued to follow us up, until we got to about 75 feet. I believe he may have come closer if we had not been on the anchor line. It was as if he were saying "I have plenty of bottom time left. Come play with me!" It was heart-breaking to leave the beautiful underwater bird, but realizing that some gifts don't go on forever, we did our safety stop and got back on board the boat. Now when I hear "Oh my God!" my first thought will be of Gerald and the manta ray.



North Carolina Ashore, continued

blast! We stayed at a great condo, thanks to efforts of Lucille and Bill Kilgallon. Kudos to the Kilgallons! They obtained a great rate for nice condos directly on the beach. We could view the ocean from our balcony. Give me an ocean beach and I'm a happy camper. I needed some R & R desperately, and this fit the bill. The water was wonderful: clean, very warm, but refreshing. On Monday Lucille Kilgallon and I relaxed on rafts in the surf. By Wednesday the surf began to roughen up, making the rafts too challenging, and we resorted to boogie boards. Tom enjoyed his favorite hobby—sleeping on the beach between dips in the ocean.

We had a very nice barbecue on Sunday night with the whole gang at our condo. On Tuesday night we all went out to dinner. On Friday night most of us went out to the Texas Steakhouse (the one with the stuffed bunny/antelope thing on the wall), a traditional stop on North Carolina trips, I'm told.

I must include a disclaimer in this article. Bill Kilgallon now calls me a "Procurement Specialist." Anything he says about me "procuring" certain articles on the beach is a stretch, to say the least. He has an active imagination; please do not take him seriously.

I have to say this was my first dive trip with the Scuba Sports Club, but it will not be my last! Our members are the best; they really know how to have a good time. It was very special spending this time with friends.

Cape Ann Delivers Again

July 19–20, 2003

Once again we made a late night drive up to Cape Ann, arriving just in time to go to sleep. Morning brought bright skies and no wind, a picture-perfect day in Gloucester.

Six intrepid TSSC divers headed out aboard the *Daybreaker* in search of scallops at Satan's ledge, but were turned away by gill nets. Forced to change our plans, we anchored at Cat Rock. There Dave, Peter, Vreni, Howard, Sabrina, and I headed down in search of scallops. Instead I found lobsters, sea stars, rock eel, and crabs. During our dives we were joined by monstrous man-eating sharks. (Woof! Woof!) Sabrina was heard to say that they rivaled those of the Great Barrier Reef. I was personally eyed by three of these man-eaters. Some people came back with bags of scallops and others with wet dry suits (and it wasn't seawater). What a great dive! The second dive was again at Cat Rock. This time I was able to take my full limit

on scallops, one in each pocket. Once again we saw the denizens of the deep. Everyone seemed to enjoy the dives.

The ride back to the docks proved to be interesting, as we ran into a fog bank that lasted most of the way. Thanks to the skillful navigation of Captain Fran Marcoux, it was without incident.

The next day brought bright skies and a minor change in crew. Vreni and Sabrina gave up to Rob and Jack (missing in action) Pereira. We left the dock and headed up the Annisquam River to the other side of the peninsula and the wreck of the *Chelsea*. We headed down to the tangled mass of plate and beams to explore her remains. Here we were greeted by more killers who circled us as we explored the encrusted wreck. It was a very peaceful, relaxing dive.

The next dive was off Thacher Island, graced

by its signature twin lighthouses. Under its shores lie a series of ledges cut in the rock at different levels. Hidden in their cuts are tons of lobsters and crabs and hundreds of other species of sea creatures. Oh, yeah, and more killer sharks. Another diver on the boat, Steve, dove a ledge at about 55 feet where he saw "over a hundred sharks running the wall." Steve has been diving this area for over fifteen years and had never seen anything like it before.

Cape Ann had once again yielded its treasures and secrets to us. Come join us next time in Cape Ann for scallops and adventures in the deep.

Bob Bak

TSSC's final Cape Ann weekend trip of this year will be October 25–26. Call Bob Bak at (845) 278-6188 or email rbakdive@aol.com for more information or to sign up.

Canoe Trip a Success — the Biggest and Best Yet!

August 23, 2003

FORTY people canoed, kayaked, or rafted a six-mile stretch of the Delaware River from the Staircase to Kittatinny Canoe's Matamoras base on an absolutely perfect late-summer day last month. In terms of numbers, this may be TSSC's largest undertaking ever!

This section of the river featured enormous cliffs and many rapids, impressive from the water level but not dangerous. Only one boat capsized after being caught on a rock. I expected many more than that, since many paddlers have never been in a canoe, but the

boats provided were large and stable. A commendation is due to the skill of the crew. The three kayaks raced like sports cars among a truck convoy and rendered assistance when necessary. We also had two inflatable rafts in the group. These lagged behind but the current was fast enough so that we could regroup at each stop.

Half the trip was spent looking for a place to have lunch. I brought a bagel and a container of liquid. Some canoes were loaded with 30-pound coolers with dozens of cans, roast



The TSSC armada prepares to embark on the Delaware River. Teens to grandparents enjoyed a picture-perfect day on the water.

Photo by P. Riekstins

Thanks!

I'd like to say kudos to Lada for organizing this outing. It was a blast!

And I'd also like to add special thanks to Pat Forgacs for the wonderful fleece dive suit she custom-made for me. After the snorkeling, I was very chilled in the shade on the riverbank. I pulled on the fleece and it was warm and cozy. Pat says she has the time now to custom-make fleeces for anyone who would like to order. I am putting in a plug for her suits because she did a great job. She is a very talented lady!

Stephanie Milazzo

Lada Simek



TSSC Dives the Graveyard of the Atlantic

Morehead City, North Carolina • July 21–25, 2003

Eleven club members—Pat Forgcacs, Tom and Stephanie Milazzo, Jerry Moynihan, Pat Hart, Bill and Lucille Kilgallon, Michael Prange, Paul Dengler, Zeke Petryszyn, and I—made the trek to Morehead City in July for a week of diving the “graveyard of the Atlantic.” We all arrived on Saturday, giving us a day to rest, shop, and get our gear together before diving on Monday.

We stayed at the Sand’s Villa Condos, a really nice place on Atlantic Beach, just 5 minutes from the dive shop and the dock. The beach and pool were a short walk from our condo, and the rooms and kitchen facilities were great. Thanks to the Kilgallons for getting these condos for us at an excellent price, and to Zeke for making arrangements!

Bright and early Monday morning, 8 divers boarded the 65-foot dive boat *Olympus*. Stephanie was not feeling well and could not dive; she decided that R&R at the beach was what the doctor ordered. Monday was a pleasant sunny day with mild winds out of the southwest. We encountered 4- to 6-foot swells on our way to the shipwreck of the *Papoose*, a tanker sunk by German torpedoes during World War II. The broken-up wreck-age lies upside down at 120 feet. There was nothing exciting about this dive, though the wreck was once frequented by a large group of sand tiger sharks. The visibility, only about 35 feet, was about as bad as I have seen it in North Carolina—it is normally at least 60 feet. During our surface interval everyone rested or caught some rays.

Our second dive location was the wreck of the *USS Schurz*. The *Schurz* was a German gunboat confiscated by the Navy for spy activities and recommissioned as a US armored cruiser. She sank as a result of a collision with the *SS Florida*, and now lies at 110 feet. Captain George used a scooter to blow away some of the sand where rifle ammo, a favorite souvenir from the *Schurz*, can be found. However, another group of divers on our boat got into the water first and picked up all the ammo! This dive still turned out to provide the highlight of our trip—an unusual visit by an 8-foot manta ray. This was only the third time Captain George had seen one in North

Carolina waters. The ray came up to a few of our divers for a back rub, with Zeke getting the most attention. Pat, Paul and Michael shot some great photos and video that will be shown at a future club meeting.

The wind picked up overnight, canceling our diving on Tuesday. Instead we enjoyed local attractions or went to the beach for a tan. Bill and Zeke cooked up a sumptuous barbecue that evening. Wednesday morning brought heavy rain. We knew we were not going diving but some of us made the trip to the dock to check the forecast—while the smart ones stayed in bed. Thursday morning did not look good either, with gray skies and gusty winds, but Captain George was willing to give it a try. We boarded the *Olympus* with high hopes, but high waves greeted us as we cruised out of the inlet, and as we reached open water the *Olympus* slowed abruptly as it crashed through an 8-foot wave. That was enough; Captain George made a U-turn and diving was canceled for the third day. Back on shore we hung out by the pool or beach.

Friday came with more rain, but we were going diving. After a rough and wet ride we made it to our first destination, the *USS Schurz* again. Visibility had not improved, and there was nothing special about the dive, but at least we were in the water. When we surfaced the sun was shining and the seas had calmed. Our second dive was to the wreck of the *Aeolus*, a 409-foot ship sunk as an artificial reef in 1988. Hurricanes have broken the wreck into three sections. She lies at 110 feet, but the structure rises 20 feet off the sand, providing great opportunities for wreck photography.

A delicious meal at the Texas Steakhouse, a good night’s sleep, Saturday’s long trip home, and that was it for the North Carolina 2003 trip. Unfortunately we didn’t find the great diving and shark sightings that we usually have, but just being there with a bunch of friends helped compensate. And there is always next time! Many thanks to Zeke for the pancakes every morning, and to Pat Forgcacs for all the cooking and preparations.

Dick Smith, Trip Coordinator

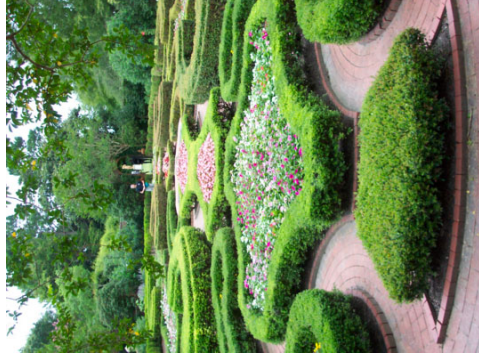
North Carolina Ashore

by Stephanie Milazzo

This was my first North Carolina trip and it was a blast, even without leaving the shore. I had planned to dive and lugged all my dive gear down (Bill will say Tom lugged my dive gear down!), but a respiratory infection decided to return on the flight. I am not ashamed to admit that I am a wimp—a blue water diver—and that the prospect of the deep dives and long boat rides of North Carolina presented a challenge to me. When to this was added congestion, a sore throat, and a bad cough, the decision to sit out the diving was obvious. It turned out that I only missed two days of diving since two days were blown out. Unfortunately, I did miss the North Carolina dive of a lifetime, when divers encountered a very friendly manta ray. Zeke even had the privilege of riding the manta. I consider myself lucky to have viewed it firsthand on video. Pauly Dengler was the impressive videographer who did a great job of capturing it. I’m sure he is planning to show it at a club meeting—a presentation not to be missed!

North Carolina without diving was still a

Continued on page 6



Elegance Ashore

The gardens at Tryon Palace. Several TSSC members entertained themselves during their enforced stay ashore by visiting this historic site in nearby New Bern, North Carolina.

Photo By Z. Petryszyn

And We Did Some Diving, Too!

by Pat Forgcacs

What is it like to ride a manta ray? Well, I can’t say for I didn’t have the pleasure, but I saw Zeke Petryszyn do it! Wait—let me back up a bit, back to the surface...

It was a sunny day on July 21, and our group was aboard the dive boat *Olympus*, out of Morehead City, North Carolina. The mate Gerald was below, setting the anchor on the *Schurz*. Suddenly Gerald hit the surface and exclaimed, “*Oh my God!*” about 15 times. We finally got it out of him that there was a beautiful manta ray hanging out around the wreck about 135 feet below us. George, the captain and owner, confirmed this upon his return to the surface, so off we went into the blue water.

My dive buddy Zeke and I had discussed our game plan. I had a digital underwater camera for the first time on this trip and Zeke was going without a camera. If the manta came near me, I would hand off the camera to him, go for a ride, and he would take pictures. If the manta came by him, I would hand off the camera, go for a ride, and he would take pictures. (See the pattern here?) Well, we were the last into the water because we were close to the back of the boat and didn’t like fighting the fins to get in fast, but finally off we plunged into the blue!

Zeke and I kept our eyes peeled for the manta, but saw nothing throughout the dive. Then, just as we returned to the anchor line at about 100 feet, ready to start our ascent, a shadow approached from behind Zeke. I got a knock on the shoulder to get my attention, and as I turned I saw the most wonderful

Continued on next page



Zeke Petryszyn hitches a ride on a friendly fellow visitor to North Carolina

Video still by Paul Dengler

Manta Madness

by Michael Prange

It was our first day of diving on TSSC’s North Carolina trip and we were all suiting up for the second dive. The divemaster was just returning from setting the hook on the *USS Schurz*, a World War I warship. As the divemaster climbed the ladder the whole ship rang with his words. “*Oh my God! Oh my God! I could die tomorrow and be a happy man!*” As we struggled to wrest some meaning from his mad ravings, it soon became clear that there was a manta ray cruising the wreck, and that it seemed to invite diver interaction. The divemaster rode the ray around the wreck and when he released it, it returned for more. A manta madness overtook us as we impatiently waited out the remainder of our two-hour surface interval before we could swim with the manta. The following is excerpted from my log of that memorable dive.

I followed the wreck line past the ammunition locker and boilers, navigating along the gunwale once past the end of the line. Dense schools of baitfish parted as I progressed to the stern. Halfway along I paused to film a school of spadefish. They swarmed around me, bumping into the camera as I filmed. I felt as if I were part of the school, jostling for rank among the masses. My wandering mind was drawn back to the moving light. Peering over my shoulder I found I was not alone, in a big way. An eight-foot manta ray was hovering overhead just inches above me. I filmed the manta for several minutes as it lazily circled me, finally leaving me to visit the other divers gathered at the up-line hooked near the bow. I then continued my journey to the stern, reaching the steering gear a few minutes later. After filming the aft cannon I made the turn, following the gunwale toward the hook. Almost immediately I saw an opportunity to film three queen angels. I straddled the gunwale and froze my movement, allowing the fish to approach at ease. In addition to the angels I filmed several huge amberjacks and several huge black grouper. Reaching the hook with a dive time of 30 minutes, the manta appeared again as I began the ascent. It was a good day!