



Sea Swells



Our 50th year serving the local and northeast dive community!

The Anchor Line



Let's get this party started!

I hope this note finds all the good folks of TSSC doing well and anxiously awaiting the arrival of spring. I'm ready I write this note as Melissa and I sit at gate 25 in JFK's terminal 5 early on a Sunday morning - struggling to keep eyes focused as daylight savings has just robbed us of an hour of sleep. With the start of 2025 for the Miceli household being what it was, a trip out of the states for a week of diving seems appropriate. Grenada, the nutmeg spice island is only several hours away. True Blue Bay Resort and Aquanauts divers await. We will be sure to share greetings from TSSC when we arrive. This club descended on the island back in 2017 and had a fantastic time at the same resort .

It's only been a couple months since we gathered at the December holiday party, yet it feels longer. Much has taken place since the new year kicked off. The 2025 board of directors are off and running positioning the club to tackle the many activities and trips upcoming. Beneath the Sea is only a few weeks away and if you blink Earth Day will be here as well. Volunteer opportunities await with both events to represent your club, share the good work we do and help grow the membership. I look forward to seeing many of you at them!

Many of you are already aware, but 2025 is a significant milestone year for TSSC. It was 50 years ago this club of ours was started. The idea that forming a club to bring friends together to enjoy activities such as scuba diving and even skiing would attract friends of friends. I wonder if the thought of growth of the level we experience today was even a thought back in 1975. So as we navigate this milestone year, you can expect to see some subtle and some not so subtle acknowledgements.

I wish you all the very best this year and I hope you get to all the scuba diving you are planning. We will talk soon.

Gene Micelli, TSSC President



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Editorial Meanderings

Equinox Daze



Welcome to Spring. For those who are not Winter aficionados, the days are getting longer and warmer. Actually at **0501 EDT on March 20th**, day time equals night time. Here's a Spring tidbit, the date of Easter is determined by the spring equinox, falling on the Sunday after the first full moon following the celestial event.

For many of us warm water divers who haven't had a chance to go South, the warm water is coming North. Take a look at the Club calendar for the next few seasons and pick an activity that you are interested in participating in. There are many possibilities from Ossining Earth Day on the Hudson River, or cleaning up the Long Island Sound at Orchard Beach, to diving in Lake George in the Adirondacks. Then, of course, there is the 50th Anniversary extravaganza diving trip to Indonesia in July.

Beginning this issue, to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of TSSC, Kenny Salstrom has agreed to do a feature reprising some of the articles that were published in earlier Sea Swells. It's always interesting to look at where we were versus where we are. Take a gander, and see what it does for you.

OR.....if you have been somewhere or done something that you think is worth sharing with the Club....write up a piece or send me some pix of your adventures.

There is also the new SCUBA Network page. If you would like to add a connection to itjust let me know.

Ken Andreu



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The 2025 New Board & Directors



Gene Micelli

Kevin Cushing *

Sheri Buchman *

Katlyn Krack

Amanda Slattery *

Niels Ebbeson

Nick Lappano

Jack Ricotta *

Judy Hops

Eva Sandolo Versaci

Matt Marrone

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Gary Lehman *

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◆ **Membership**

◆ **Program Director**

◆ **Executive director**

◆ **Dive Planning**

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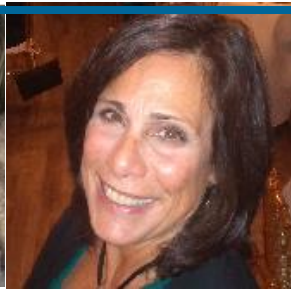
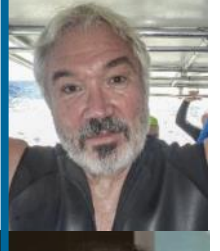
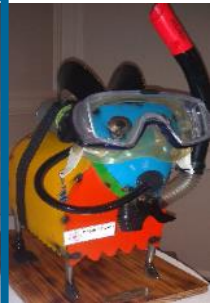
◆ **Social Director**

◆ **Safety & Education**

◆ **Director at Large**

◆ **Newsletter Editor**

◆ **Newsletter Contributor**



We encourage Club members to join the TSSC Leadership Team



Sea Swells



Meet the New Social Director—Eva Versaci



My name is Eva Versaci. My interest in scuba began in the late 1980s when I was first exposed to scuba while visiting Greece with friends. Coming from a family rooted on an Italian island, the water has always been a natural draw for me. Inspired by that early experience, I pursued and earned a PADI Open Water certification in 1991.

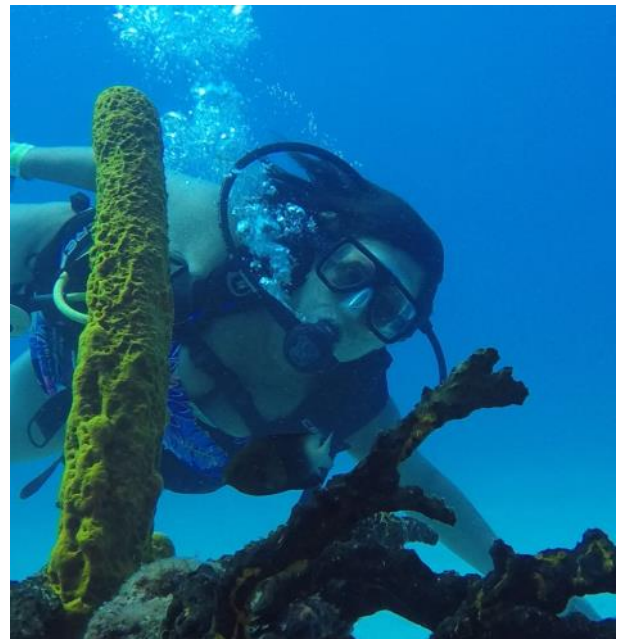
My first dive trip took me to the stunning waters of Grand Cayman, where I spent a week exploring vibrant reefs through both shore and boat dives—an unforgettable experience that even included a night dive. I also had the opportunity to dive in Maui, Hawaii, where the underwater beauty was just as breathtaking as the landscapes above. Though my original dive log was lost in a move, the memories of those breathtaking underwater moments remain with me.

After a 20-year break from diving due to work and family commitments, I rekindled my passion in 2016 during a family trip to Puerto Morelos, Mexico. Learning that its National Reef Park is the second-largest barrier reef in the world, I was determined to return to diving. I sought out and completed a PADI refresher course and, a few days later, explored the reef—an experience that reminded me of why I fell in love with the sport in the first place.

After retiring from the New York Court System three years ago, I have embraced the scuba community once again. I joined TSSC after being introduced to it through an acquaintance and found it to be a welcoming space, even for those without extensive diving experience. I enjoy the adventure and camaraderie that comes with being part of this club, and value the opportunity to learn from those with more experience. Recently, I was honored to be asked to serve as the club's Social Director, a role which I am excited to organize engaging activities for club members.

Since joining, I participated in a club trip to Tulum and will be heading to Wakatobi this summer. I look forward to furthering my dive education by obtaining a nitrox certification and pursuing an Advanced Open Water Diver certification.

Beyond diving, I have a deep passion for international travel, learning about different cultures, history, and food.





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Blasts from the Past with Kenny Salstrom

And here is a clipping from the January 1993 Sea Swells ,courtesy of Kenny Salstrom.

Wow, TSSC used to have Halloween Parties!!!!!! Food for thought????

HALLOWEEN PARTY

Thirty-seven people attended our annual Halloween Party at the Rye Golf Club this past 31 October. Most of them came in costumes including cowboys, a bat, a witch, a "flapper", a nun (accompanied by a rabbi), Christopher Columbus, Richard M. Nixon, Ninja warriors, and Penguin (from "Batman").

As the evening of music, food, and friends approached its conclusion, "Rabbi" Greg Stasiuk announced the winners for various costumes. The winner of the best overall costume went to Nara Sullivan, who was a gauze-covered splendor as "the Invisible Man". Our best couple award went to Gus Barry and Debbie Eckert, who came as "the Flintstones", complete with "Bam-Bam" doll. Soliman Shenouda captured scariest costume honors with "the Elephant Man". A special category, most politically un-correct costume, was awarded to Steve Leonardo, who came as Don King (or was it Al Sharpton?).

I would like to thank Kenny Salstrom for supplying music from his CD collection and Jim McNeill, who helped with decorations. Special thanks to Greg Stasiuk, who arranged for the prizes for the costume competition. And of course, thanks to all of you who came and made this activity a success. A special personal thanks to all of you who surprised me so nicely for my 40th Birthday.
--Rick D'Amico



And from the same issue....a note from Armand "Zig" Zigahn. This is from Armand 'Zig' Zigahn and his wife JoAnn.

Thank You

Having a child like Michael Alexander was JoAnn's life-long dream. The adoption process, however, was the most stressful that I've ever gone through. Not the Russians nor the Ukrainians but the American Embassy in Moscow made it even terrorizing. Those times are now past.

Michael Alexander is a dream come true.

JoAnn and I do lovingly thank the officers, directors and members of The Scuba Sports Club ongoing support and affection. And now your gift of the Savings Bond for Michael's future education. You've finally made me humble. Tears? Yes.

So much for the mushies ... let's get wetter.

And from December 1994, a reprint from Underwater USA.

THE SCUBA SPORTS CLUB hits the news once again!

Wonders Of The Sea Stamps Get Watery Sendoff

The U.S. Postal Service's new four-stamp issue featuring divers and underwater life was celebrated with cancellation ceremonies all around the country. In Hawaii, the first underwater cancellation took place in a special plexiglass device on a sunken ship that allowed two divers to conduct the ceremony. Video cameras recorded the event, while media members watched aboard a pair of Atlantis passenger submarines. The underwater device, canceled stamps and envelope were shipped to Washington D.C. for display at the Smithsonian's postal museum.

At the other side of the nation, in Rye, N.Y., members of The Scuba Sports Club worked with the Larchmont, N.Y. Post Office. A display featuring scuba gear, artifacts and underwater photographs by TSSC members complemented the colorful children's sea-stamp poster contest entries also on display in the Post Office lobby.



PADI International Photo

Al Hornsby of PADI International and Ed Broglio of the Postal Service unveil the Wonders of the Seas stamps 80 feet underwater off Waikiki Beach in Hawaii.

Reprinted from UNDERWATER USA/DECEMBER 1994



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Blasts from the Past with Kenny Salstrom

Wondering how the club used to do business over thirty years ago. Thanks to Kenny Salstrom's collection of old Sea Swells issues, we can get a good idea. Here posted is the 1993 Dive Schedule. A plethora of local diving with some still familiar locations that we have on our schedule for this year.

The Scuba Sports Club 1993 Dive Schedule

May 23	Sunday	Fort Wetherill, RI
May 30	Sunday	Regatta, LI Sound
June 6	Sunday	Directors Dive-Diver I -LI Sound
June 13	Sunday	Sea Hawk Freeport, LI
June 26	Saturday	Deep Adventures NJ
July 11	Sunday	Lady Kasey Mystic, CT
July 17	Saturday	Sea Snag, NJ
July 24	Saturday	Sea Hawk Freeport, LI
July 29- Aug 1	Thursday- Sunday	Lake George Weekend
Aug 8	Sunday	Sea Hawk Freeport, LI
Aug 14	Saturday	Lady Kasey Mystic, CT
Aug 22	Sunday	Sea Snag, NJ
Aug 29	Saturday	Local Dive
Sept 5	Sunday	Labor Day Regatta
Sept 11	Saturday	Sea Hawk Freeport, LI
Sept 19	Sunday	Lady Kasey Mystic, CT
Sept 26	Sunday	Fort Wetherill, RI
Nov 2-13		Wave Dancer, Bellz

Looking for more dives? Check out the Buddy List



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John & Vinnie at Sint Eustatius, Dutch Caribbean



Courtesy of Vinnie Dabynple and John Shuk



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Diving the Caves of Abaco by Joe Rinaldi



Most divers know that the Bahamas offers excellent diving for recreational scuba diving. However, not many are aware that the Bahamas also offers some of the most unique cave diving in the world.

In January of 2025, I was fortunate to spend a week with Brian KaKuk diving what many refer to the “Cristal caves” of Abaco, Bahamas.

Brian KaKuk is the owner and founder of Bahamas Underground, a cave diving/exploration/guiding /teaching company that is based in Abaco, Bahamas. Brian was trained to dive by the US Navy as a “Hard Hat” diver to make repairs and preform maintenance on US Navy ships. While Brian was stationed in the Bahamas, he fell in love with cave diving, and decided to make a change of careers. To fund his newfound passion for cave diving, Brian used his diving and photography skills in the motion pictures

industry working as the lead safety diver for *The Pirates of the Caribbean (2&3)* as well as the *Ancient caves* movie.

Brian met me at the Leonard Thompson International Airport in Abaco, and gave me a quick tour of Abaco, Bahamas. Abaco is a small town that was severely damaged by hurricane Dorian in 2019. Signs of the devastation are still evident more than 5 years later with the twisted remains of many buildings and the near complete deforestation caused by the category 5 hurricane.

However, thanks to international assistance and the strong sprit of the locals, the community of Abaco is revitalized.



While there are many caves is Abaco, the most famous and unique are Dan’s Cave and Ralph’s Caves. Both caves are part of the same cave system and are located about a half hour drive outside of Abaco. While that is not a great distance, it was luckily far enough away from the damaging winds of hurricane Dorian.

The cave entrance is reached by turning off the main road onto an old logging road. After going approximately another mile into the forest, we reached the unassuming entrance to the Dan’s cave. While spartan in appearance, this set-up is nevertheless very function-

al for a cave diving team to set up and plan a cave dive. It is also just a short walk to the entrance of Dan’s cave.

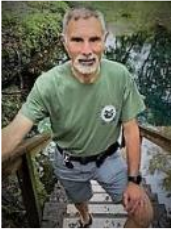
On our first dive we had just finished gearing up in preparation of diving to a section of Dan’s cave known as “The Crystal Palace”, when I realized that my closed-circuit rebreather (CCR) had flooded. Essentially the integrity of the CCR had been





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compromised and water entered what is known as “the loop”. A flooded CCR is extremely serious, as the material that scrubs carbon dioxide out of the system becomes hazardous to divers once it has become flooded with water, it is often called a “caustic cocktail” as it can produce burns to any skin or tissue that it comes in contact with.

Fortunately for me, it was discovered quickly and not wanting to miss a single dive, Brian and I made a quick change of plans, and we visited another section of the cave known as “the Badlands” while I used my sidemount cylinders that I had originally planned to use as a “bailout” for my CCR. While I was disappointed that my CCR had failed, the cave was memorizing with formations that were much more impressive than anything that I have experienced in my cave dives in Florida.



As for my CCR, with Brian’s help I spent most of that night cleaning and drying out my CCR (thankfully we were still in a fresh water when my CCR leaked, so there was no saltwater damage to the electronics of my CCR). While I never found out what caused the leak, my CCR did work perfectly for the rest of my trip.



The next day we returned to Dan’s cave and we made the planned dive to “the Crystal Palace” that we had planned to dive the day before. This section of the cave is an enormous “room” that has a high ceiling and continues farther than my eyes could see. I should also point out that the water clarity inside the cave gave us well over a hundred feet of visibility!

Inside this massive room are intricate stalactites suspended from the roof of the cave that were translucent. There were also stalagmites rising from the floor of the cave that were equally as intricate and translucent. During the dive Brian would carefully place his cave light against one of these formations and illuminate it so that I could see the most amazing and minute details of these formations that were made over thousands of years ago when this cave was “dry”.

Some formation possessed an orange tint, which Brian explained after the dive was composed of sand that analysis had traced to have originate from the Sahara Desert in Africa. The room also had giant columns (formations where the stalactites and stalagmites have formed together)



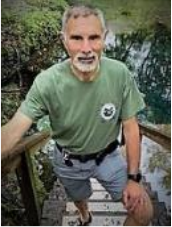
that were as wide and as tall as redwood trees. After the dive, Brian explained that analysis of some of the cave formations has revealed that this cave had alternated between being dry and flooded three times over the last 300,000 years. In fact, the area that we were using as a set up area was once 30 feet under water.

Over the course of the week, we visited several equally amazing sections of the cave system, in particular was Fred’s room, a section of the cave that is accessed by going through a deep tunnel (approximately 145 feet of water). In Fred’s room were giant columns and stalagmites that appeared to be a giant fence separating one section of the room from another. There was also a formation that



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appeared to be two waterfalls on opposite sides of the passage that gave me the impression that I was swimming through a parted sea. Yet another formation resembled the jaws and teeth of a giant shark.

Another amazing room was "The Crystal Cave". For this dive we entered the cave system through Ralph's cave. This section was much shallower and infinitely more delicate. Instead of massive rooms filled with giant formations, the Crystal cave has several restrictions (sections of the cave where the passage closes in making it difficult to pass through). Fortunately for me my cave instructors taught me techniques to maneuver through these restrictions. Suffice to say progress through this portion of the cave was not made by kicking. Instead, we employed a technique known as "finger walking" where we moved forward simply by pulling with our index fingers. At some points we had to contort our bodies into abnormal positions. Think of it as moving through bent pipes, all while hovering in a section of the water column that had only a few inches above or below us.

All this effort was well worth it to preserve the fragile and unique formations. Once we entered the room, Brian pointed out a skeleton of a bat that had been encased in the same translucent solution that made up the stalactites. There were also formations that looked like crystal cut like diamonds (some as large as your hand while others were as tiny as a fingernail).

In other sections, the stalactites descending from the ceiling were formations curved at odd angles into shapes that looked like a miniature corkscrew (Brian later explained that bacteria inside the cave when it was dry caused the unique shapes). The most striking section of this cave for me was where Brian lead me through a tight section that resembled moving through a chandelier. As we exited the cave, Brian showed me the remains of a crocodile jaw and a giant tortoise leg. While each fossil was fascinating, in truth they paled in comparison to the other wonders inside this cave.

Unfortunately, during my dive to the Crystal cave, I experienced my second equipment malfunction of this trip. My new Diveo Ikk underwater cell phone housing flooded, and all the underwater pictures from this trip were lost. My friend Jeremy at SCUBA NY once warned me that it is not **if** an underwater housing will flood, but **when** the underwater housing will flood. I just never expected that my new housing would fail on my first dive trip. While it was upsetting, I had placed my old phone in the housing, and kept my new phone safe (and dry) on the surface.

While I cannot provide any underwater photos from this trip, anyone who has access to the internet can see some of the amazing scenes that I tried to describe on Brian's Bahamas Underground Facebook page. Another excellent source would be the Pan's Labyrinth video by Go Sidemount on YouTube.

My final dive of the week was to a location called "Fangorn Forest". We entered through Dan's cave and followed the same path that we had taken a few days earlier when we visited Fred's Room. However, to reach Fangorn Forrest we had to continue a considerable distance further. As this was a deep and long dive (we swam approximately 2,700 feet to reach this room), we each brought along an additional "stage cylinder" (a spare open circuit scuba tank in the event we experienced an equipment failure). As I have already mentioned, my CCR was worked perfectly aside from the first dive, so the precaution of carrying the extra tanks was, while prudent, was fortunately unnecessary.

Upon reaching the Fangorn Forrest room, all the effort of the long swim and the carrying of the additional scuba cylinders was rewarded. The Fangorn Forrest room was gigantic with huge formations of various sizes. There was one formation that resembled a giant chicken, which stood at the entrance to the room as if it was standing guard. Inside the room were giant columns that resembled the pillars holding up Greek temples. Some of those columns had fallen over, and other formations extended from them like new growth arising from the stump of a tree that had been cut down.

There were other column formations that appeared to be twenty feet wide,





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but upon close inspection were made up of scores of smaller columns like a bundle of crystal-clear branches bundled together. However, the highlight of the room for me were several enormous columns that literally dwarfed all the other formations in the room. These columns were affectionately named the Ent columns after the living tree characters in JRR Tolkien's novel.

The room went on and on, and while I was fortunate enough to see most of it, even with a CCR given the depth of the water that we had to traverse to reach the cave, and the time we needed to swim the just over half mile to reach that section of the cave, our time seeing those wonders was all too short. I should point out that while my CCR provided me with plenty of breathing gas for this dive, I still incurred a decompression obligation of over 40 minutes.



During my trip I was fortunate to have excellent weather and near perfect diving conditions. However, as this cave system has over 40,000 feet of explored passages, I was only able to see a small portion of this cave system.

If I had not already expressed this, Brian was an outstanding guide. Among his many other talents are his cave exploration skills and his teaching skills (Brian is also a certified Cave diving and CCR instructor). However, what I found most impressive is that Brian was single handedly able to get the Bahamian government to designate over 30,000 acres of land over the Dan & Ralph cave systems as the Blue Hole Conservation Forest, so that the area is protected from development for future generations to appreciate.

Brian's efforts have been recognized by some of the local artists in Abaco who

have decorated one of the community water towers with a mural depicting images from the area caves.

Despite all these accomplishments, Brian still is endeavoring to do more. His latest efforts are focused on teaching the next generation of cave diving explorers and cave conservationist. Brian worked last year teaching divers in Bermuda how to replicate what he has achieved in the Bahamas. This year he hopes to do the same in Madagascar (which is the new frontier for cave diving exploration).

While I very much enjoyed my trip to dive the caves in Abaco, Bahamas, I realize that this is not a trip that many can make. The Bahamas, while relatively close, is an expensive location as virtually everything must be shipped in (gasoline alone

costs \$6.00 per gallon). The food is similarly expensive. In addition, given the sensitive nature of the caves, Brian will only

guide two divers at a time, and they must, at a minimum, be fully trained cave divers. Nevertheless, I highly recommend that every cave diving trained diver visit Abaco at least once, as it is the most impressive cave system that I have seen in my eight years of cave diving!



Joe Rinaldi



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New Year's Eve Dive at Lake Hydra by Nick Lappano



Renewing a long-standing tradition at Lake Hydra (formerly Dutch Springs) in Bethlehem, PA, the annual New Year's Eve dive was held on Tuesday, December 31st.

Originally, Pat Considine was going to go, so John Frecks and I registered using his instructor code.

Also attending was Matt Marrone, who registered using the code for Scuba NY, where he serves as a DM. Unfortunately, Pat had to bow out the day before. Luckily, for this special event the managers of the site were allowing divers to dive without an insured professional, so we were able to dive despite Pat's absence.

We closely monitored the weather forecast on the days leading up to the dive and when the forecast on Monday predicted partly sunny skies with a high temperature of around 50 degrees, we decided it

was a "go".

Since Lake Hydra requires carpooling to enter and park I picked up Matt in New Rochelle and we rode out together. John drove out by himself and hooked up with another diver, Jason, in the parking lot of Atlantis Aquatics. (Jim Feld of Atlantis Aquatics is also one of the owners of Lake Hydra,)

Matt and I arrived at the lake first to secure two tables for our group to set up our gear and John and Jason arrived shortly thereafter. Matt, John and Jason were diving in drysuits while I was in my 7 mm Greenprene wetsuit. While we were setting up our gear, I checked the surface temperature of the water which was a balmy 45 degrees.

While discussing our dive plan the group decided that I, as the one with the most dives at the lake, would plan our route and lead the dive. We intended to enter the water at the west side of the peninsula and swim out to the training platforms at a depth of 30 feet. From there we would follow the line to the crane which was at about 60 feet. The next target, the trolley, would require us to navigate by compass. After hanging out in the trolley at 65 feet for a bit, we would navigate back to the crane. From there would follow along the side of the island to the line which, at about 50 feet, would lead us back to the platforms.

When we started our dive, the first concern was just entering the lake since the water level was extremely low, probably about 6 or seven feet below normal. This was the lowest I have seen in about 10 years so I am assuming that the water table in Pennsylvania has dropped due to lack of rainfall. Because of this we couldn't easily walk out to the staging area platforms since the end of the ramp leading to them was literally sticking up in the air. Instead, we entered along the side of the ramp and, grabbing the handrail, pulled ourselves out to the staging platform where we put on our fins, etc.

After getting all our gear on, we proceeded with the dive, which went according to plan. We found all of our objectives. After swimming out to the training platforms we reorganized and located the line which leads to the crane. This can be a little tricky since there are a few lines, only one of which leads to it. We found the correct one though, and made the rather long swim out. After exploring that attraction for a few minutes, we headed west to find the trolley. Fortunately, the underwater landscape was the same as I remembered and we were able to navigate, by compass, from the crane to the trolley and back. Visibility was pretty good, between 30 and 40 feet. This was with the exception of the interior of the trolley which was silted up pretty badly as was the crane which someone had silted up after (or perhaps during) our earlier visit to it. (Being a lake, there is little current to clear silt so it remains suspended for a long time before settling back to the bottom.) Our team stayed together the whole time, exercising good buddy contact and communication despite the severe drop in visibility.



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Return to Blackbeards by Nick Lappano



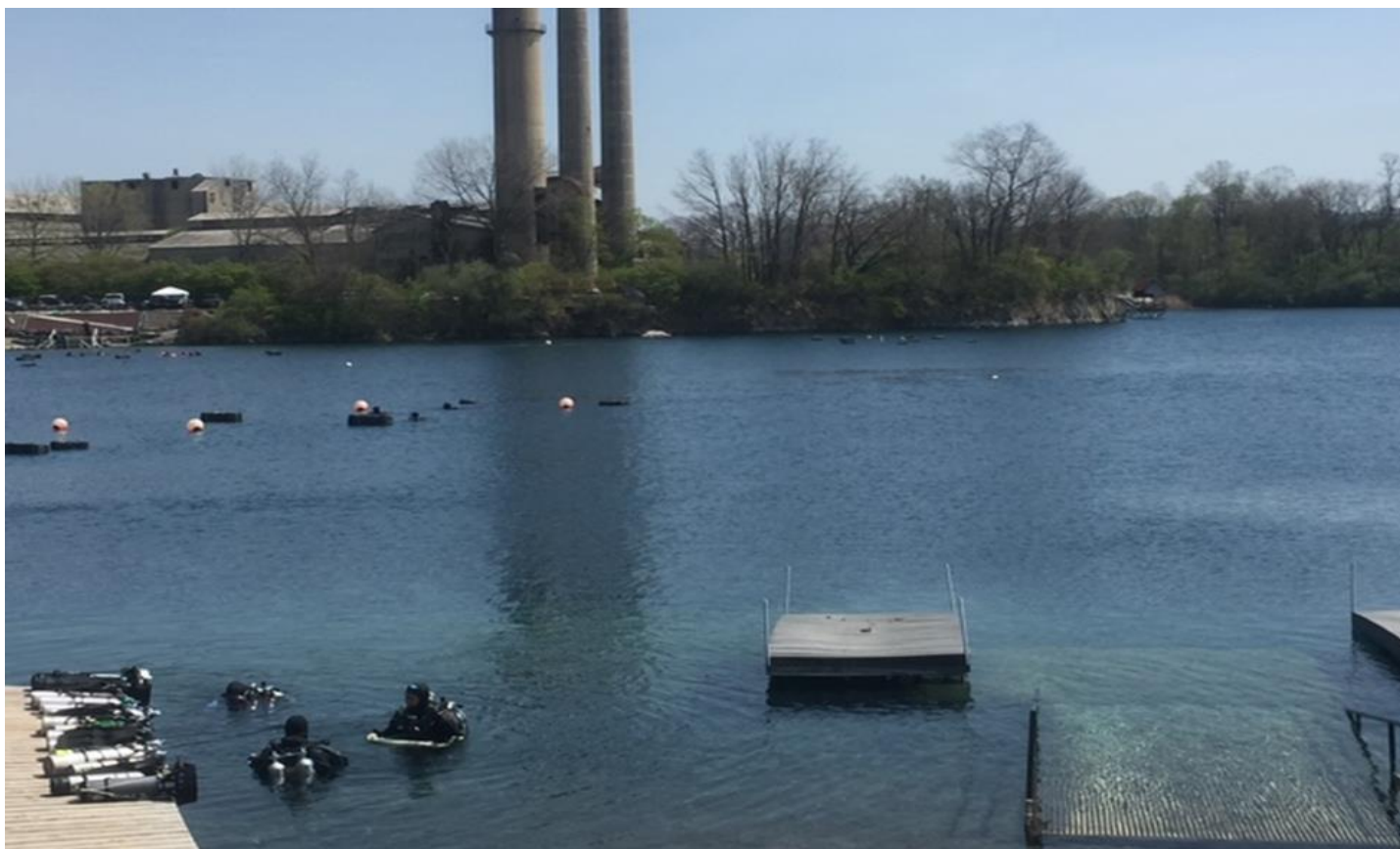
We then went around the base of the island until locating the line which is about 25 feet below the tail of the Cessna plane. Upon reaching the line we followed it back to the training platforms where we completed our safety stops.

Normally we would have actually gone up to check out the Cessna and warm up a bit. However, as the lake had flipped sometime in late November or early December, there were no thermoclines, so we bypassed that usual diversion. The temperature throughout the dive was 44 or 45 degrees, so our bodies were not adversely chilled by the depth. Nor did we warm up as we ascended. It was simply, constantly cold.

Upon completing the dive, we exited near the floating docks. Since the water level was so low and we were about 15 feet further out than usual, we were actually standing and walking on silt, rather than the small rocks and gravel which provide somewhat more stability when walking. Despite this, we were able to safely exit, proceed up the incline to the parking area, and remove our gear. The air temperature had increased to 52 degrees with sunshine and there was still only a light breeze so it was quite pleasant for the last day in December and I was able to change out of my wetsuit in the open air quite comfortably.

We were among the last divers out of the water and also the last to leave the area as we drove out at about 1:30 PM.

On April 26th Lake Hydra will be reopening for the 2025 season. Water conditions should be similar until late May when the lake starts to heat up as summer approaches.





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Penguin Primer by Gary Lehman



Penguins are so much fun to watch! They shuffle along awkwardly on land, swinging their feet from side to side as they walk. We can watch them endlessly, hopping from rock to rock and moving pebbles around their nests. They are approachable and have no fear of humans; we are not in any way perceived as a threat by penguins.

Many of us may have seen the excellent documentary "March of the Penguins." It is a very highly recommend! I watched it again after observing penguins in Antarctica. Having seen the documentary before, I greatly enriched the experience of seeing them live in their environment. (The film is about the emperor penguin, but we only saw Adelie, chinstrap, and gentoo penguins in the Antarctic peninsula and south of the Antarctic circle).

What different species of penguins are there, and where do they live?

We typically associate penguins with brutally cold Antarctic weather, but they have a far wider distribution range!

There are 18 different species of penguins, each with unique characteristics and habitats. Here's a rundown of the most notable ones:

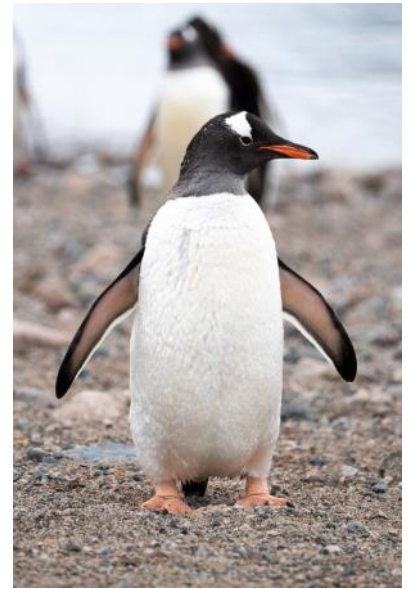
Emperor Penguin: Found exclusively in Antarctica, they are the largest penguin species and are known for their incredible endurance during harsh winters.

King Penguin: Inhabits sub-Antarctic islands such as South Georgia and the Falkland Islands. They are the second-largest penguin species and have striking orange patches on their heads.

Adélie Penguin: Commonly found along the entire Antarctic coast, their distinctive white eye rings characterize them.

Chinstrap Penguin: Named for the narrow black band under their heads that looks like a helmet strap, they live on islands and shores in the Southern Ocean.

Gentoo Penguin: Known for their bright orange beaks and white "caps," they inhabit the Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia,





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and the Falkland Islands.

Macaroni Penguin: Recognizable by their bright orange crest feathers, they are found on sub-Antarctic islands and the Antarctic Peninsula.

Rockhopper Penguin: These small penguins with spiky yellow and black feathers on their heads live on sub-Antarctic islands and parts of southern South America.

Humboldt Penguin: Native to the coasts of Peru and Chile, they live in a warmer climate compared to most other penguin species.

Galápagos Penguin: The only penguin species found north of the equator, they inhabit the Galápagos Islands off the coast of Ecuador.

Magellanic Penguin: Found along the coasts of Argentina, Chile, and the Falkland Islands, they are named after the Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan.

African Penguin: Also known as the "Jackass Penguin" due to their donkey-like bray, they live along the southwestern coast of Africa.



What do penguins eat?

Penguins have a diverse diet that varies depending on their species and habitat. Here's a general overview of what penguins typically eat:

Krill: Small shrimp-like crustaceans are a primary food source for many penguin species, especially those in Antarctic and sub-Antarctic regions.

Fish: Different types of fish, such as sardines, anchovies, and silverfish, make up a significant portion of the diet for many penguin species.

Squid: Some penguin species, particularly those that dive deeper, consume small squid and other cephalopods.

Other Crustaceans: In addition to krill, penguins may also eat other small crustaceans like amphipods and copepods.





Sea Swells

Penguin Primer by Gary Lehman



Penguins are excellent hunters who use their streamlined bodies and powerful flippers to "fly" through the water, precisely catching their prey. They also rely on their agility to avoid predation by orcas and leopard seals. Depending on the species, they can dive to varying depths, with some, like the Emperor Penguin, diving up to 500 meters (1,640 feet) in search of food. Their diet ensures they get the necessary nutrients to survive in harsh environments. Penguins feed their chicks by regurgitating partially digested food, providing them with a nutritious start in life. *(This mix is particularly delicious with Frank's Red Hot Sauce!)*



How long do penguins live if they avoid being eaten, and what are the predators that want to make a meal out of them?

The lifespan of penguins varies depending on the species, but generally, they live between 15 to 20 years in the wild. Some species, such as the Emperor Penguin, can live up to 25 years. Penguins can live even longer in captivity, where they are protected from predators and have access to regular food supplies.

As for predators, penguins face threats both on land and in the water:

Land Predators:

- **Skua:** These large seabirds prey on penguin eggs and chicks. They are particularly problematic for species that nest on open ground.
- **Giant Petrel:** Another seabird that can prey on young and occasionally adult penguins, especially those sick or injured.
- **Sheathbill:** These birds are known to steal penguin eggs and scavenge on dead penguins

Marine Predators:

- **Leopard Seal:** One of the primary predators of penguins in the water, leopard seals are fast and agile hunters. They primarily prey on young and adult penguins.
- **Orca:** These large marine mammals occasionally hunt penguins, although they prefer larger prey like seals.





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- **Sea Lions:** Found in regions like South America, sea lions can also pose a threat to penguins when they venture into the water. Despite these natural predators, penguin populations are more significantly threatened by human activities, such as overfishing, climate change, and habitat destruction.

Why are there no penguins in the Northern Hemisphere or the Arctic? Could they live there?

Theoretically, if penguins had access to their usual food sources and suitable breeding areas, they could survive there. But there are a few hurdles they'd have to overcome. Penguins are native to the Southern Hemisphere, so they've adapted to those specific conditions. The Arctic is home to different predators (like polar bears) and environmental conditions that penguins aren't used to. But if presented with an environment where food, breeding areas, and those pesky predators aren't a problem, then penguins might be able to thrive.



But penguins cannot fly. (...Or, CAN they?) Penguins are incredibly 'aerodynamic' underwater. We have all seen this in aquariums. And some of us might have watched penguins underwater in the Galapagos and elsewhere. Penguins are incredible swimmers and have adapted perfectly to life in the water. They do indeed "fly" through the water with the following physical characteristics:

- **Streamlined Bodies:** Penguins have torpedo-shaped bodies that reduce drag and allow them to glide smoothly through the water.
- **Powerful Flippers:** Penguins use their flippers like wings to propel themselves underwater. These flippers are strong and rigid, allowing them to generate powerful thrusts with each stroke, similar to how birds use their wings to fly through the air.
- **Efficient Movement:** Penguins flap their flippers in an up-and-down motion, creating lift and thrust that propel them forward. Their flippers are highly efficient, enabling them to reach impressive speeds of up to 15 miles per hour - then rapidly swerving left, right, up, or down to catch prey (or avoid becoming prey).
- **Adapted Musculature:** Penguins have strong muscles, especially in their chest and flippers, providing the power needed for rapid and agile swimming. These muscles are adapted to endure long periods of swimming and diving.
- **Buoyancy Control:** Penguins can control their buoyancy by adjusting the amount of air in their lungs and specialized air sacs. This allows them to dive to various depths and stay submerged for extended periods. WE SCUBA DIVERS should only have such buoyancy control!

Hydrodynamic Feathers: Penguins' tightly packed and water-resistant feathers create a smooth surface that minimizes resistance. They also have a layer of air trapped under their feathers, which provides insulation and buoyancy.

Their ability to "fly" underwater enables them to hunt for fish and other prey with remarkable precision and escape predators like



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Penguin Primer by Gary Lehman



leopard seals that want to make a meal out of them.

Speaking of which, what do penguins taste like?

Penguins are fascinating and adorable creatures. That said, various international laws and conservation efforts are required to protect them. It is illegal to hunt or consume penguins. Historically, however, explorers in Antarctica sometimes resorted to eating penguins due to limited food supplies. They described the taste as a cross between fish and poultry, with a notably oily texture. Not exactly a gourmet dish, but when faced with extreme survival situations, they made do with what was available.

In this column, we often discuss recipes for the animals we encounter! Historically, some early Antarctic explorers, like those on the expeditions of Sir Ernest Shackleton and Captain Robert Falcon Scott, did consume penguins when food supplies ran low. Their journals often described these meals, but detailed recipes were not recorded or passed down. I don't think the time-honored rule of 20 minutes per pound would work very well – (remember, longer if stuffed)! (I should add that when I asked our lecturer this question on our cruise about penguin recipes, she was unhappy to get the question - and I was lightly scolded. (Especially after I responded that sailors' journals from Elephant Island reported that the Starbucks located there did a brisk business selling Frank's Red Hot Sauce for the penguin entrees!))

How many chicks do they have?

The number of chicks a penguin has can vary depending on the species:

Emperor Penguin: These penguins typically lay a single egg per breeding season.

The parents take turns keeping the egg warm on their feet, covered by a brood pouch.

King Penguin: Similar to the Emperor Penguin, King Penguins usually lay one egg per breeding season. Both parents share the responsibility of incubating the egg.

Adélie Penguin: Adélie Penguins generally lay two eggs per breeding season. The parents incubate both eggs, but often, only one chick survives due to harsh conditions and competition for resources.

Chinstrap Penguin: These penguins typically lay two eggs per breeding season. Both parents take turns incubating the eggs and caring for the chicks.

Gentoo Penguin: Gentoo Penguins usually lay two eggs per breeding season. Both parents participate in the incubation and care of the chicks.



We have seen how penguins always return to their chicks after feeding. Imagine that - thousands of squawking chicks - how in the world can Mom and Dad find their own chicks? How could they know they have discovered THEIR chicks? Yet, penguins can find their own chicks among thousands of others in a crowded colony. They rely on several key mechanisms to identify and locate their chicks:

Vocalization: Each penguin chick has a unique call, and parent penguins learn to recognize this distinct call. The parents imprint the chick's squawks and vice versa. When returning from feeding trips, parent penguins call out, and their chicks respond with their calls, allowing them to find each other in the noisy and crowded colony.

Scent: While vocalization is the primary method, some researchers believe that penguins might also use their sense of smell to recognize their chicks. Although not as well-studied, this sense could be supplementary to chick recognition.

Visual cues: Penguins also use visual landmarks and cues to navigate the colony. While visual recognition is not the primary method due to the uniform appearance of chicks, it might help parents get close enough to hear their chick's call.



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These adaptations ensure that parent penguins can efficiently locate and care for their own chicks, which is crucial for the survival of both the chicks and the colony.

How cold and windy does it get? How do the penguins survive?

Cold temperatures:

The average temperature during the winter months (April to September) can plunge to about -60°C (-76°F) and even lower. The lowest temperature ever recorded on Earth was -89.2°C (-128.6°F) at the Soviet Union's Vostok Station in Antarctica on July 21, 1983.

During the summer months (October to March), temperatures on the coast can reach around -2°C (28°F) to 8°C (46°F), while inland temperatures remain much colder.

Windy conditions:

Antarctica is known for its katabatic winds, which are gravity-driven winds that descend from the high interior of the continent toward the coast. These winds can reach speeds of over 200 km/h (124 mph).

The windiest place on Earth, Commonwealth Bay in Antarctica, regularly experiences wind speeds of around 80 km/h (50 mph) and gusts exceeding 240 km/h (150 mph).

What explains the rotational behavior when the penguins are outside in the brutal Antarctic winters?

(The penguins somehow "know" to share the burden of being on the outside of the circle, bearing the full fury of the cold and wind)... This behavior is called **huddling**. Emperor penguins, for example, form large, tightly packed groups to conserve heat and protect themselves from the brutal cold and wind. Within these huddles, they rotate from the frigid outer edge to the warmer inner part of the circle. This constant rotation ensures that all members of the group survive the winter weather during bad storms.



This behavior is rooted in DNA-level **instinct and also social factors**. The instinctual part is deeply embedded in their biology and passed down through generations.

The social aspect involves recognizing the need to work together for the survival of the group. Whether or not this is a sign of sentient behavior is beyond this article's scope; it is a remarkable example of teamwork and cooperation in the animal kingdom.

Another less exalted explanation is that the penguins in the interior part of the circle may get either overheated or de-oxygenated from rebreathed air, and self-initiate rotation to 'cool off' or get more air; this sustains the rotational cycling from outside to inside, then back to outside – until the stormy weather subsides.

What would happen if a humpback, during lunge feeding, accidentally ingested a penguin?



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Penguin Primer by Gary Lehman



In the hypothetical situation where a humpback whale accidentally ingests a penguin during lunge feeding, the penguin would likely experience a rather dramatic and unfortunate end. However, the humpback whale would likely be unaffected. Here's why:

Size difference: Humpback whales are filter feeders, meaning they usually consume small prey like krill and small fish. Their throats are relatively small—just about the size of a grapefruit—making it difficult for them to swallow larger objects.

Filtration process: When humpback whales lunge feed, they take in large volumes of water and prey. They then use their baleen plates to filter out the water, trapping the prey inside. Ingesting a penguin would be unusual and unintended, and the whale would likely expel it during filtration.

Biological incompatibility: If the penguin were somehow to make it past the filtration stage, it would likely be expelled as the whale couldn't digest such a large and solid creature.

If the penguin were lucky, it might be expelled very quickly and would probably survive. The humpback would try very hard to get rid of it pronto because its throat is only the size of a grapefruit.

Want to meet some penguins in person?

YouTube: [Nature: Penguins in Antarctica | Watch](#) these adorable gentoo penguins tending to their newborn chicks. We were at this very same spot a year ago. You may notice similar views in my photos and video here.

The New York Aquarium at Coney Island in Brooklyn is home to penguins, which you can see at the Sea Cliffs exhibit! Penguins also live in these other local venues if you don't want to deal with Brooklyn traffic: **Central Park Zoo** in Manhattan features several penguin species, including Chinstrap, Gentoo, and King Penguins;

Bronx Zoo also has penguins; the Long Island Aquarium in Riverhead has a Penguin Pavilion that houses African Penguins; and finally, the **Adventure Aquarium** in Camden, New Jersey, is home to Little Blue Penguins.

Enjoy— but leave the hot sauce at home, **PLEASE !!!!**





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Your TSSC Social and Dive Calendar

2025

- 15-16 Mar—Boston Sea Rovers
- 29-30 Mar—Beneath The Sea
- 12 Apr—Dive Club Film Festival
- 26 Apr—Earth Day—Ossining
- 26 Apr— 121st Explorers Club Annual Dinner—Glasshouse, NYC
- 18 May –Orchard Beach Cleanup—City Island
- 11-18 Jul—Wakatobi—Indonesia
- Post trip—18-21Jul —Bali—Land —Indonesia
- 2-4 Aug —Lake George—Hearthstone Campgrounds
- 9 Aug—TSSC Summer BarBQ
- (Oct—Member SCUBA Trip—SoCal?)
- 25 Oct —37th LIDA Film Festival – Hofstra
- 8 Nov - Explorers Club—Sea Stories
- 11-14 Nov - DEMA Show—Orlando
- Dec ??? —Holiday Party

Membership Meetings—Second Wednesdays—Sir John's, N White Plains
Directors Meetings—Last Wednesdays

(; Post on your refrigerator ;)



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THE DIVE CLUB

FILM FESTIVAL

Featuring...



Richard Simon
"The Discovery of the Defender in the Long Island Sound"



Jennifer Sellitti
"Everything is Possible: the 2024 Le Lyonnais Discovery"



Nuno Gomes
"Deep Ambition"
Karen's World
Record Deep Dive



John Bricker
"The Sinking of the U.S.S. San Diego when the Great War Came to America"



T.B.A..
Stay tuned to be the first to hear when our next featured speakers are announced!

APRIL 12, 2025 AT 6:00 PM

65 Champlin Avenue East Islip, NY 11730

\$75 Admission – Tickets available online

Come join us for an evening filled with underwater adventures and cinematic wonders! The first ever Dive Club Film Festival showcases the beauty of ocean and cave depths through a selection of captivating films from renowned industry professionals that will leave you in awe. Grab your friends and family and immerse yourself in the magic of diving from world-record-breaking dives to adrenaline-filled discovery expeditions.

Dinner

Music

Open Bar

Raffle Prizes



WWW.TinyURL.com/TDCFilmFest



Sea Swells

TSSC 50th ANNIVERSARY CLUB TRIP - July 11- July 18, 2025

LIMITED TO 20



STAY AT Wakatobi Dive Resort (Ocean Bungalow)

7 night package includes all meals, drinks, airport-hotel transfer, private charter r.t. Wakatobi- Bali, park fees, and nitrox. Does not include flights to Bali. Flights to be announced.

DIVE with: Wakatobi Dive Resort (on site) Unlimited dives www.wakatobi.com

Brochure: <https://blog.wakatobi.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Wakatobi-Brochure-1023.pdf>

TOTAL PRICE: \$5,387 DIVER/ \$4,395 NON-DIVER (BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY)

With comps (need 20 participants) \$4,890/diver- no comps for non-divers

DEPOSIT \$1,000 DEADLINE 4/1/24

(Venmo: TheScubaSportsClub@Sports-Club / Zelle: mysheribaby61@gmail.com or check)

Payment schedule:

\$1,000 by 7/1/24

\$1,000 by 12/1/24

Balance by 3/12/25

Bali Land Tour scheduled prior to Wakatobi. Stay tuned for details

NON MEMBER PRICE ADD 10%

NO REFUNDS OF DEPOSIT MONIES AFTER 4/1/24 DEADLINE

COMPS ON THIS TRIP TO BE DETERMINED

MUST SIGN TSSC TRAVEL AND CANCELLATION POLICY

MUST SUBMIT SEALED TSSC MEDICAL FORM AND WAIVER

DIVERS MUST HAVE DAN INSURANCE

NOTE:

- DO NOT BOOK FLIGHTS UNTIL YOU HAVE RECEIVED JACK'S CONFIRMATION
 - FIRST COME FIRST SERVED ON BOOKING
 - TSSC RESERVES RIGHT TO CANCEL FOR LOW PARTICIPATION (FULL REFUNDS)
- PLEASE EMAIL JACK WITH QUESTIONS jjarchitect1@gmail.com

SOLD OUT

WAITING LIST NOW OPEN FOR INTERESTED MEMBERS



Sea Swells

SCUBA Networking

Training, Services and Equipment

Captain Mike's Diving Services - 530 City Island Avenue, City Island, NY 10464 -(718) 885-1588
- captainmikesdiving.com - 5 Star PADI Dive Center

SCUBA New York—2037 Central Park Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10710—(914) 779-2966—
scubanewyork.com/ - on-site, heated pool -Five Star PADI Instructor Development Center

Abyss SCUBA—29 Marble Ave, Pleasantville, NY 10570—(914) 244-3483 - abyss-scuba.net—Tue
- Fri 12am - 6pm, Sat 11am - 6pm Sun, Mon - Appt Only. Offer a complete range of scuba diving
classes, from Discover Scuba through Dive Master, Instructor, and Technical Diving.

The Ski & Scuba Connection LLC—26 Saint Roch Ave, Greenwich, CT, 06830, skiandscubaconnection.com (203) 629-4766

Pan Aqua Diving, Inc. 460 West 43rd St New York , NY, 10036 panaqua.com/ (212) 736-3483

Adventure Scuba Inc 1737 York Avenue New York, NY, 10128 www.adventurescubany.com

Dive Sites

Lake Hydra Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The successor to Dutch Springs. **Opened April 20th, 2024.**
Advance reservations and online ticket codes are required. Divers/students must be accompanied by
an insured dive professional with credentials copied to Lake Hydra.

Lake Minnewaska State Park Preserve Scuba diving is allowed in this NYS park

Miscellaneous

New Jersey Scuba Diving a website dedicated to exploring the New Jersey / New York region under-
water, sometimes referred to as "Wreck Valley".

Aquatic Explorers Scuba Club—Dutchess County SCUBA Club

MoonTide Charter- Capt Joe Somers 94 Hudson Park New Rochelle NY 10805 914-447-2504
moontidecharter@optonline.net EDBA Member

Long Island Divers Association (LIDA) - 814 Montauk Highway, Bayport, NY 11705
lidaonline.com



Sea Swells

Our 50th year serving the local and northeast dive community!



Friggin Zigahn Ver 3.0



The Friggin' Zigahn Award has been around since at least 1985.

Sometime in the early 1980's (before 1985) **Captain Bill Clark** (skipper of Lady Kasey) found an old mounted goat head for sale. He bought it because it resembled **Armand 'Zig' Zigahn** who also had a goatee. Zig founded **The Scuba Sports Club** and later **Beneath The Sea**. At the time, Zig always wore a



shark tooth around his neck, so one was added to the goat head. The goat head also sported a pair of glasses. The goat head became an annual award called the Friggin' Zigahn given to the diver who had the **most memorable screwup of the year**. Years later the head was in bad shape so a plastic one (**Version 2.0**) was purchased.

This year, the award was given to our president, Gene Micelli, for loosing track of the Version 2.0 Friggin Zigahn and not realizing that in fact it was in his possession in a shopping bag in his basement. That being said, it was time to replace the torn and tattered **2.0**. And so, **Version 3.0** was created.

The new award trophy features a metal goat, fully equipped to start diving. He has a mask, snorkel, fins, regulator, and a tank of laughing gas.

Long live the Friggin Zigahn.

Historical references by Kenny Salstrom





Sea Swells



Dr Soliman Shenouda has left our Planet



Dr. Soliman Shenouda, has left our planet, but not without an incredible legacy.

Dr. Soliman was not only the most kind, most generous man I got to know, but also someone who lived life to its full potential, he had many facets where he excelled at each and everyone of them.

The scientist, who has an incredible portfolio of research and patents in the the field of Food biochemistry in affiliation with The University of Washington. His research, has transformed the industry of food production. I remember when he used to test the TV dinners at the beginning of their development and I was there, they were called the Hungry man meals and I used to laugh with him and called them the Angry man meals, as they were at their early days when I first visited him.

An incredible career where he reached the heights of corporate life as the VP of Latin America for Philipp Morris and Kraft Foods.

Flying, was his greatest passion, started at an early age of 16, where he founded with two friends the Gliding Club of Egypt in Cairo, that exists till today. A wonderful passion and talent, for flying planes and Helicopters, taught flying to others and did a lot of acrobatic flying.

SCUBA Diving, where he did the same, and took it to the level of becoming an instructor, was also the flame behind starting the first underwater National Park of Egypt at Ras Mohamed on The Red Sea.

An artist in his own right, a painter and an expert on Renaissance art. Could read Ancient Egypt's Hieroglyph Language, and a scholar of Ancient Egypt's history.

A humanitarian, who dedicated the Month of March of every year, to teach mentally challenged children how to ski.

A loving, guiding uncle to me and all his nephews and nieces, he will remain a flame for passion and excellence in our hearts forever.

Sol, we miss you, but are happy celebrating your reunion with sisters, brothers and loved ones, all welcoming you in the new heavenly world where all is possible and free.

With my love and admiration, I bid you farewell, till we all meet again,

Wael

January 16, 1940 – March 7, 2025

Solimen was an early member of TSSC and was instrumental in assisting Zig getting BTS off the ground.



Sea Swells



Remembering Eugene Micelli and Nicol Fortuna

We are deeply saddened to announce the passing of Eugene J. Miceli on January 13, 2025, the father of our current president Gene Micelli and the passing of Nicola Fortuna, the father of Melissa Fortuna Micelli, on February 12, 2025

Eugene Joseph Miceli, a longtime Mamaroneck resident, died peacefully on January 13, 2025, after a long illness, at the age of 77. He was born on November 8, 1947 in San Fili, Cosenza, Italy, to the late Valente and Concetta (Aiello) Miceli and came to the United States as a young boy. After graduating from New Rochelle High School he entered the U.S. Army and served as a sergeant with the 37th Signal Battalion in Vietnam. He owned an Arnold Bakery franchise and delivered their products throughout lower Westchester for over 40 years. He was affectionately known as “Uncle Gene” to his many customers. He enjoyed hunting and fishing, although his two great passions were cooking and love of his family.



In 1963, at the age of 16, Nicola Fortuna came to New York with his family, and they settled in New Rochelle. He worked at Bonnie Briar Country Club in Larchmont, NY, for over 40 years. Nick enjoyed gardening, fishing, traveling, and cooking for his family. His door was always open, and his table was always full of family and friends. He was born February 23, 1947 and was age 77 at his passing. He was the father of Melissa Fortuna-Micelli, a long time TSSC member and Gene’s support.



The TSSC community puts out it’s sympathy and prayers to the Micelli family for the passing of their two paternal figures.