

DIVER DOWN NEWS

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE DIVE CLUB

President's Letter — January 2026

Hello everyone!

February is here, and while winter may have slowed down our local diving, it definitely hasn't slowed down the club. It's been great to see everyone staying involved and sharing what they've been up to during the colder months.

We kicked off the "Where in the World Is the Dive Club?" contest in January and have already received some awesome submissions. To participate, all you need to do is take a photo of yourself wearing your Dive Club t-shirt or sweatshirt while you're on a dive trip. We'll track how far you've traveled, feature the photos in the newsletter, and award prizes at the end of the year based on distance traveled. Even if your trip isn't as far as some of the others, please keep sending them in, it's been a lot of fun seeing where everyone ends up.

We're also excited about our speaker for this month's meeting. Please join us on February 3 as we welcome Chris Paparo, who will be speaking about Long Island's Tropical Drifters: Caribbean Visitors in Our Waters. It's a fascinating topic and a great reminder that you don't always have to travel far to see something special beneath the surface.

Also, t-shirt and sweatshirt orders will be available for pickup at the February meeting. If you didn't place an order, don't worry, we'll have a few extras available as well.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the meeting and catching up soon.

~Courtney Lyons, President



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February 2026
Volume 37, Issue 2

MONTHLY MEETING

The Dive Club holds monthly meetings monthly on the first Tuesdays.
Location: The Tap Room in Bayshore

EST ★ 2011

TAP ROOM

44 E Main St. #46
Bay Shore, NY 11706
(631) 665-2000

Support our host and wait staff. Additional “Event Gratuity” on each bill.
And don't forget cash for our 50/50 raffle!

Arrive for dinner as early as 6:30pm. Meetings commence at 8pm.



February 3, 2026

The Dive Club presents

Christ Paparo ~ “Fish Guy Photos”

Long Island's Tropical Drifters: Caribbean Visitors in Our Waters



Dive into the captivating world of tropical marine life that makes its way to Long Island each summer! Discover the vibrant fish, crabs, shrimp, and other exotic creatures that hitch a ride on the Gulf

Stream from the Caribbean, bringing a touch of the tropics to our coastal waters.

Born and raised on Long Island (New York), Chris Paparo has been exploring the wilds of the Island for over 30 years. He is a wildlife photographer, writer, and lecturer who enjoys bringing public awareness to the diverse wildlife that call the island home.



His passion for coastal ecology, fishing, and the outdoors led him to obtain a BS in Marine Science from LIU/Southampton and currently manage the Marine Sciences Center

at the Southampton campus of Stony Brook University.

Chris is an award-winning member of the Outdoor Writers Association of America and the New York State Outdoor Writers Association. He is also a freelance writer for several fishing and wildlife-related publications. Although his work tends to focus on marine life, everything in the natural world is fair game. 🐟





MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Club Membership year is January 1 to December 31, and each year club members must fill out an application form and waiver specific to that year along with submitting annual dues. Forms must be filled out and submitted for your safety as well as the Dive Club's and are necessary to participate in our club dives and activities. These forms and timely payment of your dues keep you in good and active standing with the club.



TDC APPLICATION INFO & INSTRUCTIONS

Fill out the application, which is available for download on the The Dive Club's webpage (thediveclub.com/membership) and at the back of this newsletter. Please fill out the application on your computer, print to sign, and then scan and email to Bill Cadden (below).

If filling out by hand, please use **black ink** and write legibly. If scanning it in via phone, please crop out any areas that are not part of the forms (aka the surface from which you took the image).

ALL SIGNATURES MUST BE HAND SIGNED, NO ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES ACCEPTED.

The application consists of the Data Sheet, Wavier, and Membership Directory (4 pages total)

The Data Sheet keeps your information current and updated, including emergency contacts (who should be someone other than your typical dive buddy). The waivers is needed for safety and protection year over year. Finally, the Directory sheet is to add you to our membership directory and keep that fresh as well.

For Family Memberships, EACH PERSON IN THE FAMILY UNIT needs to fill out a Form and Sign it. Print out the form so you can sign **ALL Pages**, and **Initial the Waiver** where indicated. **PARENTS**, you must sign the Waiver for your Children under the age of 18. **No Digital Signatures please.**

When you sign the Waiver, PLEASE DATE IT January 1 of the waiver year.

Scan the pages and save as a *.pdf, using your Last Name for the File Name (ex: Cadden.pdf), and email it to Corresponding Secretary, Bill Cadden at Membership.TheDiveclub@GMail.com

Individual memberships for 2026 are \$25. Family memberships are \$35.

You can **Pay your Dues** by one of 3 ways:

1. Pay Cash at the meeting or if you run into an Officer (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, or Corresponding Secretary).
2. Pay by Check, either at a Meeting, to an Officer, or via mail to the P.O. Box.
 - * If you use a Business Check, make sure you include a note telling us who it is for.
 - * If your Family Unit has multiple Last Names, please let us know who is included.
3. Venmo to the Treasurer, Gus Bricker.
 - * If you need Venmo directions, please contact the Treasurer at info@thediveclub.com.
 - * If your Family Unit has multiple Last Names, please let us know who is included.





MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 6, 2026

RECORDED BY NORMA LEON

- 🐟 New Years Day dive was blustery and Cold with one Brave Polar Plunger - Alex E., no gear but he went in. All the rest were “surface support” and standing next to the building being shielded from the wind. Nice tradition with Bagels and hot chocolate.
- 🐟 Newsletter this past week featured our new segment: Where in the World is the Dive Club? First admission was placed. New contest where you go diving takes you, take TDC club swag and take a selfie. Started Jan 1- Dec.31, 2026. Rules of the contest are as follows: Take dive gear swag with you , go on a Dive trip, take a selfie of yourself wearing it on a dive boat, resort or wherever you are, send it in, we will put it in the newsletter and we will be calculating how many miles it is away from Bay Shore, Long Island and whoever travels the farthest will get a prize. You do see that our first participant went quite far. So If you have a trip coming, don't be afraid of submitting it. There will be surprises for the runner up. So congrats to Jake.
- 🐟 We are also accepting committee heads for this season:
 - 🐟 Oak Beach Wednesday evenings in Babylon: That includes bringing the BBQ (that the club supplies). Not every week though—can take turns and hand it off.
 - 🐟 Weekend Beach Dives: In the past years we have sent out zoom meetings where anyone who wants to contribute help decide where we will be going join in and help plan the schedule. We are still looking for someone to be the leader of those dives. We are still looking for someone to take attendance and be there every weekend. Hopefully we will have volunteers for these committees as we have had a lack of participation these past few years.
 - 🐟 Wreck Diving: Which involves talking to some local captains. Whoever is left and try to plan some wreck dives.





MINUTES (CONT'D)

- 🐟 Regarding wreck diving: Courtney spoke to Jim from the Gypsy Blood out of Pt Pleasant, NJ: Sunday, June 7 to the Totten, 95ft, 6 spots left. And on Saturday, September 5 to the Coney Island, 80-120ft to sand, 6 spots left.
- 🐟 Passed to Bill Cadden about Membership renewal. Regular members are paid up, hopefully improved participation and members do their paperwork. Dues are now \$25 and \$35.
- 🐟 Glen Whepley informed Bill about the next Fresh Pond Exploratory Dives will be the weekend before Memorial Day, the 16th and 17th of May. The local Fresh Pond Association will be hosting the event, providing food, refreshments and offering support. Also in conjunction with the explorers club, they will have a flag there. If you are familiar with the Explorers Club, a flag event is a big thing with them. Glen will be at the April meeting to give us more details on what the work plan is, what the goal of the dive is this year. Mark it in your calendars if you are thinking about participating.
- 🐟 Speaker for next month is Chris Paparo, also known as “Fish Guy Photos”. That one is going to be great, you guys don’t want to miss it!
- 🐟 Any other speakers that you would like to recommend, please let Courtney know, there is a whole year to fill up..
- 🐟 The club would like to acknowledge our wonderful wait staff, especially Bianca. Thanks for always being so welcoming and Happy Holidays to her!!
- 🐟 Thanks to Gus for the Christmas Party!!
- 🐟 Motion to approve the December meeting minutes was approved.





NEW CONTEST

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THE DIVE CLUB?

Dive Club Travel Contest/Challenge Instructions

1. Pack Your Dive Club Swag: Bring a piece of your dive club swag with you on any 2026 dive trips.
2. Take a Selfie: Snap a selfie of you wearing or displaying your swag at each destination.
3. Share Your Photos: Once you have your selfies, collect them for submission.
4. Tracking Miles: At the end of the year, Courtney will review all submitted photos to calculate how many miles each member has traveled.
5. Win a Prize: The member who has traveled the farthest will win a prize next year!
6. No Swag? No Problem: If you don't have any swag, reach out to Courtney. She will arrange to get you a piece with the club logo.

Participate and showcase your travels while representing our dive club!



NEW SUBMISSIONS

🧑‍🦯 Barry & Maureen Lipsky

🌐 Raja Ampat, Indonesia

🌐 9,317 miles

🧑‍🦯 Mary Davis & others

🌐 Blue Grotto -
Williston, Florida

🌐 940 miles

🧑‍🦯 Norma Leon

🌐 Tortola, Antigua, &
Saint Lucia

🌐 2,000 miles



Past Submission: Jake Griffin
New Zealand - 8,800 miles



SEA SMART 2026 PROGRAMS & SCHOLARSHIPS

APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN FOR THE



2026 SEASmart Ocean Conservation, Marine Science and SCUBA DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP

Talent and passion are evenly distributed,
but opportunity is not.

SeaSmart hopes to provide qualified students with an opportunity to explore their interest in ocean conservation, marine biology and SCUBA diving. This scholarship is offered to address the underrepresentation of women and minorities in marine science studies and will award funding to support their participation in the SeaSmart Summer 2026 program.

In order to be considered for this opportunity, please complete and submit the application at the link below by 3/1/2026. Recipient will be announced by 3/31/2026.

WWW.SEASMARTOCEAN.ORG/DIVERSITY-SCHOLARSHIP

WE'RE LOOKING FOR FEMALE OR NON-BINARY STUDENT APPLICANTS WHO:

Are a member of a minority group(s).
(Including but not limited to: Black,
Latina, Native American, LGBTQ+.)
We are excited to hear your unique
story!

Have a demonstrated interest in
marine science, ocean conservation
and/or a related field as well as in
learning to SCUBA dive.

Are enrolled as a high school student
as of September 2026.

JOIN US IF YOU ARE A SCUBA DIVER OR WANT TO LEARN



2026 MARINE BIOLOGY, OCEAN
CONSERVATION, AND SCUBA ADVENTURE

STUDENTS: JULY 11-JULY 18 ADULT WOMEN: JULY 18-25

PUERTO MORELOS

FIND NEW BUDDIES * BEGINNERS * EXPERIENCED * LEARN TO DIVE

Summer 2026: We will venture to Puerto Morales, known for its proximity to the Mesoamerican Reef, the largest barrier reef in the Western Hemisphere

Along with Scientists & Conservationists, 12 fortunate participants will explore:
SCUBA (Learn during the week if you are not already certified)

Seagrass Studies & Surveys- A critical habitat for many marine species, participants will perform important in-water scientific monitoring techniques capturing data about the sea grass conditions and its inhabitants

Coral Monitoring- Learn the AGGRA coral monitoring methodology leveraging a comprehensive set of visual training tools

Cenotes- Explore the jungle and the natural sinkholes formed by the collapse of limestone bedrock that exposes groundwater, creating natural wells, pools, and caves

More info at: seasmartocean.org/upcoming-programs

LIMITED SEATS
AVAILABLE

Want more information?:

Diversity Scholarship: seasmartocean.org/diversity-scholarship

2026 Student Program: seasmartocean.org/puertomorelos26students

2026 Women's Program: seasmartocean.org/puertomorelos26adults



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

↓ Jan. 1, 2026 - New Years Dive



Steve Bienemann

William Iaconetti

James Campbell

Richard (Rusty)

Edward Chasan

Lukeman

Danna Prather Davis

Victoria Luong

Steven Davis

Tim McMahon

Terrence Fenten

Vadim Paley

Mike Fichter

Anita Eve Perez



2026 LEADERSHIP



President:
Courtney Lyons



Vice President:
John Berntsen



Treasurer:
Gus Bricker



Recording Secretary:
Norma Leon



Corresponding Secretary:
Bill Cadden



Wreck Diving:
[Vacant]



Beach Diving:
Courtney Lyons &
Martin



Oak Beach:
John Bernsten &
Eric Cregren



Camping Trips:
Bruce Russo



T-Shirts & Swag:
[Vacant]



Website:
Jim Vafeas



Social Media:
Jerry Kinkade



Newsletter:
Randi
Hochenberger



APPLICATION DATA SHEET

Name: _____ Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Emergency Contact: Name: _____ Telephone: _____ Relationship: _____

Level of Certification: [] Certifying Agency: [] Date of Certification: []

Student Yes No Years Diving: [] Approx. Number of Dives made: [] Deepest Dive to date: []

Have you ever made a planned decompression dive? Yes No

What are your diving interests? Wreck Diving Shore Diving U/W Photography Deep Diving
(Check all that apply) Spear Fishing Night Diving Artifact Collecting Travel/Vacation
 Environmental Issues

Are you First Aid/CPR certified? Yes No

Are you interested in furthering your present level of certification? Yes No

What are you looking for in a dive club? []

Would you be interested in participating in club committees? Yes No

When are you available for club dives/activities? (Check all that apply): days nights weekends

Do you have Dive Accident Insurance (DAN or other)? Yes No

Are you a member of any other dive clubs? Yes No If so, which ones? []

Membership Type: Please check New Renewal

Single Membership: \$25.00. Full club membership

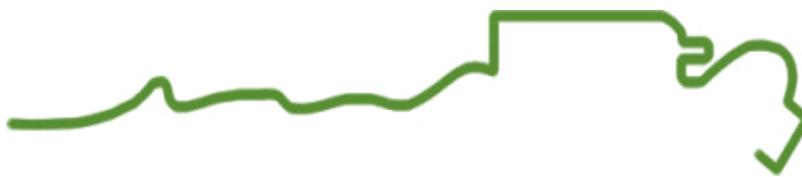
Family Membership: \$35.00. Full Club membership for the person signing up, plus Partner and all children 26 years old and under.

Disclaimer:

I understand that if accepted for membership in The Dive Club, I will be bound by the by-laws of The Dive Club and will be required to sign a waiver of liability and pay the applicable admission fee.

Signature of applicant: _____ Date: _____

Approved by:
Signature/Title of Club officer: _____ Date: _____



LIABILITY RELEASE AND EXPRESS ASSUMPTION OF RISK

This is an important legal document. You may wish to consult an attorney prior to signing it.

This release may be used against you in a court of law if you sue any released person or party.

Please read carefully, **fill in all blanks and initial each paragraph before signing**. Incomplete forms will not be accepted.

I, _____, hereby affirm that I have been advised and thoroughly informed through my open water training of the inherent risks of skin and scuba diving.

- Further, I understand that diving with compressed air involves certain inherent risks; decompression sickness, embolism, or other hyperbaric injuries can occur that require treatment in a recompression chamber. I further understand that any trips of any kind (diving or non-diving), whether sponsored or not, by The Dive Club may be conducted at a site that is remote, either by time or distance or both, from such a recompression chamber. I still choose to proceed with such diving activities in spite of the absence of a recompression chamber in proximity to the dive site(s).
- I understand and agree that neither The Dive Club or any of their respective board members, officers, agents or assigns (hereinafter referred to as "Released Parties"), may be held liable or responsible in any way for any injury, death, or other damages to me or my family, heirs, or assigns that may occur as a result of my participation in any Dive Club activity, or as a result of negligence of any party, including the Released Parties, whether passive or active.
- In Consideration of being allowed to become a member of The Dive Club I hereby personally assume all risks in connection with diving or non-diving activity from any harm, injury or damage that may befall on me, including all risks connected therewith, whether foreseen or unforeseen.
- I further save and hold harmless said Dive Club and Released Parties from any claim or lawsuit by me, my family, estate, heirs, or assigns, arising out of my enrollment and participation in Club events including both claims arising during said event or after said event.
- I Further understand that skin diving and scuba diving are physically strenuous activities and that I will be exerting myself during any diving activity, and that if I am injured as a result of a heart attack, panic, hyperventilation, etc., that I expressly assume the risk of said injuries and that I will not hold the above listed individuals or companies responsible for the same.
- I further state that I am of lawful age and legally competent to sign this liability release, or that I have acquired the written consent of my parent or guardian.
- I acknowledge scuba diving is an activity that is done with a buddy. I will not make a solo dive during a Dive Club event unless I am certified to do so by an accredited training agency and I am equipped to make this dive safely.
- I understand that the terms herein are contractual and are not a mere recital, and that I have signed this document of my own free act.
- I acknowledge that The Dive Club does not provide buddies, gear, transportation, training, or professional advice pertaining to the sport of scuba diving. However, the dive sponsors will do their best to help club members find what they need for a dive by setting up email groups to allow individual club members to coordinate rides, buddies, and rental gear, if necessary.
- The Dive Club does not vet divers or make any determination about whether any diver is qualified to do any given dive. This decision is entirely up to the individual diver, as well as any external dive operator, such as a dive boat captain or resort operator. It is important to evaluate your current experience when making the decision to dive. If you only have experience diving in warm waters with optimal visibility, you should consider the additional challenges associated with northeast diving before making your decision. I expressly assume the risk of any injury or illness for **each and every** dive that I determine to make and hold harmless for the same the above listed companies and individuals.



- I acknowledge that for planned boat charters, the minimum certification and equipment requirements listed in our newsletter are the requirements of the boat captains. Please contact them directly if you have any questions about the suitability of a dive for you.
- I understand that DAN (Divers Alert Network) Insurance or other similar diving accident insurance policies are available to me if I choose to acquire this. I acknowledge that it is my own responsibility to educate myself on the available policies and choose the one, if any, that is appropriate for me. I understand that without this, I will be responsible for any medical bills or damages to my equipment that I incur.
- I recognize that I may receive false or misleading information from one or more club members or non-members pertaining to the relative difficulty of a dive or my ability to safely participate in or perform a dive. Additionally, I acknowledge that one or more club members or non-members may negligently approve of my dive plan, including preparation or intended dive plan, the condition of my equipment, my ability to use my equipment, or proper use of equipment. I understand and agree that **I am responsible for determining whether I am capable of executing** a dive safely, whether I have sufficient information regarding my own physical abilities and the intended dive to base this decision, as well as whether my equipment is in proper working condition and is sufficient for the intended dive. I release The Dive Club and all co-signers who by signing this waiver similarly release me from negligent acts or omissions of this nature.

IT IS THE INTENTION OF _____ BY THIS INSTRUMENT TO EXEMPT AND RELEASE THE DIVE CLUB, AND ALL RELATED ENTITIES AS DEFINED ABOVE, FROM ALL LIABILITY OR RESPONSIBILITY WHATSOEVER FOR PERSONAL INJURY, PROPERTY DAMAGE OR WRONGFUL DEATH HOWEVER CAUSED, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE RELEASED PARTIES, WHETHER PASSIVE OR ACTIVE.

I HAVE FULLY INFORMED MYSELF OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS LIABILITY RELEASE AND EXPRESS ASSUMPTION OF RISK BY READING IT BEFORE I SIGNED IT ON BEHALF OF MYSELF AND MY HEIRS.

Signature of Applicant

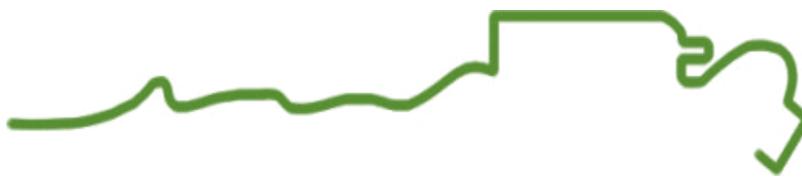
Date

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

Reviewed by Club Officer

Date



Membership Directory Data Sheet

First Name _____

Last Name _____

Telephone Number _____

E-Mail Address _____

I wish to have the above information published in the 2025 Membership Directory to be distributed to the Membership.

Signature of Member _____

Date _____

