

The

TRIDENT

The official publication of the Long Beach Neptunes



June 2019



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October 31, 1936 - May 16, 2019

IMPORTANT

Important Club Announcements

- To improve communications between the general membership and Executive Board, we will be using LBNEPTUNES@yahoo.com from now on, for **ALL COMMUNICATION, including: Fish Applications, Tournament Applications, Questions, Comments, Compliments, Complaints, Newsletter Articles, Annual Dues thru Paypal, and any other PayPal payments.** This will make it convenient and easy to remember rather than having to use separate email for each board member or separate event.
- Funeral Services for Duane Smith will be Thursday June 6th. Time and Location is listed on Page 5.
- 2019 BWM T-Shirts will be available at the next General Meeting. Cost is \$20 ea or two for \$30. Long Sleeve T-Shirts and Sweatshirts will also be available.
- The San Diego Freedivers are considering reviving the Tri-Club Meet, formally known as the “Omer Nielsen Meet”. The recent poll given to the club thru Survey Monkey showed interest among some members. More details will be available as it progresses.
- Family Campout date will be July 12-16th. For more information, contact Lou Rosales @ (310) 469-1639 or Mahtzo1@frontier.com

IMPORTANT

A Message from the President



Fellow Neptunes,

As I write this, I am filled with both sorrow and anticipation. The Neptunes have lost a great member. Duane can never be replaced and it is easy to feel like his kind is disappearing from this world. For those of us who knew him though, we will always be looking for bits and pieces of that wonderful character in each other and in new faces as we nurture and select our next generation of Neptunes.

By the time this is printed, we will have already finished our greatest event of the year, the 2019 Blue Water Meet. Part of the anticipation I feel is not only the ability to compete in such a prestigious and richly historical event, but also to have the honor of presiding over the meet as President. I'm both anxious that the meet goes well and all of the divers return safely to the weigh in at the end of the day, and excited about what we will see on the beach. Who will rise to the top this year? Will it be an old name that has won or placed in the past? A newer diver that will undoubtedly feel so much pride that he or she will have to trade in their shirt for a larger size?

To me, diving competitions are more about sharing a moment in time that can never be replaced or erased with friends and comrades that share a crazy passion for an incredible sport. In years to come, looking back on the 2019 BWM, some people may have a difficult time remembering who exactly had fish to weigh in, or on whose boat they rode over to the meet. Someone may even forget winning the grand prize raffle of a beautiful Koah Bluewater gun. One person, however, will not forget the details of the meet. They will remember everything. How it feels to stand up on stage with the winning fish. How it feels to have many friends cheering congratulations for a great fish and a job well done.

Woven in and amongst the people at the event will undoubtedly be the great competitive attitude and friendly welcoming spirit of divers like Duane and other pioneers and heroes from the history of our great sport.

Dive safe!

Jeff

The Trident is the official newsletter of the Long Beach Neptunes, a Non-Prophet organization. The Trident is published monthly and is provided free of charge to members of The Long Beach Neptunes and Associates.

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2019 Neptune's Calendar

06/05/19 Wed Meeting
 07/03/19 Wed Meeting
07/12 – 07/16 Neptunes Catalina Family Campout
 08/07/19 Wed Meeting
08/17/19 Sat 51st Fathomiers Scramble Meet
 09/04/19 Wed Meeting
 10/02/19 Wed Meeting
10/12/19 Sat Fall Classic
 11/06/19 Wed Meeting
11/30/19 Sat Xmas Dinner @ The Phoenix Klub
 12/04/19 Wed Meeting

Fish Competition 2019

California Awards

Calico Derby	Kyle Brannon (Final)	7.5 lbs
Calico Bass	Open	
White Seabass	John Hughes	61.1 Lbs
Yellowtail	Open	
Halibut	Open	
Sheephead	Robert Strohbach	16.25 lbs
Bonito	Open	
Barracuda	Open	
Dorado	Open	
Wahoo	Open	
Tuna	Open	
Marlin	Open	
Lobster	Open	

Out of State/Country Awards

Yellow Fin Tuna	Masahiro Mori	45.6 lbs
Reef Fish	Open	
Pelagic	Open	

Kent McIntyre Award

Open

Big Fish Perpetual Trophy

John Hughes	61.1 Lb White Seabass
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The Passing of a King Neptune

Duane John Smith

October 31, 1936 - May 16, 2019

Dear LB Neptunes,

It's with a heavy heart that I relay the passing last night of Lifetime Member and King Neptune #10, Duane Smith. Some of you did not have the good fortune of knowing and/or traveling & diving with Duane and his two sons, Steve and Dave. Duane was one of those unique individuals who made the world a better place. He was my Neptune sponsor and we developed a long friendship over time. Most importantly, Duane was also a mentor and example of what being a man, husband, father, and "man of faith" was all about. Duane led by his deeds, and made those around him, especially younger men like me, want to be better. Unfortunately Duane had to stop diving later in life because he suffered from Alzheimer's disease.



Please keep Duane's wife Sue, sons Dave & Steve as well as the entire Smith family in your heart & prayers, and good thoughts. I plan on putting together a story for the newsletter in the near future.

Sincerely,
John Carpenter

Services for Duane John Smith

Fellow Neptunes,

Services for Duane Smith will be held on Thursday June 6th at 10:30 AM at [Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church, 780 South State St, Hemet CA, 92543](#). There will be a reception to follow at 12:00 at the Four Seasons lodge, 237 Four Seasons Blvd., Hemet, CA 92545. Flowers for the service can be ordered online from [McWane Family Funeral Home; www.mcwanefamily.com](#), or call (951) 658-9497.

Duane was a true gentleman, a Lifetime Member, and King Neptune #10. I have fond memories of his hospitality and sense of humor.

The Neptunes will be sending a special flower arrangement to the services, and I hope some of you who knew him will be able to attend.

Thank you.

Jeff Bilhorn

Condolences, flowers, Etc. can be sent to:

**Sue Smith & Family
8061 Hazeltine Ln.
Hemet, CA 92343**

Fellow Neptunes,

There's no doubt that if there were no Duane Smith in this world, I would not be a Neptune and would probably never know the sport of Spearfishing. I would also not be the man I am today.

I went to grade school and high school with Duane's two sons Steve and Dave, both great Freedivers. Duane was a driving force of nature that we all looked up to. He was always in great shape and spearfished with a vengeance. I am not sure how he juggled it all with 7 kids but he ate it up. We were always in the water early and didn't get out till it was too dark to see. I never slept so well.

Duane's best friend in the club was Dale Cote. Dale was like Duane, your classic older gentleman from a generation that was as nice as they were funny. Neither ever had a cross word to say about anyone.

My first trip to Baja was in 1984 with Duane and his son Steve. We took Steve's green Pinto station wagon with a piece of 4x8 plywood on top of my surf racks while dumping stop leak in the oil. We met up with Dale Cote at Bahia de Los Muertos near La Paz. These pictures are from our trip. We gave our fish to the fisherman that took us out in exchange for a ride and he had the fish truck from town waiting for us on the beach after our first day. Needless to say, if I wasn't hooked on Spearfishing after that trip, I never would be!

Duane was funny, gracious, tenacious humble and a true gentleman. He saw in me a freediver. For that, I will always be grateful.

Paul Byrd



Long Beach Neptunes Legend

Duane John Smith

October 31, 1936 - May 16, 2019

"A Life That Mattered"

By John Carpenter

Most people can only hope for a time in their lives when they meet someone who is so special that they make you want to be a better person, husband, father - man. For me and many others, that time was when Duane Smith entered our lives. Duane was an extraordinary individual, and his commitment to faith, family, friends and diving was unmatched. When discussing Duane with others, words like "honest" "humble" "kind" "considerate" "pure gentleman" as well as "tenacious" and "adventurous" were routinely used to describe him. During our many adventures together, Duane often spoke about his once in a lifetime love, Susan "Sue" Landy-Smith, with an unwavering attitude of love, respect, and admiration for everything she has done for him and their family.

Duane met Sue while she was working as an elevator operator in a Minnesota. It was pretty much "love at first sight," and they began courting one another before getting married in 1957. Duane put himself through electronics school and was 1 of 3 top candidates to be recruited by IBM. Part of the job offer was first moving to Los Angeles, CA., before relocating a few times and settling in Norco, Ca. It was in Norco that they spent the majority of their time raising their 5 beautiful daughters (Linda, Kathy, Tracie, Jill, and Christie) and 2 sons (Steve and Dave). Duane also served our country as a Naval Reservist.



Duane first started his freediving obsession by diving various Minnesota lakes as a 16 year old in the early 1950s. In fact, one of the local newspapers wrote an article about Duane and what was thought to be a World Record Carp he speared. He continued diving freshwater lakes until permanently settling in Southern California.



Duane looked into area dive clubs before joining the Long Beach Neptunes. He always kept himself very fit (6'0" tall - 190 lbs of solid muscle!), an extraordinary freediver/spearo, and won many Neptune Big Fish awards over his half century of diving. Duane obtained the coveted King Neptune Award, #10, Mr. Neptune, Lifetime membership, and served as the President of the Long Beach Neptunes in 1976. Duane was also our club auctioneer for well over a decade. Some of his early dive buddies included Neptune legends such as Dale Cote, Bob Stanberry, Harry Ingram, Wes Morrissey, Steve Alexander, Bob Donnell, Bill Green, Mark LaMont, Dewey Hennessy and many others. The competitiveness between Duane and Bob Stanberry was legendary. Duane was also one of the original "mavericks" that blazed the trail for diving Baja California in the late 60's and 70s. His favorite game fish to hunt included Roosterfish, Grouper, Amberjack and Pargo. In fact, Duane once held the World Record for Roosterfish. Duane was well known for his ability to dive quietly and get very close to fish. When

discussing spearguns years ago, I recall Steve Alexander exclaiming, "Well, most of us can't get as close to fish as Duane." Duane was often first in the water and last to exit. When fish appeared scarce and motivation wavered, Duane simply exclaimed, "Well, you're not going to get any fish sitting in the boat!"



I first met Duane's son, Dave, through work in the late 1980s. Like many of us first starting out, I was a scuba diver with no serious intention of becoming a freediver. Why? Well, it was common knowledge that Great White Sharks preferred freedivers! However, that all changed after my first trip to Catalina Island with Duane and his son, Dave, on Duane's 24 foot Reinell "Just For Fun." We were diving off the East End on a very clear, calm afternoon. I recall laying on the surface and watching Duane make repeated, effortless drops through the baitfish to around 40 feet. The water was a deep, clear Indigo blue, and Duane's white hair was flowing in the current as he slowly scanned the depths while holding a custom Jack Brown speargun. I've always likened that image to King Neptune, and it's forever etched in my mind. Later, Duane swam back to the boat with a nice size Yellowtail. He tossed it in the boat, looked up to me and said, "Son, this is what it's all about!" The rest is history - Duane sponsored me and I became a Neptune. Funny part is that a couple years went by without me being officially voted into the club. I had made numerous dive trips with Dale Cote and Duane, Neptune functions, and I wondered if something was wrong. I approached Duane and Dale at one of the monthly meetings and asked them when I was going to be voted upon. They looked surprisingly

at one another and began laughing loudly. Duane said, "We thought we already voted you in the club!" Just prior to me, Duane also sponsored Paul Byrd and they shared some amazing Baja and other dive adventures as well.

Stories of Duane dragging his young sons all over the Pacific Ocean and Baja California are legendary. His first boats were inflatables with small outboards, and they often crossed the channel to Catalina and sometimes San Clemente Islands in their 14' inflatable. Duane loved speeding along in Zodiac style boats, and navigated by charts and a handheld compass he kept secured in a piece of wood between his feet. Duane and his sons would gas up in Avalon, then go diving. Initially, Steve would follow Duane around on the surface like a puppy dog and Dave would fish from the boat. That changed quickly once Duane got them comfortable in the ocean. Both soon had spearguns in their hands



and were banging fish on their own! On one occasion, they returned to the launch ramp after a trip to Catalina Island when someone asked him if he had been out to the “breakwater” with his “little” boys. Duane simply replied that they had been to the “islands.” A lady got so upset that she threatened to call Child Protective Services on Duane!

Duane and his sons were diving San Marcos Island in Baja when the engine on their inflatable failed. Duane took apart the engine’s lower unit and attempted to fix it, but to no avail. As the sun was setting, he threw the anchor and spied a fishing boat at least a ¼ mile away. Steve, the eldest and less than 12 years old, was ordered by Duane to swim to the fishing boat for help. Steve refused initially, stating that he had no problem sleeping in the boat until morning as opposed to swimming in those waters around



dark! Duane insisted, and had him don his fins before guiding him into the water for the swim. As Steve got near the fishing boat, it pulled anchor and began to leave. Steve shouted and waved his arms frantically, and someone noticed him before they left. One of the fisherman plucked Steve from the water with one arm and said, “Where the heck did you come from?” Steve pointed to Dave and Duane stranded far away in the inflatable and told them they were broken down. The fishing boat brought them back to San Bruno where they were camping. Although Steve did not appreciate it at the time, he now sees it as one of Duane’s “character building” moments!



Dave and Steve always got excited when they learned that Duane was taking Sue out for a special dinner. Why? Well, that was the deal he had with Sue before taking the boys on a Baja adventure!

Equally legendary is Duane’s ability to problem solve and fix just about anything. The TV problem solving character, MacGyver, had nothing on Duane Smith! Duane always found a way to repair any of the cars they used on Baja trips - the VW bus, Pinto wagon, Cadillac or Dave’s Ford truck. In fact,

many think he welcomed breakdowns just to see if he could fix them! If you travel Baja enough, breakdowns will happen. To Duane, it was all part of the experience. The stories are numerous of broken fuel pumps, scuba tanks to pressurize fuel tanks, rerouting fuel hoses from portable fuel tanks on top of cars in order to make it back to the states. I'm told that he once used a rolled up piece of carpet and wire he found along the roadway as support for a trailer leaf spring that had broken. I recall Duane, Dave and I returning from Cerralvo Island during some very rough seas. We heard a loud snap, and Duane smiled and said, "That didn't sound good." My inflatable floorboard had snapped badly, but Duane repaired it later with some screws and Duct tape, which allowed us to dive the final morning of our trip!

None of us recall Duane ever using profanity. However, everyone knew he was very upset when he exclaimed, "Judas Priest!" That said, I did pick up one bad habit from Duane and Dale Cote - the infamous 5 gallon bucket dump! We used a 5 gallon bucket filled partially with salt water as a toilet. Not always, but sometimes someone would save the contents of the bucket and dump it right in front of a diver just as they were returning to the boat. I suspect it was a "Neptune" thing - Boys will be boys!

Duane and Dale Cote taught me to make a lot of my own gear. There were not any pure freediving stores like today, and being resourceful went along way. We routinely made our own float lines, tied speargun rubbers, straightened bent shafts, and made smaller items like knife sheaths, weight belts and straps. Duane was notorious for not buying anything that he could fix or make. In fact, much of that has rubbed off on Dave and Steve - sometimes much to the chagrin of their wives!

Duane eventually sold the house and boat in Norco and moved out to Murrieta. I looked up to Duane as a father, and before his illness we shared many dive trips and adventures: La Jolla/Point Loma, Coronado Islands, Ensenada, North SD County and the usual islands. I recall one trip when we took my son Adam, about 10 years old at the time, on a kelp paddy hopping trip south of the Coronado Islands. I dropped off Duane and Adam on a nice paddy that was holding decent size Yellowtail. Duane, being the kind, considerate gentleman that he is, coached Adam instead of taking a shot and spooking the school. The result was Adam landing his first real game fish!



One of the photographs depicts Duane, son Dave and I after one of the many particularly successful Baja trips circa 1990s. It was one of my first Baja trips where we literally shot hundreds of pounds of fish. Although we gave away a lot of fish, we still filled 3 large coolers before leaving for the long drive back to the US. As we passed San Quintin, Duane decided to stop and look for the Kelly Catian family (dive friend of the Neptunes who lived there). Once we found them, he gave away some of our fish to his family; they were very thankful.



Before Duane moved away and before his illness worsened, he sometimes stopped by my house holding his favorite drink, Mountain Dew. He always asked about my family and we discussed old dive trips on the back patio. We golfed occasionally. After he stopped diving, I often brought him fish while he was still living in Murrieta. After one occasion, he cornered me and told me that I did not have to keep bringing him fish. Further, he told me that he had long since forgiven me for taking such a long, irresponsible shot and scaring off that school of big Yellowtail years ago off Catalina Island!

Duane also developed an interest in prospecting/metal detecting later in life and continued his quest for adventure. He joined others that searched beaches and the desert for hidden treasures.

Although the pictures represent a history of spearfishing, Duane would also encourage us to consider those things that mattered most to him: faith, family, respect for others, and showing appreciation for the many blessings of life. He was always active in his church and volunteered for various opportunities to give back to his community. He is literally an icon to his family, friends, and the spearfishing community.



Far too many people go through life wondering if their life really mattered. They have regrets or possibly concerns during their final years. Duane would be humble about this, but I'll take the opportunity to say that Duane lived "*A Life That Really Mattered.*" A life full of love, family, concern for others and adventure! Not only are Duane and his dear wife Sue role models, but they provided the world with 7 wonderful children who have also brought joy & happiness to so many other lives.

The world is a bit emptier without Duane in it's presence, but he'll live forever in the heart & souls of his family, friends, and the many others that he touched.



Rest in peace my dear friend - Until we meet again.

56th Annual Long Beach Neptunes Blue Water Meet 2019



The Long Beach Neptunes Sweeps the 2019 Blue Water Meet

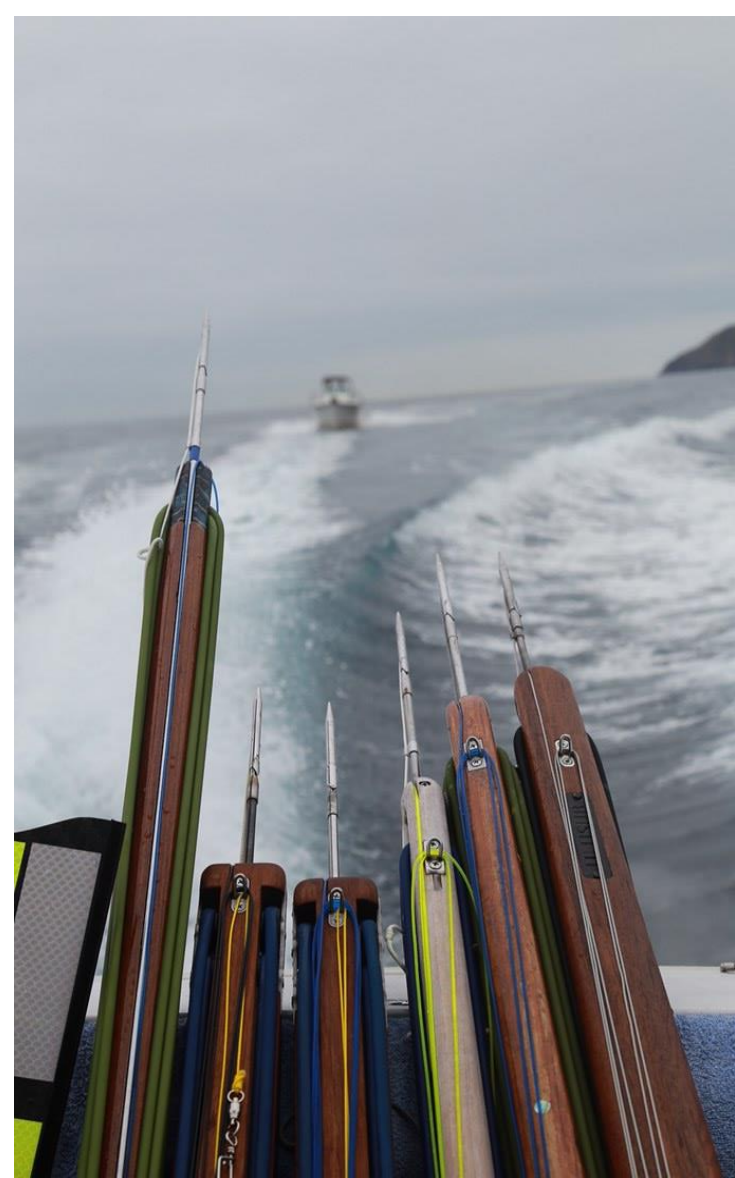
Catalina Island, June 1, 2019

Sixty Six registered competitors from spearfishing clubs throughout So. California gathered at Catalina Island to compete for the most prestigious and historical Spearfishing Meet in the US. There were only 5 fish landed, all Yellowtail, taken by members of the Long Beach Neptunes. Todd Farquhar took first place with nice 36 lb Yellowtail, closely followed by President Jeff Bilhorn, with a 34.4 lb fish. Despite the numerous boasting and bragging by certain members of the LA Fathomiers prior to the meet, unfortunately, none of them were able to land a fish. Although this is an individual meet, there has always been friendly rivalry between the two clubs, which always adds to the fun and bragging rights. Regardless of the low fish turnout, a great time was enjoyed by all who attended. The Biggest Winners of the day included John Carpenter, who won a custom Koah Bluewater Speargun and Steve Parkford, who won a one of a kind Handmade fillet knife made by the well renowned artist, Todd Norell. The Long Beach Neptunes would like to thank all those who competed and especially to those who contributed the time and effort to organize the meet.

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| 1. Todd Farquhar | LB Neptunes | 36.0 lb. Yellowtail |
| 2. Jeff Bilhorn | LB Neptunes | 34.4 lb. Yellowtail |
| 3. Jeff Benedict | LB Neptunes | 26.7 lb. Yellowtail |
| 4. Will Withers | LB Neptunes | 24.7 lb. Yellowtail |
| 5. John Johnston | LB Neptunes | 18.0 lb. Yellowtail |

[Click Here for
more 2019 Blue
Water Meet Pics](#)





Local Tuna Action.. already underway

It's time to get your big
guns rigged, get out your
bungees and high pressure
floats.....

Are you ready??

Even a Blind Squirrel Finds A Nut Occasionally

4/29/19

Mike Marsh

This is exactly how I feel when it comes to hunting White Sea Bass. I've seen them, spooked them, missed them and on occasion landed a few. This past weekend my friend Mike Feldman, one of the owners of House of Scuba and I, were able to put a couple on the boat. Too Tall is his nickname and he has been a victim in several of my past stories. In fact, this story is as much about him as it is about me.

Too Tall asked if I wanted to look for whites this weekend and I responded with "Oh hell Yes". He has been shooting whites every time he hits the water. He looks like a bull sea lion in the water maybe that's what is attracting them to him. Whatever the case, I'm in.

Saturday morning we launched "Big Red", Mike's 15' inflatable and headed out of Mission Bay to his secret spot. Thankful for calm seas, we pulled up to the spot with all my teeth intact. Looks like the word got out. The bed was surrounded by less desirables, meaning other divers and fishermen. Before entering the 63-degree water, Too Tall told me of the cluster F---- he found himself in yesterday.

What happened went something like this. Too Tall had shot a large female which took a nosedive to 50 feet entangling itself in the world's largest kelp stock. So big, according to Too Tall, a chainsaw would have trouble with it. Anyways, he dives down hacking away at the tangled mess, grabs the fish swimming to within 10 feet of the surface when the float line put the brakes on the ascent. Fully spent, he lets go of the fish, were it promptly finds the bottom yet again. Unable to see it and unsure of his shot placement, he somewhat recovers for another attempt to retrieve the fish. Now the visibility near the bottom has worsened due to a newcomer. An 8-foot 7-gill shark was thrashing about with the WSB firmly within its jaws. According to Too Tall, he ninja kicked the shark free from this handout, but the shark wasn't about to let that pitiful knock to the head detour and it made an aggressive move towards him. Fearing for his life, Too Tall jammed his 4' dive knife into the predators head. The shark momentarily moved away allowing the diver to ascend to the surface with most of his fish intact. Evan, another San Diego Free drive was nearby to assist by holding the WSB at the surface while Too Tall sorted out his gear. Moments later, you know who circled back for seconds



and possibly thirds. Too Tall, with his shaftless gun, connected on the 7 Gill's nose. Still not moving off, Too Tail hits it again with a glancing blow promptly removing a patch of skin from its hard head. That did the trick, the shark

disappeared and both divers and most of the fish made it back to the safety of Big Red.

Back to Saturday, I've seen 7 gills before and they generally don't even acknowledge your presence unless you have a wounded fish on the end of your shaft. Then it's game on. The best thing you can do is to bring the fish up with the least amount of commotion as possible. Wishful thinking, Like that's going to happen. Mike and I slid into the water about as graceful as a cannonball. So much for stealth. Anyways, we both headed for the massive kelp bed at slack tide, we had 30' vis. and It looked promising.



Maybe 45 minutes into the dive, I found myself in the middle of the bed. The thick canopy made it impossible to swim at the surface and hunt, so I dove to where I became neutral at 20 feet. There I could make out the

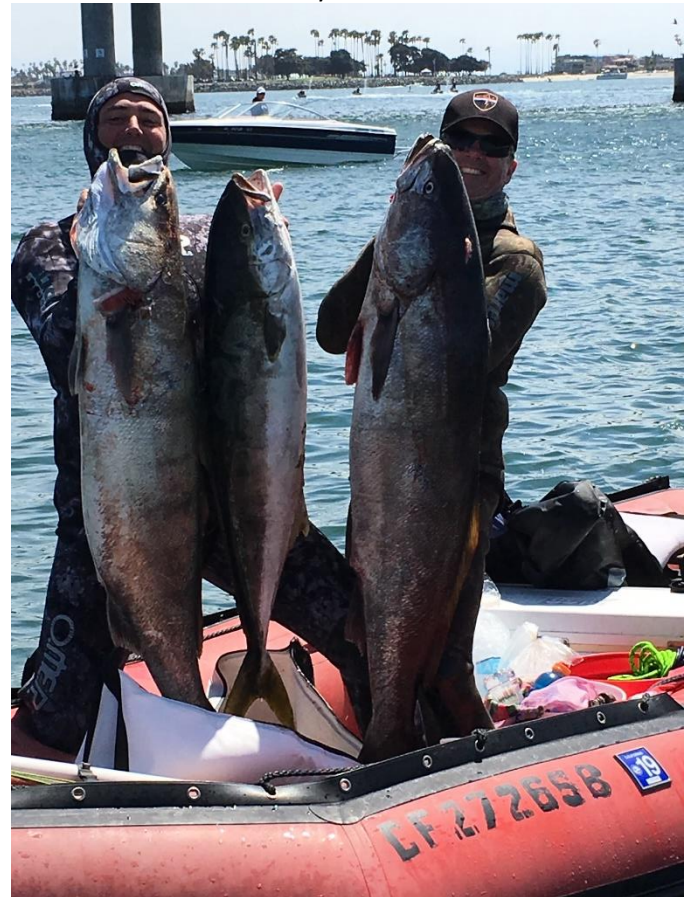
bottom and see a good distance all around me. This dive, I sensed movement to my right, it was the large head of a white. We were swimming side by side, nose to nose, 6 feet apart with only a few strands of kelp acting as a curtain obscuring my presence. I stopped kicking to allow the fish to move ahead of me. Nothing, where the hell did it go? Seconds later the entire shape appeared into an open area and it picked up speed. It turned broadside and I fired hitting the fish mid body. The line on my reel began to spool parallel to the surface 15 feet down. Although I had not seen one today, thoughts of seven gills and Too Tall's encounter was ever present. I followed my yellow line to the coated cable and there it was not 10 feet below me, a nice sized white in the kelp looking straight up at me. I was deliberating the best approach to grab the thing without spooking it. That very moment, it broke free of the kelp and the 56.2 pounder literally swam into my arms. Dispatching the WSB, I collected my gear and made it back to the inflatable where I found Mike coming alongside. He also had a fish, but it wasn't a white, but a 31.2-pound yellowtail. Mike began to explain his encounter with yet another shark. While Too Tall is swimming into the kelp, he notices a 7 Gill and what he first thinks is a baby 7 gill trailing behind it. Holy crap, it's not a baby shark but a nice yellow. He dives on the pair and the yellowtail peels off. As he is lining up on the Yellow, he glances left to find yet another more massive 7 Gill gliding slowly through. Directing his attention back to the yellow as it is pulling away, Mike takes the longer shot and connects. With the 2 sharks hanging around, Too Tall short lines his catch. Luckily he placed the shaft through its spine and brings it to the surface without incidence. With 2 nice fish on the deck, we switched gears. Too Tall was back in the water on the hunt for whites and I scoured the fringes for yellows.



With no sightings, and teeth chattering so loud I would scare off any fish in the immediate area, I made my way back to the inflatable. On my way, a 7 Gill nonchalantly passed by me at arm's length. I thought to myself, these

sharks are very impressive and badass especially up close and personal. Too Tall wasn't far behind and grinning ear to ear, as he held the head of his 50.8-pound WSB above the water line. That's a California Special, both a white and a yellow on the same day. Time to head in. We had fish to weigh and clean, along with a boat and gear covered in fish goo. A problem any Neptune would gladly endure.

The next morning we headed out on Evans cat to the same spot, Evan is a member of the San Diego Free Drives and has a charter business that takes divers out to hunt bluefin. Making it to the spot, Evan wasted no time suiting up and miraculously got in the water before me, which is a rare occurrence. Maybe ten minutes go by and Evan hollers for our attention raising the head of his 47-pound white out of the water. As he began his descent, the thing swam right below him, he fired his gun hitting it through the gill plates. Now that's the way you do it. I had one missed opportunity on a larger white, Too Tall saw a smaller white which he passed on. Other than dolphins swimming just outside the kelp and of course those pesky 7 gills we had no other sightings and decided to call it a day.



In conclusion, I shared a great adventure with my buddy Too Tall, met a new dive buddy Evan, and also qualified for my King Neptune. It's about damn time.

Tentative Profile: Juan Aguilar

Sponsor: Lou Rosales

Hello Neptunes, my name is Juan-Carlos Aguilar. I have been a friend of the club for ten years or so, and am honored to be a tentative member. I first met the club during the 2009 Fall Classic Tournament, held in my home town of Two Harbors, California. I have lived on the island since 2001, and am originally from San Diego, California.

I first started diving in the waters surrounding San Diego, mainly La Jolla cove. I learned at an early age that the ocean is my true natural habitat. I planned on becoming a marine biologist, or an oceanographer since childhood. I attended San Diego State University, and during my studies, I realized that my true passion was the ocean, not just the science. In 1996, I got my open water SCUBA certification, and learned to explore the



waters further, with newfound skill and enthusiasm.

In 2001, I landed a job at the General Store in Two Harbors, Santa Catalina Island. I was introduced to the sport of spearfishing when one of the locals came up to the communal kitchen, hoisting a 30 pound white seabass over his shoulder. Astonished by the size of the fish before me, I asked, "What the hell is THAT?" He replied, "It's a white seabass." Naively I responded, "Are they good to eat?" He smiled, and offered to cook up a chunk so I could taste it. Simply seasoned with olive oil, salt and pepper, he put it on the grill, and soon



I was enjoying the bounty of the ocean. I was hooked. I asked him how he got this massive fish (the biggest one I had ever seen). He said he speared it, and the usual Q&A ensued. Where did you find it? – In the ocean. Were you on SCUBA? – Nope, just holding my breath. How can I get one? – Get out there and find them.

So I did.

I bought my first fiberglass pole spear, and began to hunt the waters just outside the harbor.

Eventually, I got pretty good with my pole spear. I landed some nice calicos and even a few decent halibut. My prowess caught the attention of a friend of a friend,

Ryan Bombard. A highly skilled, long time spearfisher of our local waters. He told me one night to wake him up



the next morning, and we'd go shoot some yellowtail. I didn't own a gun, so I borrowed a 90cm euro with a reel, and promptly pounded on his door at 6:50 AM. He came to the door, laughing at me in my wetsuit (an ill-fitting 7mm SCUBA suit). "You're really eager to get out there huh?" Yes, I was.

Twenty minutes later, we're aboard his friend's 50 foot Sea Ray, headed East to waters I'd never seen. We arrived at Italian Gardens, greeted with rivers of bait, being chased by some unknown predator. I slipped into the water, and watched as Ryan quickly landed a solid yellowtail within 10 minutes of getting wet. He brought it back to the boat, and pointed me to the direction of the action. "Watch the bait, when it spooks, dive down and level off." OK, I can do that. I watched the bait, it spooked, I dove, and was greeted with a wall of yellows. I took a terrible shot, hitting the fish just under the



dorsal fin, and proceeded to get my butt kicked until Ryan came to the rescue with a second shot to secure the fish. I was now addicted.

I bought my first gun, a Riffe C3X, and began to hunt with a fervor. Eventually, I landed a spot on the most coveted of local spearfishing boats, a 16 foot Sea Squirt

owned by Kevin Ingster. He became my mentor, showing me how to run a boat, read conditions, and hunt with true skill and respect for the ocean.

During my formative spearfishing years, I landed a job with the USC Wrigley Marine Science Center. Eventually, I started working for the waterfront department, which allowed me to earn my Captain's license. I now run a 45 foot passenger vessel, and get paid to free dive.



I have had the privilege of diving the past 10 years of Neptunes tournaments. As well as placed seven times (4 second places... always the bride's maid, never the bride). The Neptunes have been an integral part of my life, and I only hope that becoming a member will further the relationship. Louis Rosales was kind enough to offer his sponsorship, which I gladly accepted. He has been a fantastic friend, as well as a person I can always count on for words of wisdom, kindness, and encouragement.

If you ever need a report, feel free to ask. If you ever need anything around the West End, I'm your man. Thanks for the opportunity to be part of a legendary club, with some of the best people I've ever met.

Juan

Working Overtime !

By: John Hughes

fish picture came in from a friend. Oh lucky guy. Then shortly after, another. I was starting to feel the urge. 2 hours later and I'm getting another. Fish are popping and I live close enough to be there if I want. But I can't. Commitment with the wife within two hours. My head is telling me to blow it off but the right thing to do is stay so I do. With a forced smile on my face.

I take 5 weeks off every year just to hunt seabass. I miss May and June due to a massive work run so it's always mid -March - April. I hope the fish show up on time.

I dove my ass off for 4 weeks straight. The fish showed up fairly late and in strange places. I finally saw a nice school on my 50th bday and tore one off on a shot I felt was super solid. Not sure what happened.

Heartbreaker after a few weeks of seeing nothing. Put a 42lb under my belt after another few weeks of donuts. Dove more and more for nada.

My worst season by far but I was happy to end my vacation with a fish under my belt as I've never got a zero and felt this was going to be the year. My last week off and I dove extra hard. By Thursday I was completely

fried. Had planned to wrap it up and hang with the family the last 3 days. Friday I was in full gear cleaning mode and putting everything away and battening down the hatches for the next few months of 16 hour grinds at work. The first



I'm committed the whole next day even though conditions are beautiful. I start my day at 430am with a baby handoff from the wife. She never does that so I know she's worked. Got a giddy 18 month old daughter in my hands. Happy daddy. I have commitments all morning and charge through till 930am. At 930 I'm in route to meet a friend in need. I get a phone call and he cancels. Sitting at a stoplight planning on turning right to his house I look at my watch and calculate. I have exactly 2 1/2hrs till my next commitment and I'm 15ish miles from my house. I can jam home, grab my stuff and hike down and out and have exactly 45 minutes in the water before I have to run up the hill and be home to build a



hot wheels track with my son which I promised all week to do. I weigh the options and punch the gas pedal.

I practically run down the hill. I'm swimming out in crystal clear water at a spot that is normally mud. My legs are already shaky and I realize I've had nothing but a giant cup of coffee all day. No breakfast and no water. I laugh at how ridiculous I am as I've already been up 7 hours. Going to have to be careful. Reach 25' and it's still top to bottom and I'm seeing parts of the reef I've never seen before. Nice diving but not what I'm looking for. I'm doing a diagonal swim off the beach headed up current and shooting for the outside. No need to even dive as I can see everything it's so clear. I get to be lazy and surface hunt, just as I like it. As I get deeper, it gets dirtier. I work further and further out and by the outside stringers it's finally where I like it. 10'-12' hazy viz with a little bait moving around.

I turn down current and drift with it diagonally in. I'm sliding through the stringers slowly and it gets a bit dirtier and I slow some more. Just relaxing and letting



the current do the work which isn't much. I'm about out of time as it took me 1/2 hour straight swim to get out there. I'm going to do another 40 yards and head for the beach. Then I see it. Right down on the edge of viz about 10' under the surface I see two pectoral fins sticking out sideways just sitting there. I can't see the fish at all, just the fins sticking out. I slowly start lowing my gun and he gives that pre bolt shiver. Except there are two of them. I see them completely when they shiver and it's a pair just sitting there facing up current next to a kelp stalk. Knowing it's all about to be over in a heartbeat, I slam my gun the rest of the way down and pull the trigger right as they bolt. The reel line starts screaming headed straight down towards the 50 foot bottom.

Not knowing where I hit it but not wanting to dig it out at 50 in the gassed out state I was in, I applied pressure. The fish made the wrong move and headed for open water. As it was dragging me outside the kelp line, I was happy but still worried I might tear it off.

That tear off a few weeks back was still haunting me. I had that excited, sick to my stomach feeling. As I kicked to stay afloat I started bringing the fish closer and recovering my reel line and letting it pool on the surface. I'm always very conscious of this. I got the fish close enough to see I had a solid shot in the shoulder and it went on another run. Nothing like a big seabass in open water. Those tails can generate some strength and they take longer to die in my opinion. This thing was kicking my ass and I was about done. I got the fish back up and realized he was trying to get back in the kelp. I also realized he swam me back into my reel line and I had some caught in the back of my weight belt. I wasn't too concerned as I thought it would be an easy fix. It wasn't.

I had the shooting line in my right hand holding the fish as it dragged me around and I was trying to get the line out of my belt with my left hand. It just wasn't happening and I knew it was time to go all in. The fish was much bigger than I thought and if he went on another run I was done even with my FRV. I horsed that thing to me and bear hugged it. It completely destroyed me but I couldn't let it go or I was toast. Struggling to stay on the surface and trying not to stab myself in the frenzied state I was in, I broke out my knife and brained it. Typically something I don't do with seabass. I prefer



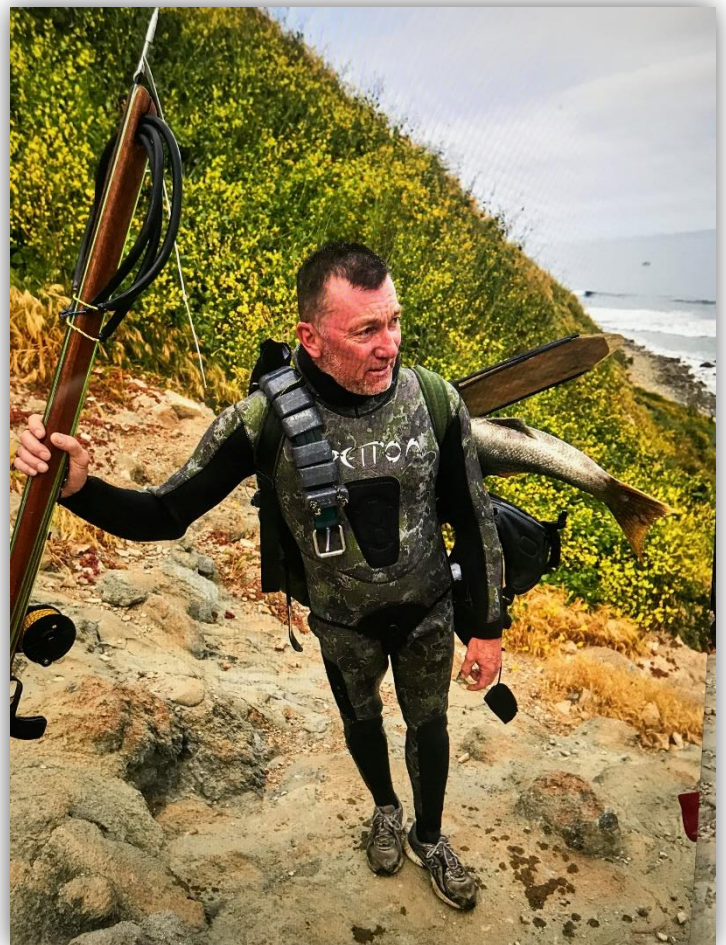
took me 45 minutes before I could touch bottom. I gasped and fell down as I dumped my weight belt and fish in 2' of water. Some girls on the beach tide pooling couldn't figure out if I was for real or whether I was going to die. After a few minutes I dragged my fins and gun and sorry ass up to dry rocks. I sat down and took another 5 minute break and realized I couldn't see my fish as it wasn't floating. I went down and grabbed it and my weight belt and dragged both up to my gear. What a slug, I couldn't believe it. I cut the shaft out and with the slip tip came the air bladder. Seems I punctured it when I shot it which is why the damn thing was sinking the whole time. I had to laugh but only because I was on dry land.

This specific spot holds a lot of fond memories for me from diving and from some other experiences I've had there. I've shot a ton of small fish there but never shot a really good one there and I've dove it for years. I asked the girls if they had a phone and if they could grab a few

to just bleed them out. After I brained it I was still trying to catch my breath as I cut all the gills and bled it.

I was still really struggling to stay on the surface and at first I couldn't understand why. I weight myself super heavy because of my suits. I also like to hunt around 16-18' so that's where I set my neutral. 29 lbs is what I have to wear to make that happen. Normally even a big fish is semi neutral after you get it to the surface. Not this thing. It was sinking me. It felt like 40lbs on top of the 30 I had on my waist. I noticed the shot went in the shoulder and since I shot straight down on it, it toggled in the stomach cavity. I wasn't getting this shaft out and the damn thing was still sinking me. My legs were quivering. I looked to shore and almost cried. I was way, way outside and there was a thick matt of kelp between me and shore. Time to do some work.

I headed towards shore realizing I was going to be late but knew I had to take it easy. Better late with a dead seabass than pass out and not make it home at all. I hate swimming fish in through thick kelp with a shaft hanging out of it. Gets caught on the kelp often which it did. My breath hold was about zero and the damn fish was still totally sinking me. I was doing all I could do to stay afloat. Huffing and puffing and as shaky as I could remember being for a long time, I just kept momentum. There was no stopping to breathe or relax as I had so much weight on me I'd just sink. It was brutal and it



photos and text them to me. They were marine biology students and were super stoked to help me out the whole time asking questions. It took me another two trips to get the fish and all my gear up to the base of the

cliff. I was so shook. I struggled to get the fish in my bag and on my back and I looked at my weight belt and just knew I'd never make it. I ALWAYS hike my belt out with my fish. Like a good soldier, I never leave it behind. I grabbed my belt and threw it in the bushes and almost threw up. I probably would have but 10 hours after waking I still had absolutely nothing in my stomach.

Quivering with every step, I started up. Not sure how long that took but after about 100 stops, I made it. I felt 50, that's for damn sure. LOL. I also felt pretty damn good about things as well. Taking a solid beating, I got that beast up and threw it in the back of my truck. "Today I WON" I was thinking. Homeward bound about an hour late. I got home and apologized to the wife and son who are always forgiving and my biggest champions. I could finally look my son in the eye after countless returns with the same reply to his question of whether I got a fish or not. After weighing it

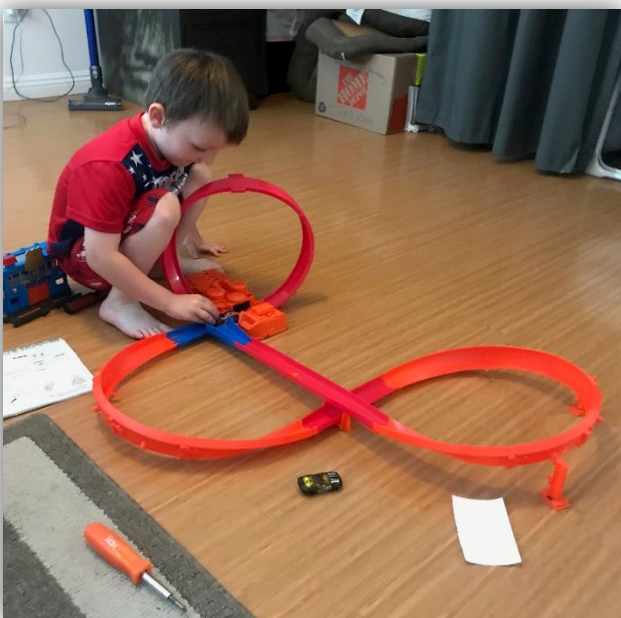
I found out it was 61.1 the biggest fish I've ever hiked out. Hiked out numerous in the high 50's but never one over 60. Threw the fish on ice for the afternoon and cleaned my gear and choked down some food. Within a half hour I was knee deep in Hot Wheel Track parts and



my son had forgotten about the fish.

It's a few weeks later today and I still haven't forgotten it. Still stoked and it's nice to have overcome and gotten at least one good one under my belt before it ended for me. It'll make the next few months easier while I'm working like a slave and all my friends are still killing it. Feeling extremely grateful for the adventurous life God has given me and all that it contains. Sometimes this seabass thing can be a beating that doesn't end for weeks. Sometimes years. And sometimes just days or hours. Regardless, the more extreme the pain seems, the better the high when you finally overcome all the miserable obstacles and land a good one or just a schoolie.

Be safe out there guys. If you're having a rough season like a lot of us this year I hope it turns around in the next few months. If you're one of the few that has been killing it this year, your time of pain will come. Hahahahaha.....



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