

Buddy Line



Fraternal Order of Underwater Swimmers School, Key West, Florida



EXECUTIVE'S CORNER: By DAVE GHOLSON

Shipmates, I am excited to inform you of the new developments with our fraternity. The plans for Key West are coming together. Here are some of the details as of this issue of the BuddyLine. First of all, many of you know Don Stone, retired DV SEAL and our long-time secretary and the father of the BuddyLine under the guidance of Art his wonderful wife. Don passed away a few years back and Art is donating Don's little Jake, number 255 to the Group to raffle. Three hundred of the 37 pound, 21" replicas of Big Jake were sold at \$2,000.00 each to finance the construction and placing of Jake at NDSTC in Panama City Beach, Florida. We are going to print 300 raffle tickets for the statue and its matching coin. Drawing will be at the Beach party, at our reunion, Saturday, June 17, 2023, in Key West, Florida. More about this

may be read in the coming Buddy Line and on the US Navy UNDERWATER SWIMMERS Facebook page.



EVENTS – Key West UWSS Reunion

Wednesday – June 14, 2023

Deep Sea Fishing (added excursion)

Thursday – June 15, 2023

1600 hours Chief Petty Officers (CPO) Registration

1800 hours CPO Mess Dinner, Sea Story contest, wives

Sea Story contest, (Cash Bar)

Friday – June 16, 2023

0900 hours SEBAGO docks Reef Snorkeling trip (open bar Beer-Wine)

1300 hours CPO Mess Lunch Business meeting (Cash Bar)

1800 hours SEBAGO docks, Sunset Sail (open Bar Beer-Wine)

Saturday – June 17, 2023

1000 hours TBA, Conch Train tour of Key West

1500 hours Truman Beach, Memorial Service, BBQ cook out. (Cash Bar)

Sunday – June 18, 2023

0900 hours CPO Mess, Breakfast

Farewell and fair seas

Monday – June 19, 2023

1000 hours (10am) Miami, 4-day Carnival Conquest Western Caribbean Cruise Miami – Key West, Cozumel, Miami (added excursion if interested please reply to Dave Gholson. He will be watching for the lowest the prices)

EXECUTIVE’S CORNER by Art Stone from February

2020 is still applicable today. (Thank you Art.) Key West is calling us back once more to the place where our UWSS memories were made. This place, a long way from anywhere, still draws former students at US Naval School Underwater Swimmers to celebrate, with classmates and instructors, the few weeks spent here makes some of the best memories of their lives. Your reunion committee has worked hard to make this reunion more fun for everyone, to include wives and

guests in more activities, and to send you home closer friends with each other. Security is tight on the bases so it is important that any reunion attendee who does not have an active duty or retired ID card include the requested ID information on the Reunion Registration so you can be added to a gate list for access to bases. Otherwise, you will be refused entry or have a long wait while security tries to find someone who can come to the gate in person and vouch for you. IDs for non-military must comply with the REAL ID Act see <https://upgradedpoints.com/realid-act> for more information When you arrive in Key West, head for the Fly Navy Building to register for your accommodations. Then head over to the Chief Petty Officers Club at Boca Chica to sign in for the reunion, browse the logo store, and enjoy the Ice Breaker for food, refreshments, and socializing. We will be combing the members for a few bold Sea Story tellers to gin up a bit of smiles and competition for the Sea Story Contest. You will not want to miss the Snorkel Reef Trip on Friday morning. Don’t want to snorkel? Just call it a boat ride to the reef and enjoy the breeze, the smell of the sea. And don’t forget the refreshments. Lunch is at the CPO Mess followed by the business meeting, and we’ll top off the day with a Sunset Sail from SEABAGO docks. Saturday we’ll gather at Truman Beach for a Memorial Service. The Army Combat Divers School has offered a vessel and divers to take memorabilia or ashes offshore to put into the Gulf Stream. We ask if anyone is a drone camera person that they contact Jim Houle (vicepresident@uwss.org) to coordinate group photos and photos of the Memorial Service and BBQ cook out. As mentioned by the Executive Corner there will be a drawing for Little Jake and coin that Art Stone has so graciously donated to raise funds for the UWSS organization. Thank you, Art.

Beachside Recreation Center

The Beachside Recreation Center is located at Truman Annex just steps from Truman Beach. The facility offers the Navy DVD theater, billiards, air hockey, board games, direct TV, video game stations, library, and gear rental*. www.navywmrkeywest.com

U.S. Navy Underwater Swimmers

Bronze Little Jake Statue Raffle



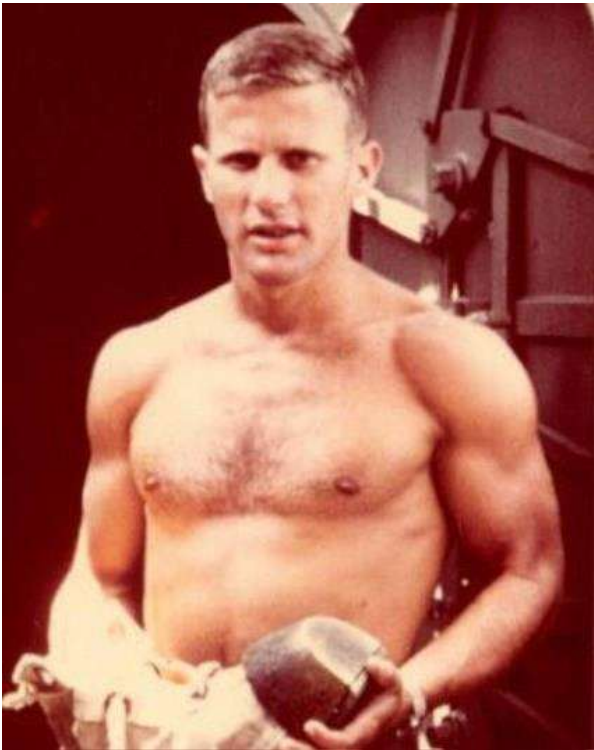
The 21” bronze statues with a polished teak base, weighing 37 pounds were originally sold for \$2000.00 each to raise funds for the 10’ Big Jake Statue that currently stands at NDSTC Panama City Beach. This Little Jake is Number 255 of 300 made and comes with a limited edition coin. The widow of Don Stone, HMCS SEAL-HALO, has donated his statue to UWSS to be raffled off at our next reunion, June 15-17, 2023 in Key West, Florida. Tickets are \$20 each and limited to 300.

Tickets may be purchased through the LOGO gear page at UWSS.org



Dive School Memories – Chris Seger

Dive School Memories I was looking forward with pleasure to dive school in Key west in the spring of 1961. After spending a brutally cold winter at Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island, the balmy weather, and blue skies of south Florida were a welcome change for this newly commissioned Ensign. The program started quickly, with pool training, rigorous calisthenics, and plenty of classroom study. We learned every detail of the various diving equipment, including basic scuba, mixed gas, and Jack Brown, but my favorite rig is gone now. But anyone who has ever dived this rig will remember it fondly. Getting into the Mark V took some time. First, I put on the thick rubber and canvas suit with the cumbersome three-fingered gloves and slipped into the 35-pound canvas and bronze shoes. I then sat down on a little three-



Really! Just slip into this 35# canvas and bronze shoe.

legged stool and my diving mates put the heavy chest plate over the rubber neck piece with the bronze studs sticking out to secure the chest plate to the diving suit. The helmet came next, and if one were in the least bit claustrophobic, this is where you would find out. The crew lowered the spun copper helmet down over my head, and with a clank it dropped into the bayonet type fitting. With a slight jerk to the right, the helmet threaded tightly into the breast plate, and I was locked

inside. I could see out of the helmet through four small portholes: one directly in front of my face, one on either side and one slightly above me. All communication took place with a two-way radio in the helmet through a speaker just above my right ear. Now I stood up and my dive mates eased the 85-pound weight belt over my shoulders and buckled it in front. I checked communications, confirmed my knife was in place, and the air was turned on. I could control the inflow of air to the helmet with a hand valve that was secured at waist level. Excess air was dumped from the rig by pushing a chin button inside the helmet. When I was ready to dive, I awkwardly clanked my way over to the ladder at the stern of the dive barge. In Key West I weighed about 150 pounds in my Navy issued skivvies, but fully dressed in the Mk V rig I weighed an additional 185 pounds, so walking around on a heaving dive barge was not easy, but once down the ladder and into the water the Mk V rig was in its element. The hissing sound of incoming air and the calm voice of the dive master calmed the adrenalin rush that came as the surface slipped away above my viewing port and I eased down toward the ocean floor, connected to the surface by my air hose and a thick steel wire. If I did it right, I could fill the canvas suit and spun copper helmet with just the proper amount of air so that I was slightly negatively buoyant, and my descent was gradual and controlled. Too much air and I would bob back to the surface; too little air and I would plunge out of control toward the bottom. We all dreaded the possibility of looking like the Michelin Man coming out of the water because we didn't dump enough air. It was a marvelous sensation to descend from the surface in a gradual freefall, the sound of gurgling air escaping from the helmet dump valve as the colors of the surface lost their intensity until I reached the sandy bottom 150 feet down and became part of a gray-white, monochromatic world. At that depth, there is plenty of light, because the white sand of the Florida Keys reflects it, but there is little marine life. No coral, few fish, and only the occasional sea slug on the bottom. Walking around on the sea floor was fairly easy if I controlled the amount of air in the rig. When done just right I would be neutrally buoyant and could bound along the bottom like an astronaut on the moon. Naturally, the rig was limited in its range because it was tethered to the dive

Dive School Memories – Chris Seger

barge with the air hose and safety wire. But here was a problem. If the barge was heaving in a seaway, the man tending you had to be very quick handling the hose and wire. If he didn't ease his grip when the barge rose you would be jerked off the bottom, and then when the barge came back down you would slam into the bottom. A few of those gyrations could generate a lot of nausea. I know because one day I left the remains of a night on Duvall Street in my helmet. When it was time to come up the dive master would let me know on the helmet radio and I would start walking back to a point where the air hose and safety wire were approximately vertical. Using the air valve at my right side I would start filling the helmet and suit with extra air until I became slightly positively buoyant and moving toward the surface. As I ascended, my tender would be easing in the hose and wire so that when I surfaced, I would be directly under the short dive ladder on the barge. Grabbing the ladder, I would heave myself upwards against the renewed sensation of gravity. It was considered macho to climb the ladder and then clank briskly to the dive stool, turn around, and sit down to be undressed. The Diving Officer would step up and with a hand wrench open the face plate to ask if I was all right before the actual undressing began. And so, a trip to the bottom in the old Mk V would go into my dive record



Not intended to be a facsimile-it just looks good.

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Tell Us Your Story: continued from BL Aug 2022**By Rudy Enders - Day short of a MMFT record!**

The most competitive division in the Miami Metropolitan Fishing Tournament (MMFT) is the spinning bonefish. More than a million anglers visit southern Florida each year and hire expensive guides in hopes of catching one of these electrifying game fish. The majority use spin fishing gear on light line. The eastern shore of Big Pine Key contains a long shallow rocky flat, which bends to the west, disappearing at the Newfound Harbor channel entrance. I frequently noticed tailing bonefish on this stretch of shoreline and drove there on several occasions with Dr. Puckett, who loved to fish for these strong and elusive creatures. We often released from one to three fish each, using small white Hopskins jigs. I considered it a very dependable spot. I made the trip alone one Saturday morning in February 1960 and started to wade out into deeper water. About ten feet out, I took a short cast to clear a snag on my spin casting reel. No sooner had the bail flipped when the line on the reel began screaming. I thought for sure a large barracuda had hit and was not overly excited. Nonetheless, I stumbled along into deeper water trying to stop the fish before it stripped the reel. I was neck deep in water with about three turns left on my reel when the fish stopped running. I thought I had lost it for the line went slack, but quickly realized it was heading directly at me. I took the slack in as quick as possible, walking backward into waist deep water. The fish headed inshore, passing within ten feet of me. As it streaked in the crystal-clear water, I could see it was a very large bonefish, maybe a record breaker. I held my rod high, thinking the fish might cut the line on the inshore rocks. It then reversed course and streaked toward a grass bed to my right. I had a tough time keeping calm, trying to keep pressure on the fish without breaking the line. After a twenty-minute fight I started to gain control. I kept it at a good distance until it began to lie sideways in the water. Then I approached the fish, carefully sliding my left hand under its body until my fingers reached its gill plate, which enabled me to get a firm grip and land it. The fish was mine. I knew the bonefish was over ten pounds and a potential Miami Metropolitan Fishing Tournament (MMFT) winner, so I left immediately to an official MMFT weighing station, keeping the fish in water so it would

not dehydrate and lose weight. It tipped the scales at 10 lbs. 3oz and became the 1960 MMFT spinning division winner. It exceeded the next bonefish in the division by almost a pound in the open division (any line, rod, and reel). Throughout this tournament, I concentrated on the spin and plug divisions, occasionally entering a fish in the unlimited category. In 1961, Dr. Lenny Berg and I had a banner day fishing the outer reefs. We spent most of the day catching barracuda, but nothing close to a winning tournament fish. Nevertheless, it was fun fighting citation sized cuda with the possibility of hooking into a record breaker. The winter months attract large numbers of barracuda around the various shallow reefs offshore, making them amazingly easy to catch. Of course, you need to pick a calm day between fronts since strong winds will make fishing almost impossible. The seas were glassy calm on this particular day as we motored northeast of the "K" marker in one of the Underwater Swimmers School's diesel powered LCPR's. As we turned toward Key West harbor, we saw a small baitfish pod being crashed by chasing fish. Instinctively, both Lenny and I casted simultaneously into the frothing foam water. We both hooked up immediately with some very strong fish. Lenny whipped his fish first, a large Spanish mackerel. Mine took a little longer. Remarkably, both of these fish became 1961 MMFT winners and my 18 pounder would have been a tournament record had Jim Sumpter, the MMFT Key West director, witnessed the official weigh in. It was no surprise to me he would not show up since he held the previous record of 17 pounds 9 oz. Nevertheless, our fishing trip was extremely unusual since we caught tournament winners not only on the same day but also on the same cast! I doubt whether this feat will ever be duplicated. Besides bonefish, the most prestigious game fish in the MMFT light tackle fishing is tarpon. I had set my sights on winning the spin casting division and spent considerable time attempting to land a really big one. Hooking them was no problem. On every evening or morning outgoing tide, they fed along the channel edges between Fleming Key and Demolition Island. The really large tarpon usually arrived in April near the time when the MMFT was coming to a close. During the month of April 1961, I fought huge tarpon practically every morning and night. When hooked, they would either run into the seaplane drone to the east of Fleming Key or beeline down the main channel for Key West. Some of these fights lasted for hours with the

(Tell Us Your Story: continued by Rudy Enders)

same disappointing result, losing the fish next to the boat or while trying to lift it aboard. I could not get enough leverage on the large fish to slide it into the boat, even with a small wrist gaff. A regular gaff was useless, it would not penetrate the scales. Yet I was getting closer. The day after the MMFT ended, I hooked a large fish off Demolition Key. I slipped the anchor and chased it down the main ship channel while it exhibited a spectacular acrobatic performance. After a relatively short half hour fight, it lay sideways on the surface practically lifeless. On closer examination I noticed my 52M Mirror Lure had locked a half hitch around the tarpon's tail and I had been pulling the fish in backwards. Without water running through its gills, it had simply suffocated. Instead of trying to gaff the fish, I slid a loop over its head and pulled the knot tight before reaching the tail. This fish did not get away since I had little difficulty when sliding it over the stern and into the boat. It weighed exactly one hundred pounds. It would have been a world record on 8-pound test line had I not used treble hooks on my lure. After several photos, I sent the fish off to be mounted, and it now decorates the wall in my family room. Had I caught it a day earlier, it would have broken the MMFT record by twenty-four pounds. 100 POUND TARPO



100 POUND TARPON

Rudy to be continued February 2023

Story from the Mailbag:

by Doc Rio

DOC RIO asked, "Do you have the story of the Astronauts that went through UWSS?" Of course, I replied, No! Doc, can you send the astronaut training story. I never heard the story. I would love to hear it and see the test you gave them. We could put in the BuddyLine and see if anyone can pass it today." Thank you, Doc. Your BL editor.

Doc Rio replies, I have the list. Crazy Bunch and a lot of fun. Okay a Sea Story: just a few lines: we told them it would be an extremely hard graduating exam to study hard. Their class proctor passed a sheet of paper and told them to Sign their full name. I taught the Medical Aspects of Diving. I might still have a copy of the exam. Ha! ha! ha!

I remember that Solomon Atkinson and John F. Rabbitt were the class proctors for the Astronauts Class. Lucky sons of guns! They sure had a lot of fun training those Astronauts; as a matter fact, we all did. I was their

classroom instructor for their medical aspects of diving. I remember telling them that they could probably stand up in front of their class and replace me as their instructor. I mean, those guys were all highly educated, and the Lord knows how much physics they accumulated into their brains. Of course, there is no hard evidence available because their final exam was to sign their names on a sheet of paper. Some wise ass added an ENS. JP-4 or JP4 (for "Jet Propellant") was jet fuel back in those days. I wish I had a copy of all their signatures. Doc Rio, aka. Erasmo "Doc" Riojas

UWSS Astronauts 1956:

Neil Armstrong,	Gus Grissom,
Scott Carpenter	Wally Schirra
Gordon Cooper	Alan Shepard
John Glenn,	Deke Slayton

FO UWSS SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT: By Ken Recoy

FO UWSS Membership October 31, 2022

Members in database = 291
Total Active Members = 238
Active Members behind on Dues = 99
We learned of no members passing away this Quarter.
We currently have 4 brothers in Hardship that FO UWSS is helping.
Donations are always accepted and appreciated.
New Members this Quarter = 1.
Steve Miller Rejoined us August 2, 2022. He was a UWSS Instructor 1968 – 1970.

FO UWSS Treasurer's Quarterly Report:

Account Balance August 1, 2022, = \$13,296.15

Dues Income + \$75.00
Label Fees Income + \$0.00
Logo Gear Sales Income + \$438.00
Other Income (Donations) + \$25.00

Reunion Expenses - \$0.00
Logo Gear Expenses (Purchases, mail) - \$1,057.26
BuddyLine Expenses Danny Mize donated - \$0.00
Business Expenses (Ink, paper, postage) - \$33.81

Account Balance October 31, 2022, \$12,743.08

FO UWSS Secretary's Notes and updates

1. As I noted in our last BuddyLine, I am in the process of stepping down as the FO UWSS Secretary/Treasurer. I plan to stay until the June 2023 Reunion at which time a new FO UWSS Sec./Treasurer can be Voted in. If you are interested in being our next FO UWSS Secretary / Treasurer, please send me an email as soon as possible. Tom Hodgins has agreed to receive the 2023 FO UWSS Reunion checks and Registrations. Watch for details on the UWSS Website.

- 2. Dave Gholson FO UWSS President Pro Temp is also our **Reunion Committee Chair**. Note: In the last Quarter, Dave Gholson Appointed Jim Houle as UWSS Vice President Pro Temp.
- 3. Jim Houle our **Logo Gear Chair**. You can Order Logo Gear by going to the UWSS Website and printing out the Order Form and sending us a check. The address is in the BuddyLine and on our UWSS Website.
- 4. Be sure to pay your **"Label fees"** to continue receiving your BuddyLine in paper copy by regular mail. Due to cost, please do your best to get an email address, as we expect mailing paper copies of the Buddy line to be a thing of the past. Label Fees are \$5.00 per year. We currently have 17 members that receive their Buddy line by regular mail.
- 5. Please check to make sure you have paid your **UWSS Membership Dues**. Dues remain at \$25.00 for 2 years.
- 6. **UWSS Graduating Class pictures**. If you do Not see your Class picture on the FO UWSS Website, please send in a copy for the FO UWSS Archives.
- 7. **If you have changed your address, phone number/s, or email address**, please send us an update, so we can be sure to stay in contact for important News, Updates, and your Buddy line.
- 8. **So we may honor them**, if you know of a UWSS brother that has passed, please let us know and include a copy of the Obituary.
- 9. About 5 years ago, I created a **UWSS Facebook Page** and if you are interested in joining, the Link is below. Membership is free. Only members of the UWSS FB Page can see who a member is and read member only Posts

Note: My UWSS Facebook Page is not part of FO UWSS.

10. It is important to reach out to our UWSS dive buddies and check on each other from time to time. Especially in this time of COVID. And none of us are getting any younger. It is always good to hear from a brother. **Stay in touch. Stay safe. HooYah!**
Ken Recoy, FO UWSS Secretary/Treasurer
UWSS Graduation Class March 1972.
Submariner, Radioman and US Navy Diver.
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/682196168496022>
www.uwss.org



UWSS ORDER FORM

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	SIZE	NUMBER	PRICE	TOTAL
	DECAL TRANSPARENT	4"		\$4.00	
	DECAL WHITE	4"		\$4.00	
	EMBROIDERED PATCH	4"		\$12.00	
	BLUE FACE MASK			\$10.00	
	WHITE FACE MASK			\$10.00	
	KEY CHAIN			\$11.00	
	LED FLASHLIGHT			\$12.00	
	POLO SHIRTS S,M,L,XL			\$32.00	
	POLO SHIRT 2XL	2XL		\$34.00	
	GRAY MICROFIBER TEE S,M,L,XL			\$34.00	
	GRAY MICROFIBER TEE 2XL	2XL		\$38.00	
	BLUE MICROFIBER TEE S,M,L,XL			\$34.00	
	BLUE MICROFIBER TEE 2XL	2XL		\$38.00	
	LONG SLEEVE TEE S,M,L,XL			\$30.00	
	LONG SLEEVE TEE 2XL	2XL		\$33.00	
	BLUE DENIM SHORT SLEEVE SHIRT S,M,L,XL			\$42.00	
	BLUE DENIM SHORT SLEEVE SHIRT 2XL	2XL		\$44.00	
	BLUE BASEBALL CAP			\$35.00	
	KHAKI BASEBALL CAP			\$35.00	
	ALL SERVICE COMMEN. COIN	2"		\$15.00	
	UWSS COMMEMORATIVE COIN	1 5/8"		\$12.00	
				SUB TOTAL	
				TOTAL AMOUNT DUE	

Mail completed form with check to:
 U.S. NAVY UWSS
 Ken Recoy, 25810 East 330 Road,
 Chelsea, OK 74016-5262

Fraternal Order of Underwater Swimmers School
Buddy line Newsletter
25810 East 330 Road
Chelsea, OK 74016-5262

*The Fraternal Order of Underwater Swimmers School was formed
in order to keep lines of communication open between personnel of the armed forces
who were staff or students at the U.S. Naval Underwater Swimmers School
Key West, Florida from 1954 to 1973.
One of the most important reasons for our existence as an organized group
is to plan for and participate in biannual reunions.*

MISSION:

FO/UWSS

