



Hometown News & Views

# The PELICAN

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Making a Difference

## Every Sunday the Vone Research team dives deep to help save and protect ocean resources



Kristen Hoss, Sea Scout Michael Cohen and Stephen Attis get ready to do some Marine Archaeology. [Photo courtesy of Vone Research]

**By Phyllis J. Neuberger**

PELICAN STAFF

Kristen Hoss and Stephen Attis share their lives and a common passion for preservation, conservation and education. Hoss is as active and enthused about Vone Research as is Attis, its founder. Their home, which is also headquarters for Vone Research, is a certified wildlife habitat.

Attis says, "We started by helping non profits such as the Marine Archaeology Council which needed divers to do underwater archaeology. We began by working on the Gil Blas, a 200 ton twin masted Spanish Brig which went aground during a hurricane in 1835, one mile north of Hillsboro Beach. It's buried under six feet. of sand and e feet of water. Our job was to identify the ship. We learned the ropes out permitting, and about 10 years ago Vone Research became a non profit. We're a 501c3, registered as a Florida Charity."

There are about 15 hard working unteers in Vone Research. Their goal is to preserve the past, present and future through marine archeology,

Phyllis J. Neuberger wants your suggestions about people you know who are making a difference. Call 954-783-8700 to suggest a candidate for this column.



coral ecology and education. Attis says, "We're a self-funded group of men and women who pay dues and our own expenses such as fuel for own boats. We welcome donations and can use volunteers who can help us with our web site, create data bases and promotional materials."

Scott Cravens, one of the dedicated Vone team of divers for the past eight years, says, "I can't wait for Sundays because I enjoy diving with my friends and contributing to the important work we do"

Hoss, whose stage name is Tanawha, is an ecologist and educator who has traveled the world learning and educating others about marine preservation. "It's my life's mission," she says.

"I've been employed as a wild life biologist, educator and manager for a variety of private, state and federal government agencies. I'm currently a full time volunteer for Vone Research.

We've had a busy summer bringing lessons into schools, camps and libraries. "

She explains "We bring simulated field expeditions to a group, training these young archaeologists. We've worked with groups in Jupiter, Miami, the Bahamas and just recently, on July 29, we brought our expeditions to the Pompano Beach public library on Atlantic Boulevard. My partners are Dr. Kira Kaufmann, Florida Public Archaeology Network and Stephen Attis. We all know that you can't move a child into action if you are not dedicated and passionate about what you're doing. We are."

The classes are tailored to the ages of the students, which have ranged from second grade through high school. They explore or visit six stations, or activities, and have a hands on experience which engages them thoroughly in a fun way. Hoss says,

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"We've done our expeditions in schools, camps and for birthday parties. We do charge a token fee which helps to subsidize Vone Research. Our three in school programs, taught to FCAT standards are Marine

Archaology, Marine Ecology and Adaptation Ecology. We even get fan mail." She shows one letter from Luis who wrote, "Thank you Mr. Attis and Tanawha! for coming to show us some cool experiments in learning about how to stop pollution and save ocean plants and coral."

Stephen Attis, an AT&T employee for 28 years, is a facility technician, currently working with a team on U-verse which brings high speed data and television into the home.



UNDERWATER SURGERY - Vone divers carefully reattach an Elkhorn Coral to the substrate, or ocean bottom.

He runs the Members' Assistance Program for Communications Workers of America, local 3104, and manages to find time to volunteer for the Telephone

Pioneers. "There are two sides to what we do at Vone Research," he explains. "There's the environmental/education aspect which impacts the

future. The underwater archaeology side is a way to preserve our historical record by finding and protecting submerged cultural and ecological resources. Just a few weeks ago, we attached a newly determined endangered species of Elkhorn Coral to the substrate, or bottom. For us, this was an honor and a privilege. We worked with "Cry of the Water" and Palm Beach Reef Rescue.

Vone Research is the first volunteer group to create the process of obtaining Fish and Wild Life permits to reattach. They have paved the way for other trained volunteers to apply for the same permits.

Many of their Sundays, which start at 6:30 a.m., are shared with the Sea Scouts and volunteers who are learning about and doing ongoing coral monitoring.

One of the group's most recent successes is the building and installing mooring buoys off of Pompano Beach with the Sea Scouts Ship 307. The scouts learned how to splice line and fabricate the buoys.

The public can now moor to the buoys rather than anchoring and destroying a reef. David Stout, Broward County DEP or Department of Environmental Protection organized the volunteer organizations which made this wonderful community effort possible. The main organizations involved were Ocean Watch and Vone Research.

The organization's biggest challenge is the price of gas and permitting. For further information on how join or help Vone Research, call 954-781-5321. Thank you volunteers with Vone Research for preserving ocean resources, and insuring oxygen and food for the rest of us who benefit from your efforts.