



Anne Judge, Membership Director
The Scuba Sports Club
2 Pine Mountain Road
DANBURY CT 06810

May Meeting

8:00 pm, Wed, May 14

Vince Bologna

presents

How to Research a Shipwreck

at

Whitby Castle Restaurant

at the Rye Golf Club
330 Boston Post Road
Rye, NY

See page 11 for more details.

Sea Swells

LOG

The monthly
newsletter of
The Scuba
Sports Club

May 2003

TSSC Starts Its Atlantic Dive Season at Fort Wetherill

Jamestown, RI • Saturday, May 17

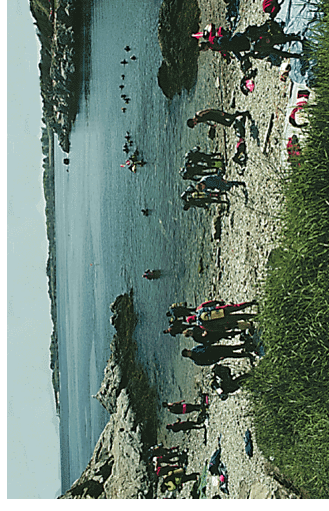
On Saturday, May 17, TSSC will hold its traditional first dive of the North Atlantic diving season. The trip coordinator, Rick D'Amico, has not one, not two, not three, but ten reasons for you to be there. So bow to the inevitable, and join us at Fort Wetherill for this great season-opener!

The top ten reasons for joining us at Fort Wetherill on May 17 are...

- 10) It's free.
- 9) It's a great site at which to get acclimated to diving after a winter's layoff.
- 8) The relatively shallow, calm waters make this a good dive to test out new gear.
- 7) You can go deep (if you want to)—a portion of the site has depths greater than 70 feet.
- 6) It's also a great site for kayaking.
- 5) This is your chance to enjoy that great New England dish, clam hash—by joining us at our traditional breakfast stop at Pat's Kountry Kitchen, exit 67 on the Connecticut Turnpike.
- 4) Following the first dive, we have a great picnic/barbecue at the site. In the past, we've been known to roast a pig.
- 3) You can find outstanding fish—we once saw a spearfisherman come back with a striped bass of at least 40 pounds.
- 2) It's free.
- ...and, the number one reason for joining us at Fort Wetherill is...
- 1) It's time to get off that couch and do some diving!!!

For more information on our Fort Wetherill Dive, please contact me.

Rick D'Amico
(203) 335-0246
usamarbiol@aol.com



The cove at Fort Wetherill, above. Top right, TSSC knows how to have a picnic! Bottom right, Anne Judge enjoys a perfect spring day on the water. Photos by Dave Lindsay (above) and Michael Prange (right).



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- ▶ **TSSC May Meeting**May 14
Vince Bologna teaches us how to re-search a shipwreck. More on page 11.
- ▶ **Fort Wetherill Dive and Picnic**May 17
This is always a great way to get wet—it's fun and it's free! See article at left.
- ▶ **Memorial Day Squantz Pond Picnic and Dive**May 25
- ▶ **Teatown Hike**June 1
- ▶ **North Carolina Trip**July 21–25
- ▶ **Salt Cay Trip**Oct 25–Nov 2
Lada Simek will lead this trip to enjoy "diving the way it used to be." Page 11.
- ▶ **TSSC/BTS Party**Sept 13
- ▶ **Ballroom Dancing**Sept 26
- ▶ **Halloween Party**Oct 31
- ▶ **Holiday Party**Dec 13

2003 Dive Schedule

Date	Day	Boat & Port	Dive Description	Class [†]	Cost	Trip Coordinator
May 17	Sat	Fort Wetherill, RI	Beach Dive & Picnic	C	Free	Rick D'Amico
May 24–31	Sat	Caribbean Explorer	Caribbean Liveaboard Diving	C/B/A	TBA	Jim McNeill
May 25	Sun	Squantz Pond	Memorial Day Picnic & Dive	C	Free	R. Bak
Jun 8	Sun	Max, Rye, NY	Local Dives*	C	\$35	Lada Simek
Jun 14	Sat	Sea Hawk, Freeport, LI	Lizzy D	B	\$60	TBA
Jun 21–22	Sun	Cape Ann, Mass.	Two-Tank Scallop Dive	C/B/A	\$65	R. Bak
Jun 29	Sun	Max, Rye, NY	Local Dives*	C	\$35	Lada Simek
Jul 12	Sat	Sea Hawk, Freeport, LI	G&D	A	\$60	TBA
Jul 19–20	Sat	Cape Ann, Mass.	Scallop & Wreck Dives	C/B/A	\$65	R. Bak
Jul 21–26	Sat	North Carolina	Wreck Diving w/Olympus Divers	C/B/A	\$360**	Dick Smith
Aug 2	Sat	Max, Rye, NY	Local Dives*	C	\$35	Lada Simek
Aug 9	Sat	Sea Hawk, Freeport, LI	San Diego	A	\$60	TBA
Aug 16–17	Sat	Rye, New Hampshire	Seal Dive	C/B/A	TBA	R. Bak
Aug 24	Sun	Max, Rye, NY	Local Dives*	C	\$35	Lada Simek
Aug 31	Sun	Regatta, Long Island Sound	Boat Dive & Raft-up Party	C	TBA	TBA
Sept 7	Sun	Sea Hawk, Freeport, LI	Algol	A	\$60	TBA
Sept 20–21	Sun	St. Lawrence Seaway	Wreck Diving Weekend	A	TBA	Gregg Macaulay
Oct 5	Sun	Fort Wetherill, RI	Beach Dive & Picnic	C	Free	Rick D'Amico
Oct 11–18	Sun	Key Largo, Florida	Land-Based Florida Dive Trip	C/B/A	TBA	TBA
Oct 25–26	Sun	Cape Ann, Mass.	Scallop & Wreck Dives	C/B/A	\$65	R. Bak
Oct 25–Nov 2	Sun	Salt Cay, Turks & Caicos	Caribbean Diving	C/B/A	\$375**	Lada Simek

*Local dives are in Long Island Sound and may be to Parsonage Point (4'–20'), the Maine (25'), Glen Island (20'), Gwendoline Steers (65'), Celtic (60'), Condor (70'), or Poling Brothers #2 (50'), or may be to another site the captain knows.

**North Carolina dives are \$90 per day, and four days of diving are planned. Salt Cay Divers will provide 15 dives for \$375. For both trips, food, lodging, and transportation are additional. See current and/or past newsletters or contact coordinator for details.

[†]TSSC's dive classification system may be found on page 3.

Oops I forgot the darn thing

It's no secret that flying is the safest means of transportation. It is a well-regulated industry. Among its regulations is the mandated use of checklists. In flying, either for business or as a sport, there is a checklist for everything, and for every step. The pilot adheres to it no matter how much experience s/he has, student pilot or captain of a Boeing 777. The FAA mandates the use of checklists before engine start-up, during taxiing, before take-off, while climbing, in cruise, at approach, before landing. There's even a checklist for turning the engine off! The FAA believes that distraction, stress or any other environmental factor can lead to missing a step, which may lead to a disaster.



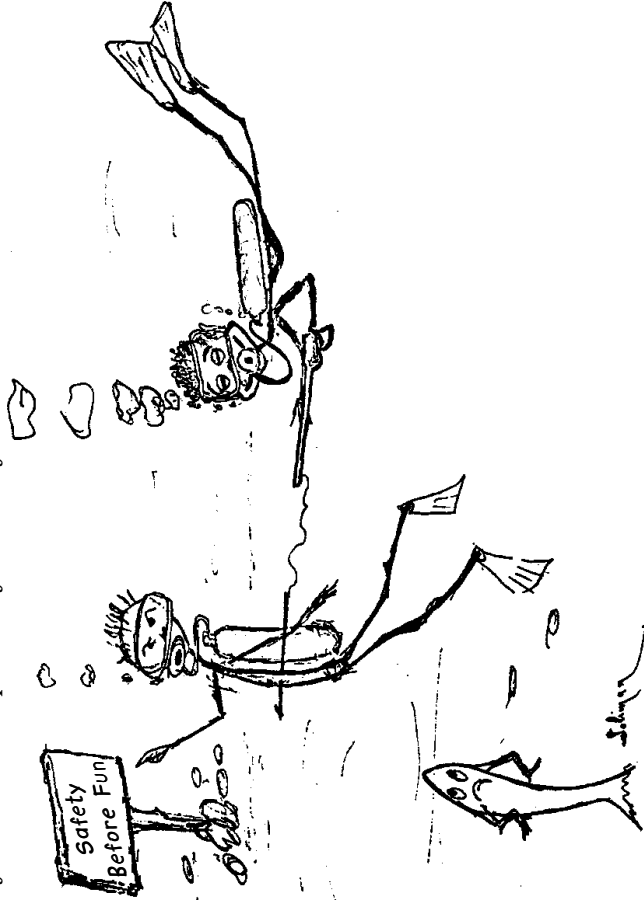
Soliman Shenouda
President

In the world of scuba diving, I believe we should adopt the use of a checklist system. If it would not prevent a mishap, it would at least avoid embarrassment.

Over the years, I have witnessed quite a few divers spoil their dives or ruin their dive trips because they missed an item or two, from a broken fin strap to incorrect weights. Some have brought empty or half-full tanks to the dive boat. Sometimes dive flags or lights were left at home. In the one that tops them all, a diver forgot his whole wetsuit for a cold-water dive!!

A checklist that includes all dive gear, both the presence and diveworthiness of each item, would be very helpful to the diver, particularly if the diver is a seasonal diver or dives different types of dives. The checklist for Long Island Sound dives would be different from the one needed for deep shipwreck dives or warm water dives.

Prepare your own checklist, laminate it and attached it to your dive bag. Use it in packing your gear. When packing, check each item against the list for its presence and its working condition. Go over the list one more time before leaving home. If you arrived at the dive site and find that you are still missing something, add two extra items to your checklist: medication for Alzheimer's for yourself, and aspirin for your buddy.



THE SCUBA SPORTS CLUB

P.O. Box 644
Rye, NY

<http://BeneathTheSea.org/TSSC/>
TSSC@BeneathTheSea.org

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Vice President Bob Bak
Treasurer Paul Dengler
Past President Ben Brush

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Dive Operations Vadim Ternovski
Education/Safety Rick D'Amico
Enviro/Legislative Rick D'Amico
Membership Anne Judge
Newsletter Anne Judge
Planning Bill Kilgallon
Program Michael Prange
Social Zsa-Renae Ho-Sang
Photo Steve Dicosola
Wreck Diving Jeff Pagano
Director-at-Large Gregg Macaulay
Public Relations Judy Klotz-Simek

LEGAL ADVISOR Robert Schragar
FOUNDER Armand Zigathn

CO-FOUNDER Soliman Shenouda

Submissions to Sea Swells Log may be made in electronic or paper form by the 20th of the month. Electronic submissions (email) are preferred and should be sent to

SeaSwells@BeneathTheSea.org

Submission of paper copy should be sent to

Anne Judge
2 Pine Mountain Road
Danbury, CT 06810
Fax (208) 485-4641

Please call or email to confirm fax receipt. For information send email to SeaSwells or call Anne at (203) 778-3584.

Join TSSC on Salt Cay, Turks and Caicos

October 25 to November 2, 2003

Salt Cay is the most remote island in the Turks and Caicos, an island group between the Bahamas and Cuba. It covers about three square miles and has a population of about 80. In the past it was the second largest exporter of salt—the center of the island is one big set of salt flats. It is very dry, as you would expect (diver's translation: few mosquitos), has no surface drainage from land (diver's translation: good visibility), and its small population produces a tolerable impact on the local environment (diver's translation: the reefs are healthy). This is diving the way it used to be!

What does Salt Cay lack? Glitz, souvenir stands, tourist traps, casinos, traffic, beggars, crime, vendors, swimming pools, big hotels, big restaurants. There are places to eat, such as Pat's—Pat is a wonderful cook and joins her guests. In all eating places, you call in advance to tell them that you are coming, and even what you want to eat. Otherwise, when you show up, your dinner may be frozen. (Every bit of food and drink is flown in). Seafood is number one on any menu. Transportation on the island is by foot, bike or golf cart. The natives are very friendly.

I have arranged a package of 15 dives with Salt Cay Divers for \$375. (You can find them on the web at www.SaltCayDivers.tc.) That amounts to \$25 per dive—you would have a hard time finding such a price in the States! Included will be trips to Grand Turk, where the entire island's waters are a wildlife refuge. They have wonderful walls. I went there with Dave Lindsay and Ken Salstrom two years ago and we liked it very much. (Although Ken later found a cheaper place to stay than our hotel—the local hospital). The sea life is prolific. For example, having seen hundreds of hogfish, all about one or two feet long, I was quite amazed to find in the Turks and Caicos a specimen four feet long and probably 50 pounds! Another diversion will be a dive and barbecue at Gibb's Cay, a small

uninhabited island where the sting-rays come to you, rub against your legs, and beg for food. The best treat is a trip to the wreck of the Endymion, a British warship sunk by an uncharted reef. The cannons are huge (eight feet or more) and there is a wreck of a steamship next to it. This is a world-class dive, all in 30 to 40 feet of water. Shore diving is available, without limits, and snorkeling on the north side.

There are three choices of accommodations.

- You can rent a house for \$1000 per week. This is recommended for four, and there's one house that will hold six. I believe they all come with golf carts. They each have a kitchen which Debbie, who runs Salt Cay Divers, is willing stock for you. Most people have breakfast and lunch in, and go out for dinner. The cost of eating out is similar to other islands.

- There are five suites at the Tradewinds. These are recommended for two, but can hold four if you use pull-out beds. The suites with kitchenettes are a little less.

- There is a bed and breakfast named Mt. Pleasant where the rooms are \$100 a night for two. Dan Levin and I stayed there last year and found it to be OK, except for one early-rising rooster. Coq au vin began to sound very appealing.

Overall, you can count on about \$795 for lodging and diving for eight days and seven nights.

To get to Salt Cay, you must fly into Provo and arrive before 3:30. Debbie of Salt Cay Divers will arrange inter-island flights to Salt Cay (25 minutes) for \$150. Or five people can charter a plane for \$130. You can get to Provo on American Airlines, Air Jamaica, Delta, or US Air for about \$840. Direct flights to Provo available from JFK.

Lada Simek
(718) 884-4611
lada@prodigy.net

May Meeting

8:00 pm, Wed, May 14

Whitby Castle Restaurant
at the Rye Golf Club
330 Boston Post Road, Rye NY
(914) 777-2053

Vince Bologna presents

How to research a shipwreck

If you've ever wanted to research an historic shipwreck, this meeting is for you. Our speaker, Vince Bologna, is an expert.

Vince received scuba training with the US Navy's Underwater Demolition Team. He's been diving New Jersey shipwrecks since 1964. Vince is on the Boat USA speaking board and conducts wreck lectures in the Northeast. He is also president and research director for the NOVA Caesarian Maritime Preservation Society and the Maritime and Northeast Historical Society. Both societies are involved in the research and preservation of ships wrecked prior to 1899.

Directions to Whitby Castle

at the Rye Golf Club
330 Boston Post Road, Rye NY
(914) 777-2053

From I-287: Get off at exit 11, stay in the right lane and at the end of the ramp, turn right onto Route 1 south (Boston Post Road). Stay on Route 1 for approximately 2.7 miles, going through 8 sets of lights. The Rye Golf Club and Whitby Castle are on your left. Turn into the Golf Club driveway and Whitby Castle is straight ahead.

From I-95: Get off at exit 19, Rye/Playland. Immediately take the first exit to the right, signed Rye/Mamaroneck/Harrison. At the first stop sign go left toward Rye/Mamaroneck. At the next stop sign turn right on North Street, following signs for Mamaroneck and Route 1 south. After .3 mile you will merge onto Route 1. Follow it for .7 mile. Turn left into the entrance of the Rye Golf Club. Whitby Castle is straight ahead.

From the Hutchinson River Parkway: Take exit 23 onto Mamaroneck Avenue in the direction of Mamaroneck. Just after the slow-down lights (approx. 1 mile), go straight onto the on ramp for Route I-95. Stay left for I-95 North. Follow as above.

Area Dive Shops

This list is provided as a convenience. TSSC does not endorse any dive shop.

Aqua Visions Scuba Ltd.

126 Mamaroneck Avenue,
Mamaroneck NY
(914) 381-1884
<http://AquaVisions.biz>
info@aquavisions.biz

Captain Mike's Dive Center

530 City Island Ave, Bronx NY
(718) 885-1588
<http://CaptainMikesDiving.com>

Cougar Sports

917 Saw Mill River Rd, Ardsley NY
(914) 693-8877

The Dive Shop

265 Federal Rd, Brookfield CT
(203) 740-9166
<http://TheDiveShopOnline.com>
Sherrit@TheDiveShopOnline.com

Marsh Scuba Supply

91 Lauer Rd, Poughkeepsie NY
(845) 452-8994
<http://MarshScuba.com>
Marsh_Scuba@worldnet.att.net

Orbit Marine Sports Center

3273 Fairfield Ave, Bridgeport CT
(800) 395-3483
<http://OrbitMarine.com>
OrbitDive@aol.com

Pan Aqua Diving

460 West 43rd St, New York NY
(800) 434-0884
<http://PanAqua.com>
NYstore@PanAqua.com

Pan Aqua Diving

461 Federal Rd, Brookfield CT
(888) 388-3483
<http://PanAqua.com>
CTstore@PanAqua.com

Rex Dive Center

144 Water St, Norwalk CT
(888) 260-DIVE (3483)
<http://RexDiveCenter.com>
DiveShop@RexDiveCenter.com

Scuba New York

2037 Central Park Ave, Yonkers NY
(914) 779-2966
<http://ScubaNewYork.com>
Info@ScubaNewYork.com

Westchester Dive Center

500 North Main St, Portchester NY
(914) 937-2685

In search of those crazy underwater eggs...



Above, the Scuba Sports Club's representatives at Dutch Springs' Underwater Easter Egg Hunt on April 19. Gregg Macaulay, Bob Bak, Kenny Salstrom, Camille Platzek, Anne Judge, and Michael Prange. Below, Kenny, Camille and Anne enjoy the fine weather. At right, from top to bottom, Camille and Michael prepare to enter the water; is that a sea otter, or the Creature from the Black Lagoon floating there?; and a couple of bunnies prepare to distribute the prizes. Article on Page 9.

Photos by: Kenny Salstrom and Michael Prange



Dive Shop of the Month Aqua Visions Scuba, Ltd.

126 Mamaroneck Avenue,
Mamaroneck NY
(914) 381-1884
<http://AquaVisions.biz>
info@aquavisions.biz

Aqua Visions is a full-service PADI dive center and a DAN business member, with a full rental department and a compressor. They are an authorized dealer for Cressi-Sub, Parkway Scuba, Mobby's, Sea Pearls, Underwater Kinetics, Spare Air, OS Systems, Ikelite, and Xcel. Aqua Vision is conveniently located about 50 yards north of Route 1 on Mamaroneck Avenue. Visit them soon—they are currently holding a first-anniversary sale on all in-stock Cressi wet suits!

TSSC Directors' Meeting Highlights

April 2, 2003

Budget: Bill and Paul submitted a balanced budget with revenue of \$3580 and spending of \$3468.

Dive Schedule: The dive schedule was finalized, with coordinators named for all dives except Sea Hawk dives. A trip to Salt Cay, proposed by Lada Simek with a projected cost of \$750 plus airfare, was accepted as a club trip.

Programs: Speakers for April—Dr. Erik Larsen—and for May—Vince Bologna—were confirmed

BTS: TSSC spent \$225. Net income from the raffle was \$139. The upstairs welcome party was poorly attended, and may not be repeated. 52 names of potential members were collected.

Open House Party: The cost was set

at \$35 per person with a \$15 discount in membership for new members. Door prize raffles & donations are all secured. Zsa will prepare a flyer.

Public Relations: Potential targets for membership were identified as police and fire departments, colleges, ski clubs, hiking clubs, YMCAs, Rodale's Scuba Diving magazine, and rec-scuba web sites. Judy will have a meeting with her team in April to establish procedures and actions.

ABCD award: The judges for the Above and Beyond the Call of Duty award for a TSSC director will be the president, the vice president and the executive director.

TSSC Secretary: Soliman will carry out the duties of secretary until the appointment of a replacement.

Help Publicize Our Club

We're asking all TSSC members to take club flyers and post them in their local supermarkets, gyms, YMCAs, and ski clubs. Pick up some flyers at the next meeting, and help your club!

Judy Klotz-Simek

BTS 2003 Raffle

The raffle held at TSSC'S booth at Beneath The Sea was a great success. Thank you to all who helped at the booth! The winner of the Mares MRI2 Axis regulator was Lou Lingstuy of Island Park, NY. Congratulations and safe diving!

Bob Bak

Get TSSC Stuff!

Show your club spirit with TSSC decals, patches, hats, and shirts! Stick-on plastic decals are \$1, and sew-on cloth patches are \$3. You can pick them up at any club meeting from director-at-large Gregg Macaulay. T-shirts should be coming soon, so ask him about them!



Anne Judge

TSSC's Dive Classification System

Every dive on TSSC's schedule (see the back page of this newsletter) has a "class" assigned to it. This class is an indication of the expected difficulty of this dive. Below are the descriptions of the three dive classes.

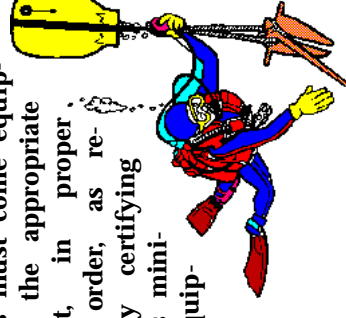
But remember, any dive can be more difficult than expected, depending on the conditions at the time of the dive! These classifications are only to be used as a guide when choosing which dives you will sign up for.

A: Be prepared for an advanced dive to depths of 130 feet. These are usually wreck dives in difficult conditions, including cold water, low visibility, significant currents, and wave heights over 3 feet. The diver should be self-sufficient and very experienced in these adverse conditions.

B: Be prepared for an open-water intermediate dive to depths of under 80 feet. Cold water and low visibility are to be expected. Currents and wave heights should be moderate. The diver should dive at least once per month and be mentally and physically at ease in the water.

C: Expect a shallow dive in a relatively protected area, but be prepared for cold water and low visibility. Some current and moderate wave heights are possible. Appropriate for beginning open-water divers, divers new to Northeast diving, and divers who love lots of relaxed bottom time.

All divers must come equipped with the appropriate equipment, in proper working order, as required by certifying agency as minimum equipment.



Ready to Dive?

Local diving will start this month, at least for those of us who have only wetsuits, so this seems the time for some general questions on stuff that might be good to remember before starting the season.

- Upon attaching the SPG to the regulator and opening the tank valve, a diver notices that the SPG reads about 100 PSI. Assuming the tank is full, what would be the first thing that the diver should check?
 - The SPG is malfunctioning.
 - The tank's burst disc has ruptured.
 - The tank valve is only partially opened.
 - The SPG is hooked up to the wrong port on the first stage.
- To avoid seasickness, avoid foods with high levels of
 - Fats
 - Carbohydrates
 - Proteins
 - All of the above
 - None of the above
- When using a compass, the way to navigate a triangular course that will lead back to the starting point is to make two
 - 90-degree
 - 120-degree
 - 180-degree
 - 210-degree
- turns in the same direction.
- Which action is not recommended to prevent the loss of weights during a boat exit?
 - Using both hands to remove the belt
 - Handing the weight belt to a person on the boat by the end without the buckle
 - Handing the weight belt to a person on the boat by the end with the buckle
 - Using keepers to prevent weights from sliding on the belt
- The emergency phone number for the Divers Alert Network is:
 - 1-800-MATTRES
 - 1-1-555-1212
 - 911
 - 1-1-919-684-4DAN

Rick D'Amico

Answers are on the next page.

Safety Corner

Refresh your memory on scuba and safe diving with these questions from Scuba Diving Magazine.

- When entering the water from a height of several feet to go spearfishing, a diver should
 - Hold the spear out to the side with the tip pointed upward.
 - Hold the spear out to the side with the tip pointed downward
 - Tie the spear on a line and lower it into the water before entering.
 - Have someone hand you the spear after you enter.
- Which of the following statements is false? A fishing spear should be pointed
 - Toward the bottom when at the surface.
 - Downward for storage.
 - Away from people at all times.
 - Upward except when shooting.
- While underwater you become extremely nauseated and realize you are going to throw up. You should:
 - Hold your regulator tightly in your mouth and vomit through it.
 - Remove your regulator from your mouth while you are throwing up.

your mouth while you are throwing up.

- Hold your regulator against your mouth with the purge button depressed.
 - Pull you mask down over your mouth and throw up into the air space.
- Which is the appropriate action to take if vertigo occurs while diving?
 - Swim to the surface and rest.
 - Assume a head-down position.
 - Grasp a stationary object until vertigo subsides.
 - Ascend a few feet and equalize pressure in the ears.
 - With a buddy line, the signal to another diver to stop is
 - One tug on the line.
 - Two tugs on the line.
 - Three tugs on the line.
 - Four tugs on the line.
 - The weight of a full standard 71.2 cubic foot scuba tank compared to an empty tank is
 - The same.
 - About a pound greater.
 - About a five pounds greater.
 - About two pounds greater.

Soliman Shenouda

4) c. Divers have swum down or sideways thinking they were going to

depressed while vomiting.

3) c. Vomiting can clog a regulator second stage, but gasping can be disastrous with the regulator removed from the mouth. Don't dive if nauseated, but if you are suddenly overwhelmed, remove the regulator, hold it at one corner of the mouth and keep the purge depressed while vomiting.

2) d. With a spear pointed upward at the surface, you might poke a hole in your float or in another diver; and keeping it pointed upward underwater is not practical

1) d. There are practical as well as safety reasons for this technique. Frequently you may need to adjust some gears after entering and is much easier if you have both hands available for any adjustment

the surface. Most cases of vertigo are temporary. Hold a solid object for reference until control is regained. If in mid-water, hug yourself for some relief until the dizziness passes.

5) c. In diver-to-diver signals, one tug means "OK", two means "Go", four means "Surface". And five or more means "Emergency", or come here quickly". All signals should be answered when received.

6) c. Air weight about 0.08 pound/cubic ft. at normal atmospheric pressure and temperature. This means the tank will contain $0.08 \times 71.2 = 5.7$ pounds of air when filled. When the tank reaches 300 PSI (that is empty for divers!) it contains only about 8.4 cubic feet of air, so the weight of the air will then be only about 0.7 pound.

Answers to Safety Corner Quiz

A Rabbit That Lays Eggs Underwater?

Dutch Springs Easter Egg Hunt • April 19, 2003

What the heck! Where am I? Oh, it's my alarm. 5:30 am. Got to get up and get going. Well, at least it's diving. Let me see...hood, mask, regulator, BCD, fins, gloves, dry suit, undergarments, weight belt. Anything else? Air, I forgot the air. Are the tanks in vis and hydro? Too late now, pack it up and look when you get there. Bob.

It's 8:30 and no one is here. I hope somebody shows. I know Gregg will. I think I'll just sit back in my chair with a pillow and catch some zzzzzz.

"Hey Bob, wake up."

Holy ---! I'm being attacked by a giant orange Easter egg! Hey Gregg, is that you? Where did you come from? Who are those two sick individuals who were in the water with you before 8 in the morning? Two AI candidates in training. I see you're practicing your torture techniques. Well, I can tell that you three are diehard divers.

Soon Michael, Anne, Kenny, and Camille showed up, eager to make short work out of the Easter Bunny and those colorful Easter eggs.

I suited up for the first dive. I looked down into the water and found that a miracle had happened: I could see bottom and not just a caldron of

We cruised out to the fire truck, van, boat, and cement truck, then turned north and hit the electric pole, then out of the blue saw the helicopter. Throughout the dive I was able to see Michael clearly on the bottom. The water was extremely clear.

After the dive we handed in our eggs and collected our prizes. Mike, Gregg's crazy AI, won a pink BCD. René won a tee shirt. Gregg won sunglasses. Camille and Kenny won hats. Michael won a hat and the grand prize, a season pass to Dutch Springs. And I won two days diving at Dutch Springs with a stay at the Holiday Inn. We cleaned up!

We were having too much fun to just drive home, so we went to Cactus Jack's for an early Tex-Mex supper and good conversation. What a way to end a good day of diving!

If you are interested in more information on Dutch Springs, visit them on the web at dutchsprings.com.

Look for the next adventure of Orangeman and Bottom Dweller as they tackle the stump monsters of Squantz Pond next month.

Bob Bak

See pictures on the next page

Don't Be the Typhoid Mary of Zebra Mussels

Club Environmental/Legislative Director Rick D'Amico points out that, although zebra mussels may at first seem a blessing to scuba divers enjoying the increased visibility, they spell disaster for native aquatic life. They filter large volumes of water for food, and in doing so remove much of the plankton from the water column, including eggs and larvae of important commercial and recreational fish species, and their food. They settle on native mussels and starve or suffocate them. And eventually their effects harm scuba diving, as they encrust and obscure underwater features.

This may not seem of much concern in an isolated, manmade environment like Dutch Springs, but it is of great concern in most of our lakes and rivers!

And it is very easy to inadvertently transport zebra mussels from one body of fresh water to another. Their free-swimming larvae are of microscopic size, and have been shown to survive in merely damp environments—like your wetsuit!

Even washing your equipment at home can lead to further spread, as they can get to rivers and lakes via storm drains or sewers.

Therefore, it is very important that divers take precautions to avoid spreading zebra mussels.

The Lake George Park Commission,

in a special edition newsletter (May 2001; available at lgpc.state.ny.us/zm_news.pdf) gives these warnings and procedures:

Diving activity can spread alien aquatic species. Microscopic zebra mussel larvae (veligers) and other small organisms can be trapped and transported in nearly any piece of diving or snorkeling equipment, including buoyancy compensators and wetsuits.

Between dives in different water bodies, submerge **all** equipment in hot tap water—110°F or greater—for at least 10 minutes. A cold-water rinse away from water bodies, storm drains, and plumbing drains is the less desirable second-choice method.

Baja Break — A Week in La Paz

by Gregg Macaulay

Last month, I and six friends took a break from New England's fickle spring to a warmer climate and bluer water—Baja California. We had a great time.

In what turned out to be a harbinger of things to come, our direct flight into Los Cabos went without a hitch. Once we cleared customs, our van driver was waiting for us right outside. Our first stop was the convenience store outside the airport to stock up on provisions for our two-and-a-half-hour trip to La Paz. Why fly into Cabo and drive? Total flight time was 6 hours instead of the 13-hour ordeal of flying into La Paz. Plus it was over \$200 cheaper even after van fare. And, not least, this allowed us to enjoy the rugged desert landscape while sipping everyone's favorite beverage, known locally as "cerveza."

Although La Paz is the capital of Baja, its downtown remains a nice uncrowded place to walk by the ocean and shop and eat. Due to the lack of cruise ships and the million bars, drinks and food are very reasonable. Every meal was good, except a version of filet mignon. We did find one restaurant with great steaks, but in most cases we were happier with the local seafood, Mexican dishes and soups. On our last night the dive shop's staff prepared a carne asada barbecue for us. It was great!

The La Concha Beach Club has been purchased by Howard Johnson's and was very well maintained. The rooms, though small, were clean. My wife, Karen, wanted a better view of the ocean so she and Donna Mays went to see about upgrading. I, of course, headed for the dive shop, then the bar. Or was it the other way around? Oh, well, it doesn't matter as the dive shop has its own bar! I liked the place better and better every minute. As I sipped my margarita Karen and Donna came down to inform Mark Mays and me that we were moving. They had found an empty two-bedroom condo that we could have.

The condo was a split-level, two-

bedroom, three-bath unit with full kitchen, dining room, sunken family room, and huge sixth- (top-)floor balconies looking over the bay of La Paz. How could I argue with what turned out to be a \$4 per couple per day difference? When another unit became available the next day, the rest of our group moved also.

The Cortez Club dive shop, a PADI five-star IDC facility, is very well run and can accommodate almost any need. The staff works very hard at making sure you enjoy your vacation. We dropped off our gear the first day at check-in and didn't have to touch it until it was time to pack it for the trip home. They loaded all the gear for each diver, with required weights, into a large plastic milk crate labeled with the diver's name. Every morning the staff put together tanks, BCDs, and regulators, and made sure they and the crates with the rest of our gear were on the boat. Our only job was to grab our wetsuits from the rack where they had been hung to dry the previous day. Their boats are comfortable and fast, usually getting us out to the dive sites and into the water within an hour to an hour and a half. They can arrange a lunch on the boat when a three-tank dive is planned. Once back at the dock, they take care of rinsing everything and hanging everyone's wetsuits to dry.

Our first two dives were with sea lions. As we pulled up to their rocky island, we could hear them barking. Once in the water, we could still hear them as they barked at each other and at us. The young pups are quick and I had trouble at times trying to follow their acrobatics with the video camera. They are also very curious and wanted to explore us and everything we were wearing. They will bite fins and enjoyed pulling on floating zipper strings. It's no problem getting close to these guys; I had to push them away sometimes just to be able to get them in focus! They also thought it was cute to sneak up behind us and give us a little nip in the butt. I think they liked the yelping

sounds we made! The older guys would just swim by slowly and gracefully. It wasn't mating season yet, but they would sometimes square off underwater and do a lot of posturing (barking, showing teeth).

As the week went on, the water got calmer and calmer. By the third day, we could head out to the seamounts. The northern seamount is where hammerheads are usually found. The top of the mount is around 80 feet and I had been told that we should see sharks hanging around 100 or 110 feet. But when I dropped down, while waiting for everyone else, a hammerhead swam above me! Unfortunately, that was the only shallow one we saw, as most were down around 140 feet, and I had set up my rebreather with too rich a gas mix to go that deep. But we saw around 20 sharks and had a great drift dive. The second dive was on the central seamount, green moray heaven. If you like eels, you have to check out this site! There were hundreds of green morays of every size, and every hole had at least a couple in it. This made for a great dive for videography and photography.

Every dive was great, with something new and unique to see. Even during surface intervals, we spotted small mantas jumping out of the water, doing flips to free themselves of parasites. Other interesting marine life included guinea fowl puffers, king angelfish, Cortez angelfish, Moorish idols, Rathburn's sea stars, Panamics crown-of-thorns, jeweled morays, bulls-eye electric rays, long nose dolphin, and schools of porpoise. One day on the way to our dive site a small blue whale was spotted. We tried to get a closer look, but it would dive and stay down for 20 or so minutes, then surface a distance away and immediately dive again. The area sees many different species—orca, pilot, finback and blue whales—at different times of the year. We were there too early for the giant Pacific mantas and whale sharks, but plan to go back next October as that is said to be the best time to visit La Paz.

True Dives

Only the facts have been changed to protect the guilty

By Sy Turner

As many who know me seem to think I'm on the nutty side, I decided to see a very prominent psychiatrist, Dr. I. M. Fischy. Unfortunately, he says it will take many years and a whole lot of money to cure me.

I asked him if this sport that we call scuba can be considered a "normal" sport. At first he saw no reason not to consider it normal. I didn't want to sound like I would do such a thing myself, so I told him a story about a diver I know, whom we will call Mr. A. J. Smith Jr.

Mr. Smith would get up on the day of a dive between 3:30 and 4:30 am. After showering (why?) and eating a balanced breakfast (coffee and doughnuts), he would load up his vehicle with gear and set out on his dive adventure. He would drive from one to two and a half hours. Then he would carry all his gear down a ramp to a waiting vessel (a boat to some of you). This vessel takes him on his second ride of the early morning, another one to two hours to get to the dive site.

Now the fun begins! He gets into all the gear he loaded on board, then jumps into the water and dives down to somewhere between 75 and 120 feet

for 15 to 40 minutes, then stops at 15 feet for a few more minutes, before returning to the surface. Once back on the vessel he talks about the poor visibility and the nasty current running near the bottom. After waiting through a one- to two-hour surface interval on the rocking and rolling vessel (seasickness, anyone?), he can go back down again, this time maybe to a lesser depth for a shorter time. After the second dive the vessel cruises back to the dock, another one- or two-hour trip. Then it is back up the ramp to load all his wet gear and whatever "souvenir" junk he may have found (if he was lucky) into his vehicle. He has to fight the late afternoon traffic all the way home. Once home all the gear must be cleaned and dried. All of this effort has been expended for maybe an hour underwater.

Dr. Fischy thought about this for a long time, and then said to me that if I really know people who do this he would be happy to offer a great group rate. He even said he would be willing to give up his other patients to study this strange group and may write a paper on them.

So the next time you think we divers are "normal," think again!

And now you know divers are crazy!



5) d. Bob Bak, this one's for you.

4) c. Weights can slip off the end of the weight belt without the buckle.

3) b.

2) a. Fats. Typically, light meals consisting of proteins and carbohydrates tend to prevent seasickness.

1) d. Fortunately, most new regulators have different-sized threads for high- and low-pressure ports, so this mistake won't normally happen.

"Ready to Dive?" Quiz

Answers to

The Bottomless Pit

Blue Lagoon • Port Antonio, Jamaica

by Vadim Ternovski



with only a snorkel. Doubtful, but who knows. It is doable, as proven by David Lee, who successfully established a world unassisted constant ballast free dive record of 51 meters (167 feet). (Read more about David Lee and see his world record dive video clip at apneablue.com).

David Lee's mom, Jan Lee, owner of the Lady G'Diver dive shop in Port Antonio, Port Antonio's only official PADI-accredited dive operation, had complimented us on our good diving skills the day before our Blue Hole dive, as she took us on a drift dive along a healthy reef wall off Jamaica's northeast shore. With her approval, her husband Steve agreed to take us to the bottom of the Blue Hole.

reflections of the lush forests and Blue Mountains, possesses some magical properties. One local boy told me that the water takes about 10 years off your age; this might be true as we had a hard time guessing his age. He seemed like he was 15 or 18, yet something just hinted that he might very well be over 30. The place also features mineral baths, and islanders encourage the idea that it will "turn a man into a bull." "In America," a caretaker told us, "men take Viagra. Here, all we need is one cup from the Blue Lagoon, and we're fit as a fiddle all night." I was eager to find out, and sat back to compose some sensible way of introducing the suggestion that we actually try diving this thingx.

Fabled Errol Flynn, a bona fide Hollywood movie hero, purchased land in the lush Jamaican town of Port Antonio with his third wife, stage and screen actress Patrice Wymore, in the mid 1950s. It is said that he dove in Blue Lagoon and reached its bottom

And so it begins. Dumping all air out of our BCs and slowly exhaling, we begin to plunge into what seems a rapid descent into the deep. I watch the digits on my computer: 30... 60... 75... 105... 120... hmmm, it begins to feel funny. The nitrogen narcosis starts to kick in. Still with control over the situation, I form an O around the descent line with my index finger and thumb, so that I can immediately stop my descent if I need to. I continue to descend. I feel "funny," and perhaps a bit lightheaded, from the second "martini" as the digits drop to 150, but still strong and in control. I know I'm narced, but I know I'm in control. I look at Izzy. He has a big smile on his face, but gives me an OK sign—I know he is good to proceed. Steve is confident in us, and continues to lead the descent.

Finally, we reach the bottom. A sigh of a relief, and I feel a gentle reduction of the narcosis, which makes me think that a lot of it has to do with psychology rather than purely with physiology. I glance at my Suunto Cobra—168 feet. Damn! That's the deepest I've ever been, I think. Still in full control with a good sense of direction, I start to swim away from the line to explore the rest of the bottom of the hole. This underwater environment is primarily granite

Dive tables are a thing of the past.
Computers make diving a blast.
We applaud this mass movement,
As a diving improvement,
As long as the batteries last!

walls covered with dead trees sticking out and lying on the floor. The bottom is covered with what seems to be centimeter-thick silt. Trying not to kick it up, I slowly kneel down and pick up a baseball-sized stone, which appears to have a smooth surface. "Cool!", I think. It will make a perfect souvenir to take home.

Checking on my buddy, I find both Steve and Izzy sitting on a bench, one of them, I believe, even crossing his legs. "Weird," I think. "Why would they have a bench here on the bottom; are they really trying to be like Dutch Springs?" Even though it felt like the nitrogen narcosis eased up a bit, it is still present, and I realize I'm spending more than a reasonable amount of time trying to analyze why Izzy would be sitting on a bench with his legs crossed at 168 feet of water. (The "bench" was a dead tree lying horizontally across the bottom of the hole, and you can actually see it briefly in David Lee's freediving clip on the website mentioned earlier in this article.)

Visibility, it turns out, is indeed bad by Caribbean standards, reaching at best 10 feet. Despite the bright sun on the surface, the hole is dark and light torches provided by Lady G'Diver turn out to be handy as we explore the moon-like bottom of the Blue Hole, completely void of any kind of flora or fauna.

Four minutes at the bottom—time is up! We slowly proceed back to the line, and, looking up, start the

controlled ascent from the dark deep pit of Blue Hole, making two deco stops at 30 and 15 feet. Izzy is smiling. "We did it!" I think to myself, and stretch my mouth into an equally big smile—some water even entered my mask.

The dive was a success. It was done safely, as planned, and supplied valuable experience. I now know what nitrogen narcosis feels like; I know what my tolerance for it is and how I react and function under its influence.

Steve later autographed the stones that we had picked up from the bottom. He seemed slightly surprised at such a strange request but I felt he was honored and maybe blushed a bit as he wrote "5th of April 2003, Blue Lagoon—168'" and his signature, while incoherently mumbling that this is the first time anybody actually asked him to autograph a stone. I meant to hint to him that this is a great business idea for his dive operation, assuming taking stones is not illegal!

Author's notes: Since my computer only showed a depth of 168' near the bottom (we can perhaps add two or three more feet for the actual bottom depth), and the advertised depth is 180', I can only assume that perhaps the depth fluctuates due to high and low tides, and that it was a low tide at the time of my dive. Because there is often a drastic fluctuation in water temperature, it has been suggested that the origin of the Blue Hole is a long-extinct volcanic crater.

Lada's Limericks

That wetsuits have a habit of shrinking
Is the consensus of all divers' thinking.
Some think it crass
To blame their fat ass
Or their gut, from all the beer drinking!
Your ears will remind you with pain!

Equalizing is often a strain;
You must do it again and again.
You can use all your might,
But if you don't do it right
Your ears will remind you with pain!

Continued on next page