



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

July Meeting

8:00 pm, Wed, July 9

Michael Lombardi

on

Diving Extreme Environments

at

Whitby Castle Restaurant

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

See page 7 for more details.

Sea Swells

LOG

The monthly newsletter of
 The Scuba Sports Club

July 2003

the anchor line

Diving with Contact Lenses?



President

Soliman Shenouda

Some time ago, the Naval Medical Research Institute studied the risk associated with wearing contact lenses while diving. Through the study used limited number of volunteers, it had quite interesting results.

Two types of lenses were used in the study, hard (polymethyl-methacrylate) and soft (membrane). Two versions of the hard lenses were used: a fenestrated lens, which had a 0.4 mm hole in the center, and a nonfenestrated lens, which had no hole. The subjects each wore a contact lens in one eye and the other eye was left without.

The study was performed in a hyperbaric chamber. Exposure depth was 150 feet for a bottom time of 30 minutes, followed by decompression following the standard U.S. Navy table. The researchers examined the cornea using a slitlamp, an instrument which provides magnification and a narrow beam of intense light, similar to the one used by your eye doctor. They examined the corneas of the subjects before, during, and after the exposure.

Small bubbles in the precorneal tear film under the solid hard contact lens were first noticed as decompression progressed through 70 feet. The bubbles increased in number and expanded during the 30-foot stop. By the time the divers reached the surface, there was a reduction in the size and number of bubbles. After 30 minutes at sea level, no bubbles were left, but coin-shaped patches of damaged corneal tissues, medically called corneal epithelial edema, could be seen in the area where bubbles had been. At the time of bubble formation, divers expressed a feeling of soreness in the involved eyes, saw halos and radiating spokes when viewing lights, and experienced decreased sharpness of vision. Symptoms lasted for about two hours after a return to sea level. No bubbles were seen if no contact lens was worn, if a soft lens was worn, or if there was a single 0.4-mm hole in the center of the hard lens. The researchers hypothesized that permeability and flexibility of the soft lens allows, to some degree, exchange of gas and nutrients such as sugar, and each blink pumps nutrient-rich tears across the cornea-lens surface. The edema was attributed to the trapping of nitrogen bubbles in the precorneal tear film during the outgassing, depriving the epithelium of oxygen while retaining excessive carbon dioxide, causing the tissue damage.

The study concluded that wearing contact lenses in general, and hard lenses in particular, is not a good answer for people who lack perfect vision. To this can be added other problems associated with wearing contact lenses during diving. For example, should the face mask flood, there is the possibility of the lens floating out of the eye, or of shrinking of the lens polymer by seawater or swelling in fresh water. Without a doubt, the best answer is the use of face mask with corrective lenses glued to it. You don't have to worry about the nuisance associated with handling contact lenses or the risk of corneal epithelial edema.

[Reference: "Contact lenses & diving" by Mary M. Matzen, NMRJ]

2003 Dive Schedule

Date	Day	Boat & Port	Dive Description	Class [†]	Cost	Contact
Jul 12	Sat	Sea Hawk, Freeport, LI	G&D	A	\$60	Bill Kilgallon
Jul 19-20		Cape Ann, Mass.	Scallop & Wreck Dives	C/B/A	\$65	Bob Bak
Jul 21-26		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	Bill Kilgallon
Aug 16-17		Rye, New Hampshire	Seal Dive	C/B/A	TBA	Bob 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	Bill Kilgallon
Sept 7	Sun	Sea Hawk, Freeport, LI	Algol	A	\$60	Bill Kilgallon
Sept 20-21		St. Lawrence Seaway	Wreck Diving Weekend	A	TBA	Gregg Macaulay
Oct 4	Sat	Fort Wetherill, RI	Beach Dive & Picnic	C	Free	Rick D'Amico
Oct 11-18		Key Largo, Florida	Land-Based Florida Dive Trip	C/B/A	TBA	Bill Kilgallon
Oct 25-26		Cape Ann, Mass.	Scallop & Wreck Dives	C/B/A	\$65	Bob Bak
Oct 25-Nov 2		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, with four days of diving planned. Salt Cay Divers will provide 15 dives for \$375. For both trips, food, lodging, and transportation are additional. See past newsletters or contact coordinator for details.

[†]**Dive Classification:** This is an indication of the expected difficulty of each dive—but remember, any dive can be more difficult than expected, depending on conditions at the time! These are only to be used as a guide. All divers must come equipped with the appropriate equipment, in proper working order, as required by certifying agency as minimum equipment.

A: Be prepared for an advanced dive to depths of 130'. These are usually wreck dives in difficult conditions, including cold water, low visibility, significant currents, and wave heights over 3'. 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'. Cold water and low visibility are to be expected. Currents & 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 divers, divers new to Northeast diving, and divers who love lots of relaxed bottom time.

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Keep up to date on club news. And again this month, great recipes from club members.

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New member and new diver Kathryn Taubert writes about some lessons she's learned.

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A successful hunt for scallops in the waters of Cape Ann.

► Education and Safety 6

Let the club know you want a rescue course! and test your pressure IQ.

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calendar highlights

► TSSC July Meeting July 9

Michael Lombardi speaks on diving extreme environments. See page 7.

► Cape Ann Trip July 19-20

Collect scallops or just enjoy great marine life. See page 7.

► TSSC/BTS Party Sept 13

Saint Lawrence Seaway Trip

► Saint Lawrence Seaway Trip Sept 20-21

Enjoy warm, clear water and lots of wrecks. See June's newsletter (available on our web site).

► Ballroom Dancing Sept 26

► Salt Cay Trip Oct 25-Nov 2

Enjoy "diving the way it used to be." Details in the May Sea Swells Log.

► Halloween Party Oct 31

► Holiday Party Dec 13

TSSC Directors' Meeting Highlights

June 4, 2003

Public Relations: Judy Simek is leading a very strong public relations program. TSSC is currently advertising on 11 local radio and TV stations and in 12 publications. Judy is looking for more volunteers to sustain the PR activities.

Web Site: Ken Salstrom in coordination with Anne Judge will explore options for displaying on the web site which members will be participating in social and dive events. As a preliminary approach, Yahoo's online calendar will be used.

Program: Michael Prange finalized the speakers list for the rest of 2003.

Internal Marketing Director Position: Soliman Shenouda is looking for a volunteer for the new position of internal marketing director, to establish the policy and procedures that would be most effective in increasing members' participation in the club.

Membership News

I'm happy to announce that five new members joined us during June. They are **Daniel Weisbard** and **Chuck Failla**, both of Stamford, **Tony Mazza** of Greenwich, **Ernest & Joseph Barone** of Woodbury, and **Anthony Marsico** of New Rochelle.

Tony Mazza is a Master Diver with 200 dives under his weight belt, and interested in warm-water dives. Chuck and Anthony want to dive in the Northeast. And Dan and the Barones just want to get wet—they'll dive anywhere!

So look for these new members at club meetings and activities—and I hope we'll be seeing them on lots of club dives!

Anne Judge
Membership Director

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



THE SCUBA SPORTS CLUB

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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.

Member of the Month

Tony Mazza

Let me tell you a little about one of the newest members of our TSSC family. His name is Tony Mazza and he has been a close friend of mine for years. I met Tony when he was a neighbor in Danbury. I had recently certified my wife and we had just returned from a trip when I met him for the first time. In our conversation, Tony mentioned the he and friends had done a resort course on their last warm-water trip and wanted to get certified prior to their next trip. By the time we had talked a few minutes, we had set up classes and pool sessions and a trip to Bonaire for their first dives. Since then, Tony has joined me on most trips and has done some New England diving also. Well, as they say, "What goes around comes around"; Tony and his fiancée Paula will be joining me on my November trip to Bonaire so she can get certified. We look forward to returning to one of Tony's and my favorite dive locations in the world. The last time we were there we dove during a solar eclipse! If you want a good story, ask Tony about our pre-dawn dive we did there. It's the only time I have ever been on a reef where everything was asleep.

If you would like to meet Tony and his soon-to-be wife, look for him at the next club meeting—or join us on our trip to Bonaire (page 7), where we can spend the evenings discussing the day's dives prior to doing a night dive.

Gregg Macaulay

TSSC Needs a Secretary!

The position of secretary is currently empty. If you would like to be involved in club government, in a clearly-defined role, this may be for you! The secretary (a) records minutes of the directors' meetings and provides copies of those minutes at the next board meeting, and (b) presents highlights of the minutes to the members at the regular club meetings, and where appropriate, in the newsletter.

Scallops and Lobsters and Fish, Again!

Gloucester, Massachusetts
July 19–20, 2003

The Scuba Sports Club will again host two days of two-tank boat dives beginning at noon on Saturday, July 19. On Sunday we will leave at about 7:45 am for a two-tank boat dive and be back by noon.

We had a wonderful time in Cape Ann in June—read about that on page 6—and this is your chance to get in on the fun. Expect to see beautiful sea life, possibly seals at some sites, and of course, lotsa lobstas! If you like Jersey or the Sound you will think you have died and gone to heaven with the 20- to 50-foot visibility in Cape Ann.

Reserve today! To sign up, or if you have any questions, please contact me at (845) 878-9604 or Rbakdive@aol.com.

Bob Bak
Trip Coordinator

Dive Bonaire in 3D

November 8 – 15, 2003

Join your friends on this trip to the dive paradise of Bonaire! We have arranged a trip for 12 people (to share three villas) and have six spots left without deposits. We are planning a 3D dive package with a 2-tank morning dive boat trip for \$708. Airfare from JFK is \$612. If you are interested, please let me know ASAP as this is on a first-come, first-served basis—and this is a prime time to visit Bonaire!

What is a 3D dive package? PLAZA VILLAS~PORT BONAIRE and TOUCAN DIVING have simplified your dive travel needs with their **DRIVE, DIVE, DELUXE** package, which includes a 2-bedroom villa with kitchen, a double-cab pickup truck for your shore diving needs, plus unlimited air fills for shore diving the many marine park sites along Bonaire's coral-fronted coastline. This is one-stop dive shopping!

Separate daily single- and two-tank boat dives, afternoon single-tank boat trips, and night boat trip options are also available from the staff of PADI five-star, Gold Palm IDC-rated Toucan Diving, which uses small Island Hopper boats (carrying a maximum of 12 divers and 2 crew) with multilingual instruction for beginner to advanced divers, photo and video services (including E-6 processing

You can read about this and more at Plaza Villas~Port Bonaire's web site at plazavillas.com.

Remember, if you're interested, act fast! Call me at (203) 746-4983 or email gmacaula@juno.com.

Gregg Macaulay

Dive Shop of the Month Pan Aqua

Pan Aqua is a full service PADI dive center with two locations, in New York City and Brookfield, Connecticut.

July Meeting

8:00 pm, Wed, July 9

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

Michael Lombardi
or

Diving Extreme Environments

Very little science beyond initial exploration is being conducted in extreme environments—deep, under ice, in caves. Technical diving has opened the door to these unique environments, leaving opportunities for discovery.

This presentation will provide an overview of recent scientific efforts in these areas, from the Bahamas to Antarctica, and the significant results which are opening a whole new world to the scientific community, and are ultimately shining a new light on the significance of ocean exploration. This is part of the official launch of "Project Innerspace" (appliedsubsea.com/project_innerspace.html), a movement to support science at depths of 200–500 feet.

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.

Jumbo Scallops

Cape Ann, Massachusetts • June 20-22

Cape Ann was again good to our club when, last month, four TSSC members ventured there in search of scallops, lobster, and buried treasure.

What we found was a glorious sunny day on Saturday, filled with calm seas and scallops. Our first destination, in search of scallops, was Satan's Banks. Unfortunately, a sea dredger was in operation there, making it impossible to dive. So we moved on to Eagles Ridge, a 35- to 50-foot dive. There Pete, Bill, Mike, Dan, and I went in search of the elusive scallop. They were not plentiful but those venerable scallops that we found hiding under lots of growth were massive—6 to 8 inches with muscles the size of a hockey puck! (OK, maybe they were a tad smaller.) We dove both sides of the bank and by the end of the day we each had about 5 pounds of *jumbo* scallops. That evening we dined on papaya and steak and settled into a comfortable tent at Cape Ann Camp Site.

felt it prudent to surface even though we had wandered from the boat. Upon surfacing we grabbed a lobster buoy and returned the OK signal to the wee little man on the wee little boat on the horizon. After riding out the 8-foot rollers for ten or so minutes we were on the boat in a heavy rain rinsing our gear. The hot coffee and chowdah tasted good at the Gull's before the ride home.

I hope members of this club will seize the opportunity to dive Cape Ann and New Hampshire with TSSC this summer. This coast has a lot to offer. Don't look back to your checkout dives in a quarry or the dark waters of the Sound.

There are several trips to this area remaining on the club's 2003 dive schedule. The next Cape Ann dive trip is July 19 and 20. There are still spaces left—reserve today!

Dive safe, dive often
Bob Bak

education and safety

Would You Join Us for a Rescue Course?

One of the activities that the club is planning this year is a rescue weekend with Lifeguard Systems, Inc (LGS; www.teamlgs.com). We hosted such an event in 1988, and it was a valuable experience for all club members present. LGS has taught rescue and search and recovery classes to numerous fire, police, and rescue departments from Alaska to Florida. LGS instructors are special. They would be interested in such a course. It would cost approximately \$100 and would be taught in early or mid-October, probably at Squantz Pond in Danbury. If you are interested, please contact Rick D'Amico at (203) 335-0246 or Usamarbio1@aol.com.

More information will follow as it becomes available.

Now, on to the quiz...

No Pressure Here!

- 1) A diver who has a blocked eustacian tube during ascent will likely experience:
 - a) vertigo, due to increased middle ear pressure
 - b) ringing in the ear
 - c) pain, as a result of a bulging ear drum
 - d) all of the above
- 2) As temperature increases, pressure in a scuba cylinder _____, as per _____.
 - a) increases, Boyle's Law
 - b) remains the same, Boyle's Law
 - c) increases, Charles' Law
 - d) decreases, Charles' Law
- 3) The volume of air in a flexible container would increase most during an ascent from:
 - a) 132 feet to 99 feet
 - b) 99 feet to 66 feet
 - c) 66 feet to 33 feet
 - d) 33 feet to the surface
- 4) At high elevations, a bourdon-tube type depth gauge will indicate a depth that is _____ than the actual depth of water.
 - a) shallower
 - b) deeper
 - c) the same

Rick D'Amico
Education and Safety Director

• a • d • c • 2 • 1 • 1 • :sawmsv

TSSC Keeps Cooking!

As announced, TSSC will be putting together a cookbook this summer. I hope you have all contributed your best recipes! If you haven't, you have one last chance—you can **submit recipes by July 9** to Pat Forgacs (Pat_Forgacs@abicon.com or 9 Fairway Drive, Danbury CT 06811). All kinds of recipes are welcome.

For the second month, we're giving you a sneak peek at some of the recipes submitted. This month the selection is two recipes from newsletter and membership director Anne Judge. Some of you may have tried her morning glory muffins—she has brought them to several club events.

MORNING GLORY MUFFINS

This originally called for a cup of oil, but was oily & heavy that way. I replaced 2/3 of the oil with puréed prunes (or a 50/50 mix of puréed prunes & applesauce) and found that not only was it less oily-feeling, but the taste was richer. The sugar is reduced from 1 cup in the original recipe.

I usually now make this in 4 mini loaf pans (about 3"x5 1/2"), baked for a few minutes longer than the muffins, but it could also probably be done in one standard 9"x5" loaf pan. When made as muffins, I generally make 12 instead of 18 muffins & just fill the cups higher.

I like these—they taste good & satisfy, but you feel like you're eating something healthy!

—Anne Judge

- 2 cups flour
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 cups (8 oz) grated carrots (3 medium)
- 1 apple, peeled & grated
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup shredded coconut (or 1 Tbsp miller's bran)
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- 2/3 cup puréed stewed prunes
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 2 tsp vanilla extract

Grease 18 muffin cups. Set oven at 350°F. Into a large bowl sift flour, sugar, baking soda, cinnamon, & salt. Stir in carrots, apple, raisins, coconut (or bran) & pecans. In another bowl stir together eggs, oil, & vanilla & add to the flour mixture just until the batter is moist & smooth. Divide the batter among the muffin cups & bake 30–35 min. or until firm & puffed. Serve at once.

To purée the prunes, place pitted prunes in a glass measuring cup & cover with water. Microwave several minutes, let sit a few more (depending on how patient you are), then purée in a blender. Add enough water to make a fairly runny mix—this is replacing oil—but still mostly fruit. It will take about 6 prunes to give 2/3 cup.

Area Dive Shops

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

- Aqua Visions Scuba Ltd.**
126 Mamaroneck Ave, Mamaroneck (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>
Sherri@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
<http://WestchesterDiveCenter.com>

FOR SALE: Brand new 2003 Zeagle Ranger BC, size medium, never touched water—even has the sticker attached to it. Includes manual and hose, still in original plastic bag, and full manufacturer's warranty, registered from authorized shop where it was bought. A copy of the warranty card that was mailed to Zeagle will be included. The Ranger is an excellent BC! This one was custom ordered with the integrated pull-out weights instead of the traditional Ranger ripcord system; each side is released independently with a pull on the weight pouch handle. Information can be found at zeagle.com/bc2001_ranger.htm and zeagle.com/bc2001_design.htm. Contact Vadim at (718) 519-7718 or vadim.ternovski@verizon.net if you're interested or if you know anyone who might be. Can be delivered for inspection within Westchester/New York City area.

New Kid on the Dock

Kathryn A. Taubert

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Taking up diving in my mid-fifties was something that just happened. A trip to the dive shop for a new skin for my long-distance swimming ended with me soon under water, getting my c-card, and looking back (or up) just long enough to wonder what had taken me so long! Enthralled, I launched into this ten-month leg of what I hope will be a life-long journey. To ensure it, I'm attending every available workshop, advancing certifications, taking copious notes and discovering that learning in this sport never stops, nor should it.

Since last July, I've made 22 dives of varied profiles, all of them instructive. I've learned that not all dive shops are the same, not all certifying agencies agree, not all instruction is complete, and not all divers use their learning in the same way. My AOW-plus training wheels are merely entry-level diving credentials, requiring further advancement of my education and practice so that I can dive well into the next years, even decades of my life.

My logbook contains not only notes on dive basics, but rules I didn't learn in training. It is some of these I wish to share with other new divers, seasoned divers, and instructors who might find them helpful working with us "new kids on the dock."

1) Bigger is not always better.

Lots of advertising, Hollywood endorsements, boats, colorful T-shirts, and years in operation don't necessarily mean the best dive, especially for the new diver. Signing up for a two-tank dive with Mr. Century's Reef 'n' Beef Dive Shop can mean:

- You're on a boat with 17 other divers falling over each other to don gear and get in the water.
- Your buddy, if there is one, may be chosen by lottery, with you, the rookie, raffled off as the dubious prize.
- The divemaster's briefing, in his haste to get everyone in and out of the water, may consist solely of "Our first dive will be deep and our

competition's 20-knot juggernaut overhead if it had run up the back of his first stage and hauled him off by it. (He was, however, an awfully nice guy, and except for this deficiency, one of the better DMs thus far).

2) Little details not covered in training can mean the difference between comfort and misery, even life and death.

a) Availability of emergency treatment facilities, on-board ship-to-shore radio and emergency equipment is something you might want to know before boarding the boat. Not all small dive boats carry equipment, but they should, at least, have access to on-shore emergency treatment facilities in the event a diver gets in trouble.

Ask the dive shop operator the location of the nearest decompression chamber and treatment personnel and facilities for dive injuries, as well as how recently your divemaster or crew have been recertified in rescue techniques.

b) Warm water isn't always warm, especially when you're just out of it in wet gear, heading at 20 knots back to the dock or next dive site. Change into extra clothing or warm jacket and cap before the juggernaut to the next dive site. I don't care if the air temperature is 85°F, that fast boat ride to the next dive site can chill. And if you're cold out of the water, you're darned sure going to be cold in it. Hypothermia may foment DCS, a sure-fire way to ruin your next dive, if there is one.

c) "Water & food on board" doesn't always mean H₂O and consumables. Sugar-loaded soft drinks and insulinsusting snacks, technically mostly water or edible, may be the best you can expect.

Bring your own water and healthy, high-protein snacks.

Some professional divers drink two

Continued on next page

quires grasping the slippery line and dragging it across the knife in a way that may delay extrication. I learned that at the recent Westchester Medical Center Dive Safety Seminar in Valhalla, NY (thanks to Andrea Zafares of Lifeguard Systems), and all it cost me was a small donation to the new Children's Hospital.

3) The buddy system isn't universally endorsed, nor practiced in quite the same way as you may have learned.

a) As solo-traveling diver, I've found "buddy" a relative concept. Of six certifying agency-affiliated dive shops in two well-known Caribbean dive sites, only one practiced what I learned as "routine." The other five either didn't require it, substituted "barely acquainted" for "buddy," or seemed to suggest that anyone practicing it was a lesser diver rather than more of one.

It seems that not all seasoned divers nor certifying agencies are entirely keen on buddy diving, especially for newer divers. ("You're still too busy worrying about yourself to help someone else.") I took this aspect of my training very seriously, however.

I'm taking steps to be a truly good buddy (ten-four!) by advancing skills through training and practice. If I'm diving on a boat with a stranger who may have even less dive time than I, I want to help ensure that neither of us gets in trouble. I can't do that without learning, practice, and raising my own confidence so it's second nature to me to dump weight at the right time, make a controlled ascent without blowing out my lungs, or avoid being hog-tied to the bottom by fishing line, after dropping the only cutting tool I almost couldn't retrieve because it was strapped remotely to my calf and tangled in that same line (see 2e).

b) Ask the divemaster to select a buddy for you. If no one is available, make it him (or her).

Sometimes a new diver is better off pretending to be less skilled before descent, to ensure appropriate monitoring below. Once your true diving skill becomes obvious, your DM will be pleasantly surprised, your

confidence bolstered, and you will have covered the contingencies, just in case.

c) At the very least, ask your buddy to point out his weights and alternate air source.

Although the blank look I once received after asking those questions was a bit disconcerting, I considered it information well learned, visualized managing the worst-case scenario, and positioned us as close to the DM as I could. ("He knows where the morays are!") is a good excuse.) You may find your new buddy relieved to have someone actually ask those questions!

On one dive I was paired with a teenager from Germany on her first ocean dive. Her anxious snorkeling parents circling above like hovering gulls, I felt kind of silly as the blind leading the blind! But the



experience was both enjoyable and rewarding, forcing me to concentrate on safety basics and practice new skills. And I felt good about having helped another new diver through her first ocean dive, as she, arms flailing midwater over a mile-deep trench, required a gentle tug from me to stop the unexpected ascent as she eyed the Deep below. Her second dive, however, was an example of bolstered confidence. I'd like to think I might have been at least partly responsible. It still makes me smile to think that my photo is in Mom's scrapbook in Germany somewhere, as the "seasoned" diver who offered to buddy with her daughter on her first ocean dive!

As I said, if you don't ask, you may never know just with whom you are diving! If you're lucky, however, maybe it will be somebody like me.

