



The Official Newsletter of
THE SCUBA SPORTS CLUB

January 2007



Wanted--New club members with Fresh new Ideas!

I could have started this year off with reminiscing about last year and our accomplishments but the fact is we are all tired and need a shot in the arm. We are looking for all of you to jump in and make this the best (funniest) year ever. We are going to have terrific meetings with exciting speakers, great parties and social events that will be remembered for years.(except for those who have had a really great time.)And we are going to dive our tails off. So get ready clean off that gear and hang on for a wild ride this year.

We need and want you to join a committee and plan a event or dive. It can be as simple as getting people to meet for dinner one night, or maybe take a hike in the woods, or do a dive in a local quarry or Candlewood Lake.

The point is that you can not wait for someone else to have fun for you. Life is too short so lets take the diver by the fins and get swimming. You all have

something to offer the club.(i.e., your friends). So please share.

Hang on!!! Dive safe—dive often.

Bob Bak
President

OPINION

IS IT FAREWELL TO DURLAND SCUBA?

On November 18 and 19 the Durland Scuba Fall Class braved murky water and chilly winds to complete their open water dives at Beach 9th Street in Rockaway, Queens. Visibility hovered at 6 inches on the bottom but the Venture scouts and their relatives were more than game. This group of 15 students, which included a local Police Chief and four family groups (father & two daughters, father & son, father & two sons and father, step-mom and son) as well as my own son Anthony, was our largest and our last at the Boy Scout facility. The next day the local paper proclaimed the

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DURLAND, CONT.

upcoming purchase of the Aquatic Center by local investors and dangled the possibility that we might make a deal to stay on.

It is too soon to tell whether our hopes of keeping alive the 37 year tradition of Scuba instruction at the Durland pool will be realized. Certainly there will be changes but the tradition of offering volunteer dive instruction to youth started by Buster Crabbe when he certified a 16-year-old Rick D'Amico at Durland in 1969 must go on.

This year our dive community already lost one landmark with the closing of Westchester Dive Center in Port Chester. I am proud to say that after closing his doors, Bob Tseng gave all of his teaching masks, snorkels and fins to our Venture Crew. This is just the latest of a string of charitable acts that kept our class going as the Boy Scouts throttled back on their support of activities at the pool they were actively trying to unload. Thanks to the kindness of Zig we were able to get a booth at BTS last year and as a result a Jersey dive shop contributed a half dozen BC's and a number of divers from all over the metro area gave every manner of good usable equipment that we couldn't afford to buy.

Durland has long been a TSSC stronghold and in recent times every staff member has belonged to the club also. Without the help of the now betrothed Pat and Zeke, Rick D'Amico, Don Reynolds, Sy Turner, Steve Hausch, Bob Schupak and relative newcomers Andy Maher and Mike McGuire we couldn't have got it done. The long suffering Ed

Smith kept teaching in the face of much adversity and we snatched a couple of fairly nice days from the brink of winter to finish up our class. Ed brought in his buddies Tony and Kent, all tech-rigged and dry suited and they anchored the down lines while my guys Tom Farley and Warren Reilly from the NYAC Scuba club helped us escort students to the cages. Megladon rebreather diver (and seldom seen TSSC member) Pete Macintosh showed up and was relegated to making chicken soup and hot cocoa on the beach since I was already using his toasty custom crushed neoprene suit.

When they show up for their C-cards every one of our new divers will be handed an application to TSSC (I see a few family memberships coming). It has been a great run over the years bringing new divers safely into the sport and with a little luck and perseverance maybe we can find a way to continue the Durland program for the next batch of youngsters. As always, yours thoughts and assistance are solicited.

Tom Cascione

DIVE TRIP

Attention!!! The Don and Bob Show takes it to the road again!!!

There are some important things to know. First take out your checkbook and send me a deposit of only a mere, measly, skimpy, pathetic \$100 to hold your place on this fun-filled EXOTIC trip.

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DIVE TRIP, CONT.

Second, you are going to have the most fun in your life by joining us. Thirdly, you will be heading to Roatan to **Fantasy Island**.

Fourth and all the way to last, the date is September 15th-22nd, 2007. We leave from Newark on Continental Airlines. We fly to Houston and then directly to Roatan where we will be greeted (probably by heads of state or Migue Land) and whisked away via limo or bus, complete with chickens, to the Lovely Fantasy Island Resort. Once there, you will spend seven fun-filled nights and eight days. Included is room (double occupancy with a/c), three meals a day, three boat dives per day, unlimited shore diving, a night dive (preferably not in your drink), a welcome cocktail, a free hour-long massage by masseur Don (or not). Oh yeah, and a flight back here to Jersey. The cost (dat, dat, dat, dah) is going to be approximately \$1,200.00, tax included. Not included are gratuities, extracurricular activities, drinking, private jet service, etc. Check out the web site at:

<http://www.fantasyisland.com/>

So what's to think about? It's only a mere, measly \$100.00 deposit. So far twelve are signed up with five more ready to go. Invite friends, family, co-workers. Let's make this the biggest, best, trip that the TSSC has ever gone on!!! Let's take over the Island, the Country. Think Big!

JANUARY PROGRAM

January 10th

Our guest speaker will be **Thomas Matont** from *Brooklyn, New York*. Tom has been diving since 1975 and has worked his way up to a Master Diver. He dove with TSSC in Northeast Long Island, the Jersey Shore, and Maine back when Zig was running trips. Tom dives mostly in the Caribbean now, (Cozumel, Costa Rica, Bonaire, Cayman, and Cayman Brac). He will present a slide show with his under water pictures.

BELIZE IT OR NOT...

I had a wonderful opportunity to visit the country of Belize with my middle daughter Christy this past August. We had a great time. We had decided to do this father /daughter thing to bond. This was the first time she had been out of the country even though she is a seasoned traveler. I know this because the customs office in Belize ask me for the note from her mom saying it was ok for her to leave the country. I exclaimed, "oh sh-t." Rule number one: have a note when traveling with child if both parents are not going. Thanks to Gale from the Belize tourism board, I did not have to spend the week there by myself. (What? You thought I would have to go back to NY with her? She almost had to pull a Tom Hanks for a week.)

Then came the inter island flight. Her eyes opened real wide when she saw the Cessna 208. The only two words she knew were Boeing or Airbus. During that week. We figured that we landed and took off fifteen times. She ate it up. The first stop was Placencia, to the Placencia Resort. What a wonderful place. Huge paintings similar to Patric Cevalier by an artist named Karren

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BELIZE, CONT.

adorned the walls of the lobby and soon to find out our rooms. I noticed the immaculate grounds and raked sand beach. Thatched roofs over hardwood lounge chairs with thick padding lined the shore. A lagoon sized pool next to a well-stocked bar. There a local Texan named Rod with his guitar serenaded his beautiful wife with "put another log on the fire..." while I sipped a Belikin beer. Life doesn't get much better than this.

During our stay there we visited the Jaguar Preserve. We hiked thru the jungle. Learned about the different plants and their uses from our knowledgeable guide, Doyle. The rain came down but little did it matter. We were having fun. trucking thru the muck, tubing down the river, hiking to a waterfall and then swimming behind it, and finally sliding down the rocks and small falls in the river. We had a blast.

Another day Christy and I traveled with Doyle number 2 through the mangrove on the coast to the mouth of the monkey river. Slowly we traveled by boat along the shore spotting crocodiles, large reptiles, beautiful birds, osprey, and howler monkeys. We trekked thru the jungle knee deep in water where no man had gone before (a week ago last Tuesday). We returned to the mouth of the river where we dined on chicken (I am sure it was seagull.), beans, rice and the orange or the cola soda. On their trip back number 2 spotted manatee in the underwater grasses. They eventually surfaced for us, making it another great day in paradise.

The next day we dove. It was a 45 minute trip to the outer reef. Dolphins raced our boat to the dive site. There we did two dives. The water was clear even though the skies were not. The reef was healthy and full of life. As I was about to board from my last dive a grand bill fish broke the water about 50feet behind the boat soaring at least 20' into the air. What a sight to see. It looked like a dark blue rocket with a large antenna

in the front. We ate on a postage stamp-sized island, the type you see on an Amex commercial, with beautiful palms and flowers.

The next morning we traveled from Placencia to Ambergris. There is a difference between the two places. Ambergris is more of a town, the way Cozumel used to be. There we stayed at The Sunbreeze Hotel. The accommodations were very nice and on the beach. The dive shop was conveniently in front of the hotel. The boats were larger and the trips shorter (5-10 minutes). On the dives many morays, sharks, turtles, and giant grouper could be seen. Christy was petrified of sharks at first. By the end of the trip she was petting them (not the Great White). During the week I saw a young lady go from a timid wrist clenching, (Rule two: have teens trim their finger nails prior to diving with you.) bug-eyed remora, become a confident, sleek, streamlined dolphin. After being away from the sport for a year and a half it did not take long to get back into the swim of things. I also saw a middle-aged man go from his neck being permanently wrenched to the left relax to the point he could almost look in front of him while diving.

In Ambergris there are many things to do. From shopping (Rule Three: Don't take a teenage girl shopping), to snorkeling, checking out the hand crafts in the square, night clubbing (not her), to crashing weddings at Ramon's on the beach. The nice thing is that you can do as much or as little as you want to. We met people for all around the world and many from the States. It was a good first time experience out of the country. It also opened her eyes to just how lucky we are here in the USA and how much we have. She got to see a side of the world that few in this country get to see. She seems to appreciate things more. Belize in my book is a great place to go for a vacation with things to do topside to break it up. Thanks, Belize.

Bob and Christy Bak