



Special Edition Norm Knutson's 1000 Dives

CYPRESS SEA BOAT DIVE JAN 10, 04

by Norm Knutson

I guess the secret is out, but winter diving in Monterey/Carmel can be the best time of year to dive here. I called up Pierre to see if there was any space available and he said the boat was full but there might be a cancellation. He called back and said Gerda was just getting over the flu and would not be diving that day. He said I could take her spot and I yelled YES and pumped my fist back. (Sorry Gerda, but your pain was my gain, and I will be paying her back for this for a long time, I'm sure).

CONGRATULATIONS TO NORM KNUTSON ON HIS 1000TH DIVE OR "ODE TO A PINHEAD"

by Bill Levine

I understand Norm is approaching his 1000th dive. Gerda asked me to write some amusing anecdotes of our long history together. But I would like

to give a little background on how Norm and I hooked up.

I had first moved to California in 1977 after diving lakes in upstate New York for

Coast divers. They were great guys and great divers, but every dive

became an issue of proving your manhood. No ocean too rough, etc.

This went on for about a year. I increased my diving ability greatly. But I figured it was time to branch out so I checked out some club called the Reef Divers in 1978. Robin Buckley was president and Rudy Erler was divemaster. I don't remember the other officers. But Rudy and Norm immediately invited me to go with them. I was accepted without having to prove myself. I couldn't believe what a joy it was to dive



a few cold and miserable years. I immediately wanted to get into the "warmer" California ocean as fast as I could. I hooked up with a group of guys from the Barbary

with these guys. Norm was easy going and knew his limitations. Rudy, on the other hand, is not

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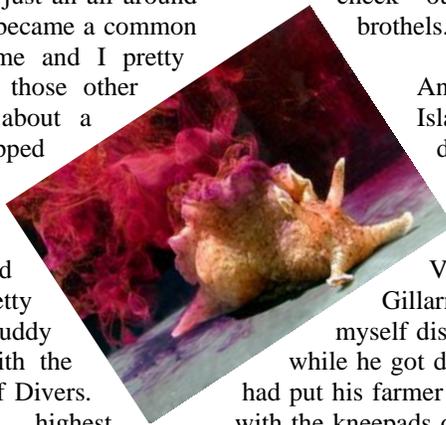
Ode to a Pinhead from page 1

from this planet. But he taught me how to be a good abalone diver. I enjoyed both of them very much. Rudy was always a laugh and Norm was just an all around nice guy. We became a common buddy threesome and I pretty much dropped those other guys. After about a year, Rudy dropped out to mostly dive with the firemen. Thus, Norm and I became a pretty standard buddy team, along with the rest of the Reef Divers. One of the highest compliments you could get was that Ursula Bernhart was willing to dive with you. She loved diving with Norm. Ursula considered personality just as important as safety. Life was too short (how prophetic) to waste time with people that were not enjoyable.

Norm introduced me to the Channel Islands and to Monterey. Up to this point in time, all my diving, including my tank diving, had been on the North Coast. Norm also introduced me to inflatable diving. He warned me about Carmel Meadows, (which I didn't heed—in 1980, four of us went out to dive Carmel Meadows and only three of us returned). We went to Grand Cayman together (I had a full time job by this point in time obviously.)

My first Channel Island dive was with Norm to San Clemente. At that time, there were no night flights between SFO and San Diego. When we came back to the dock after the trip, the only hotel we could find was one that rented rooms by the hour. They gave us a discount for the night

rate. So after two days of diving, and almost no sleep, we stayed up all night watching porno flicks on the in-room TV and then spent the next day in Baja with some cabby following us insisting we check out the local brothels.



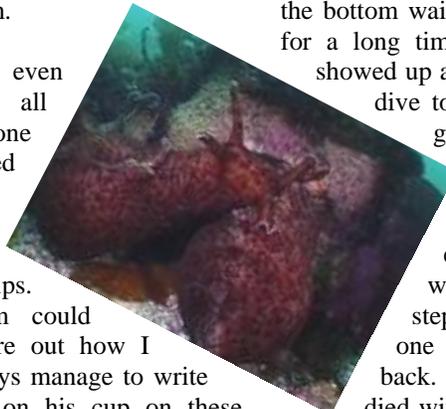
Another Channel Islands trip we did together had Curtis Degler, Jim Vallerio, Bill Gillarneau and myself distracting Norm while he got dressed. Norm had put his farmer john pants on with the kneepads on the back of his knees. Since we were keeping him occupied, he never noticed. We waited until he had his beaver tail on, his horse collar BC (which were a pain to deal with before buoyancy vests), his tank, weight belt, even his knife, before we told him.

I can't even remember all the times one of us turned off his air on these Channel Island trips. And Norm could never figure out how I could always manage to write "Pinhead" on his cup on these boats. He would watch me and his cup like a hawk. Hint-I had help.

It is just damn lucky that Norm always used Poseidon regulators and Fenzy BCs, as he never maintained anything. These items were fortunately bulletproof. Even his ScubaPro bendomatic analong decometer worked! (As best as it could in 1979) I think the bladder (yes, it

had a bladder) exploded on a plane finally.

I especially remember the famous Timber Cove Reef dive. I believe this was 1978. It was a horrible day. The reef is reached by entering at Timber Cove (duh) and heading one mile outward, and two miles downrange. We had five or six of us in a 16-foot Avon, with tanks, and a small 2 or 3 HP Seagull engine. Did I mention that Norm was the lightest of the bunch—about 205 pounds soaking wet, which we were. The actual dive is another story, but it is a long story that misses the point of this article. Suffice it to say that I was the first one over the boat, hand by hand down the anchor line in the black water, down to 120 feet, with almost no visibility, in a 20 dollar used beavertail wetsuit, with no crotch, no armpits, and no farmer john. Anyway, the guy after me panicked, and left me on the bottom waiting and shivering for a long time. Norm finally showed up and we had a great



dive together. Anyway, getting back to the point, on the way back, the ocean had gotten even uglier. We would putt two steps forward and one and a half steps back. The engine finally died with us about a mile or two from shore. We all jumped in the water to swim the boat back, except for Norm and me. I was bailing while Norm was praying to the outboard motor gods. Another boat in the area had capsized and was being towed in by the Coast Guard. We flagged the Coast Guard down and they threw us a line. As soon as the boat started to move, Norm fell out. Nobody helped him back in.

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When Norm's first child was born and brought home, Lupe and Norm invited me to come over to see her. As any guy knows, we do not like holding babies. So when Lupe handed me the kid, I refused, saying that I will not touch anything falling out of Lupe's crotch, especially if it is still living a week later. To this day, I cannot figure out why Norm didn't slug me. That's the kind of guy he is, real easy going.

One last story, so bear with me. Norm and I were doing the "same ocean buddy system" dive in the Channel Islands. (Curtis and I came up with that term that is now common usage, we should have copyrighted it.) I was spear fishing in waters that a great

white had been seen in a week earlier. During the dive, a seal went after the fish tied to my stringer. It took me a while to realize what it was, especially while being dragged backwards. Well anyway, I gave him the fish (no choice, he wouldn't let go, so it was either give him the fish or kill him.) I came back to the boat a little shaken. Norm was standing on the deck with his feet in my face as I was climbing up. I stopped to tell him the story and he made a comment about any excuse not to come back with fish. I punched his foot as hard as I could (not very hard as the muscles were still cold.) Only I didn't know he had broken a toe on that foot a few days earlier. I think he may still have a little bit of a limp.

I left the Bay Area in the early 80's. But during the time I was there, I really appreciate the divers I had the opportunity to dive with. I learned so much from some really great divers. But Ursula and Norm are the ones I think about the most and compare other dive buddies to. Ursula taught me about self-sufficiency, in all aspects of life, not just diving. Norm taught me to have enough cajones to understand your limitations and be willing to cancel a dive.

I have spent many dives with Norm holding hands as the visibility was so bad. He is the only human being on the face of the earth I have ever held hands with. And I haven't washed my hand since.



**SAN FRANCISCO REEF
DIVERS JANUARY 2002
VOLUME XXXV, No. 1**

by Norm Knutson

Just want to clarify that "Mr. Maintenance" is not Bill Levine this time. But me, Norm. It had to be my most "what more can go wrong" dive other than the one that I almost drowned over 20 years ago at Carmel Meadows. First of all my main regulator was not working properly after I jumped in the water, so I switched to my Scuapro Air 2 which was slightly free flowing.

I should have said the heck with it and cancelled my dive, but no, I went under and had a difficult time getting under. New wetsuit with full cold water hood and chicken vest or I couldn't get all the air out of my B.C. because I was using my Air 2 to breathe from. Anyways, borrowed some extra weight from Frank at the surface and went down and then found out my computer quit working. At least my new compass got me back to the anchor line. Other than that, once on the bottom, it was a nice dive.

On my last scuba dive my mouthpiece fell apart. How can a mouthpiece fall apart? Well it did. So now I have one of those new fancy high tech snorkels. Kind of miss my old snorkel, but sometimes you have to depart with the old stuff and spend money on new equipment.

**SAN FRANCISCO REEF
DIVERS FEBRUARY 2007
VOLUME XXXV, No. 2**

**INTERSPECIES
COMMUNICATION &
COORDINATED DIVING
BETWEEN REEF DIVERS IN
COZUMEL, CHANNEL
ISLANDS AND MONTEREY.**
By Gerda Hurter

Editors Note: (any similarity to the PloS Biology article <http://biology.plosjournals.org/perlserv/request=getdocument&doi=10.1371/journal.pbio.0040431> is purely coincidental. The editor urges you though to check this



out as it is a most stunning study! Also see Smithsonian Article Review)

SFRDs mature (only reference to age!) buddy diving has received considerable attention because of the close links between cooperative behavior and its cognitive demands. Accordingly, comparisons between divers have focused on behaviors that can potentially distinguish between the different levels of cognitive complexity involved, such as "intentional" communication between partners

in order to initiate a joint dive, the adoption of different roles during a joint dive (whether consistently or alternately leading or getting lost), and the level of food sharing following a successful dive. Here we report from two sources, (1) field observations from the Cypress Sea and Channel Islands as well as (2) written documentation from a trip to Cozumel, on the highly coordinated and communicative interspecific diving between the giant *Homo Sapiens Knutson Normalicusinquestionus*, the brainy *Homo Sapiens, Valerius Saveticus* and "*Homo Sapiens Timicus Tagalongus*. The following was observed: (1) associations are nonrandom, (2) giant *Homo Sapiens* signals to brainy *Homo Sapiens* in order to initiate joint diving and recruits brainy *Homo Sapiens Valerius* and *Homo Sapiens Timicus* (who always tags along) to prey hiding places, (3) signaling is dependent on giant *Homo Sapiens* feeling of dryness and missing out on an adventure, and (4) all three partners benefit from the association. The benefits of joint diving appear to be due to complementary diving skills, reflecting the evolved strategies of each species, rather than individual role specialization during joint dives.

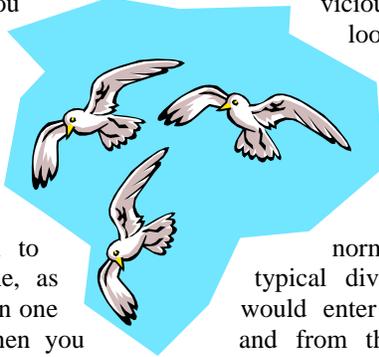
Having said enough, please read the latest Cozumel adventure just in from Mexico!

**DIVING IN COZUMEL
AND THE YUCATAN
CENOTES**

By Norm Knutson

As Jim Vallario already mentioned in another write-up,

myself, Lupe, Jim and Tim Howe undertook another underwater adventure in the land of warm water, great diving, cold beer, delicious margaritas and friendly natives in Cozumel in early January. If you have never done a drift dive, it is an easy way to dive and you do not have to figure out how to return to the anchor line, as the dive is all in one direction. When you run low on air, you signal the dive master and head for the surface after a recommended safety stop at 15 ft for 3 minutes and then surface and wait for the dive boat to swing by and pick you up. It was on one of those dives, waiting to be picked up when divers on the boat were yelling at me and Jim to look down NOW. We looked down just in time to see a dolphin coming up at us like a Polaris missile and dove around us before it took off quickly into the deep. It was an unforgettable moment that will never be forgotten. It was also on this dive that Jim had another moment he will probably never forget and probably hopes to wipe it from his memory. But before I tell you what happened, I have to preface this with the fact that over the years, some of us have been known to "horse play" underwater. So, being that Jim has never played "cowboy" underwater, I gave one of the photographers on this dive the u/w sign for "time to ride the pony", I then snuck up on Jim and attempted to ride his tank, but Jim was not going to be cooperative or submissive with this sudden deviate behavior. All of a sudden, visions of Mike Nelson on the old Sea Hunt TV series



came into view, with Mike grabbing his knife and slashing out at the villain sneaking up behind him. So there I was looking into the eyes of a man who looked like he was facing a vicious killer and who looked like he was going to kill. Phew, no "ride um cowboy" with this "buckaroo"!!

As far as the other normal diving goes, on a typical dive, our dive team would enter the water together and from the surface, see the bottom at 60ft and dive down and then follow our guide through a swim thru and exit out on a vertical wall such as Palancar or Santa Rosa Wall. The view of other divers cruising along the wall with all the sponges, gorgonians, coral was very majestic. We just drifted along in the current and sometimes we would swim thru a tunnel or around coral buttresses or pinnacles and maybe see a giant grouper or a nurse shark. Out on the wall you may even see an Eagle Ray or two. After awhile we would head to the top of the wall and dive along the shallower reef and just be blown away with all the colorful u/w creatures.

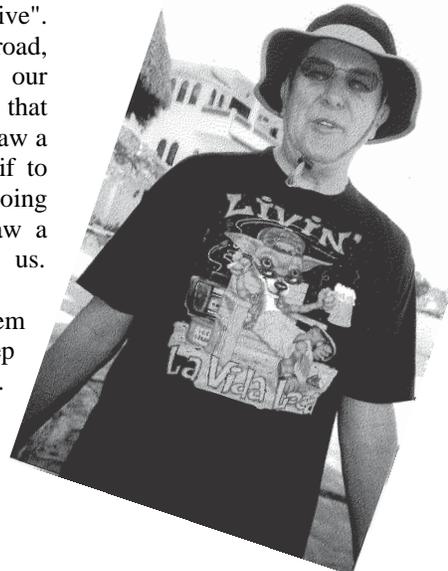
One day, after our 2 boat dives, we decided to do a "taxi dive". We took a taxi a mile up the road, got out and scuba back to our hotel. It was on this dive that when we first went under, I saw a barracuda staring at me, as if to say, "Hey what are you doing here?". After that we saw a squadron of squid go by us. What was weird, is that some of them would turn around and keep going in the same direction. In other words, they could swim forward and then

backwards, but continue going the same direction. We discovered an 8' tall u/w Mayan pyramid. Not sure how that got there, but was unusual. Tim found some 3ft Sharp Tail Eels and actually picked one up. It did not seem to mind.

On another day, we ventured onto the Yucatan Peninsula and dove Bat Cave Cenote and Dos Ojos Cenote. They filmed part of the IMAX film, "Journey Into Amazing Caves" here and that underwater thriller last year called "The Cave". The diving here was one of the most unusual as far as geological formations that I have ever seen. It was surreal and spooky at times, and I hate to use the overused phrase, but it was "like being on another planet" as we dove through the passage ways and going up and over limestone formations with the stalactites and stalagmites in this underwater cave and cavern. Check out this url for some unbelievable formations and diving.

<http://www.hiddenworlds.com.mx/>

Now, I'm thinking about my upcoming Monterey dive on the Cypress Sea and hope I remember to wear a full wetsuit. While diving Cozumel, full wet suit was not on my radar.



Odds & Ends or Norm's Flotsam & Jetsam



Picture Courtesy of Frank King

EAVESDROPPING ON THE PEACE

by Gerda Hurter

Jim's succinct account of this year's Channel Island trip evoked unforgettable memories. Memories etched into the brain, memories of brilliant conversations on board the Peace, just like the following:

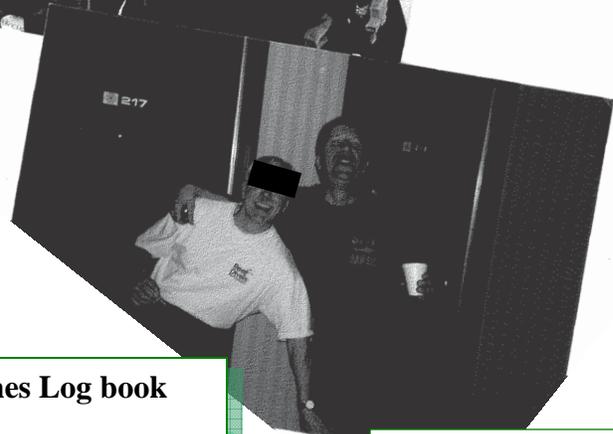
Bill: "Wow, did you see Norm down there on the last dive?"
Skip: He [redacted] sea hare [redacted]!!! Wild, man, it was [redacted] wild."
Pierre: " [redacted] safety sausage [redacted] ..."
Norm: "I once asked "Skip" if he practiced safe diving, and he says all he ever carries is [redacted]. And you wonder why [redacted]"
Debra: " [redacted]"

Skip: "Yeah, [redacted] but still I better than that [redacted] think that [redacted] right?"

Editor's note: to comply with the America Newsletter code of ethics & decency, portions of the dialogue have been expurgated.



1000 ... & still WET after all these dives



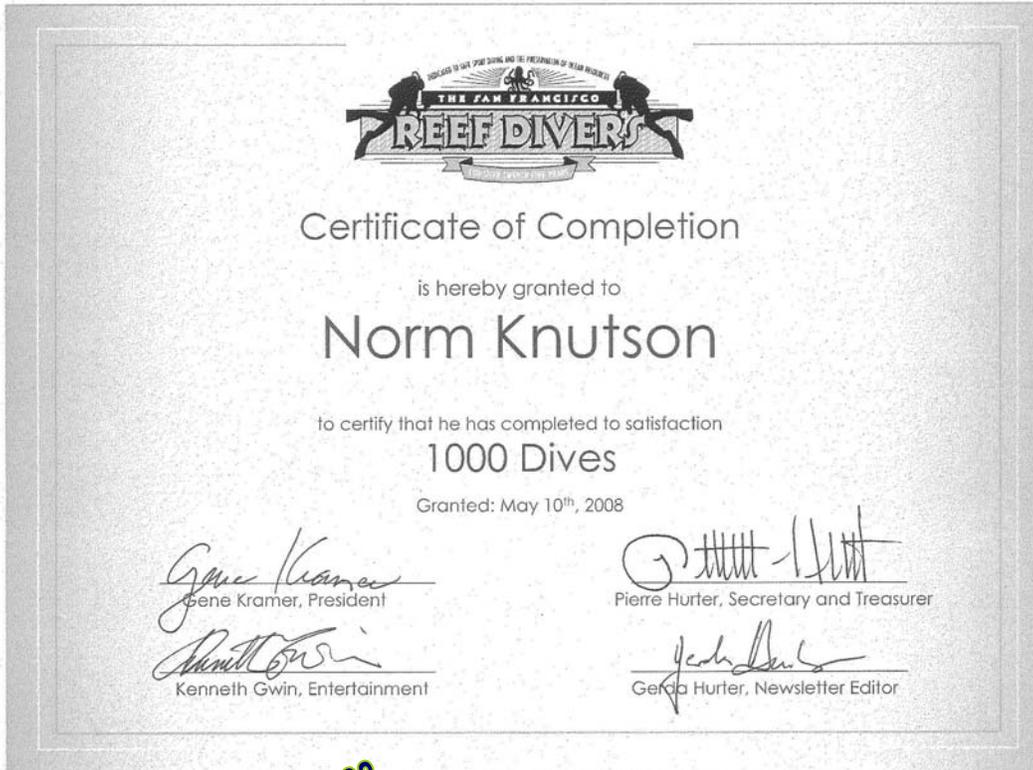
Some ones Log book Entry...

[redacted] solo dive. (Note to self: Diving solo is just like diving with Norm, only without the constant questions about where the boat might be).

No one can resist a Rubber suit in SF!

Next time you see Norm on the Cypress check out his new LID!!!





Will he ever give up his Wetsuit???



Fitting in with the Best o' Them



Still looking for that Tall, Dark & Handsome Guy ...



**Channel Islands 2000 - 2004
nothing changes ...**



Picture Courtesy of Frank King



ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO REEF DIVERS (SFRD):

The *Reef Diver Times* is the official newsletter of the San Francisco Reef Divers, a not for profit community organization dedicated to safe sport diving and the preservation of our ocean resources. Membership is \$25 annually, dues payable to “SFRD”. The General Meeting is held 3rd Wednesday of the month at Sinbad’s, located at Pier 2, Embarcadero Street, SF, CA 94111. Meet at 7:00pm for socializing, drinks and food and 7:30 pm for club business and entertainment. For more information, visit <http://www.sfreefdivers.org/>.

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