



**SLIPPIN' INTO DARKNESS...**  
**TAKE MY MIND BEYOND THE DREAMS...**  
by Ken Gwin

Taking Brother Curtis deep diving is always a goal when he visits the homeland. Royston joined us on this little adventure.

Out of Lobos, somewhere near Pinnacle Point Wall. (Thanks to the BAUE guys:  
[http://www.baue.org/lobos\\_maps/sites/pinnacle-point-wall/pinnacle-point-wall.html](http://www.baue.org/lobos_maps/sites/pinnacle-point-wall/pinnacle-point-wall.html))

Dead flat and startling blue water. A slight overcast and not a breeze in the air.

Anchored over the ridge at 120, followed the line to the end.

Curtis sculled backward, repelling down a pastoral slope, eyeing each tiny creature (including a young wolf eel) until he turned to follow a sharper drop off and the inviting darkness of deep water.

We followed the wall north, single file to 200 feet, past dramatic fissures and cracks split top to bottom through the rock face.

Drifted off into the sand and a small field of sea pens and settled on a little island of rock Curtis seemed to like, just a short distance from the base of the wall.

Spent all of our bottom time on this little spot no larger than a parking space and only one foot tall. It seemed to be a rambling apartment building for juvenile rosies ranging from 1 inch to maybe 4 inches long. Yeah, there were a couple of young adult coppers in there too.

Beautiful.

I'm so glad to dawdle in one place. Didn't see the point in swimming anywhere. There wasn't a better place to be.

The ascent was spectacular. While Royston and I were watching a juvenile yelloweye, Curtis slipped over a rise and into a bowl shaped structure with

a dramatic over hang and seemed mesmerized by a dozen small vermilion and the occasional canary.

We followed him through this floating menagerie and slowly made our way back to the anchor, meandering along the ridge line and all the colorful life.

Out of the darkness, into the light....

Topside was a gentle lake.

Kelp was a monster filling the Cove. There were several groups of divers out into the mat, looking like urns with snorkels, planted in a garden. One pair of yellow fins was doing a pirouette thing in the air. This unnamed diver swore they were in no danger, though the constant repeating of the bad word had us all concerned.

The diver lived.

The parking lot was pretty busy.

A lot of laughter goin' on.

**HOVERING AT THE 200 FOOT MARK**

By Royston Nguyen

When I started diving, I would never have dreamed of diving down beyond 130 feet and breathing helium. I always thought these people were crazy for carrying double tanks, stage bottles, and so much equipment. Even a shop like Stan's Skin & Dive tried to dissuade me from doing tech diving.

But, on May 10 of 2010, my dive computer registered 200 feet and I was breathing a mixed gas of 18 percent oxygen and 41 percent helium. Ken Gwin and Phil Sammet were my dive buddies for the day. I had come a long way.

**GENERAL MEETING**

**AUGUST 18<sup>TH</sup>, 2010 - AT SINDBADS**

**Pier 2, Embarcadero Street, San Francisco**

**MEET at 7:00p.m. for socializing, DRINKS & FOOD  
and 7:30p.m. for CLUB BUSINESS**

Reefer's Rap 2010		
<p><b>JANUARY</b></p> <p>01 - New Year's Day - Breakwater Dive 02 - Club Dive: Beachhopper II 06 - Officer's Meeting 22 - General Meeting - Sinbad's 23-31 - 41<sup>st</sup> International Boat Show - Dusseldorf - <a href="http://www.boot.de">www.boot.de</a></p>	<p><b>FEBRUARY</b></p> <p>03 - Officers Meeting 03 - 07 - SF Ocean Film Festival <b>13</b> - Club Dive: Beachhopper II 17 - Meeting - Sinbad's 19-21 - Our World Underwater - <a href="http://www.ourworldunderwater.com">www.ourworldunderwater.com</a></p>	<p><b>MARCH</b></p> <p>03 - Officers Meeting 05-07 - The Boston Sea Rovers - <a href="http://www.bostonsearovers.com">www.bostonsearovers.com</a> 24 - <b>Club Dive: Sanctuary</b> 17 - Meeting - Sinbad's 26-28 - Beneath the Sea - New Jersey - <a href="http://www.beneaththe.sea.org">www.beneaththe.sea.org</a></p>
<p><b>APRIL</b></p> <p>03 - Abalone Opener - Fort Ross - CenCal 07 - Officers Meeting 16-18 - Ocean Fest - Fort Lauderdale - <a href="http://www.oceanfest.com">www.oceanfest.com</a> <b>21 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b></p>	<p><b>MAY</b></p> <p>01 - Bay Area Dive Show - San Jose - <a href="http://www.divechronicles.com">www.divechronicles.com</a> 05 - Officers Meeting 15 - 16 - Scuba Show - Long Beach - <a href="http://www.scubashow.com">www.scubashow.com</a> <b>19 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b> 21-23 - Dive &amp; Travel Expo - Tacoma - <a href="http://www.diveandtravelexpo.com">www.diveandtravelexpo.com</a></p>	<p><b>JUNE</b></p> <p>02 - Officers Meeting 13 - <b>Club Dive: Sanctuary</b> <b>16 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b> TBD - Abalone Closer</p>
<p><b>JULY</b></p> <p>07 - Officers Meeting 17 - <b>Club Dive: Sanctuary</b> <b>21 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b></p>	<p><b>AUGUST</b></p> <p>TBD - Abalone Opener 04 - Officers Meeting 08-11 - Channel Islands - Jim Vallario - 415.566.0784 11 - Channel Islands' Extension <b>18 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b></p>	<p><b>SEPTEMBER</b></p> <p>01 - Officers Meeting 10 - 12 Lake Tahoe - Norm Knutson 15 - Meeting - Sinbad's</p>
<p><b>OCTOBER</b></p> <p>06 - Officers Meeting <b>20 - Meeting - Sinbad's - Officer Nominations !!!</b></p>	<p><b>NOVEMBER</b></p> <p>03 - Officers Meeting <b>17 - Meeting - Sinbad's - Officer Elections !!!</b> 17 - 21 - The Dema Show - Las Vegas - TBD - Abalone Closer</p>	<p><b>DECEMBER</b></p> <p>01 - Officers Meeting <b>15 - Meeting - Sinbad's - Christmas Party !!!</b></p>

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## Stammtisch

By Pierre Hurter



We're back from vacation and I still haven't finished Cousteau's *The Silent World*. You'd think with all of the time I

spent swinging in a hammock while on vacation I would have gotten more reading done, more on that topic latter.

The other day, one of those glorious summer days in downtown San Francisco, a brief respite before the normal chill winds return to the downtown canyon lands of high-rises and blue knee'd shivering tourists. Whether he said it or not, Mark Twain's comment about the City still holds true "The coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco." Like so many quotes and comments, we'll never know if it's been properly attributed. Like the phrase "the whole nine yards" the Internet hasn't shed much light on the provenance, just added to the confusion.

Meanwhile, moving right along, I like to spend my lunch hour wandering the streets of San Francisco, constantly on the lookout for Karl Malden (Detective Lieutenant Mike Stone) and his faithful sidekick Michael Douglas (Inspector Steve Keller). It was a more innocent time, or maybe it was just easier to ignore the reality lurking around me.

No speeding cop cars or fleeing suspects only teeming throngs of people clutching shopping bags, heads down texting away,

running into each other and the odd spotlight pole. Each street corner on Market Street seems to have a competing drummer, busily hammering away at a collection of five gallon plastic pails, Gene Krupa meets Ginger Backer.

There is a San Francisco connection for both Krupa and Baker. Krupa was arrested here back in 1943 for contributing to the delinquency of a minor, a 17 year old boy, who he had allegedly sent to his hotel room to pick up some marijuana cigarettes.

As for Baker, his quote in Rolling Stone Magazine sums things up nicely, "In 1968, I was driving from Los Angeles to San Francisco in a Shelby Cobra with three gorgeous young birds. Suddenly, the radio program was interrupted to report that I'd just been found in my hotel room dead from an overdose." He also recorded *Those were the Days*, live at the Fillmore West. The Shelby Cobra, with or without the three gorgeous young birds is one of the few American cars I've always lusted after. I suppose it falls into the category of you can't afford the one (car) or handle the other (gorgeous birds).



In front of the California Center a man stands screaming at people wandering in and out, waving his bible overhead and repeatedly slamming it into his thigh for emphasis, punctuation and a bit of drama. Not sure what he was on about, but I've often wondered

if these particular Bibles are purpose built for the trade, reinforced at key stress areas to prevent blowout. The topic might make for a bit of interesting research, at the very least it seems an untapped market niche.

My lunch hour wanderings have made me wonder just where the economy is heading and if we are starting to rise from the doldrums. The ground floor of the California Center has an empty store front proudly proclaiming the opening of a Rolex store in the fall. Hardly the timepiece of choice for the empty wallet set. This right next to the existing watch shop that aside from selling the aforementioned Rolex brand also has some decent watches as well as the "Vertu", a British-based manufacturer of luxury mobile phones. Who'd have thought that you could sell cell phones costing thousands of dollars, their most expensive models are in the six figures. For that price it ought to screen my calls.

Wandering through Bullocks, best men's lounge in the city by the way, wide screen TV, couch to wait for your shopping partner, the works, I noticed among the men's accessories a pile of what Herb Caen used to call "prol caps", as in proletariat, or "gimmies" as in free. You know the sort, they advertize everything from dive boats to chainsaws. These particular caps were lying in a pile and advertising imaginary products, complete with arty logos and frayed bills and selling for over a hundred bucks a pop. So are we recovering or do I smell smoke and hear a fiddle in the background?

You often hear that some things

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never change, but I'm not so sure.

The final roll of Kodachrome film produced, was processed in Parsons, Kansas. I'm sure there are still bricks of the stuff sitting in refrigerators around the country, but the final roll, think about that for a minute, there will be no more; at least not from Kodak. Eastman Kodak had announced that they would be discontinuing the brand on June 22, 2009. It was one of the world's first commercially successful color films and it's had a good run since 1935.

At the time of the announcement by Kodak, Dwayne's Photo Service in Parsons, Kansas informed Kodak that they would be processing the film through December, 31, 2010. So if you have any rolls left around in a drawer or the fridge, get to it! It's not the end of film, but it is the end of another icon.

Maybe the surest sign of how things continue to change is the saga of Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer in China. If you're like me you probably have some fond if blurry memories of drinking PBR, usually from quart bottles nestled in brown paper bags. It was just about the cheapest beer you could buy. Sure some argued that Old English 800, Old Gold or Old Executioner, provided more drunk for the buck, but for those of us with more sophisticated palates we always came back to Pabst.

It seems that an enterprising distributor in China is marketing Pabst Blue Ribbon as a sophisticated beverage called Pabst Blue Ribbon 1844 and selling it for \$44 a bottle. Not bad, I told you guys I was in many ways ahead of the curve.

So next time someone, Ken, makes fun of my wine cellar, just remember I was on to the "world famous spirit" way before it was likened to Scotch, Cognac and Bordeaux and other beverages aged in wood. Can Stella Artois be far behind?

Meanwhile, in-between musing on the general state of the world and more particularly the local economic indicators, we managed to break free from the day to day toils and take a vacation. We headed off to do some diving of course; more particularly we spent two weeks on Sabang Beach, near Puerto Galera in Oriental Mindoro. Puerto Galera is the nearest big city, with a population of some 21,925 cheery souls. Sabang Beach is down the road and around the corner about 4 miles as the crow flies or more likely a Jeepney or three wheel scooter ride away. With 36 dive operators, half a dozen message parlors, two barbers, several watering holes and a German butcher, it has pretty much everything you need to relax.

Jeepneys are unique to the Philippines and they are ubiquitous, not to mention everywhere. Aside from the sidecar scooters you see running around, this is the most popular mode of transportation around. The vehicles were originally cobbled together from jeeps left over after WWII, hence the name, a portmanteau of "Jeep" and "Jitney". It represents an amazing cottage industry ranging from shade tree mechanics that crank out a couple vehicles a month to semi industrialized assembly line operations. What they all have in common is lots of stainless steel and lights on what seems like every exposed spot on the vehicle. Most of the "modern" Jeepneys utilize Isuzu diesel engines of doubtful provenance.

It's clear that getting a smog certification means something completely different here than in California. Still, they are unique and you have to take at least one ride in one, the price is certainly right.



We've been here before and as in the past we stayed at the Atlantis Resort, smack dab on the beach. Our journey started with our dragging our dive bags through SFO to the Philippines Airlines counter in the International terminal. You can't miss it, long lines snaking through the airport with people pushing piles of cardboard boxes, called balikbayan, the maximum size allowable, neatly tied and labeled, some with purpose built zippered nylon carriers, complete with outlandish graphics and the ever popular carrying handles. Curious as to what people might be schlepping across the Pacific I asked one of the people tending what seemed to be the largest collection of boxers in the line, "microwave oven, kitchen sink and miscellaneous toys for the cousin's kids at home."

The flight to Manila is a semi-nonstop. Depending on how full the flight is, you stopover in Guam to refuel, you don't get out, but you have a great view of the

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place as you fly in. Looks pretty much like any suburb in Southern California at night. If you're lucky and the flight isn't full, you fly nonstop, nonstop, no parking along the way to siphon off some fuel from a rival airline. Of course to make up for the shorter flight time, you leave SFO later as no matter how full or empty, the airport on the other end isn't open for business until 04:30 in the morning, local time.

After flying for 13 hours on what's becoming my favorite, Flight #105, reading two books and watching three movies, we were there. My eyes, nose and mouth were dry and scratchy, despite the lovely French Chardonnay I had washed my Beaujolais down with and my butt, well, I'm still waiting to fully recover feeling, just the other day, I felt a vague tingling, like so many pins and needles, so I may yet recover. My neck and shoulders were easily taken care of, for some reason, everywhere you go in the Philippines, there is someone giving massages. It is really remarkably civilized. After going through Immigration, getting another stamp in my passport, we recovered our bags amidst the tumbling cardboard boxes, headed through customs and regrouped outside. They actually check your luggage tags here to make sure that the Louis Vuitton Golf bag you are dragging out the door is really yours, what a novel idea.

Outside my glasses immediately fogged up in the 90% plus humidity making it hard to look for the cardboard sign announcing Any Water Sports. We were here with Frank and Ginny as our hosts; all told there were 14 of us ranging in ages from 10 to mature. We had

a similar range of diving experience, Rachel, at the ripe old age of 10, was going to finish up her certification, and then there where the likes of Phil and Frank who have long since stopped counting their dives, not enough fingers and toes in our group to accommodate. Fresh garlands of flowers around our necks, bottles of cold water in hand we boarded the waiting vans and headed for Batangas.

The drive to Batangas gives you a chance to take a close look at Manila, it's quite an eye-opener. Every square foot or in this case meter of ground seems to be occupied by some sort of building, dwelling or business, they are chock-a-block and jammed in one on top of the other. People stir early here and by 5:30 the streets are choked with an endless stream of three wheeled scooters packed with entire families, Jeepneys, each proudly displaying a "how am I driving" sign along with a number for you to text your comments. Supposedly the Philippines are the text capital of the world. I wouldn't want to argue the point, you see people zipping down the street on scooters, while texting.

The drive, about 70 kilometers, takes up to three hours including a stop at one of the turnpike comfort stations, McDonald's, Seven-Eleven, Starbucks, the fish ball stand, all the hallmarks of modern life, depending on the traffic. Once you get to Batangas there is one more stop at a gas station convenience store for some snacks and to take care of those folks who couldn't resist the double sized Mocha Grande at the last pit stop. From there it's a short hop past the oil refineries and onto the ferry dock.

The dock, which is starting to look almost upscale, features some palm thatched shade pavilions, a fighting cock or two tied to the spindly palm trees and an impressive collection of ferries or Bancas waiting to whisk passengers to Sabang Beach.

A Banca is a typical boat in this neck of the woods; they range from small one man models with a scooter engine, up to 60 foot ferries powered by the omnipresent Isuzu diesel engine. The hull is made of wood planks, with outriggers and superstructure cobbled together from bamboo and plywood. The bulk of what lies above water seems to be lashed together with heavy duty monofilament line, fishing string if you will. Both stern and bow are pointed, making it easy to land and take off from the many beaches in the area. If you have the deluxe model there is a plywood booth at the end, open to the sky and the water below with a seat and a hole, the rest is left to your imagination.



Once we docked in Sabang, which is also building a new and much improved dock, it's a short walk to the resort, a single file of tired looking tourists with bags in tow. Once at Atlantis, you tag your bags, room or dive locker and they are whisked on their way. We sat down for an orientation, a shoulder and neck massage, a tall cool drink made from the local limes, clamansi or

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*Citrofortunella mitis*; makes a great caipirinha, and the usual stack of waivers to be signed, initialed and countersigned. In short order we had been oriented, given the tour and were putting our gear together for our first plunge, a check out dive in 84 degree water with 50 foot plus visibility. It's tough, but someone has to do it. After staying awake until dinner time, we headed for our rooms, not really sure what time our bodies were on and almost simultaneously with hitting the sheets drifted off on the wings of Morpheus.

The next morning we started settling into what would be our routine more or less uninterrupted for the next two weeks. We'd wake up around 06:00, sometimes a little earlier, and wander downstairs to the restraunt for a cup of coffee. We were there during the off or rainy season, though the weather was actually fairly benign, so we had the place more or less to ourselves the whole time we where there. On weekends we had some walk-ins, a couple of young ladies from Japan, a brother and sister from Scotland visiting their dad and stepmom and some of the locals would drop by for dinner, but most of the time it was our group that predominated.

Breakfast is ordered from a menu, a change since our last visit when it was buffet style. My personal favorite was the Divers Special, a steak, hash browns, bacon and the ever popular eggs to order. Of course Gerda quickly pointed out the error of my ways and I went back to the traditional oatmeal and fresh fruit breakfast that I enjoy so much. Phil had a unique approach, he

would ask "... "What is your favorite breakfast?" and order whatever came up. If you had any particular or peculiar needs or cravings, the kitchen was up to the task. The only thing they seemed reluctant to do was reduce the size of the portions, there was always more than enough.

The food at Atlantis is good enough to be a draw of its own. For lunch I would usually try whatever fresh fish was on offer. After one of our dives, we where just in time for the delivery of three good sized tuna's, ranging from 100 to 150 pounds. It's an amazing fish and we gave it due respect when we ate sashimi with our après diving beer. In between dives there was always a snack, my favorite being a sort of dumpling filled with jam and floating in a sweetened butter sauce baked in a large pan so that they stick together. Reminded me of the *Buchtln* served in Vienna and just the thing after an hour of diving in the chilly mid 80's water.

I noticed that I wasn't the only one that in between dives would wander over to the chalk boards that announced the lunch and dinner menus so that they could start planning what they would eat that day. The menus were scheduled out for two weeks, apparently to coincide with the length of a typical German dive tourist's stay. We managed to stay just long enough for me to end the trip the way I began it, with the best club sandwich I've ever had, the secret is the fried egg.

The way the resort is set up is tucked right up to the beach, the one storm we had caused the waves to splash into the bar and lounge area. Behind the 50 BAR (a Bar is 100 kilopascals or

roughly equal to one atmosphere, 1.01325 for you purists or 14.5038 psi) the pertinent part of the discussion is that 50 Bar or 725.19 psi is what European divers are taught to use as their safety margin, hence the bar's logo is a SPG with the gauge showing 50 Bar. There is an ongoing discussion concerning the merits of learning metric conversions; particularly among those who do not live in Liberia, Myanmar (Burma) or the United States, the last major non-metric nations. I say screw em! The BAR is not an SI (metric unit) either. I am glad that Thomas Jefferson managed to insure that our monetary system is metric; can you imagine pence and half pence?

Anyway, behind the bar, where they serve pints by the way, is an area where you analyze your tanks, get your dive briefings and in general meet before heading out on the dives. The speed boats are anchored in front of the bar and depending on the tide you wander through the water for a foot or two or a hundred feet to get to the boats.

There is a public walkway separating the bar and assembly area from the rest of the resort which is fronted by the restraunt, which has it's own slightly more upscale bar, the obligatory gift shop and the front desk where you can make arrangements for tours, Jeepney rides, massages and whatever else comes to mind. Continuing beyond the restraunt there is the pool area, the spa and massage pavilion, the photo shop with power outlets, compressed air to blow dry housings and plenty of layout space for all the housings, "o" rings and assorted paraphernalia that goes with taking images underwater. From here the stairs lead up to the.

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rooms themselves

The rooms are good sized with everything made up of cement stucco, including the bed frames, shower and shelves. It gives the place a vaguely Flintstones effect and I half expected to see Fred or Barney at breakfast before heading off to work with a hearty Yabba-Dabba-Do! Aside from a fan and air-conditioner with a remote control, the rooms have a small refrigerator, a safe and a TV. The floors are flagstone so you don't have to worry about wet bathing suits or gear.

I forgot to mention the dive locker. As you enter the resort's main area, the dive lockers complete with showers, hangers and cubby holes for your gear are on the right hand side. As you enter there are showers and rinse tanks. They have separate tanks for cameras in the assembly area. It's all reasonably well thought out and seems to work well for a variety of divers.

While we were there both Gerda and I managed another dive milestone, I had my 700<sup>th</sup> and Gerda her 600<sup>th</sup> dive. That meant that both of us got to do the dive bong snorkel. This time we were not alone, Rachel, our youngest member of the group completed her skills, managed to remove, replace and clear her mask, always a major hurdle and was certified as a junior open water diver. She got lucky, her dive bong, a mask with a snorkel to which a liter plastic bottle with the bottom cut out is attached, was filled with Ginger ale. Gerda and I, since we were diving Nitrox got the beer and rum treatment. At least it wasn't Jagermeister, I'm curious what they do with Trimix divers.

At the end of the first week half of our group either headed on to Dumaguete or home, that left six of us with virtually the whole resort to ourselves. We managed to knock off 47 dives, a couple of massages and even a nap or two in our two week stay. In between diving we made a run into Puerto Galera for the sights and sounds of the big city as well as looking at countless knockoff Rolex's, Breitlings, iphones, etc. Should have bought one, Gerda's after two years is starting to keep somewhat erratic time, but for 20 bucks you can't complain. I managed to resist the custom built, sea snake skin covered pool cues and the silver dollars, quasi Rolex's and pearls, but I couldn't resist the blowgun. It's just the thing when your spouse is nodding off on the sofa and refuses to go to bed, keep tuned to see how that works out for me

Cogito, ergo sum ... I exist; therefore I am; now let's go diving! Mabuhay



## DIVE REPORT 7/17

By Curt "Seajay" Degler

July 17th, 2010 at 7:30am found a baker's half dozen SFReefers aboard the Sanctuary Dive boat, including Norm K, Bhushan M., Loretta L., David C., Jim V., Jacob R. plus myself, Curt "Seajay" Degler. Over 100 years of Northern California Diving experience right there.

The Sanctuary is a most sweet and well appointed twin engined little cabin cruiser with two of the nicest and most helpful guys

crewing the vessel. Compared to the Spartan interiors and fittings of the Cypress Sea, The Sanctuary is truly deluxe, with nice thoughtful touches everywhere, from the wood paneled interior, to the six canvas cubby holes for hats, glasses, and sweaters, to the flybridge, high over the water with three seats in front of the wheel facing out over the Pacific. I can even recommend the head to any squeamish toiletphobe. For a look go to:

<http://www.sanctuarycharters.com/theboat.htm>

Plus they have a background of working with the best recreational and tech divers, namely piloting Ken G. Phil and company on their 300ft discovery trips down below to the wreck of the Art Reidel.

The seas were especially calm with hardly any significant swell once we rounded Pt Pinos and while it was overcast, it wasn't windy at all, with very little current. Ideal conditions, especially with reports of legendary visibility preceding our departure.

After leaving the harbor our first dive was necessarily delayed when the Capt slowed the boat to a crawl in order to circle and closely eyeball a pod of humpbacks that responded by doing circles around the boat, showing tails, backs, and loudly exhaling a miasmic cloud of poisonous whale breath.

Here are my dive stats as recorded on my venerable Aladin Pro Nitrox computer:

### First dive

Flintstones  
max depth 119 feet  
dive duration 44 minutes  
surface interval 1:27 minutes

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Second Dive

Pt Joe

max depth 81 ft  
dive duration 43 minutes  
twinset with 32% O2.

Water temps were pretty warm for divers used to really cold water.

Flintstones had visibility on the bottom of about 60 feet, about what you would expect on a fine day. I just jumped in and seeing no one at the anchor line, decided not to waste any time and headed solo directly down with my twinset to the deepest spot I could find where I lay down on the white sand and thanked the Gods of the Abyss for allowing me to once more be back down deep underwater south of Carmel Bay, my most favorite spot in all the world. Then I finned into Bhushan and we floated together for the remainder of the dive.

One thing I must note was the fairly large schools of mature blue rockfish we saw on both dives. This was a nice improvement on the school density and size I recall seeing in the last 15 years.

Pt Joe, which I don't recall diving in the past is infrequently dived but the calm seas and absence of a current made it doable. It was peasoup for the first 10 meters and then opened up to a remarkable but dim eclipse-light like 100 ft, enabling one to clearly make out the full layout of the rocky jagged bottom.

Bhushan was my buddy for most of this dive and I really enjoyed pulling myself close to the bottom though all the thick *Pterygophora californica* while Bhushan watched from above. I'm more of a claustrophobe than

he is, but that is nothing against Bhushan. I'm just exceptional in that regard.

On this dive I missed witnessing the epic life and death struggle between the great white shark and the giant squid so you will have to get a first hand account of that battle and its outcome from the others. I was too busy taking some close-up photos of the usual boring inverts, which I have (or will) post to our site at yahoo groups. I'll let you all know when they are up - don't hold your breath. There are also some topside photos of most of most of the gang on board and one great shot of Loretta underwater and another of Bhushan. Those will go up as well.

After the day's diving we all headed to Wharf II where we enjoyed lunch at The Sand Bar and Grill, overlooking the fishing harbor. I think this joint has been there since there since the days of Steinbeck but may have had a different name back then and most certainly had a different Saturday lunch clientele. I had the seafood quesadillas at Norm's insistence and can announce that they did not make me ill.

What's next? I'm ready!



**Hovering At The 200 Foot Mark from page 1**

It really all began when I actually realized I wanted to move into technical diving. Unfortunately, I had no idea how to approach it, and there was no one who would share their secrets. But I finally felt I was ready to take the big step. I

thought this might turn some heads, too. Now that I had the motivation and felt responsible as a diver, I thought to myself: "I can do these dives." Now I just needed a mentor and more training.

Throughout my process of becoming a tech diver, I asked many questions about gear and diving. Some of the people on the ba\_diving yahoo group were helpful, others weren't. One person who did stand out was Ken Gwin. After meeting Ken at a Home Depot store to pick up some gear he was selling, he would call me almost every week, asking how my training and diving was going. Another person who was a surprise to me was Phil Sammet, Captain of the former Cypress Sea. I knew he was a deep diver, but I never knew he was an instructor until I asked Any Water Sports for whom he is a tech instructor.

The class I needed to complete first to become a basic tech diver was Decompression Procedures by TDI (Technical Diving International). This was a class that taught me to dive to 150 feet, just past the recreational limits.

During a San Francisco Reef Divers club dive on the Cypress Sea, I gave Phil my information and the Advanced Nitrox C-card to verify that I had completed those courses and he gave me the book for Decompression Procedures. The book was very straightforward and after one night in the classroom, we planned a schedule for our future diving days.

It wasn't long before I finished the class, but because there were some students who weren't comfortable with 150 feet, we

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only reached the depth of 130 feet.

Although Ken congratulated me on completing the dives, he suggested I should go forward with Trimix because I could go deeper, breath helium, and he thought I should be able to make these dives with the progress I had been making. On the last dive day of the Procedures class, I asked Phil if we could start moving into Trimix and he said no problem. We planned out a schedule, and it was a go.

The first day of the Trimix class was almost like diving in the Procedures class except we did an awesome dive at Twin Peaks (a deeper part of the Point Lobos State Park). Never before had I seen such beautiful layers of hydrocoral, corynactics, and many other invertebrates. The size of the fish were from small fry to full grown adults. I had never seen them in such quantities before.

Many days after diving to 180 feet, it was time to hit 200 feet. Ken Gwin wanted to join me on this dive, just to see my expression. Phil chose a site called D3, which was a steep and aggressive looking pinnacle that reaches from 130 feet down to 230 feet. With a mix of 18/41 as my bottom gas, 50 percent and 100 percent stage bottles, it was a moment like landing on the moon.

When the beam from my canister light hit the pinnacle, I couldn't believe the beauty that I'd been missing out on. There were elephant sponges all over the place, corynactics were poking out everywhere, hydrocoral were as big as the

ones at East Pinnacle--and fish, so many fish that it felt like they were making it impossible to see. The visibility was perfect in every way. I could see the next pinnacle and it felt like I was flying like an eagle through the water.

After a deco of 20 minutes at 20 feet, we had a long talk about how the diving went. The visibility was great, and the life on the Pinnacle was spectacular. At the end of the day, I scheduled some more dives with Phil and he said that if there were any days when there were other tech students diving, I could jump in too.

In the end, not only did I gain a lot of dive buddies, I gained some new friends. And, now I have the knowledge and skills to make these types of dive as safely as possible. It looks like Ken has another deep dive buddy he can count on. On any day, you might see me on Phil's boat, over a deep dive spot, ready to jump.



### CHANNEL ISLANDS REFLECTIONS 2010

By Ken Gwin

Once again, I returned to my old diving haunts off Southern California. And, once again, excitement and adventure, but deep regret for the loss of what once was.

Those of you that have been to our own Channel Islands know how good the diving can be.

These islands are a beautiful chain of offshore sites, above and below the surface. They span an ecological interface between the southern temperate eco-zone and the more northern zone we have off Monterey.

There's a lot to see.

But, since I didn't dive in Monterey when I was a kid, I have nothing to say about the past up here. On the other hand, Catalina, in particular, was "my" dive spot, and my how things have changed.

Again, the water's still blue (a little colder this trip than I usually brag about this time of year and a little hazy overall -except for that one deep drop-off off Ship Rock where the viz miraculously cleared to 70-80 feet or so - ). But time, predation, and circumstance have certainly taken their toll.

So, for those that have bitched about the MLPAs cutting into their livelihood and free time: get a f%\$^#(&) grip!

There were a few reports of abalone in a couple of clusters in Catalina and San Clemente--some pinks and greens. (I know they are easily found at the more remote San Miguel, but some commercial guys wants to harvest them.)

There was a report of a nice moray eel in one spot too.

There were some male sheephead, here and there. Some maybe ten inches long.

There were some calico bass, almost dinner sized, as well. But, lots of little ones.

Treefish now seems to be the dominant species of rockfish.

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You see them everywhere. I saw one almost large one.

There were, however, lots of juvenile rock fish of varying species--none more than 3 inches long.

A few horned sharks, a soupfin. Scorpion fish. an ocean whitefish and mid-water bait fish (Especially Catalina), compared to what this island paradise used to be, this place is now a beautiful wasteland - unless you are fond of blacksmith, garibaldi, perch, opaleye, tiny kelpfish, and particularly bluebanded gobbies.

So, while some may whine and bitch about access, limited take, closures, lack of scientific data, whatever, my advice is to simple-go and take a look. Take a close look. The water's nice. The kelp is nice. The sea fans are abundant and lovely. The views are still spectacular. But, the rich and varied density and diversity that once was have long since left the scene.

The rocks are bare and the holes are empty.

Sure, it's not all negative. The white sea bass are hidden around. The black sea bass are bumping into divers at dive sites everywhere.

Soupfin are to be seen.

There are positives. Even above the water, the bald eagles are happily breeding in their protected habitats on Catalina, guarding the nobility of our national symbol.

*For a live nest cam check out*

[http://www.iws.org/bald\\_eagles/nestcam.htm](http://www.iws.org/bald_eagles/nestcam.htm)

YouTube clip:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iV8KgOiGPg>

But, these are the results of rules and restrictions, limited fishing, intervention, and anti-pollution laws.

It is up to us to get a grip. We cannot continue to pee in the pool, fish at will where ever we choose, and throw a fit when someone points out that there really is a limit. Human population really does matter and there is an end to all of this.

On to Landing Cove:

On the east end of the Anacapa cluster, Landing Cove (like Point Lobos) has been a protected area for decades. There my dive buddy met his new best friend--a male sheephead, a big guy on the fat side of 25 pounds. This poor friendly soul that followed us around for the dive has no idea how rare his is.

Hey, nay sayers: Wake up! Get a grip!

**KAYAKING SHELL BEACH  
AFTER DIVING THE  
CHANNEL ISLANDS**  
By Norm Knutson



It's starting to be a tradition now to do some ocean kayaking the next day after diving the Channel Islands.

So, this year, it was Jim Vallario, Ray Will, Tim Howe and I that explored the offshore wash rocks and kelp beds off Shell and Pismo Beach.

We used to do an oil rig dive the following day, but for some reason, we have not been able to do that, so we had been kayaking Santa Cruz Island the following day.

But this year, we discovered the caves and tunnels off Shell Beach, which is about 2 hours north of Ventura, just south of San Luis Obispo.

We arrived at Central Coast Kayak in Shell Beach early in the morning and they brought the kayaks to the top of the stairs at the beach. With an easy entry into the calm water, we headed south and paddled through the kelp bed past inquisitive seals and bird heavy wash rocks. We discovered some cool caves, tunnels and arches and wished we could do this more often. As directed, we left the kayaks on the street above the beach and the folks in the kayak store brought the kayaks back.

By kayaking from here it gets us back to beach by noon and then off to San Luis Obispo for a casual lunch before we make our way home.

It's a great way to end this diving and kayak adventure.

Hope you can share this fun with us next year.



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| <input type="checkbox"/> Central California Council of Diving Clubs (CenCal) | 15        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sonoma County Abalone Network (SCAN)                | <u>10</u> |
| <i>Show your support for all three!</i>                                      | \$50      |

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**SINCE JANUARY 1<sup>ST</sup> 1973**

**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 the 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/>.

SAN FRANCISCO REEF DIVERS  
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