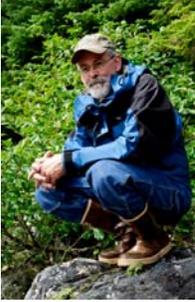


Reefers Rap		
<p>JANUARY</p> <p>14 - Sanctuary Dive Boat - K Dock - 08:30</p> <p>18 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</p>	<p>FEBRUARY</p> <p>15 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</p>	<p>MARCH</p> <p>10 - Sanctuary Dive Boat - K Dock - 07:30</p> <p>21 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</p>
<p>APRIL</p> <p>01 - Abalone Opener - ???</p> <p>14 - Sanctuary Dive Boat - K Dock - 07:30</p> <p>18 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</p>	<p>MAY</p> <p>12 – 13 Dive Show - Santa Clara Convention Center</p> <p>12 - Sanctuary Dive Boat - K Dock - 07:30</p> <p>16 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</p>	<p>JUNE</p> <p>04 - Scuba Show - Long Beach - scubashow.com</p> <p>09 - Sanctuary Dive Boat - K Dock - 07:30</p> <p>20 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</p> <p>TBD - Abalone Closer</p>
<p>JULY</p> <p>14 - Sanctuary Dive Boat - K Dock - 07:30</p> <p>18 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</p>	<p>AUGUST</p> <p>TBD - Abalone Opener</p> <p>12-14 - Channel Islands - Jim Vallario - 415.566.0784</p> <p>18 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER</p> <p>08 - Sanctuary Dive Boat - K Dock - 07:30</p> <p>19 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</p> <p>24 – Colorado Dive Show - Denver – divechronicles.com</p>
<p>OCTOBER</p> <p>13 - Sanctuary Dive Boat - K Dock - 07:30</p> <p>17 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</p> <p>22 - UK Dive Show - Birmingham - diveshows.uk.com</p>	<p>NOVEMBER</p> <p>21 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</p> <p>TBD - Abalone Closer</p>	<p>DECEMBER</p> <p>19 - Movable Feast - Check our Yahoo Site for Location</p>

STAMMTISCH

by Pierre Hurter



New Year's, how is it possible that another year has slipped by so quickly? Whatever happened to the old one?

Just when you start to get comfortably settled in, it's gone, with a pop of champagne corks and a backdrop of fireworks, or in our case the sound of snoring on the sofa. I seem to be asking myself that question (what happened to the year?) more frequently as I get older, or more mature if you will. There's no escaping it, its 2012, I watched the Tournament of Roses parade on TV, and they kept saying 2012 so it must be true. They're not prone to embellishing facts in Pasadena.

People celebrate New Year's in some peculiar ways. In Vienna there's the New Year's Concert, *Das Neujahrskonzert der Wiener Philharmoniker*. The concert always ends with three encores after the main program. The first encore is a fast polka. The second encore is Johann Strauss II's *Blue Danube Waltz*, traditionally and predictably interrupted by the audience's applause. The musicians then collectively wish the audience a happy New Year, play *The Blue Danube* and close with Johann Strauss, Sr.'s *Radetzky March*. During this last piece, the audience claps-along, and the conductor turns to conduct them instead of the orchestra. We end up watching it almost every year, not in person mind you, but via the wonders of television and the Internet.

Since it's a new year and the question often pops up, here we go, "what is a *Stammtisch*?" Well, it's a table set aside for a group of regulars, often men, who congregate at the local *Gasthaus* in most of the German-speaking world. A sign, declaring the table to be reserved, mostly to save embarrassment for any newcomers who don't know the drill, often designates the table.

The regulars meet to smoke, joke, play cards and generally debate the philosophical and political topics of the day along with whos's screwing who and will Brazil take the World Cup. The atmosphere can get fairly loud and even border on the rambunctious at least for onlookers, but within the group there is a *Stammtischniveau* which informally regulates the debates and keeps matters from coming to blows.

In its heyday, the *Stammtisch* was where the business of the farming villages and the discussions of the *inteligencia* (real or self imagined) in the cities took place. Nowadays, it's a place to go on a Friday night when you don't have plans, but would like to hookup with some friends, have a drink and shoot the breeze for a while.



One of my favorite traditions is *Bleigießen*, where you melt lead in a spoon and pour it into a bowl of water. The resulting shapes are interpreted to predict the coming year. For instance, if

the lead forms a ball that means luck will roll your way. The shape of an anchor on the other hand means help is needed, a cross; well it's not considered to be a propitious sign. It's obvious that "Johnny Tremain" is not required reading in Austria. And we get excited about lead paint in children's toys.

As Mark Twain once observed, New Year's is an institution "of no particular use to anybody save as a scapegoat for promiscuous drunks, and friendly calls and humbug resolutions."

For those who just can't say no, to just one more, here's a short list of my favorite hangover cures. First, there's the Bloody Mary, the quintessential hair of the dog treatment. Second, for a Continental twist, try prickled herring and white bean salad, no really, you have got to try this, it really seems to work. One of my favorites is the all American hamburger with fries, cheese is strictly optional, but a thick slice of raw onion is a must. I suggest a combination of all three depending on the severity of the situation. Of course, a couple gallons of water and a handful of aspirin seem to help as well.

It's been a good year, a fair number of changes as well as some excellent diving. For me the year's diving highlight was our dive trip to Chuuk (Truk), our second to a destination that is becoming one of my favorites. So what will the New Year bring? Stay tuned; a trip to Cozumel with fellow Reef Divers is on the horizon as well as our annual Channel Islands Trip. Than there's the local diving as well as kayaking and other adventures. Until we meet again, dive often, deep and safely.

Continued on page 4

Stammtich from page 3

*Below the thunders of the upper
deep,
Far far beneath in the abysmal
sea,
His ancient, dreamless,
uninvaded sleep
The Kraken sleepeth: faintest
sunlights flee
About his shadowy sides: above
him swell
Huge sponges of millennial
growth and height;
And far away into sickly light,
From many a wondrous grot and
secret cell
Unnumber'd and enormous
polpy
Winnow with giant fins the
slumbering green.*
The Kraken - Alfred, Lord
Tennyson

Galapagos from page 1

The flight from the mainland to the Galapagos Islands is two hours from the coast. The first impression one has is: islands are coming up in the middle of the ocean that are formed by volcanoes. It is almost like approaching Hawaii but more barren and brown. The islands are, as Hawaii, formed on a so-called hot spot and the most eastward islands are the oldest ones as the most westward ones like Isabella are the youngest ones with active volcanism. The runway on the island of Baltra was a little bumpy as this runway goes back to the Second World War, when the US Army Air Force built an air strip to send planes out to patrol the ocean and to protect the waters against Japanese submarines in front of the Panama canal.

The Galapagos Islands were Darwin's natural history laboratory when sailing on the

Beagle from England halfway around the world to make his observation on the Galapagos Finches and formulating his ideas of evolution.

The first great encounter with the fauna and flora was on Santa Cruz, experiencing the marine iguanas and the tortoises. We visited the Darwin Research Station near Puerto Ayora, the main port on Santa Cruz. The research station has an active breeding program to support the endangered tortoise species. They have been a protein resource ever since the discovery of the islands in 1535 by Fray Tomas de Berlanga. Ships made a stop-over at the islands to get fresh water and meat. The tortoises became the meat source and got tied to two beams. The sailors carried them over their shoulders to shore and onto the ships, kept them alive and the tortoises finally ended up as a big burger.

The Galapagos Islands became a National Park in 1959. The number of animals got reduced from 250,000 to a low in the 1970s at around 3,000. Ten subspecies of the original 15 survive in the wild. "Lonesome George" is kept in captivity at the Research station and is the only survivor of its kind. The tortoises developed differently on the various islands depending on the food sources. The shell shows different form and shapes. This adoption combined with longer necks allowed certain species to reach taller growing vegetation.

Let us now get into the water. The diving is, first of all, colder than one expects. You are at the equator but the water is at the surface around 66F (19C) and as soon as you hit a thermocline it

gets down to balmy, at least for Galapagos penguins, 61F (16C).

This brings us to the topic of species, or particularly to endemic species. The Galapagos penguins are the most Northern living members of their family. They are small and they adapted to the surrounding water.

Five different currents meet at these islands. The main ocean currents affecting the Galapagos Islands are the cold Counter Equatorial (Cromwell) Current from the west, the cold Humboldt (Peruvian Oceanic and Peruvian Coastal) Current from the southeast, the South Equatorial Current from the east, and the warm North Equatorial (Panama) Counter Current from the northeast, which brings with it the devastating but infrequent El Nino.

The Galapagos sea lion is another example of an endemic species.

We observed the blue-footed booby; sea lions and the penguins on the little basalt island Los Tintoreras a 10 minute boat ride from

Juvenile white tip sharks are swimming in narrow channels carved into the basalt while the black marine iguanas are hanging at vertical cliffs of the channels. Life at its densest form within 10 feet. We tried hard to get pictures underwater of the marine iguanas feeding from the marine algae.

On his visit to the islands, Charles Darwin was revolted by the animals' appearance, writing:

"The black Lava rocks on the beach are frequented by large (2-3 ft), disgusting clumsy Lizards. They are as black as the

Continued on page 5

Galapagos from page 4

porous rocks over which they crawl & seek their prey from the Sea. I call them 'imps of darkness'. They assuredly will become the land they inhabit."

I disagree with Charles, as they are very elegant swimmers. As reptiles they have to manage their body temperature as they dive for food. If the body temperature drops too low during their search for food they might not be able to climb the rocky shores to heat up their bodies. They also release through a gland on the nose excess salt from the body. This looks pretty funny when they spray it up into the air. Also the color is not only black as some animals have copper red skins.

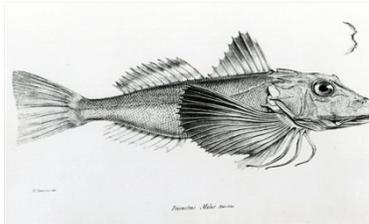


The harbor town Puerto Villamil on Isabella itself is the perfect dream for "hanging loose" and enjoying the remoteness and wilderness of the Galapagos. Long stretches of white beaches, the constant rollers coming from the southeast and the palm trees give you the feeling of paradise. The streets are sandy dirt roads bordered by guesthouses and huts. An interesting crowd meets from all over the world to have beer, margaritas and vodka-based drinks in all colors for the sundowner.

In the far distance is the large shield volcano Sierra Negra covering the western sky. It is the second largest crater after

Ngorongoro in the Serengeti. Some of our team made it to the top and were able to see the fumaroles and steam coming out of the earth. It was a trade off to go diving and this was what we were here for.

The diving allowed me to see the pacific seahorse for the first time in the wild. We found them in the seaweed at around 40 feet; well hidden and well camouflaged swaying with the seaweed in the swell. A further highlight was another endemic species: the Galapagos Gurnard.



This is an interesting fish. It inhabits sandy bottoms and "walks" on spines of ventral fins turning around like rocks in the search of pray. If you come too near it unfolds its "wings" and rapidly swims away. The dive master was exited to see it, as it was only the second time in his life that he had seen one.

The barracudas, Galapagos sharks as well as the hammerheads completed the picture. Galapagos sharks are found in other parts of the Pacific being a circumtropical fish. I already had seen them in Baja California and the Revillagigedo Islands in Mexico. The same applies to the hammerheads and the barracudas. Nevertheless it is always amazing to see the barracudas schooling at the edge of reefs in the fast current. They are fast, elegant and slick. The hammerhead sightings were limited by poor visibility. The water in general was rich in nutrients, which reduces the

chances for good pictures or video. The most interesting dive site with hammerheads was Kicker Rock of San Cristobal. It consists of two towering basalt monoliths rising out of the sea with a narrow channel in between the two rocks: a great dive site with unpredictable currents. The channel is about 110 ft (30 meters) deep. Here we saw hammerheads and Galapagos sharks as well as eagle rays.



Another exciting dive site is an eroded volcano called Gordon Rock, east of Santa Cruz. Two sides of the cone on the NE and SW side are still above the water. The middle of the volcano is submerged and in the East-West direction are deep entries with three major underwater needles on the west entry. Current conditions are more than chaotic and good buoyancy as well as a sense for the horizontal and vertical direction is absolutely mandatory. The current develops in the crater as well as back currents with vertical up and down effects that easily moved me up and down by 20 feet in less than 10 seconds. The wind blows mostly from the SE.

Waves from 3-5 feet with some white caps made the water entry in the crater a timely matter. The captain had to bring the engine into neutral, us needing to jump fast into the water, assemble and submerge immediately as fast as possible to a depth of 40-50 feet

Continued on page 6

Galapagos from page 5

to avoid the main wave action. The crater itself drops in steep steps down to over 150 feet.

Getting out of the water is easy if you end up in the lee outer side of the crater to the west. Surfacing within in it is not advisable, but the captains have been very capable recovering divers from there.

I brought my dive equipment with the exception of a wetsuit, as I had to optimize the weight of the luggage. Renting was the answer. In summary I was cold after a 50 minute dive and shivering severely as the rental suits do not fit well. The wind was at 4 Beaufort, most of the time and sometimes reaching 5 telling from the white caps we saw. This made the boat rides a "cool" experience at times. In all fairness though, this is my personal assessment and I am getting cold fast. Our tour started at Santa Cruz and we went by boat to Isabella. We had calm conditions on our a 2 1/2 hour boat ride.

Our next trip was from Isabella in the west to San Cristobal in the East. The original plan had been to fly from Isabela to San Cristobal. As always with plans, some work, some do not. This one did not. The inter-island hopper was in such a state that it was only allowed to be used for medical emergencies by the authorities. In summary, the boat ride was the only option.

The challenge was to get our team and the luggage on to a half covered boat with no cabin and an open fly bridge for the captain. The sea was relatively choppy with somewhat more than 20 knots of wind, an ingredient for a "nice" five hour

ride on the Pacific Ocean. (Editors note: this is what you call the Pacific Ocean?!?)

Once in a while we got a large braking wave from starboard that gave us a cold shower and slowed down the boat. The life vest came in handy and gave some protection, but after four hours I started shivering. By the fifth hour my hands started to turned blue. We huddled as close as we could to avoid further heat loss. I started to dream of hot chocolate... Finally, we got to Baquerizo Moreno our final island on this trip. The harbor promenade offered a lot of coffee shops and bars. The first sip of a hot drink was sooo great.

In summary, it was a great trip and the land excursions were as interesting as the underwater experience. The islands are expensive to travel but as long as the money is used to protect the islands and applied towards providing the population with a living, I am all for it.

In general, the time was too short and I was not able to visit the outer islands. Like the youngest island, Fernandina, which has active volcanism and interesting dive sites. In all unique places to explore and a reason to come back again....next time with my own dive equipment including a thick wetsuit.

Galapagos,
Nature's
laboratory

Joerg Borchert
Los Gatos,
California

- Never stop
exploring

**THE USS IOWA BEGINS ITS
FINAL MISSION**

In it's day, it was called "The Big Stick." With its Mark 7 16" guns along with 20 5" guns mounted in twin turrets as well as 20 mm and 40 MM anti aircraft guns, this was one ship not to b trifled with. She's been anchored in Suisun Bay along with the rest of the Moth Ball fleet since 2001 after her retirement in 1990.

In early November she started the first leg of her journey to her new home in San Pedro. Taking advantage of the extreme high tide, the ship was towed to Richmond where she'll be prepped for her trip to Southern California.

The *Iowa*, was the lead ship of its class, the biggest, fastest and most powerful battleships ever to sail under an American flag, it's also the last battleship to find a permanent spot for retirement. Its sister ships are museums: the *Missouri*, at Pearl Harbor; the *Wisconsin*, in Norfolk, Va., and the *New Jersey*, in Camden, N.J. The Navy no longer has battleships in its fleet, the Iowa class represent the pinnacle of the battleship era, but Aircraft carriers had already made them largely obsolete. Their dominion over the seas ended October 3

Continued on page 7



USS Iowa from page 6

1925 with the launch of the *USS Lexington*, America's first aircraft carrier.

As an aside, The Montana-class battleships were planned as successors to the Iowa class. They would have been slower but larger, better armored, and having superior firepower. Five were approved for construction during World War II, but changes in wartime building priorities resulted in their cancellation in favor of the Essex-class aircraft carriers before any Montana-class keels were laid.

Sometime in January or February when her hulls been scraped and pained she'll be towed down the California coast to the Port of Los Angeles, where the city has provided a permanent spot for use as a museum and, it is hoped, a tourist anchor for future waterfront development.

The *Iowa* was commissioned in February 1943 and deployed to the Atlantic and then the Pacific. President Franklin Roosevelt traveled on it en route to the Tehran conference with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet leader Josef Stalin.

The Navy installed an elevator and bathtub for Roosevelt, to accommodate his wheelchair. The tub and captain's wardroom where he stayed were the main attractions for the few workers and visitors allowed on board Thursday. Kent said it is the only battleship ever equipped with a bathtub.

In her final fighting trim she had three 16" guns mounted in three turrets, twelve 5" guns, 32

Tomahawk missiles, 16 Harpoon anti-ship missiles along with eighty 40mm and forty-nine 20mm anti-aircraft guns. The armor around her belt was over 12-inches thick.

On New Years Eve Gerda and I drove over to Richmond, Pier 3, rolled through the North East Gate and there she was, "The Big Stick". The teak decks are in sad shape, and the paint is looking grim and peeling, but the deck was filled with people young and old who wanted to see this ship. As is so often the case when you visit a piece of history like this, there were also many people wandering the decks who knew the ship in her prime, better yet they were bursting to tell someone about it.

Gerda asked me what it is about his ship and her sisters that fascinate me. It's not so much the martial history, though that is a part of the story. These ships stand as a testament to the workingmen and women of this country. The folks who wore overalls and wiped their faces with bandanas, not as a fashion statement or gang affiliation, but as they busted their knuckles to build what we so often seem to take for granted. I can only imagine what it must have been like to come aboard this ship as a young sailor far from some small town and set sail into a world at war.

A NEW YEARS BLAST FROM THE PAST WITH THE WOLFMAN

Once again *You are There*, this time its April 1973 and the article is from the series, *Far Under the Cold Kelp*.

Hello. Another month is almost down the drain. The weather, while very mild early in the month, has now turned into a real windy mother ... Small craft warnings etc. The rough water hasn't deterred the hardy folk in the funny rubber suits from pursuing the elusive and delectable Ab. I read the other day about the Fish and Game Gendarmes putting the arm on a couple of dudes in possession of fifteen Abs. The kicker in this bust was that one of the dudes happened to be Sheriff o one of the communities in the North Bay area. The Sheriff didn't think it was right for one fuzz to bust the other. *Nobles oblige?* My the justice if it all.

I guess there is a little larceny and crookedness in all of us. It seems that the crime is not breaking the law, but getting caught.

Well, speaking of ripping off and related topics, it seems that there is a smooth operating thief, or gang of same, operating around the Greyhound Rock area who are ripping off divers' vans and station wagons. I understand that they are very selective, taking items of high value. Soooo, be warned. Put your gear out of sight. If you notice anything suspicious around a van or car, observe it carefully, make a few notes like descriptions, license numbers, etc, don't make it easy for them. Also, I imagine that decalomania such as dive flags, club emblems and such on your car is a clear indication that dive gear is probably stowed within.

I mentioned before that plans are underway to convert the whole area around Point Lobos (Monastery and Carmel Beach, etc.) into an Underwater Park. Well, the Sierra Club Dive

Section is assisting the state Park Commission in taking an inventory of the varieties and number of Underwater Critters; Algae, Sponges, Hydrozoa, et al. It is a commendable and worthwhile project which doesn't hurt the Diver's image at all. There are about fifty divers participating. I'd say that there is a few divers.

Another Club, The Reef Divers, have been considering moves in the direction of Public Service. It is still a new Club, however, and projects like the above take a lot of organization. Tom Delebo, our M.D. in residence, is formulating a First

Aid and Lifesaving program relating to diving. This sounds like an excellent program and should be of real interest to one and all. Dave Rickard, our resident PhD. In Ecology, is planning an Underwater Navigation Seminar; Mark Gibson, our resident Marine Biologist, is overdue to conduct a Seminar on Marine Fauna. Oh, The Reef Divers are up to their Snorkels in talent. These people can use help and I suggest that if you want to help just pick up the phone and discuss it with them.

Hey, I'm getting a little excited about the upcoming trip on the Bottom Scratcher. How about

you? The weather in Southern California is still pretty cool, but it should be good by Memorial Day Weekend. I took a little run down past Ensenada last weekend and it is plain that it has been a severe winter down there also. The beaches are all torn up, at least the ones I saw were.

Dammit, I am running out of air again, well, Cest la jolly old vie.

The Man in The Black Rubber Suit (aka Emmett Malone)

We'll be featuring more blasts from the past in future newsletters so stay tuned the Wolfman will be back

Spindrift

JAPAN'S WHALING FLEET SETS SAIL FOR THE ANTARCTIC



Japan's whaling fleet left Shimonoseki port in south-western Japan in early December heading for the Antarctic where it plans to kill 1,000 whales in the upcoming season amid accusations that it was using disaster funds to pay for added security. Anticipating clashes with Sea Shepherd, the three ships, led by the 720-tonne *Yushin Maru* will be accompanied by a fisheries agency guard vessel.

According to Sea Shepherd as well as Greenpeace Japan, the government used 2.28 billion yen (\$28.5

million) from the earthquake recovery fund, on top of the existing \$6m annual subsidy, to pay for this year's hunt as well as the added security.

The Japanese Fisheries Agency said the use of money from the fund was justified because one the towns destroyed by the tsunami was a whaling port.

A total of 18 Japanese non-governmental organizations, including the Environmental Lawyers Federation and Consumers Union have signed on to a letter to the Prime Minister, Yoshihiko Noda, protesting the use of recovery cash.

Commercial whaling was banned in 1986 but the International Whaling Commission (IWC) permits Japan to kill a limited number of whales for "scientific research".

Japan's annual cull has caused friction with Australia and New Zealand, which have again called on the fleet to abandon its hunt in an area they class as a whale sanctuary.

BRIGITTE BARDOT ENTERS ANTI-WHALING CAMPAIGN



Sea Shepherd has a new ship in its anti-whaling fleet, the *Brigitte Bardot*. She will join the *Steve Irwin* and the *Bob Baker* in this year's Whale Wars.

In the meantime, Kyodo Senpaku Kaisha and the Institute of Cetacean Research along with the Captains of the research vessels have filed a lawsuit against the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SSCS) and Paul Watson.

The Institute of Cetacean Research and Kyodo Senpaku are seeking a

court order in the US District Court in Seattle, Washington that prevents SSCS and its founder Paul Watson from engaging in activities at sea that could cause injuries to the crews and damage to the vessels.

Kyodo Senpaku owns the whaling ships, while the cetacean institute operates the whaling program under the authority of the Japanese government.

The Japanese statement said the whaling program was "greatly contributing to the advancement of scientific knowledge of whale resources in the Antarctic".

SCIENTISTS FIND NO OIL ABOARD THE SUNKEN 1941 OIL TANKER OFF CALIFORNIA COAST



The S.S. *Montebello*, an oil tanker carrying 75,346 barrels of crude oil, was making her way up the coast; it was December 23, 1941, 16 days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The tanker had left Port San Luis in San Luis Obispo County shortly after 1 a.m., bound for refineries in British Columbia.

Four hours after leaving port, a lookout spotted a Japanese submarine

surfacing about 100 yards away. The *Montebello* made an attempt to outrun the sub, but to no avail. At 5:55 a.m., the tanker was hit by a torpedo. The submarine then shelled the tanker with a deck gun while the 38 crew members lowered the lifeboats. The ship sank quickly, but its crew escaped.

The 440-foot-long ship's whereabouts were a mystery until it was discovered in 1996, lying in 1,000 feet of water six miles west of Cambria. After several exploratory dives, federal and state officials decided to mount a major effort to determine if the ship was still holding the oil.

The Coast Guard hired Global Diving & Salvage, a Seattle firm, to do the investigation, paying the costs from the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund. The federal fund was created with a 5-cent-per-barrel fee imposed on the oil industry by President George H.W. Bush after the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill.

After more than a week of high-tech imaging and drilling into the side of the aging hull, scientists confirmed that the sunken ship's 32 oil tanks now hold only seawater. The 3 million gallons of oil are gone.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ran computer simulations of the tides and winds, and concluded that the oil probably leaked out slowly over the years and drifted south, evaporating, sinking or washing up over time along scattered beaches.

THE SS *GAIRSOPPA*'S TREASURE TO BE SALVAGED



The *SS Gairsoppa* was a 412 foot British cargo steamship that was enlisted in the service of the United Kingdom Ministry of War Transport and sunk by a German U-boat on February 17, 1941, approximately 300 miles southwest of Galway, Ireland.

The ship had sailed with several convoys, before joining Convoy SL 64. Returning to Britain from India, running low on fuel, she left the convoy and headed for Galway, Ireland, but was torpedoed and sunk by the German U-boat, U-101. All but four of the crew were lost when she sank, six crewman managed to launch a life boat and reached the

Cornish coast two weeks later. Two died trying to get ashore.

In January 2010 the British government awarded a US company, Odyssey Marine Exploration, a two-year contract to find and salvage the 7,000,000 ounces of silver onboard, with an estimated value of £150 million (\$240 million give or take). Of course there's also the 1,700 tons of soggy tea onboard.

The Florida-based Odyssey Marine Exploration on September 26th, 2011 confirmed the identity and location of the *Gairsoppa*. The wreck of the ship was found on the sea floor at a depth of nearly 4,700 meters, 300 miles off the coast of Ireland. Odyssey Marine indicated that the operation to recover the bullion would begin in the spring of 2012. Odyssey will retain 80% of the value of any recovered cargo, with the remainder going to HM Treasury.

The shipwreck was located using the MAK-1M (deep-tow low frequency sonar system), aboard the chartered Russian research vessel *RV Yuzhmorgeologiya*. Visual inspection of the site was conducted with a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) from the *Odyssey Explorer*.

DUES ARE DUE!

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW!

IS THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS ENDANGERED?



The nautilus is a fascinating animal. The spiral of its shell seems to mirror the shape of distant galaxies. It's that fascination which is pushing the nautilus to extinction.

The sale of jewelry and ornaments made from the lustrous shell has led to fisherman killing them by the millions. The nautilus lives on the slopes of deep coral reefs at depths up to 2000 feet in the Pacific and are caught using baited traps.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service reported that 579,000 specimens were imported into the US between 2005 and 2008. In the interests of full disclosure, the shell on my bookshelf came from a beach in Palau, its owner had already vacated the premises.

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DUES ARE DUE!

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW!



SINCE JANUARY 1ST 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. Location is announced one week prior to the meeting. Please check our yahoo site for details <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sfreefdivers/> We meet at 7:00pm for socializing, drinks, food and club business. For more information, visit <http://www.sfreefdivers.org/>.

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