

DEDICATED TO SAFE SPORT DIVING AND THE PRESERVATION OF OCEAN RESOURCES

# REEF DIVER TIMES

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SAN FRANCISCO REEF DIVERS

## *A Message from our Leader*

Sweltering in 100+ degree temperatures, sitting at what these days passes for a typewriter, all I can think of was how COOL it was making two deep dives at Monastery Beach, Carmel on May 27th (48F) and two dives May 20th at Gerstle Cove, Salt Point Sonoma (46F). If you missed these club excursions you have only yourself to blame since there were plenty of Reefers present making some great dives in clear upwelling ocean waters. Who? Bill Donnelly, Stephen (the Aussie), Pierre, Ken Gwin, Wynn Matsumura, Kaz Shibao, Loretta Lowe, Gene Kramer and son, and Jeff Lipsett at Salt Point and at Monastery, Kirill Semenov, Frank Matzkies, Philipp Jahn, Armin Luggens, Loretta Lowe, Bill Donnelly, and guests Rab and Suzanne from Scotland, and Nikki, Susan and Mark (he's from S. Africa) and of course myself, Curt Degler.

If you are determined to wet your wetsuit there are yet plenty of great club outings planned in the next few months. The last weekend in June we will be camping at Gualala Regional Park for 3-4 days: A slice of public paradise without equal. Just a few rarely visited campsites set in a preserve of old growth Redwoods right on the banks of the broad and majestic Gualala River, whose course generally follows the San Andreas fault in these northern parts. Just far enough away from the ocean to avoid its noisome cold breezes, you can launch your (or my) kayak right from the campsite and easily paddle down to the beach and unhinge an ab or two and come back with that and a load of firewood. Hate being far away from comforts? Just 2 miles away are a Safeway, a couple of restaurants, coffeehouses, a pharmacy and that diver delight - an airfill station.

More camping and diving is planned for that internationally famous getaway of Big Sur on the weekend of July 21 at Jade Cove/Plaskett Creek campground. Like to take home some real jade? I guarantee it! Plus lots of little dived coves and incredible scenery.

Then the weekend of September 9, we will drive up (6000ft) to Lake Tahoe, camp at DL Bliss State park and dive the fabled clear and deep waters of the Gem of the Sierra at Rubicon Point. Plus we have again reserved the SS Cypress Point at the end of July - just nine spots left. After this things get a little fuzzy, although an international trip to Akumal Mexico with fabulous Cenote diving, ocean drift diving, and Mayan ruins and even a wreck diving trip to San Diego to check out the USS Yukon may well take shape. Got an idea for a unique dive? Lets GO!

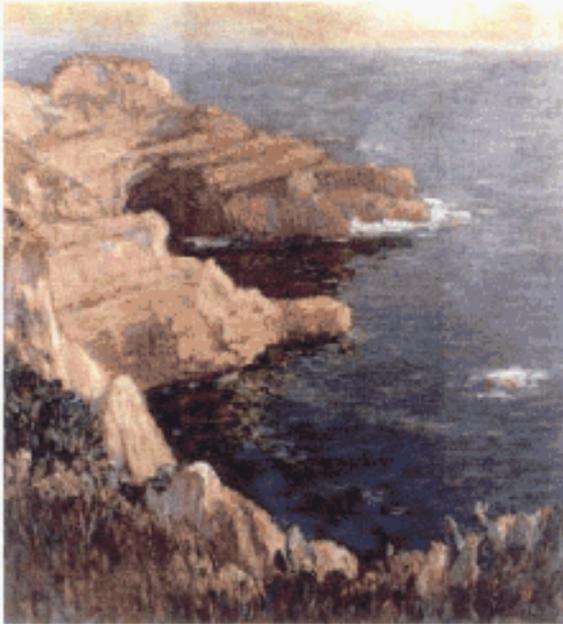
--Curt Degler

# The Reef Rap

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- **June 20th - June General Meeting:** Kaj Maurins will present a slideshow of North Sulawesi.
- **June 23-25 - Ab Closer at Fort Ross:** At the Pedotti Reef Campground, Fort Ross. Maria Misthos is the organizer. 415-564-3464, mariamist@aol.com. Check page 3 for more detail.
- **July 2nd - Del Monte Day Trip** for the Halibut. Curt Degler coordinates (707-570-0457).
- **July 28th- July General Meeting:**
- **July 21-23 - Jade Cove Dive trip:** Anthony will coordinate this diving/camping trip at Plascett Creek Campground, 70 miles south of Monterey. NOTE THE DATE CHANGE! 415-751-3617.
- **July 30th:** There will be another Cypress Point club charter.
- **August 15th - August General Meeting:**
- **August Events:** Bob Miche heads up the Ab Re-opener; Jim Vallario is in charge of our annual Channel Islands excursion on August 20th.
- **September 9-10 - Lake Tahoe Dive Trip:** Norm Knutson (510-487-6394) will lead a camping group to DL Bliss State park and dive the waters of the Gem of the Sierra at Rubicon Point. More details next month!
- **September events:** Join Jim Radkey for a "SH\*T! Back to School" Dive; and hunt the elusive abalone with Tom Leroux
- **October - Mexico:** 7-10 Day Diving Excursion To The Yucatan Mainland for Reef, Deep, Cavern and Cave Diving with sidetrips to the Jungle and Mayan Ruins. Curt Degler Coordinator cdegler@best.com 707-570-0457
- **October events:** Roy Didier hosts the Ab Feed; haunt the deep with Robert Johnson leading a Halloween Dive to Cemetery Reef. Bill Palmer and Ann Gilmore will be coordinating a kayak trip.
- **Be a Leader!** While this year's schedule is already looking pretty busy, there's always room for you to coordinate another dive trip. If you have a plan, an idea, or even just a notion about a fun Reef Diver activity, please don't hesitate to contact one of our fearless leaders: Curtis, Anthony, Frank, or current VP Ann Gilmore, to select a date and get any pointers you might need to turn your dream into reality. It would be great if someone wanted to coordinate a warm water or other "Beyond California" dive trip...such as the North Carolina adventure 2 years back. Attend an officers' meeting (held the first Tuesday of the month - check with Curtis for a location) and discuss your idea, or bring it up at the general meeting to gauge interest.
- **Be a Buddy!** If there's no event planned, you can always call up some people on the roster and see if someone wants to go diving! A new and updated roster came with this issue.. If you got this newsletter, we have your address, but has your phone number or email address changed? If so, contact Loretta at (415) 305-7517 or lorettalowe@earthlink.net.
- **Be an Author/Photographer!** Story reports of Reefdiver events is all welcomed, and highly desired. If you take topside of UW photos, I can also use them. (High contrast pics print best in B&W). And if you leave California for diving elsewhere, tell us about the experience! Finally, express opinions on politics relevant to diving.
- **Join the E-mail Discussion site!** In addition to the new web page, we also have a club forum at <http://www.egroups.com/group/sfreesdivers>. If you have questions about how to join, e-mail Curt Degler at cdegler@best.com.

## *Jade Cove Dive and Camping Trip* *July 21st - 23rd, 2000*



**M**ark your calendar for the Jade Cove dive. Jade Cove is located in Big Sur 70 miles south of Monterey. The camp site is Plascett Creek Camp grounds. This will be a three day camping trip. Bring your tent, and camping equipment. Call Anthony for further information (415) 751-3617

**Weekend Trips:** Why go diving for just a day when you can spend a weekend?

June 23-25 - Abalone Closer: The abalone dive and campout has been moved to Gualala (pronounced "Wahlala") Regional Park on the south bank of the Gualala River, just north of Sea Ranch and on the Sonoma/Mendocino border. The campsites, \$15.00 a night per vehicle and \$5.00 for extra cars, are accessed east of Highway one and run on a first-come first-serve basis. Set among old growth redwoods, you can launch small boats and kayaks right from the campsites and paddle the river down to the beach to dive for abalone. Additional pluses are a nearby supermarket, air fill station, coffee house, etc. Maria Misthos coordinates 415-664-6618 mariamist@aol.com. Please let her know if you are coming. The 4/15/00 abalone campout and dive had 50 participants and, although a great success for all, earned the club a stiff lecture from and let Maria know if you are coming!

July 21-23 - Jade Cove: Note the date for this event has been shifted one week.

August 20-22 - the Peace dive boat in the Channel Islands  
We still have some spots available on the annual late summer charter. \$305 for 3 days of Southern Cal diving, \$75 for onboard nitrox! Contact Jim Vallario (415-566-0784).

## More Upcoming Events

July 2nd (Sunday) - Day dive for Halibut Diving off of Del Monte (McMuffin) Beach. The Big ones are in! Meet at the Aquarius Dive shop on Del Monte Blvd Monterey at 9:30am. Curt Degler coordinates 707-570-0457. Call to arrange carpools.

July 30th (Sunday) - We have reserved 10 spots on the Cypress Point. Boat leaves promptly at 7:00AM at the yellow boat dock. Cost is \$65 and can be paid by checks (made out to SF Reef Divers) sent to Jim Vallario. Call 415-566-0784 to confirm, his address is on the back page. Nitrox can be had for \$8/tank if ordered in advance (Cypress Charters/AWS at 408-244-4433) or for \$10/tank on the boat.

## Dive Report: Salt Point Saga

My 15 year old son, Justin, and I joined in the Salt Point dive, both as a fun abalone dive and a shakeout dive for a spearfishing trip to the Channel Islands the following Friday. We came with kayaks since Justin, who is in his second year of diving, needed to get more familiar with paddling through the swells and with suiting up on a barely stable kayak. We launched out of Gerstle cove well before most of the other club members arrived and headed south about 300 yards, where anchoring in 20 feet of water should put us in reasonable abalone habitat.

After dropping anchor and tying off my son's fiberglass Malotte kayak, I slipped on my gear and started seaching for some tasty snails. When I looked up to check on him, he was wrestling with something at the back his kayak, and the nose of his board was pointing strangely toward the sky. He swam over and explained that his board had flipped with the rear hatch open when he was trying to put on his weightbelt. While he didn't lose anything, and we were well out from any breakers, his rear compartment was right at water level, and refilled to the brim with every passing wave.

We brought along a hand pump bailer for this type of problem, but as soon as we'd pump some water out, the next wave would fill it up again. While this was not an emergency, we really didn't want to drag this waterlogged carcass of a kayak onto the rocks to empty it.

After trying unsuccessfully to dump out the water by hand, we tried a tag team approach. He got under the stern and pushed the rear upward as hard as he could, while I pumped that little bailer like there was no tomorrow. At first, we kept getting more water in with each passing wave. But after a few minutes, the water inside the hatch was a few inches lower than the water outside. We switched off after five minutes, with me lifting and him pumping. After ten minutes, we were as good as new, but dog tired. I picked up a limit of abalone, while my son poked around and mostly rested on top of his kayak. While I could have helped him get some abs, Justin insists on either getting his own or getting none. He got none.

After being on the water for close to an hour, my son said that he was out of gas and ready to head back. That near constant north wind, which helped us get to the south, was now a chore to paddle against. We got back in and reviewed our lessons from the school of hard knocks. Lesson one: Put on your weight belt while in the water, and with the hatches secured. Lesson two: conditioning counts.



-Kathy Kennedy

We spend the next two hours snorkeling in Gerstle cove, working on techniques and equipment. Justin was using a pair of ordinary scuba diving fins, and I had him try out my own-long bladed free diving fins. After two minutes he said “My old fins really sucked. Finally, I feel like I can actually swim.” It was off to the dive shop for another pair of oversized fins.

The following Friday as the sun was rising over the horizon, we joined 20 other free divers in chasing after white sea bass in the kelp beds off of Santa Cruz Island. On board the Peace, we did 2 dives off of Santa Cruz Island, and two off of Anacapa. The first two were in somewhat murky water, and only one diver out of nineteen managed to shoot a WSB.

Dive number three was in much clearer water, with about 40 feet of vis. At this site on the west side of Anacapa, the water gets deep very fast and the current picked up almost as soon as we hit the water. As fast as Justin and I could kick, we could not swim fast enough to return to the boat. With our bright orange floats and divers flags, we drifted our way back to Santa Barbara, waiting for the chase boat to drag us back to the Peace. While we didn’t see any fish, I was glad to have the experience of being swept away with the current.

Dive four was the best. Dropping anchor in 35 feet of water at the eastern end of Anacapa, we could see the bottom from the deck and see fish swimming among the rocks. This site had it all, good vis, kelp beds, rocks, sand flats and some fish. We worked this area for about an hour, finding half a dozen bat rats, one small halibut, and numerous small kelp bed fish. While the shootable fish didn’t cooperate, the diving was so good that we really didn’t want to come home.

## Dive Computer Use For Newbies

Last month, after a day of diving on the Cypress Point, and all the adventure that could entail, I decided to go out with an instructor friend and tag along with an open water class and some of their check-out dives. They had done two beach dives the day before, and this day were going to do two more dives off a boat.

I'd heard some discussions in the past about certifying agencies teaching beyond the use of dive tables and introducing their Open Water students directly to computers as part of their beginning course. I'd only heard about it. But, here they were, total newbies, scrolling through their planning modes, checking depth, temperature, ascent rates instead of scratching their heads and coming up with conflicting repetitive dive groups. The tables, they said, were for historical reference and backup. I found this very interesting.

Personally, I believe computers are the third greatest thing to happen to recreational diving since compressed air, and, I guess, probably 80% of divers use them. Still, I know people who are against them. They don't trust them. They're unreliable. Dangerous. Another thing for the dive industry to sell you. I decided to take an informal survey. I talked to fellow divers and put a posting on [ba\\_diving](#). The general response regarding teaching beginners to dive with a computer was amazingly favorable. The reasons were based on the reality that this is the way people dive, and it would be a good opportunity to learn under the guidance of an instructor, and not later on, on the fly, or on your own, or from some misguided friend who learned on his own and has a few misconceptions. Their theory: learn from the beginning; learn from an instructor; try various makes and models; and go with it. But, nobody said to abandon teaching the tables.

Interestingly, the question opened a number of conversational avenues all leading back to a basic principle in diving: contingency planning and backups. What does a diver using a computer need to know, and what do you do when your computer fails?

This means understand and be able to use both the tables and your computer. And if you want to continue diving after a computer failure, the minimum requirement is your familiar set of tables, a watch and depth gauge, or a bottom timer. This means you need to be able to reasonably reconstruct your dive day or ascertain where you are in relation to your tables. Your tables and computer may come from the same theoretical model, but, the information is not expressed in the same vocabulary. Modern computers don't use bottom times and repetitive group designations. You can abort the dive, abort your dive day, or sit out a comfortable surface interval and reconstruct your day until your computer failed to find a conservative merge with the tables. Pre dive monitoring of your computer (pre failure) in plan mode would also give you hints to calculate your off-gassing status and NDL just before your last dive (or computer failure). With all of this calculated, you could pick up your dive day and be off again. And, maybe dive a little shallower, cut your dives a little shorter, and hang a little longer.

Ultimately, diving with another computer (redundant) similar to your primary computer (ie both nitrox) would give you uninterrupted information. Think about that for your 3-5 day live aboard exotic vacation.

--Kenneth Gwin

## June Meeting Entertainment:

Ever Heard of Sulawesi? How about *NORTH Sulawesi*? Well, it's considered an Oceanic Paradise by Underwater Photographers and we are lucky to have a chance to view SIX months of slides by Kaj Maurins just before he leaves for a SIX month photography trip to Irian Jaya (better known to me as New Guinea or Papua). This is the same show that was screened by the Northern California Underwater Photographic Society and I hear that it is not to be missed. SO DON'T MISS IT!

**Gear Reviews** by Jason: Little items worth a look.

**Custom Booties:** This spring I finally gave up on my zippered booties. Every time I enter the water, I feel that trickle of cold water immediately. Not fun. Cricket at Otter Bay Wetsuits swore that zipperless boots are the only way to go, so I decided to give it a try. A short number of measurements, \$50, and a couple weeks later you have your custom booties ready to go.

The bottom of the boot is solid, but it more closely resembles a rock climbing shoe. It's easy to fold the top under your wetsuit legs, and the resulting seal is pretty good. When I walk into the ocean, it all stays initially dry, until I'm completely immersed. So it does deliver. I did have a problem with the heel - my fins straps kept sliding off. Otter Bay is now going to put on a little reinforcement piece there that should also act as a catch for the straps.

**Laser Pointer:** At least a couple companies have released UW laser pointers in the months since DEMA. I picked up the Trident model from Peninsula Dive for about \$40 and gave it a whirl. Results are mixed. I took it out on a couple Breakwater dives and found the range to be too short to be useful. And then in Cozumel it seemed about the same. It's great on land, but not so in the water.

However, in recent weeks I found it to work decently well at Monastery and also on a night dive at Breakwater. Range was 5-6feet, which is sufficient for pointing out little critters. It works best when the water isn't too cloudy, but the light levels aren't too high, such as what you generally encounter in an early morning dive. I think I will strap it to my Aquashot and use it as an aiming beam for the strobe.



-Kathy Kennedy

**About SFRD (San Francisco Reef Divers):** 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. There is a general Club meeting on the third Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm. We meet at The Presidio Alliance Building, Room B, 563 Ruger Street, The Presidio, San Francisco. Ruger is the first left after entering via the Lombard Gate entrance.

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Submit Articles: Please forward any submissions to Jason O'Rourke by the 7th of each month. Digital submissions are preferred, as attached plain text formatted documents. If fax is only option, send w/o cover to 603-697-6532.

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