



Reef Diver Election - Can You Stand *Any More* Voting??!



Currently, it looks like the Reef Divers will have a new President (YIPPEE!) before the Country does, and hopefully without recounts. You see we vote both digitally and manually at the same time. How's that? We raise our hands!

After some discussion at the officer's meeting, I realized that I misspoke when I described the process whereby we will elect officers for 2001. We will in fact nominate officers at the next general meeting, Tuesday 11/21 and also vote on their selection at the same time, rather than in January 2001.

Officers to be selected include:

President, Vice President, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, Entertainment chair, Membership Chair, representatives to Cencal and the AMRC and Webmaster. Did I leave anyone out?

If you wish to help the club by volunteering your services in 2001 please do not hesitate to have your name placed on the ballot. Contact me if you have any questions. Being a club officer for a year or two gives new and old members alike the opportunity to meet and work with other members in planning and organizing dives and events, and is a great way to meet new people and introduce them to the pleasures, sometimes dubiously regarded, of diving the wild north coast of California. Plus it looks good on your resume.

So come everyone on Tuesday. Remember, those not present may find themselves suddenly installed as President! (You need to be present to vote but not to be nominated!)

The Reef Rap

November 21st - November General Meeting - ELECTION MADNESS!

December 2nd - Curtis leads an intermediate/advanced beach diving trip in Carmel. Check page 4.

December 19th - December General Meeting - Christmas Party

January 1st - New Year's Day dive at Point Lobos. Pierre Hurter is in charge of this, though it may well be too late now to join. Contact him ASAP at p.hurter@worldnet.att.net.

January events - There will be a ski trip at some point, tentatively lead by Pam Radley. Check next month for more details!

Plan an Event! Winter is here, but we all know that in between the storms are some great diving conditions! Talk to Curtis or me to schedule and publicize a trip to the water.

Join the E-mail Discussion site! The club forum on egroups is getting good use now. In addition to reminders of upcoming planned events, members have used it to put together short notice dive trips. You can join it at <http://www.egroups.com/group/sfreedivers>. If you have any questions about how to join or use his forum, e-mail Curt Degler at cdegler@best.com.

Be a Buddy! If you are thinking about going diving on a date when no club activities are planned, you can always call up some people and see if others are up for water. If there are errors in your entry, please contact Loretta at 415-305-7517 or by email at lorettalowe@earthlink.net.

Be an Author/Photographer! I need your story reports on club events! I also welcome UW photos that had good contrast (for B&W printing). If you travel away for diving, we also want to hear about your experiences. Details for submission are on the back page. Please don't send Word documents! Text only please- there are too many viruses attached to MS documents.

December Meeting / Christmas Party!

Although it is not yet Thanksgiving, it isn't too soon to start planning for the San Francisco Reef Diver Christmas party to be held at the Presidio Alliance bldg. at 563 Rucker St. starting 7:00 - 7:30 PM on December 19th. It will include a potluck dinner of dishes and beverages provided by members and the club. So bring your famous Hors D'Oeuvres, liquid concoction, hellishly tempting chocolate cake or a styrofoam pint of Safeway potatoes salad. All contributions are welcome!

There will be our famous Thieves Gift Exchange. Participation is voluntary but oh what fun! Bring a wrapped and unidentified gift worth \$10 to \$15.00 dollars. You will receive a number which will be called randomly by the Master of Ceremonies. If your number is called, you can either select a gift from the unopened pile or "steal" a gift that has already been opened. If you steal, the victim can either pick an unopened gift or steal someone else's gift. After two steals, the victim MUST select a new gift. You will have 30 seconds to decide what you want to do, or else you must open a new gift. All decisions of the Master of Ceremonies will be final, arbitrary and not subject to appeal. No holder of an opened gift can withhold his Prize from a Thief. The results are hilarious and bring out the worst in the Christmas Spirit. Try to find a gift that a diver might want, or related to this year's "Dolphin" Theme. The more offbeat and desirable the better. One year someone gave a pair of shark slippers they found in a dumpster, which looked new after going through the laundry. These passed hands many times and caused a few tears. Another year it was an armadillo handbag. Some people were seriously disappointed. You get the idea? We will explain it to you if you need help. There will also be a prize lottery of dive gear donated by local dive shops, dancing, and general abandon.

Bent! By Time Howe

After a careful review of my dive accident on July 13th of this year, I have to conclude it's all Jim Vallario's fault! He had been threatening for years to slap me silly for taking outlandish chances in diving. Much to his discredit, he has not done so ... so look at what happened!! Here is the story then of that sorry day...

On that Thursday, I drove alone to Monastery Beach, just south of Carmel. Monastery Beach is the closest point to the shore to the Monterey Trench, a very deep region - the attraction being that you can get very deep relatively quickly. I'd made about six dives here deeper than 150 feet. I'd been diving for 20 years and was used to deep dives, nitrogen narcosis and conserving my air. My dive plan was very simple: get deep quickly and spend the rest of the dive kicking up slowly, decompressing. I snorkeled out about 200 yards offshore and descended. I had 2900lbs of air in my tank, 3180lbs would have been completely full - 100 cubic feet of air.

Surface conditions were flat calm. Underwater, the visibility was about 40 feet. Within a few minutes I kicked down to about 180-200 feet. I definitely felt the drunk feeling of narcosis. So far it was nothing I was used to. I didn't however check my gauges here - unusual for me. Next I made the poor decision to descend further "just to check it out." I remember hovering over the bottom 15-20 feet down, idly looking at bright white sand, some kelp plants and some stranded large yellow jellyfish. I was incapacitated by the narcosis at this point; I couldn't think properly; the visual hallucinations at this extreme depth (274 feet as I later learned) just swept over me.

At a certain point, it occurred to me that I still hadn't checked my gauges - highly unusual! - and there wasn't enough light to see them. I needed to kick up towards the sun, which I did when about 100 feet above my deepest point, the air through my regulator cut off. I was sure I was out of air. This had happened before, so I was assured that it was an out-of-air situation versus an equipment failure. I immediately started kicking up for the sun so far above. A couple of things were in my favor. The air hadn't shut off at the end of an exhalation, so I had a reasonable breath of air, and I had lots of experience underwater and was in relatively good shape. As I kicked up, the volume of air in my BC vest expanded, driving me up further. Still, the surface didn't come and I had a desparate few seconds without oxygen. Finally, with a roar, I splashed through the surface and my body came halfway out of the water, my mask knocked off my face.

I gulped air for a few minutes until my heart settled down. My breathing sounded wet and noisy and I had chest pain. I thought perhaps I had overdistended my lungs, perhaps ruptured some aveoli. I thought that any second I would taste blood in my mouth. But this didn't happen. Now I checked my gauges. My entire dive time and been only 13 minutes with a maximum depth of 274 feet. I had incredibly breathed up my entire supply of air (normally a 45-60 minute supply at 50-100 feet) without my noticing that I was breathing any more than usual. One thing I had done on the way up that may have saved my life was breathing in and out on the dead regulator in hopes of getting more air. I never got that extra air, but that action probably kept my airway open so my lungs didn't pop. At the surface now, I was about 300 yards offshore. The few picnickers on the beach were unaware of what had just happened to me; I realized I'd come within a few seconds of drowning. I felt very alone. Eventually I got it together, replaced my mask on my face and snorkeled to the beach. I was able to walk and now a dull lower back pain and some numbness in the legs replaced the noisy breathing and chest pain. I knew what this was. I was quite sure I was bent.

There is a recompression chamber in Monterey, but I was mortified about what I had done and didn't want to walk in to the Monterey chamber saying, "Hi! I've just been doing some diving alone to 274ft and I'm bent." I was also quite sure my insurance wouldn't pay for it. So I convinced myself to drive home and play it by ear. Maybe I could get away with this yet... Another three hours later and I

arrived at home.

Walking to the front door, I fell. Staring up at the sky on my back, I finally had to admit I had a serious problem. The pain in my lower back persisted and the numbness in my legs and pelvis had increased. A call to my doctor started a series of events which landed me in the hospital for a month and a half. I spent hours in their recompression chamber and the rest has been rehab. The worst torture was mental, as I went over my actions of that day and realized the whole damn thing had been my fault!

Things happen for a reason, I believe. If nothing else, I got a gigantic wake-up call. My life, which had largely been involved in chasing my tail, had changed. What I was most struck with is how many people loved me and cared for me, yet I had been so egocentric and deliberately socially isolated that I largely did not return this love. So I've tried to reach out to others and be a better person. Hey, it was time to do this anyway! The accident just nudged me along the way I was supposed to go. Even if I get no more function back, I count myself as lucky. I could have easily been killed. Now I can walk and drive and dive. And there are positive repercussions to this experience that I don't even understand yet. It certainly has put things on a more real perspective than before. I've survived this, and ultimately, I believe I will triumph. I owe it in large part to the many people who put out a helping hand. Thank you, thank you!!

[Tim swam the Alcatraz test swim on October 7th!]

Editor's followup: If you're diving often, especially to deeper depths, I strongly urge you to maintain DAN insurance. The Master plan can be purchased for \$64/yr and will cover 90% of costs in any accident, regardless of the depth. PADI also offers depth unlimited plans that are a bit pricier, but I believe they pay 100%. In many cases of decompression sickness, quick treatment will stop or reverse any damage done to the body tissues. And remember, a good number of DCS victims were diving within tables or their computer. Just because it says you're in the green doesn't mean that you are. Some people's physiology is more susceptible, and rapid ascents can hurt anyone. Whenever possible, make that 15' safety stop and keep ascent rates in check.

If you're diving in remote areas such as Sonoma or Big Sur, an O2 kit may also be worth purchasing. Breathing 100% O2 is a very effective first aid response. DAN's O2 kits run in the \$400-600 range and they recently introduced a REMO system that is similar to a rebreather and can extend the tank time tremendously. Many shops offer the DAN O2 provider course; Bamboo Reef does as part of its rescue class.

Day trip to Carmel - Saturday, December 2nd

12/2/00 Monterey/Carmel intermediate to advanced Beach Dive.

We will meet at 9 AM at the parking lot of the Aquarius Dive shop at 2040 Del Monte Ave. Take the Del Monte Exit towards Pacific Grove from Highway 1, the shop will be on your left. After assessing ocean conditions and making our final selection of dive sites, we will leave the Aquarius at 9:30am sharp.

Ocean conditions will be the final arbiter in where we will dive, but if possible, we will try to Dive Butterfly House and if the conditions are a little rough, a calm, protected lagoon just south of Soberanes Pt that will necessitate a "little" hiking. Chase Reef and Lover's Pt in Pacific Grove will be a final fall back if the Carmel side is just too rough. Rain and really bad weather will cancel. Contact the coordinator, Curt Degler, 707-570-0457 cdegler@best.com to car pool, and for information on conditions.

Recreational Abalone Advisor Committee (RAAC)

Meeting September 30, 2000

The semi annual meeting was held at Meritt College in Oakland and was also attended by Gene Kramer, Ed Flynn, Ted Wheeler and Ray Will, all of Abalone and Marine Resource Council (AMRC)

The RAAC oversees how our abalone stamp funds are spent and the key items on the agenda covered while I attended (5 hrs). included: North Coast abalone status, enforcement report, disease report, white abalone listing as an endangered species, budget status. Hand outs totaled about 50 pages. Extracted and following are the more important portions:

North Coast Sport Abalone Resource: Status and Management Options

In 1999, the Department surveyed underwater sites at Van Damme State Park (VDSP), Fort Ross State Park (FRSP), and two marine reserves: Point Cabrillo Marine Reserve (PCMR) and Bodega Marine Life Refuge (BMLR), with the primary goal of making historical comparisons to the Department's 1986 abalone survey at FRSP, VDSP, and PCMR. The depth refuge analysis by Karpov et al. in 1998 examined the importance of deeper water (>28ft) habitats to the maintenance of health abalone populations on the north coast. Baseline surveys for emergent red abalone conducted there between 1989 and 1992 indicated "relatively" high densities of red abalone, including legal and juveniles (abalones between 2 and 5 inches in length). These higher densities observed during this period resulted in the Department foregoing measures to reduce fishery impacts at that time. Results of the 1999 surveys show cause for renewed concern, and while 2000 surveys are still in progress, the following trends are evident from the 1999 surveys:

1. The deep water stocks at VDSP have showed a marked reduction both in total number and number of juvenile abalone between the 1992 and 1999 surveys.
2. Shallow water abalones at VDSP in 1999 show the highest density observed since surveys began, but almost 50% are now vulnerable to the fishery, with little evidence of recent recruitment.
3. While deepwater densities at FRSP have increased between 1986 and 1999, they remain low ($0.33/m^2$) and there were no juveniles found during the 1999 survey.
4. Red abalone densities at PCMR declined between 1986 and 1999 by 50% at shallow depths and by 90% at deep depths.
5. Red abalones were in low abundance in 1999 throughout the BMLR ($<0.4/m^2$) at all stations.

The Department's abalone team, adopting a precautionary approach to these developments, is likely to recommend one or more of the following effort and take reductions for implementation during the 2002 season, unless results of this year's (2000) survey, which includes a pre-emergent component, indicate a significant reversal of the trends noted above. These measures would include:

1. Reduce Bag limit to 3, in possession.
2. Reduce annual abalone limit to 30.
3. Create annual trip limit, in lieu of existing annual abalone limit, and set trip limit to 25.
4. Set annual trip limit to 10.

DFG Enforcement Priority

This Plan is designed to address the illegal take and sale of abalone. The goal of this plan is to protect abalone stocks throughout California from illegal take. The specific issues to be addressed include:

1. Sport-to-commercial activity
2. Illegal night harvesting
3. Illegal sport harvest
4. Illegal shipping and marketing
5. Illegal harvesting on sport & commercial boats

Methods To Achieve The Objectives

The sport-to-commercial abalone activity is being worked by uniformed wardens and the Special Operations Unit (SOU). The uniformed wardens are there to monitor the daily activities of the sport divers on the coast, and to identify groups or individuals which are taking sport limits on a daily basis. They also watch for these individuals who violate fish & game laws. These groups or individuals are then identified to the Special Operations Unit who begin to monitor their activities. The Special Operations Unit is a ten member unit who is responsible for undercover/covert operations.

Revenues

Annual Stamp Revenue Approximately 41,666 stamps @ \$12 = \$500,000

Abalone Restoration and Preservation Account

Beginning balance July 1, 1999 = \$583,332

Ending June 30, 2000 = \$788,432

Submitted by Ray Will AMRC Representative



Inside the Yukon
-Jason O'Rourke

More Mentoring

by Kenneth Gwin

A couple of months ago, after our Channel Islands trip, I wrote an article suggesting that more advanced club divers serve as mentors, guides, and advisors to new, or less experienced divers. Well, of course, as it has been pointed out, that includes me.

While suiting up on deck during our November dive on the Cypress Point, I was surrounded by the Jims, Jim and Jim, who pointed out that my suggestion was a good one, and it was now a perfectly good time to put this principle into practice.

I'd already picked Michael Gold, a newer diver as my first dive buddy. He'd been on the Channels Island trip with the club where he nearly doubled his total number of dives on the three day trip. He now had a bag full of new gear to sort out, configure, adjust, and try out. Perfect.

The first dive was at Honeymoon Rock. Captain Phil has brought the club here before on good days. It's a bit south just past Point Lobos. It's also not entirely protected and can catch swells rolling over the deep ridges to make a pretty exciting washing machine down there. Doesn't this sound great for the new diver?

After Captain Phil's safety lecture and dive site admonitions a few divers bailed on the first dive. Fine. Isn't that the point? If in doubt—don't. Our dive went well, however. This spot is in deep water. Probably 130' or better. The anchor was over a crevice at about 90' that was the home of a significantly large rock greenling. The inside face of the pinnacle was a colorful, nearly vertical wall with cracks full of all kinds of interesting things, most notably a large crab. We all made it back to the boat safely.

The next spot was Carmel's Inner Pinnacles. A nice spot just off Pescadero Point. A little shallower too. On this dive I found a juvenile wolf eel and Jim Radkey swimming around looking at his compass. With a questioning look on his face, visible even through his mask, I could guess he was asking the same question I was asking—“Where was that anchor? I thought I let it around here somewhere.” Well, the anchor had pulled loose, so we all got to do the “where's the boat swim?”

I didn't get to see his great navigating skills until the last dive where I followed him and Lisa (who was that masked woman) Hoopes, a less experienced kelp and cold water diver. This last spot was Fire Rock, just next door. This spot was definitely shallower, with a little more surge, and a lot more kelp. Jim was a great guide and managed to swim around the upper edge of this kelp tangled rock, swim out and drop off the side into deeper water, swim around, and find the anchor line again. I did a great job of following both of them. Our newer diver really tried to swim through the kelp canopy on the way up the anchor line, but Jim wasn't having any of it. Everybody did their part.



Attack of the Living
Dead SALMON
-Jason O'Rourke

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 Rucker Street, The Presidio, San Francisco. Rucker is the first left after entering via the Lombard Gate Entrance.

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SFRD

<http://www.sfreefdivers.org>

Reef Diver Times

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