

Volume 2 Issue 1
January, 2003



International Scuba News

Bringing in the New Year

A New Year is upon us and it's time to start thinking about diving and trips. I am back from our first trip of the year to Cozumel with some great folks. We still have some spots left for our February Cozumel trip. Must say our Polar Bear dive on the 1st at Terrell was a blast. We could have done without the wind but, a good time was had by all. Hope some of you will join us next year. We hope to see many of you on our trips this year whether they be at the lake or out of the country. Please

watch the web site for many new Events, Sales, and pictures as the site grows with us. Safe and Happy Diving.

- **Patti Stewart**

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Remember to visit our website!

www.internationalscuba.com

Upcoming Lake Weekends:

February 1-2

February 15-16

March 1-2

BVI or Bust

The team at International Scuba wishes Jeff and Casey McNutt the best of luck in their new adventure. They join the Dive BVI team in late February located on Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands. Please plan a trip with them in the coming dive season. They will be located on Marina Cay – stop by to say hello.

Both will be sorely missed by the team and by many of the customers. Their wit and great diving skills should add lots of fun to the islands. **East Texans take over BVI.** What a headline!

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The World of Divers Continues to Grow

The number of certified divers in the world continues to grow and International Scuba continues to contribute to that growth. We would like to congratulate and thank all those divers who completed their certification in December:

Open Water/Junior Open Water:

Amy Ali
Courtney Jackson

Medic First Aid:

Daniel Dunham

Going Pro

Whether you work in a local dive center, at a resort, or on a live aboard dive boat, the adventure of a lifetime is yours for the taking. You just need to decide where you want to go and what it will take to get there. We can help you with those questions and provide the materials, classes, and job assistance you need.

Imagine a job where you actually look forward to heading off to work in the morning. Lead a life others fantasize about. Sailing into incredible sunsets could be the rule, not the exception, especially if you work in a tropical dive destination. The commute to work could be as easy as a ten-minute boat ride. Work now becomes an adventure in itself. While experiencing new cultures and lifestyles, you'll be surrounded by people who are always happy. When you take people diving all day - everyone's happy. It's not all fun and games in paradise, but the rewards are well worth the effort.

If you set your sights close to home and aspire to work at a local dive center, you teach people how to dive and guide trips to exotic dive destinations. There's a sense of

pride sharing something you are passionate about. You help others enrich their own lives by experiencing the adventure of diving.

Being a dive professional is something to be proud of. The skills and knowledge you acquire will benefit you in all aspects of life. Not to mention the great friendships you'll start as begin working with other instructors and divemasters. I've been a PADI Pro for a little over two years now. In even that short amount of time I have had so many fun and exciting adventures. The camaraderie in the diving world is unique. Divers can start up conversations with total strangers on a dive boat and come away with a new friend for life. The benefits of being a dive professional are great. Come ask us how you can start on your journey and "Go Pro".

- Jeff McNutt

Equipment Care Tips - *Cylinder Maintenance*

Just like the rest of your equipment your cylinder needs periodic maintenance. With proper care both aluminum and steel cylinders will last for many years.

After your dive you should rinse the cylinder just like you would the rest of your equipment. This is especially true if you are diving in salt water, but even in fresh water you should make sure any debris is rinsed. Be sure to rinse the valve and around the boot.

Annually you need to have the cylinder visually inspected. This involves a trained technician removing the boot, valve, and old inspection stickers. We then look for external corrosion, evidence of heat damage or impacts. The inside is inspected for corrosion and debris. It is cleaned or tumbled if the cylinder is dirty or overly corroded. The threads are cleaned and inspected for corrosion and cracking. For aluminum cylinders we also used the visual plus machine, which produces an eddy current to look for hidden cracks. We also inspect the valve to make sure it is in working order. If the cylinder passes we put a sticker on the tank indicating the month and year the inspection was done. The inspection expires on the first day of the month on the sticker.

The valve should get an overhaul periodically as well. If the cylinder gets heavy use this can be an annual occurrence, with lighter use this can be done less frequently. For an overhaul we take the valve apart, replace the o-rings, Tef-

lon washers, valve seat and burst disk. This will take care of problems with leaking valves or stiff valves.

In the U.S. cylinders are required to be hydrostatically tested every 5 years. This involves putting the cylinder in a container with water and sealing the container. The cylinder is then filled to 5/3's of its working pressure. In the case of a standard 3000 psi aluminum cylinder this is 5000 psi. The water displacement is noted. When the pressure is relieved the cylinder must return to 10% of its original displacement. If the cylinder passes this test it is then stamped with the current month and year, along with the designation of the hydrostatic test facility.

If you have a steel cylinder, you may notice a '+' at the end of the hydrostatic test date. This indicates that the cylinder was tested for 10% above the marked working pressure. This means with a + a steel cylinder with a 2250 psi working pressure can be filled to 2475 psi. As long as the hydrostatic test facility test to the extra working pressure this added working pressure can be applied for the life of the cylinder.

- Brian Divine

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure"



Photo Tips — *Let there be Light*

Q: Do I need a strobe?

First, the word strobe means an electronic flash. Only us older folks remember the days of flash bulbs, so the term flash and strobe are now interchangeable.

The answer is a resounding yes. It's pretty common for people on a tight budget to forego the strobe on their first purchase. Inevitably, they return for a strobe purchase. As one noted pro told me, "It's dark down there, take all the light you can carry". Sometimes we are fooled by the great visibility, but if I walked outside during the day and could only see 100 feet in front of me, I would consider it pretty dark.

One major difference between land photography and underwater photography is that underwater we are shooting through water, duh! Water absorbs light. At 30 ft. we start losing red. It's completely gone at 50 ft. and we progressively lose the other colors of the spectrum until we end up with a hazy blue washed out look.

The strobe provides light we need to bring back the lost color.

Q: Why can't I use the flash that's built into the camera?

While this is better than no flash at all, there are three limitations of on-board flash.

- 1) It is often underpowered for underwater use. Shooting through water robs the output much faster than on land.

- 2) It cannot be aimed. Straight ahead flash often results in unnatural lighting. An external strobe can be positioned above and to the side to provide light from the direction similar to the sun.

- 3) The flash is generally close to the lens. The light then hits any particulate in the water and reflects back to the film causing the dreaded backscatter. Backscatter is the description of all the little (sometimes) big spots on our photos.

Q: What about digital cameras?

Digital cameras tend to be more light sensitive. Results with just the on-board flash tend to be better than with film cameras, but the same issues in the previous answer still apply. Plus, if the camera is in a housing, the housing can often block or scatter the light from the flash.

Q: What kind of strobe should I get?

If you have an Ikelite Auto35 or Sea Life Reefmaster, there are reasonably priced strobes designed for those cameras. For other systems, I always recommend any of several Ikelite strobes and Ikelite produces two models specifically for digital cameras. Price/performance of these strobes is the best in the market place, plus Ikelite is famous for their quality service.

- George Vincent

Travel — *Roatan*

Check your schedule QUICKLY!! We have an opportunity to take advantage of a SUPER SPECIAL to Roatan. Direct Non-stop flights from DFW to Roatan on Sol-Air. Your package includes:

Welcome drinks
7-nights @ CoCo View resort Double Acc.
6-2 tank boat dive daily
Unlimited shore diving including NIGHT and WRECK
3 buffet style meals a day
all taxes, and transfers
all other resort water sports

Roatan offers some of the premier diving in the Caribbean along with some beautiful beaches. It is part of the "Bay Islands" off the coast of Honduras.

CoCo View Resort is considered the divers resort on the island. It consistently receives great reviews and is so popular, with so many return guests, that they have their own "CoCo Nuts" club.

Deposits of \$100 are due anytime and the balance will be due March 1. If you pay the full amount by Feb 1st you will receive a \$50 per person discount. \$975. WHAT A DEAL!!! Sign up at the shop. We're here to serve all your travel needs!!

Tami Gardner
Travelbridge
(972) 306-3260



Please visit our website. We do our best to keep it up to date. Let us know what you think about the site and the newsletter. An important part of our success has been the friendships developed among customers and staff. That's part of why we dive.

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Casey's Corner — *New Year's Solution*

Happy New Year! It's every diver's worst nightmare...the first dive trip after the holidays. You may find that you'll need a little extra weight on this next trip to get down or your wetsuit feels a bit tight, but have no fear, all you need to do is remember 2 things: watch your meals and MOVE!! Many health clubs are promoting specials for new members and even special training packages for current members.

Try to start this year off right with more sensible eating, and a little more activity. Keep your eyes open for walking or jogging groups,

seminars on nutrition, and books on proper nutrition. Be very aware of diet fads such as Atkins or The Zone, which alter metabolism adversely and extremely increase the risk of heart disease. Your next dive trip will be more fun with a little more energy and a lot less weight around the belt! Good luck and see you on the bottom!

— Casey McKay-McNutt

Creature Feature — *Blackbar Soldierfish & Cymothoid Isopod*



Blackbar Soldierfish — *Myripristis jacobus*

Red to silvery red. White marks at tips of dorsal fins. Black bar behind head. Common to occasional Florida, Bahamas and Caribbean.

Cymothoid Isopod

Attaches to host fish head or gills. Scavenges for food particles in a Commensal relationship. Remains attached for life.