



International Scuba

GETTING YOU THERE... STARTS HERE!

Volume 6, Issue 2

Not sure which way is up

Howdy Divers,

We wanted to let you know that we aren't being rude if you have been in lately and we haven't spent the normal quality time with you.

As some of you are aware, we have our friend Ale up doing DSAT courses with 3 folks plus discover technical diving seminars plus IDC courses plus lots of new open water divers that have our attention.

Some of you are also aware that we leave for Palau on the 20th with a cool group of friends for a week of live aboard diving. Birthday wishes go out to Brian, Phil (Fender), and TK as this is their monumental birthday trip.

Please come in and bother Rich and Jeff as often as possible—buying a few things would be nice too :-).

New places to dive. We will be taking quite a few folks down to Aquarena Springs for their awesome Scientific Diver course in the spring and early summer. Please contact Rich if you are interested in attending.

That being said, you know that Aqualung is beginning the Dive Across Texas campaign like they did last year. Divers will be eligible to win some cool new dive toys and such. Dive as many places around the Lone Star state and soon to be surrounding states (New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Arkansas) to

improve your chances to win. Last year Bonnie Jones and Romy Verhovshek won new ATX200 Apeks regulators. WOW!!!!

There are still plenty of trips out there for you and new ones popping up daily. Check out the website to stay in tune with what's going on.

Finally, we will hold 3 junior Open Water Diver camps this year to focus on our junior divers. The dates are March 12-16, June 18-22, and July 16-20. We want to keep the groups to 6 each session (8-12 and 1-5) so register quickly.

~ Patti

February 2007

Class Schedules & Trips— at a glance:

WEEKEND:

- FEB 3-4
- FEB 17-18
- MAR 3-4
- MAR 17-18
- MAR 31—APR 1

WHERE TO:

- FEB 16-19 COZUMEL **SOLD OUT**
- FEB 20—MAR 1 PALAU **SOLD OUT**
- MAR 9-12 COZ WITH GEORGE V
- MAY 31-6/1 FLOWER GARDENS
- MAY DIVE BVI
- JUN 22-30 BONZIRE
- JUN 30 COZUMEL
- JUN 30-7/1 FLOWER GARDENS
- AUG COZUMEL
- AUG 18-19 FLOWER GARDENS

Specialty of the Month— Go West Young Man

Here we are, another month has gone by. I wanted to talk about the specialty of the month this month and look at what is coming up next month. As with all the specialties of the month you get a gift by being a member of the PADI Diving Society. Don't forget that the specialty of the year is Digital Underwater Photography. You can take that one all year and get your free gift.

This month is the perfect course: Enriched Air Diver. Why is it the perfect course? Two reasons: Time of year, and content of the course. The nice thing about Enriched Air Diver is that there is no open water dives required. For this time of year where people don't want to brave the weather locally, one evening in the classroom is great. So why is the great content? Where else can you learn how to safely increase your bottom time? A little extra planning and knowledge and you can dive the now mysterious, soon to be clear gas that is Nitrox. I wrote quite a bit about it last month so I won't repeat all the detail now. If you have any questions about it, you can look at last month's article, or let any of us know and we will be happy to answer your questions.

Now, onto next month's specialty of the month. Does the title give it away? No, it's not about diving in California. How about a little underwater navigation? For those of you who have just taken your open water course. You learned how to use your compass to go out and back. If you have taken the advanced open water, you have added a square and some distance calculations to that. How about some more to get you completely comfortable with that little item on your console? You will learn both natural and compass navigation, how to create a course and how to run a course. This will create a nice confidence to trust your compass. This is a three dive course. The good news is that if you have taken the advanced open water, you have done one of the dives. So, you haven't taken Advanced Open Water yet. That's ok. The first dive of this specialty will count toward that course. Not a bad deal huh? This course is a great lead in to April's specialty of the month (Search and Recovery). I won't give too much away, but you will be using your compass a lot in that one. It's hard to do a lot of search patterns without it.

Don't forget, if you are a PADI Diving Society member, you will get a free gift for taking the specialty of the month or the specialty of the year. For Digital Underwater Photography it's a PADI hat, for Enriched Air Diver it's a PADI In Deep t-shirt, and for Underwater Navigation a knit cap.

Happy diving everyone,
Brian



Inside this issue:

Specialty of the Month	1
Our Stars	2
Milestones	2
Scientific Diver	3
CD Corner— Teaching	4
Creature — Feather Dusters Christmas Tree Worms	4

Our World of Divers Continues to Grow

Junior Open Water & Open Water (White Belt)

Angela Kaul
Nathan Kaul
Nathan Konvicka
Melissa Moore
Sherri Stone
Brian Hudson
James Howard
Charles Howard
Kelsey Walker
Angelina Celoni
Reed Harbeck

Advanced Open Water Diver

Ron Folkes
Bob Rountree
Deleena Black
Sharon O'Neill
Pat Arnett
Ron Bloomquist
Deidrea Johnson
Nathan Konvicka
Larry Rumley

Enriched Air

Deidrea Johnson
Kevin Ewing
Mary Ewing
Pat Arnett

Equipment Spec.

Matt Lopez
Tom Barton
Brad Sample

PPB

Les Holben
Denis Poirier

Drift

Ron Folkes
Nathan Konvicka
Melissa Moore
Sherri Stone
Jim Pasant
Bob Rountree
Deleena Black
Dani Gardner
Ed Gardner
Ho Lee
Larry Rumley
Kevin Ewing
Mary Ewing
Pat Arnett
Angela Kaul
Nathan Kaul

Boat

Ron Folkes
Nathan Konvicka
Melissa Moore
Sherri Stone
Jim Pasant
Bob Rountree
Deleena Black
Dani Gardner
Ed Gardner
Larry Rumley
Kevin Ewing
Mary Ewing

Night

Ron Folkes
Jim Pasant
Ho Lee
Ed Gardner

Ron Bloomquist
Pat Arnett

Digital Photo

Sharon O'Neill
TK Laux
Dave Allen
Bill Gutenknecht
Tony Salter

Deep

Deidrea Johnson
Ho Lee
Ron Bloomquist

Fish ID

Dave Allen
Paul Gilmore

Multi-level

Ho Lee

Master Scuba Diver

Jim Pasant
Ed Gardner

Master Scuba Diver Season Pass

Ho Lee
Deleena Black
Pat Arnett

Divemaster

Ed Gardner

DAN BLSPRO Instructor

Amanda Rickman
Bart Jennings

Digital Photo Instructor

TK Laux
Dave Allen
Bill Gutenknecht
Tony Salter

Milestones—number of dives recognition

Don't forget to email us your milestones—remember you are working hard!

10 Dives

Pat Arnett

20 Dives

Les Holben
Denis Poirier

25 Dives

Sharon O'Neill

60 Dives

Ed Gardner

100 Dives

150 Dives

200 Dives

250 Dives

300 Dives

350 Dives

400 Dives

500 Dives

600 Dives

700 Dives

Scientific Diver

Is it possible to experience the incredible visibility of the Caribbean while diving in Texas? Anyone that has been down to Aquarena Springs in San Marcos knows the answer is a big yes! Artesian springs provide crystal clear freshwater that is a comfortable 72 degrees year round. Divers from all around Texas flock to Spring Lake to enjoy the unique diving experience which provides not only warm water and great visibility but also historically important artifacts and endemic fish life only found in the San Marcos River and headwaters.

In 1980 Spring Lake was declared a Critical Habitat due to the five endangered species that call the lake home. The five species include The Texas Blind Salamander which inhabits the deep recesses of the porous limestone and has adapted so completely to its environment that it cannot survive or reproduce with any changes to its habitat. The Fountain Darter is a tiny inch long relative of the perch. It can only survive in clean, clear flowing waters that the San Marcos River provides. They live in Spring Lake and down river for 4 miles.

The San Marcos Salamander is only found in the headwaters of the San Marcos River and for 150 meters south of the dam. It can reach 2 inches length and enjoys hiding in the moss patches beneath the sand over the bubbling springs.

The San Marcos Gambusia is a small fish that looks much like a guppy. It has not been spotted in the wild since 1983 and is thought to be extinct or very close to it.

Finally Texas Wild Rice is limited to just the San Marcos River in a very limited area. The wild rice was on its way to extinction before researchers began a restoration project.

One of the things that make Spring Lake so special is the incredible history surrounding the area. The spring has been one of the most reliable sources of water for at least the past 13,000 years. What that means is that animals and people have been gathering there for as long as they have been in North America. All this leads to the many artifacts that are found in the lake from mammoths and saber tooth tiger bones to arrow heads. Because of the rich history and endangered species diving was almost banned when the property changed hands from privately owned to being owned by Texas State University.

The only way to dive in Spring Lake is to have a scientific project permit.

Enter the Diving for Science program avail-

able through Aquarena Springs. The 2 day classes are available on regularly scheduled basis and typically run a full day on Saturday and half day on Sunday. After completing the course you may continue to dive there under the diving for science program as a volunteer diver by helping complete diving tasks such as underwater gardening which involves pulling moss from the springs to allow better flow of the springs. During our class we had a blast pulling it up and watching the sand begin to boil as the spring came to life. Other tasks can include taking photos of the spring, taking water samples, fish identification, underwater archaeology, and demonstrations for visitors on the glass bottom boat tours. I was told that there are divers that will show up 3 times a week to do volunteer work every week for years. I know if I lived close enough I would also be there all the time.

We started class with a short and informative lecture on how the Edwards Aquifer works and how development of houses and shopping centers can dramatically alter the water sources and could possibly result in the loss of the spring permanently due to it drying up.

Next we learned about how several agencies have their hands in regulating the San Marcos headwaters. We learned what constitutes an artifact and how the Texas Antiquities Act helps protect Texas history. We took a tour of the spring in a glass bottom boat and got a feel for the layout the headwaters and Spring Lake.

There is a tour of the Aquarium which houses several of the endangered species and offers a chance to get a good look at these unique creatures up close. And finally we received an orientation to how the volunteer program works and how to receive permission to dive Spring Lake.

The final step before actually getting to dive the spring was a buoyancy class conducted on a really cool course which features giant clam shells that are big enough to hold a couple divers. There is a test where divers pick up a heavy object and move it around a reproduction of an archeological site while adjusting to maintain buoyancy at all times.

There is a simulated overhead environment to practice maneuvering in confined spaces that you will navigate through. The last test is the classic hula hoop course set to various heights to torture us one final time as the instructor was perched

atop what appeared to be a giant 10ft mushroom orchestrating our new finely tuned buoyancy skills. During the entire course we had a swarm of colorful bass and perch of several varieties following us through the course looking amused at our clumsy attempts to look graceful.

After getting the blessing of the Dive Instructor we were allowed to gear up and were lead to the open water portion of Spring Lake. A giant stride into what appeared to be a kelp forest greeted us. The first stop on the dive was a spot called Deep Hole and the deepest spring in the lake. The sand was bubbling up and looked much like popcorn popping. We all pushed our hands into the loose boiling sand and were rewarded with a warm rush of water up our arms. As I looked around the water column I spotted a weird long necked turtle making his way to the surface. My buddy was pointing out one of the cool Gar that populate the spring with their snake-like markings and long snouts. Next stop was the Archaeology site that has been producing interesting artifacts for over twenty years and is still being carefully excavated under the Archaeology Department at Texas University and maintained by trained volunteers. We next took a bearing for the headwaters area and probably one of the most memorable sites called Cream of Wheat where the flow from the springs is the strongest. The entire area is bubbling and looks every bit like its name sake. This is where I spotted my first Darter Fish hiding amongst the moss poking through the sand. The next day we were on gardening duty and learned how to carefully weed out the moss from the spring area to allow the flow to keep going strong. We gently pulled the moss up and were told to shake of the sand clinging to the roots close to the bottom so that the San Marcos Salamanders could make a quick escape if they were caught in the roots. The bass love the taste of salamander and have learned to follow diver hoping for a tasty treat. I'm glad to report that no salamanders were hurt during our training.

~Rich

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.



Getting You There... Starts Here!

2540 Marsh Lane
Suite 128
Carrollton, Texas 75006

Phone: 972-416-8400
Fax: 972-416-8507
E-mail: patti@internationalscuba.com

GETTING YOU THERE... STARTS HERE!

CD Corner — New Course Structure

Howdy Divers,

It's not often I talk about recreational course structures but I thought I would get you thinking early in the season.

Many of you are looking at Rescue Diver some time this year and we are excited at the thought of taking you to the next level.

I feel the Rescue Diver course is perhaps the hardest course in our curriculum because of how it is structured. Many of us have taken Advanced Open Water where we filled in knowledge reviews and got to dive and oh by the way there is a skill involved. In Rescue there are 5 chapters with rather lengthy knowledge review sand a 50 question quiz. The knowledge reviews are looking for process rather than simple answers. We get to think as we write. Over the two week course we spend one evening doing nothing but knowledge reviews. Then we spend one evening doing nothing but water skills. Finally, we head to the lake to apply our skills with a bit more practice and 4 scenarios. This is the first class where there isn't really only one way to perform the rescue—meaning our physical stature and limitations

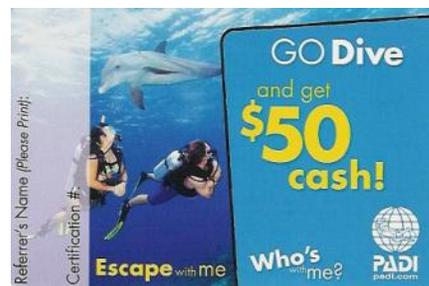
force us to vary a little bit and that is the fun part. Students also have the chance to say, "I didn't like that at all, may I do that again". How many of us asked to remove and replace our masks more than once. Yea right! :-)

We took the course and packaged it as a "Be-A-Better-Buddy" and included the First Air/CPR course which is Emergency First Response or equivalent, Oxygen Provider, Hazardous Marine Life Injuries, and On-site Neurological Assessment. We feel that this combo provides you the student with a well rounded education. We train you with the thought in mind that you could and would rescue us should the need every arise.

Rescue Diver is also a defining point in our diving where we decide to complete Master Scuba Diver or go professional and begin the Divemaster program. I recommend the minimum level of training for all divers should be Rescue Diver. Everything beyond that is just more fun and more knowledge.

Hope to see you in a Rescue class in the future.

~ Patti



Creature Feature — Sergeant Major



We see these little guys all of the time upon entry of most destinations. The pictures look like similar fish when in reality it is the same fish but in different activities.

The top one with yellow is normal and typically how we see them. The one below is a male who is in charge of guarding the eggs. Watch some time if you are near a wreck or somewhat flat surface as you will see a purplish blue circle denotes egg hatchery.

The other reason the male changes color is in courtship. Just like guys to change just to get us girls huh....Just kidding.

They are abundant in Florida, the Bahamas, Caribbean, gulf of Mexico all the way north to Rhode Island via Bermuda. They range in size from 4-6 inches with a maximum length of 7 inches. They can be found in depths just under the surface down to about 40 feet.

They are unafraid of divers and will often approach us if we get too close. If they had larger mouths their little bites could be vicious but thankfully they have small mouths.