



International Scuba

GETTING YOU THERE... STARTS HERE!

Volume 6, Issue 4

Spring into the Dive Season

Howdy Divers,

We hope your lawn has grown and the flowers are blooming after all of this rain. What we really want is the rain at our favorite local dive spot – Clear Springs Scuba Park. Terrell officially received 6.45 inches of rain last week so we hope that translates into a depth increase at the park. Spring is definitely in the air and divers are ready to get wet.

We've had 3 spots on the BVI trip (May 27-June 2) trip come up if anyone is interested. That will be an awesome trip with Jeff and Casey who run Dive BVI. Don't forget local diving in the Flower Gardens in May, July, August and September. If Co-

zumel is on the mind, we have June, August and a Pamper Yourself trip at the Palace in September. If you want a cool live-a-board that you can dive until you drop then Blackbeard's is for you. For all the trips we have going, check out the website at www.internationalscuba.com/travel.

We will be participating in the Outdoor Expo on May 4-5 and the Grapevine Main Street Days on May 18-20. Come see the activities in both affairs. There is fun for the entire family! We will be promoting diving with Discover Scuba experiences.

~ Patti



April 2007

Class Schedules & Trips— at a glance:

WEEKEND:

MAR 31—APR 1

APR 14-15

APR 28-29

MAY 12-13

MAY 26-27

WHERE TO:

MAY 31-6/1 FLOWER GARDENS

MAY DIVE BVI

JUN 22-30 BONZIRE

JUN 30 COZUMEL

JUN 30-7/1 FLOWER GARDENS

JUL 14-21 BLACKBEARDS

JUL NASSAU

AUG COZUMEL

AUG 18-19 FLOWER GARDENS

SEPT 17-20 COZUMEL PAMPER YOURSELF

Specialty of the Month— it's a Different World

Spring time is such an amazing time of year. The weather can be a little odd this time of year; 80 degrees one week, and near freezing the next. It's almost like Mother Nature is toying with us to keep the anticipation up. Of course I fall for it every year. A couple weeks ago I was helping with a class at Blue Lagoon near Huntsville. What a beautiful weekend. Water was about 70 degrees and almost 20 feet visibility. We had fun camping, socializing and a lot of diving.

As usual, I want to tell you about the specialty of the month coming up. Before I do, don't forget that this month is Search and Recovery. It's a fun course that teaches a lot of techniques for finding objects both small and large. I'll refer you to last month's newsletter for more information.

Now back to our regularly scheduled program. Next month (May) we have a great specialty of the month, night diving. This one reminds me a lot of spring. In the spring we get to see new things pop out that we haven't seen for a while. It's a fresh look at the world. In night diving we see the same world with brand new eyes as well. New creatures appear, old one hide or change colors, the activity

changes completely.

The reef at night is a truly amazing place. In the night diving course you will learn techniques for both safety and enjoyment of night diving. You will learn about lights, not only how to use them, but also how to signal with them. The planning and navigation on a night dive also need a couple minor modifications that we will learn. You learn all of this through three dives at night.

With the light of your flashlight, you can focus on a much smaller area. It's amazing what you will see. The colors just seem to leap at you. What a minute, what is that little reflection in the reef. It seems shiny. If you go a little closer to inspect, you will see the tiny eyes of a small shrimp hiding in the reef. They are there during the day as well, but are much harder to see. This is just one of many things that become easier to see because of the flashlight at night. Lobsters are out feeding in the sand. Crabs are foraging on the reef, parrot fish are sleeping in their cocoons. Sergeant Majors have changed colors. Octopus are out hunting for dinner. Corals are blooming to feed. There are so

many things you just don't see during the day.

Remember, if you are a PADI diving society and take the specialty of the month, you get a free gift. For the night diver it's a marker light for your tank. You can take any of the specialties at any time, but the gift is only available during the month. In addition, the Digital Underwater Photography course is the specialty of the year. So you can take that anytime for your gift.

Enough of my rambling, finish the rest of the newsletter, and come talk to us about going diving.

Happy diving everyone,



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Our World of Divers Continues to Grow

Junior Open Water & Open Water (White Belt)

Helmut Verlage
Robert Cox
Amanda Cox
Derrick Cox
Robert Knaus
Greg Walter
Randi Walter
Chad Sibley
Audrey Temple
Chris Cunyningham
Sonja Paxton
Taylor Paxton
John Weeks
Chris Wall
Marie Wall
Devin Rose
Matt Rose
Maryn Gier

National Geographic Open Water

Leonardo Gonzalez
Brian Brewer
John Noble

Advanced Open Water Diver

Nathan Kaul

National Geographic Specialty

Curtis Powell
Pat Lynch
Ho Lee

Enriched Air

Tom Baggett
Mark Glover

Emergency First Response

Kevin Gibbs
James Bunch
Russell Myenks
Justin Daniels
John Wedeking
Dwaine Clark
Steve Cantu
Bret Butler
Robert Harris
David Hogue
Tim Hughes
Ernesto Lugo
Arturo Velasquez
Salvador Valdez
Michael Brown
Greg Hensley
Ty Harding
Brandon Slavens
James Hogue
Jay Kennedy
Eleno Barueva
Burt Burbridge
James Simpson
Charles Johnson
Santos Gorrostieta
Ricky Harris
David Rohlfis
Floyd Slavens
William Duvall

Oxygen Provider

Kristin Gonzalez
Kevin Gibbs

Rescue Diver

Ho Lee
Kevin Gibbs
Kristin Gonzalez

Tec Rec Gas Blender

Alex McNally

AWARE Coral Reef

Ho Lee

PPB

Robert Cox
Amanda Cox
Chad Sibley
Derrick Cox
Maryn Gier
Solomon Chaim

Digital Photo

Susie Dillon
Pat Ivie
Ron Folkes
Chad Rollins
Saikat Chattopadhyay

Navigator

Chad Sibley

DPV

Ho Lee

Master Scuba Diver

Romy Verhoshek

Master Scuba Diver Season Pass

Carr Campbell

EFR Instructor

John Brocks
Tammy Myers

Divemaster

Romy Verhovshek

Digital Photo Instructor

George Vincent

Milestones—number of dives recognition

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

10 Dives

Randi Walter
Greg Walter

20 Dives

25 Dives

40 Dives

Ho Lee

100 Dives

150 Dives

200 Dives

250 Dives

300 Dives

350 Dives

400 Dives

500 Dives

600 Dives

700 Dives

Think Water

"I learned to dive so I could look at the cool stuff, but...I can't SEE why anyone would want to dive in this SOUPY LAKE!!

Soup, Milk, Chili, etc... We all have our pet names for "thick water." Yet, regardless, you still can't see much? It could be a blessing in disguise. My #1 dive buddy and I both learned to dive in a lake environment. I almost always have the privilege of teaching students to dive in a lake environment. Lakes seldom offer us the 100' plus visibility that we all see in the magazine ads, on Discovery Channel, or in our dreams of exotic destinations. Those of us that have been diving in a lake know this. However, we can enjoy every dive by adjusting our attitude toward low visibility. I hope these ideas help you to give "thick water" a mental hug.

SOME CLEAR WATER CONSIDERATIONS

Being able to see the myriad of colors on a coral reef, or the unique color patterns in our favorite fish, is one thing everyone wants from their diving experience. Photographers want clear water so their pictures are better. Being able to easily find your buddy who is only 15 feet away is a comforting feeling. Seeing below and not crashing into the bottom on descent can protect what is living below you. i.e. Delicate coral, the "don't touchies" (fire coral, etc.) or possibly another diver. Probably not a good way to get acquainted?

Being able to see also helps us to keep a perspective as to where we are, and where we would like to navigate to. Plus, we have the fantastic visual memories forever. Some of which we share with our non-diver friends. Like watching "reverse raindrops" from a passing shower on the surface during a safety stop, or seeing the moon on a cloudless night in Cozumel, from 30' down. Of course, there are many more reasons to enjoy good viz. Every diver has their favorite.

We all need to remember when diving in clear water that it is important to frequently check our depth gauge. It is VERY easy to exceed your planned maximum depth. A cool critter or barrel sponge may not seem that much farther down, but I've seen divers get "saucer-eyed" when they realized how deep they had accidentally descended.

One time in Cozumel, on a dive at Palancar Gardens, my #1 dive buddy and I were diving in a beautiful swim-thru. We started at 35' deep, and surprisingly came out at 72' deep. Being new to diving, we never imagined that we had descended that much. The beautiful colors had distracted us, plus, nitrogen narcosis was just getting started. Back on the boat, we both commented that

we were thankful to have not exceeded our planned max depth of 80', and how easy it would have been to do so. Clear water can be deceiving as to our dive buddy's proximity. The buddy may look to be 10 feet away, when really they are a good bit farther. If you needed their help, it would seem as though they were 50 feet away by the time they get to you. Remember, if you're closer together, seeing that seahorse can be a shared event. You get the idea.

SOME "THINK WATER" CONSIDERATIONS

Let me now suggest we all adjust our mental attitudes and use the term "think water" instead of "thick water" when we reflect back on our lake diving experiences.

Many new divers achieve a higher comfort level underwater much sooner by experiencing "think water." They seem to pay closer attention to where their buddy is. That is always a good idea.

They also pay attention to the "landmarks" such as tree stumps, bottom contour, the faint glow of the sun overhead, rocks, grasses, etc. for U/W natural navigation. When using landmarks for navigation, be sure to look back at them during the swim so you know how they will look when you are returning. (I thought the boulder was on the left? / right? of that tree when we came through here.)

Hopefully, they also may **think** to trust their compass more than their eyes, if they are swimming in mid-water with no bottom reference. Remember back to your Open Water check out dive when you performed a reciprocal compass swim.

Then of course there are some folks who just trust that the Dive-Master will bring them back to the exit point. Less **thinking** in that scenario, for sure. Don't worry, I won't go any **deeper** into that subject. No pun intended.

I hear some folks say on occasion that they felt disoriented during part of a dive in "think water." I occasionally have felt this same thing, too. A few solutions for overcoming this feeling are to stop for a moment, check your air supply, and determine where your exhaled bubbles are going. Now you know where up is. Look for your buddy, or maybe the sun's glow. What was your last landmark? How long ago did you see it? Use what you've been seeing in your brains playback mode. A clue could be hiding there that can help you re-orient yourself. Do you feel the need to equalize your ears? You're

probably descending and don't realize it. Check your depth, and get neutral if need be. If you hit bottom and made a cloud of silt, swim out of it so you can improve your visuals (and read your gauges.) Referencing your compass can help too. Did you check what side of the lake you entered the water from? Before your descent. North, South, etc.

Low visibility can increase our anxiety level too. A hug from your buddy (if appropriate) works wonders on the anxiety monster. I know it sounds silly, but you can also give yourself a hug. I usually hug myself if my buddy is some hairy-legged guy who wouldn't appreciate the gesture. A handshake is often an adequate amount of human contact on those dives. Key words here are "human contact." There is even comfort in simply guiding your buddy by the forearm. Even if you're wearing gloves.

Regardless of your particular experience, "thick water" usually makes you "think" more (as it should) and focus on your immediate surroundings, instead of 100 feet "over yonder." I have found more "treasures" in lakes, than I have in the clear water. Filet knives, a usable rod and reel, scuba masks, dive lights, a working watch, just to name a few. I might have swam right past all of these things had I not been paying close attention. Since I couldn't see far, I obviously was only looking close.

The next time you dive, either in "clear" or in "think" water, try to mentally take in the little things that can make the dive memorable. Small freshwater mussels, a school of 1/4 inch long baby fish, a rusty fishing lure on a tree branch, or maybe just the way the bottom grass seems to look like 1970's shag carpet.

There is a lot we can gain from diving "think water" if we "look closely." Give it a try. I know you'll be amazed at what you learn.

Dive Safe, Have Fun,

Curt is

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 — CPR and First Aid

Howdy Divers,

If you are breathing then this article pertains to you. With the Medical community managing to lengthen our lives every chance they get, we need to be prepared to assist folks when a problem arises. I am in the process of moving my mom from a rehab center to an assisted living because her health isn't what it used to be. She uses an O2 unit and it sure is nice to know how to assemble and disassemble (empty bottles) and not rely on anyone else. I understand the basic medical issues and verbiage the doctors are discussing and that is another nice thing. I learned a great deal of this information from being an Emergency First Responder. I took it to the next level to become an instructor and then an instructor trainer. You too can become one. I think it is important if not imperative that all of us in the community have CPR and first aid training. Some of you have an interest in medical type activities so now here is your opportunity to teach. EFR is not a scuba diving course and can be taught by anyone with the desire to educate. You can teach the people at work,

the country club, church, and neighborhood. I am sure I've missed a location – there's where you can help.

The course consists of CPR and First Aid skills and can be taught separately or combined. We typically take two evenings of about 3-3.5 hours each. You have the flexibility to teach with a self study mode, DVD led, or completely instructor led programs. The course is completely customizable to meet the needs of the students/company. The best part is there is also a program for Children. Kiddos because of their size require different techniques to take care of them when they are injured so this course focuses on just that. Back when many of us were young (stone ages) and we babysat for families, no one expected us to know much more than putting a band-aid on a boo-boo but that isn't the case anymore. All of you who have teenagers at home looking for extra income need to have credentials these days.

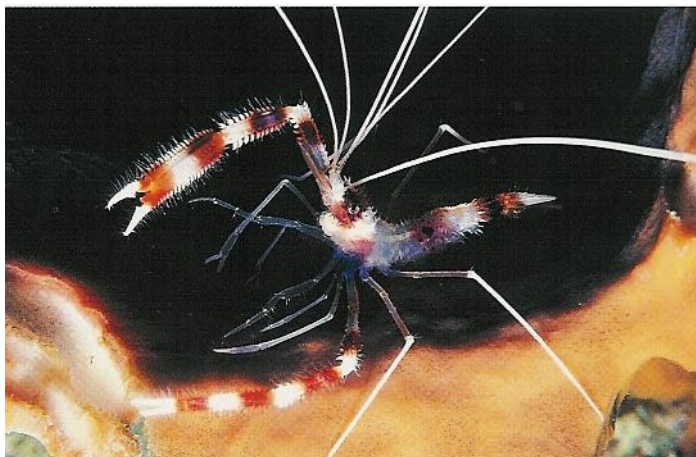
Many of us have taken some sort of CPR/First Aid course but it has been over two years since you had training. If you watch or read any news these days, some of the procedures

have trained. We all learned CPR at 15:2 (15 compressions to 2 breaths) but now it is 30:2. There is talk out there now of no breathing just pounding on the chests. Who knows what will change next. While some of the material and skills are like riding a bike some of us haven't ridden a bike in years. The moral of the story is please come in and get your skills renewed.

If you are interested in teaching the course or becoming an instructor trainer, please come in or call or email to get the details. The more folks we have taking care of the community the safer we all are.

~ Patti

Creature Feature — Banded Coral Shrimp



These little guys are usually hiding just out of sight and we get to see their antenna only. If you are patient enough they may let you see more of their cute colored bodies. They are usually about 1.5—2 inches in length.

They are typically red and white banded both on the claws and the body. Some times the bands look more purple which is even prettier. The coolest part is the walking legs and parts of the body look translucent often which make them a little more difficult to spot.

The claws are large but can be broken off easily and then regenerated. You might notice they aren't the same size. Very common in regenerative body parts.

You can find them in Florida, Bahamas, and throughout the rest of the Caribbean.

When we divers approach them they retreat into protective recesses. If we are patient and can set our hand out gently, they might come out and do some cleaning for us much like the Peterson Cleaning Shrimp.

Look carefully on you next dive for these cuties

~Casey