



International Scuba

GETTING YOU THERE... STARTS HERE!

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Is Everybody Ready for Summer?

Howdy Divers,

I know the weather has heated up and folks are ready to dive. We have lots going on at the shop if you have been in lately. This time of year we run classes every evening so you will see quite the fury.

We are also about to leave on two great trips—Bonaire and Cozumel. Rich and Paul will miss you if you haven't signed up yet. Our September Pamper me trip had a hiccup in the date due to Fun Jet so we have moved it back to August 31—Sept 3. This means you only take off one day of work. We are staying at the Palace and having an

enjoyable no stress weekend. Fun Jet has decided not to fly to Cozumel at all during the fall and winter. That has us scrambling to find other carriers and possible Riviera Maya for folks. Be patient and we will have some fun ideas for this time.

Speaking of travel. This is the time of year we sit down and begin planning 2008. Please email me with ideas of where you want to go and when you want to go and we will see if we can make it happen. Let's do some exotic place in 2008 or 2009. Some of you may know that we did Palau back in February. Guess what, we just re-booked the boat for 2010. Come join us as the 12 spots will fill fast.

Stay tuned for more fun!

~ Patti



Class Schedules & Trips— at a glance:

WEEKEND:

- JUN 9-10
- JUN 23-24 LAKE TRAVIS
- JUL 7-8 DEEP WATER
- JUL 21-22
- AUG 4-5
- AUG 18-19

WHERE TO:

- JUN 30 COZUMEL
- JUN 30-7/1 FLOWER GARDENS
- JUL 14-21 BLACKBEARDS
- AUG 18-19 FLOWER GARDENS
- AUG 31-SEPT 3 COZUMEL PAMPER YOURSELF
- OCT—WAKATOBI
- JAN 08—TURKS AND CAICOS
- 2008—WHERE TO?
- FEB 2010—PALAU

Specialty of the Month— It Calls to Me

Quite a few years ago now, Patti and I were on our first trip to Grand Cayman. It was a week long trip with a group of great friends. We dove hard, played hard, walked around town, and made many memories (and inside jokes). Toward the end of the trip we made a couple dives on the North Wall. If you have never been there, it's a spectacular dive. The wall starts about 60-80 feet and just goes down. As this was our second dive, we wanted to limit the depth to about 80 feet. Our previous dive was in the 110-120 foot range. I still remember the dive master during his briefing. He told us, "Be careful of the voices. Everyone that dives here hears voices." Of course we thought this was just local BS for the tourists. He goes on to say, "Here is what the voices will say - 'come on down. It's only another 5 feet. There's more stuff to see down here. Look at that fish, its only a little way down'".

We had a wonderful dive. As we came to the edge of the wall at about 70 feet and looked over, we see a bunch of sponges, huge angel fish, hard coral, fantastic reef fish, and all the other wonders of the deep. And we heard the voices. It was very tempting, but we resisted the voices and still had a great dive.

There are many areas since that I have heard the same voices. Because of my

training its pretty easy to resist them now. That first time though, it was very tempting. Doing deep dives does require some extra training and experience. In your Open Water class we teach you the basics, how to clear your mask, recover your regulator, swim with those big things on your feet, and so forth. We also recommend that you not go any deeper than 60 feet without further training and/or experience. Why 60 feet? A couple reasons: At 60 feet, nitrogen narcosis starts to set in. Most people won't notice it, but it is there slowing reflexes and affecting judgment. In addition, beyond 60 feet, you can no longer rely on a CESA for ascending to the surface (60 feet is pretty extreme as well, 40 feet is more like it). That means that the buddy system needs adhered to. (I don't mean to imply that you can go lax less that 60 feet, but that more than that there is no more room for being lax). In the Advanced Open Water course we give you a taste of deep diving. That gives you the experience to go to 100 feet. Why 100 feet? Beyond 100 feet, virtually everyone is showing some signs of nitrogen narcosis, they may not feel it, but it is most defiantly there. What does that mean? Well, we are back to the voices. If judgment is impaired, it's harder to resist the voices. The

buddy system is even more important because between the two of you the voices should be able to be resisted.

But the recreational limit is 130 feet. That is where July's specialty of the month comes in - Deep Diver. With the Deep Diver specialty, we will take you on 4 dives ranging from 60 - 130 feet. We show you about the pressure differences, color differences, as well as the nitrogen narcosis differences. We talk about the importance of planning and maintaining the buddy system. By the end you are able to plan and execute a deep dive up to 130 feet. If you sign up in July and are a member of the PADI diving society, you will get a gift. You can take the course on one of our trips, or we can head off to Lake Travis, Possum Kingdom, or Ten Killer and do it there.

Don't forget, you still have time for the month of June to sign up for Peak Performance Buoyancy. Also don't forget that Digital Underwater Photography is the Specialty of the year. Just because a specialty is not listed as the specialty of the month does not mean that it isn't available. We teach anything all year round (as long as the location fits the specialty, no ice diving at Lake Travis).

Inside this issue:

Specialty of the Month	1
Our Stars	2
Milestones	2
What's Next for me	3/4
CD Corner— Teaching Old Dogs New tricks	5
Creature Feature — Gold Face Toby	5

Our World of Divers Continues to Grow

Junior Open Water & Open Water (White Belt)

Tony Speer
James Woodcock
Daniel Walter
Ray Johnson
Deede Johnson
Ariel Lopez
Andrea Ketcham
Jamie Wuistingering
Courtney Wuistingering
Todd Ketcham
David LeClaire
Bennett Cassidy

National Geographic Open Water

Tonni Shook
Karin Burk

Advanced Open Water Diver

Don Lawrence
John Noble

Enriched Air

Matt Lopez

Emergency First Response

John Noble
Lyle Biddinger
Lance Thomas

Oxygen Provider

Kerry Thomas

AED

Kerry Thomas

Hazardous Marine Life

Kerry Thomas

Tec Rec Gas Blender

Thomas Baggett
Romy Verhovshek

PPB

Elena Perez
Ariel Lopez
Karin Burk
John Noble

Night

Matt Lopez

Digital Photo

Kay Tidemann
John Noble
Denise McNally

Naturalist

Kay Tidemann
Tim Ralston
Kevin Murphy
Colton Murphy

Multilevel

John Noble

Navigator

Chris Cunyningham
Amy McKinley
Brian Brewer

Dominic Owens
Maryn Gier

Seal Team

Colin Fulmer

DPV Instructor

Tim Ralston

Wreck Instructor

Tim Ralston

Navigation Instructor

Tim Ralston

Naturalist Instructor

Tim Ralston



Milestones—number of dives recognition

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

10 Dives

Tonni Shook

20 Dives

25 Dives

40 Dives

100 Dives

Tom Baggett

150 Dives

200 Dives

Dave Allen

250 Dives

300 Dives

350 Dives

400 Dives

500 Dives

600 Dives

700 Dives

How do I know what gear to buy or what to take next?

This weekend at the lake I over heard two very interesting conversations between some brand new divers and a couple of divers with a couple trips under their belts. The debate was over which gear to purchase first if you were to buy gear one piece at a time. I'm not sure they ever decided the best course of action. The second conversation that caught my ear involved which dive course to take next. They wanted to know if there is a logical order to follow. Both of these questions are ones that I have asked before also. It might be interesting to look at some considerations that go into the next gear purchase or which class will be best taken next. I don't think there is a hard and fast rule for either because everyone has a different set of priorities. There are some guidelines and a few rules of thumb I can share that might help you make the tough decisions.

Which piece of gear should I purchase next? We all start off with the basic personal gear mask, fins, snorkel and booties. The reason for this is fit in this area is crucial to a positive dive experience. I have heard too many stories of people not enjoying their resort course dives because of leaky masks, crummy snorkels that were hard to clear and fins that left blisters on feet. You



should be as comfortable as possible while diving and having a piece of gear that is properly fit to your size or taste is where I like to start.



Let's say you have a body shape that is a bit different than that of our shop mannequin. You might be extra long legged or maybe your shoulders are buffed up from the gym. You might be like some of us and have redistributed your mass. If the standard wetsuit is just not quite as comfortable as it could be then I would look here first. A good fitting wetsuit not only feels better but will be more efficient at keeping you warm. Look at where you will do the most diving and how warm natured you are. Pick a suit that will over lap the various temperature ranges where you dive the most. You can also go for the layered approach to wetsuits. A 3mm shorty and 3mm full suit took me thru several years of diving year round. By utilizing the two suits together it was like having three.



Following this line of thought if you have a hard time finding a BC that fits right or you really like the features of a particular BC go with that next. Nothing makes a diver look better than to have her gear streamlined and secured to her

BC. It's also a real confidence booster to know your BCD by touch and where all the releases are and how to release your weight system. When diving in a rental BC you could be using a different styled BC each time. It's like learning all over each time. Getting your buoyancy and trim perfected is much easier with a consistent gear setup.



We've discussed fit but what if you can fit off the rack in everything? One school of thought is that



your life support equipment is the most important to own first. That means your regulator and gauges. There is peace of mind in knowing that your air source is being provided by a well maintained and properly serviced regulator. It's also nice to have a regulator that is tuned just the way you like it. There are too many features and choices to cover here but suffice to say there is a regulator to meet every diver's needs and taste.

You'll need a means to gauge depth and air supply if you own your own regulator. This is where a computer comes in to play. My first major gear purchase was a computer because I like to get my diving's worth on dive trips. It was so frustrating to end my dives with 1500 psi because we were diving tables. With a dive computer you have greatly extended dive times. My advice to anyone getting into a dive computer is to go for the Nitrox capable models even if you aren't enriched air certified yet. The benefits of enriched air are many. Benefits include longer dives and less fatigue. On my past 2 trips free upgrades to Nitrox were provided. I have been told by one resort operator that they anticipate eventually going to Nitrox almost exclusively. We even offer a 1/2 priced enriched air course with the purchase of a computer.



All the little gadgets that everybody likes make a perfect gift from friends and family. I know for a couple years every gift was scuba related. In the end there is no right order to purchasing gear. Choose gear that best improves your diving experience whether it is fit or performance. If you are more comfortable you will be safer and have more fun. The PADI system of diving allows almost infinite flexibility in the pathway to your diving goals. This amount of freedom can cause confusion on what to work on next. While you can jump around trying many different specialties there is a prove path to diving enlightenment. Try checking out the www.PADI.com website to see the flow chart or stop by the shop

where we have a poster that describes the procession.

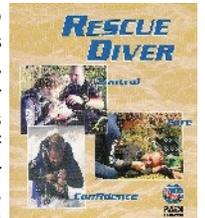
I would like to share a few ideas I have on what to take next to ensure a smooth progression. First off if you read Brian's article last month on Peak Performance Buoyancy you know how important buoyancy is to a diver. If a diver doesn't have a handle on their buoyancy they will struggle thru every dive. If you are struggling thru every dive it's hard to master other skills. We find buoyancy so important we offer a special price to our open water classes if taken that weekend.

The best way to find your niche in diving is to take the Adventures in Diving course and become an Advanced Diver. Adventures in diving will expose you to Navigation, Deep Diving and 3 other dives of your choice. You can pick from Diver propulsion vehicle, Search and Recovery, Wreck Diving, Enriched Air, Fish Id, Night Dive, Underwater Digital Photography and many more. With the 5 dives under your belt you will have a wider experience base and get an idea of what you would like to specialize in. Look at Adventures in Diving as a sampler platter. Each of the adventure dives you complete can be counted toward it's corresponding specialty.



Each specialty has a different number of dives required to complete that particular specialty. When you complete a specialty you receive a card recognizing your achievement in that discipline. If you follow thru and complete 5 specialties and also take the Rescue course you achieve the highest ranking available as a recreational diver. That ranking is Master Scuba Diver. Master Diver is the level that is most prized by all divers. It is similar to achieving a black belt in martial arts. It's a sure bet that any Master Diver has more than the average divers experience and training.

The rescue class is probably the most rewarding and challenging course we offer. Many times it's the first time a diver is asked to open his eyes to what is going on around the. The Rescue diver is alert to potential problems and prevents them. Or if needed a Rescue diver can step up to the plate when there is a full blown emergency. You learn to handle every type of problem from a panicky diver to non-responsive or lost divers. The class is designed to push you to grow and will make you a much more aware diver. Many Rescue students after completing the course say they only



How do I know what gear to buy or what to take next? Cont'd

want to dive with others that have Rescue Level training. Ask any diver that has taken the course what they think of it.

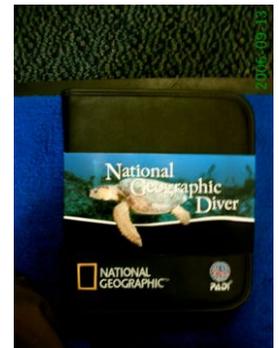
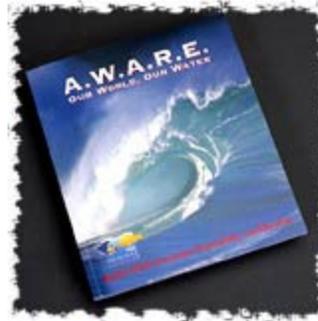
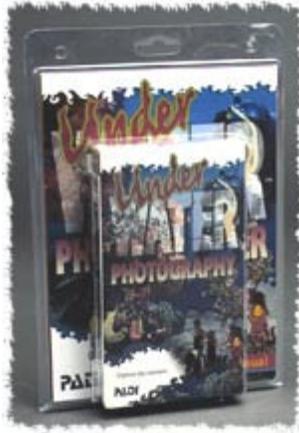
After Buoyancy the next most needed skill is good Navigational Skills many of the specialties require the ability to navigate from one place to another without surfacing. Have you ever been lost in a strange part of town or a new city? It's not a good feeling to be lost. Having experience and confidence in your Navigation skills will put you way ahead of the game. Practicing navigation is one of my favorite pastimes. Join me sometime to run a navigation course to test your accuracy. Best of all our local conditions and visibility are perfect for honing your skills.

If you want to take your hard earned Navigation skills and put them to the test try Search and Recovery. You will use every trick in the book to find and recover lost treasures. From your buddies mask to an outboard motor you'll be a hero when you bring back the lost item from the depths.

If you have a specific goal such as Master Scuba Diver we have special prices for committing to the program you can save time and money thru the Master Scuba Diver Challenge. If you want to have it all we even have a great program for that called the Season Pass which is unlimited specialty training for a one year period and one low price.

You can also find just about all of our staff looking for new challenges and learning opportunities. Some of them are working at tech diving and some have spent time becoming experts in medical response to diving accidents. Still others are honing skills in photography or conducting fish counts. I have always felt that when you stop learning you have stopped living.

If you would like to develop a plan of attack or just find something new to try give me a call or shoot an email to Rich@Internationalscuba.com.
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!

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GETTING YOU THERE... STARTS HERE!

CD Corner — Teaching old dogs new tricks

Howdy Divers,

Just when you think you can't learn another thing, you do. You just have to make room on the iceberg for a new penguin. For those of you who do not know the story of the penguin. I have to share with you. I had an instructor candidate about a year ago who during class asked me to stop for a second so he could rearrange his penguins (thanks John W). You know that brought a strange look to my face and I said—sure but you have to explain this to me. He said his brain is an iceberg and when new penguins jump on old penguins have to jump off so he needed time to sort through them. I laughed at that but it is kind of true for what our brain can hold. I now have a little penguin that sits on my desk and accompanies me to IDC's (thanks Chris G) to represent the iceberg. There have been several candidates since then whose iceberg has melted and had to reform over night and others who are gymnast/cheerleader penguins because they are doing pyramids and such because the candidate hasn't decided which penguins can leave and which ones can't.

If you find yourself in this quandary, take a second, think it through and see if without losing penguins (unless you want them to leave, grin) you can make room.

We just finished and IDC where one of the candidates had been out of training mode for a while and was doing what we term a crossover. This means he is changing from another training agency and in our case, becoming a PADI instructor. He received his materials a little later than most. (later than I like) but he made the commitment to make it happen. During the 10 day course his iceberg suffered hits from the titanic and chipped off pieces but with a little sleep he managed to regenerate. He had close to 15 years under his belt which is a long time under one training agency and then with time we all pick up bad habits. It was our job to shake the bad habits and dust off the cobwebs. Each agency teaches the basics of mask and regulator clearing and some form of buoyancy but style and standards are what vary.

I think the staff and I learned as much from him as he learned from us. The more folks we train especially from other areas and other agencies, the better we become. As of June 3rd, he is

now a PADI Open Water Scuba Instructor.

The moral of the story is you are never too old to learn something new or change the way you were doing something for a more innovative or creative way.

~ Patti

Creature Feature — Gold Face Toby



Everyone sees these little guys in around coral heads but no one knows what to call them. Alex had to tell me. I knew it belonged to the Puffer Fish family but that was about it.

Most of these little guys are shades of brown on the back with lots of dark blue markings that you wouldn't find on the sharpnose puffer. The upper snout is usually olive-brown with an area of yellow/gold running from the mouth to around the eyes covered with numerous bright blue markings. The lower body is usually white with blue spots and line markings on the base of the tail. They are usually around 2-3.5 inches long with a maximum length of 4 inches. Another interesting note, they are found at depths of 80-300 feet.

As for divers, they are relatively unafraid of us so they could have their picture taken pretty easily.

Hope you go looking for them on your next dive.

Happy Diving, Alex