



It Ain't Over yet!

Just because school is starting and we have had 2 days of cooler weather the dive season is far from over. We still have a couple great trips—**September** in **Cozumel** and **October** in the **BVI**. Bonaire has slipped off the schedule due to airline fares and dates not matching. We'll catch them next year. We are heading to **Terrell** this weekend and also for Labor Day. We have lots of folks going and we welcome the fun divers as always.

We have just returned from Cozumel where all 26 of us had a blast. We had only 20 divers on a 30-diver boat. The aquatic life was fantastic (turtles, lobsters, crabs, nurse sharks, and even eagle rays) and camaraderie even better.



We have fall swim lessons starting September 6th, don't miss out. We are changing the schedule a little bit. We will be offering 2 weeks on and 2 weeks off time slots. Tami does after all, have a family.

Jeff and Casey are coming home to visit in September so try to stop by and say hello. They will be promoting Dive BVI for October and 2004. They have some great packages set up.

Come say hello, see the new digital cameras from Sea Life as they debut, and see what we're doing

- Patti Stewart

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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 April:

Open Water/Junior Open Water:

Brian Belohlary	Nick Seidemann
Cheryl Carpenter	Austin Duval
Gay Nell Donnelly	Andrew Hightower
Kim Sujean	Amy Jenkins
Shabaka Azibo	Brian Jenkins
Bob Woelfel	
Paul Box	
Mike Sampeck	
Carl Hightower	
Andrew Hightower	
Karen Robertson	
David Leon	
John Eriksen	
Brenda Eriksen	
John Eriksen	
Natalie Armour	
Jan Stites	
Randy Drybaugh	
Patricia Chen	

Advanced Open Water

Sherry Nolan
Chris Stewart
Amanda Troxel

Rescue

Rich Lemmon
Jeff Britton

Emergency First Responder

Jeff Britton
Ralph Mahon
George Arneson
Shannon Adams

Peak Performance Buoyancy

Jeff Britton
Wendy Fox
Phil Fox
Lindsey Baney
David Leon
Karen Robertson

U/W Navigator

Jeff Britton

DPV Diver

Jeff Britton
Lindsey Baney

Enriched Air

Raymond Overstreet

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Underwater Comfort Or Getting the Lead Out

Have you noticed that you are swimming more vertical than horizontal? Or maybe you are using a lot more air than other people on the boat. Or perhaps you feel like a fish out of water in the water. There is one answer to all of these problems... buoyancy and proper weighting. Okay, that's two answers, but they go hand in hand.

If you have too much weight on, the weight belt tends to pull your hips down which pulls you more vertical. In response to too much weight, you put air in your BCD, which tends to pull your head up, even more vertical. So how do we deal with that? It's an easy two-step program. Step one is proper weighting, step two is proper weight distribution. We were all taught in our open-water course, that proper weighting is holding a normal breath at the surface and floating at eye level with no air in the BCD. Unfortunately that is only part of the story. You really need to be at that level at the end of the dive, otherwise you can't do your safety stop (more on that later). Your open water text says to get properly weighted at the beginning of the dive and add 3-5 pounds over that to compensate for the change in buoyancy of the tank. That has always seemed like overkill to me and a little imprecise. Here is a better way. Be warned it takes a few dives to get it right. Use the open water method, but refine it some. At the end of the dive do the check again and modify your weight. You will now know what the extra weight is that you need to properly do your safety stop. Remember too that your weight requirement will change based on the wetsuit (or lack of) that you wear, fresh water or salt water, etc. Keep track of the weight you use based on that so when you are in a similar environment you know where to start. After a while it will become second nature.

Now for weight distribution. If you are wearing a weight belt, you may find that moving the weights from so that they are placed in back, front or on the side may help. If your feet are floating, consider ankle weights, but remember to take of the equivalent weight from your belt. If you are head up, try putting an ankle weight or two around the tank valve to bring your head down.

If you wear a weight integrated BCD you have a few more options. You now can put weight into your weight pockets. Most weight integrated BCD's also have trim pockets in the back that will help balance the weight more. You can also use the tricks of putting on ankle weights as well. If you are wearing a lot of weight say with a dry suit, you can also use a weight belt. Try different configurations to see what works best for you.

Now for a bonus tip. Do you have trouble stopping for your safety stop? Here's an easy way to make sure you stop. For many people on the ascent the first time you stop is for the safety stop. Sometimes you are going faster than you realized and can't stop. On your way up, stop every 10-15 feet. This forces you to make sure you can stop, as well as slows down your ascent, which is far better anyway.

I hope this helps. If you want to practice we offer Peak Performance Buoyancy classes at virtually every lake weekend, or on trips. We can also do buoyancy clinics in the pool if you would like. Or come practice on your own. The lake and pool is open.

Brian Divine

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Diving Palau

Well, we finally made the big plunge and did the "once in a lifetime" trip. Rated the #1 dive destination last year by Scuba Diving Magazine, Palau, located in the Federated States of Micronesia lived up to its hype as a coveted destination.

We began our trip with the simple but exhausting trip to the main city of Palau, Koror. Simply board an early morning flight to Houston, followed by flights to Honolulu, Guam and Koror and you are there a mere 22 hours after it all began. With the time change, we arrived the next day in the afternoon. After an overnight stay in Koror, we boarded the Big Blue Explorer in the afternoon. The Big Blue is quite large at 165'. With 16 divers and a crew of 17 it never felt crowded. The rooms were spacious with ensuite bathrooms. The food was good, plentiful with a wide selection.

The diving was done from two decent sized chase boats. This meant the divers were split into two groups of eight. Again, there was plenty of room for eight divers on the chase boats. Each scheduled dive started with a mandatory detailed briefing of the site. The diving schedule was pretty much dive, eat, sleep, dive, eat, sleep for the entire week. A total of 25 dives are scheduled for the 5 ½ days of your stay. Most skipped a dive or two due to pure fatigue. Some of us opted to do a little kayaking around the scenic Rock Islands and a tour of WWII memorial site on Pelileu Island. With five dives a day scheduled, Nitrox was favored by most. The ship had plenty of blending capacity with both a membrane system and partial pressure blending (for rebreather divers).

What about the diving? Our first checkout dive was on a typical reef. As I descended, my first thought was, "Looks like any other reef". As I got closer I soon realized I didn't recognize any of the cast of characters swimming around. Wow, what a difference! Plentiful, colorful fish everywhere. I knew there was more in store.

Almost all of the dives were deep wall drift dives. Currents ranged

from almost non-existent to expressway. On several of the dives we would drift along until we reached a point and we would use a reef hook to hook into some dead coral and dangle on a line while the big boys swam by, including gray reef, white tips and black tip sharks. Other big boys included the cute and big as a St. Bernard Napoleon Wrasse, reef ramming Bumphead Parrotfish and schools of hundreds of Barracuda.

The most difficult decision was which lens to use, as there were plenty of wide angle and macro subjects to choose from. On top of that dilemma, the huge fish populations were swimming on coral walls teaming with beautiful soft corals.

Palau offered the best versatility of diving I've ever experienced. From larger species such as sharks and turtles to tiny nudibranchs and other invertebrates all congregating on beautiful coral encrusted walls. The last day included snorkeling at Jellyfish Lake, a shallow dive in the Chandelier Cave and the final shallow dive at Mandarin Fish Lake, which turned out to be the best 5-10' dive I've ever had. The briefing for this one was, "Dive as long as you want. When you run out of air, do a CESA, controlled emergency standing ascent. Ninety minutes later it was finally dark and I grudgingly headed back to the boat.

Palau lives up to its billing as one of the ultimate dive destinations. Debbie know has a To-Do list on the fridge. On it are the words, "Go back to Palau". The box isn't checked just yet. Please visit my Palau underwater images at <http://allenhost.com/gallery/album57>

Interested in a Pacific adventure? Plans are in the works for either a return to Palau or Indonesia April 2004. Contact if you are interested.

George Vincent

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Featured Product— Communication Necessities

You are on vacation onboard a boat for an afternoon dive. You and your buddy are very excited about this site. You've heard about the amazing coral formations that attract a wide range of aquatic life. Half way thru the dive, you spot a large Ray swimming along. You and your buddy stop to watch this beautiful creature gracefully glide thru the water. When it is just out of sight, you turn to see where the



divemaster and group are, but to your shock, they are nowhere to be seen. You signal to your buddy asking if he can see the group. His answer is a no. You then try to signal if he knows the way back to the boat. You make the sign for boat, but he just stares back confused. You try and signal again, but still no understanding. At this point you realize that there is no way of communicating clearly and you have just passed the time limit for staying down to search for the

group. It is now time to head to the surface to see if you can spot them or the boat. You safely ascend, and once at the surface, you spot the boat. The only problem is it is 100 yards away. At this point your buddy lets you know that he knew the way right back to the boat all along, but had no idea that was what you were asking. You decide to make a surface swim toward the boat. To your dismay, a current has picked up while you were on your dive and as hard as you try you are barely moving towards the boat and you are getting tired quickly. You try waving at the boat, but the ocean waves are too high that the boat probably can't see you. You try yelling, but the wind is just carrying your voice away. At this point you realize you are in trouble. How are you going to make to the boat?



As strange as this might sound, it happens more than you would think. But there are several little things that could have helped prevent or aid in this situation. Communicating underwater isn't always the easiest thing. People forget signs, or just don't know ones that translate their thoughts. This is where dive slates come in handy. They range in all

different sizes. Some are small enough to fit in pockets while others just clip on to BC's. They can be so light weight that you hardly even notice they are there. In the scenario above, a slate would have been a very helpful tool in communicating with the buddy on where the group and boat were. It would have been nice to know that your buddy knew the way right back to the boat before you got to the surface. Another item that would have proved useful would have been a compass. It would not only have helped underwater, but it would also have allowed you to navigate back to the boat once you reached the surface.



You could have taken a heading of the boat and then slipped back under the water 10 or 15 feet where the current was less. If the current still proved too difficult, surface signaling devices would have been nice. Here you have several options. There are visual and acoustic aids. Sausage Signals are very lightweight and versatile. They can be used at the surface to signal to the boat or can be used while underwater during your safety stop or swim back to the boat. It is a great way to mark where you are in the water. They range in sizes and colors, but most function the same. Most can be orally inflated or inflated by your inflator hose on your BC. Once inflated they usually stand vertically and are easily spotted over waves. Acoustic signaling devices come in a wide range from the simple, like a whistle, to the more complex, such as a horn that is attached to your inflator hose. Either way you go, they make life easier when trying to get someone's attention on the surface. So before your next trip, you might want to stop and think of what equipment you might have and what you might need. If you are unsure, we are always available to help.

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Can We Talk? - Dehydration

Surprise, Surprise!! Thought you would never see me in print did ya'?? Well, here I am so please don't be too critical. I would like to "talk" about Dehydration.

Diving is dehydrating. So **IS** tropical heat, travel, as well as our own Texas Hotter than the hinges of Hades heat!!

On a typical diving day anywhere, be it on vacation or in our own backyards, you will become dehydrated unless YOU make a point to offset this loss of water.

What's the big deal??

Experts aren't sure why, but dehydration seems to increase your risk of DCS (decompression sickness). Doctors theorize that your body doesn't off-gas nitrogen as efficiently when it's dehydrated. Whatever the reason, dehydration is recognized as a contributing factor in many cases of DCS, and it's one that you can control.

Dehydration causes fatigue. Muscles don't work as efficiently and you get tired sooner when you're a quart or more dehydrated. For example, if you had a water loss of 3 percent of body weight (i.e., 2 quarts for a 150 pound diver), your muscle endurance diminishes.

Dehydration also causes cardiovascular stress. At 4 percent water loss, your heart must work harder to make up for a lower blood volume leaving it with less reserve capacity for dealing with the stress of, say, a long swim against a current.

The solution to the problem is simple: DRINK WATER!!!! Lots of it! Exactly how much is hard to say since everybody is different. But to make up for the water losses due specifically to diving, DAN (Diver's Alert Network), suggests drinking a minimum of one-and-a-half to two quarts of water a day, in addition to the two quarts you're already drinking daily (you are, aren't you?).

I realize this is a broad topic with lots of do's, don'ts and recommended suggestions etc., But to prevent you from getting too bored, I would like to end the "talk" at this point and continue next month with more information on dehydration. So stay tuned for the exciting conclusion!!



Remember, especially during this hot period of the year, we will become dehydrated so drink lots of water so we can stay healthy and can continue to enjoy diving.

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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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Creature Feature – Banded Coral Shrimp



Stenopus hispidus

They have red and white banded body and claws, with bands occasionally bordered in purple. Two pairs of long, white, hair-like antennae. Walking legs and some parts of the body are often translucent. Third pair of legs are enlarged and bear large claws. Although the large claws break off easily, they can be regenerated and, as a consequence, are sometimes of unequal size.

They are common to Florida, the Bahamas, and Caribbean where they inhabit reefs near the openings of recesses or sponges.

When approached by divers, they retreat into protective recesses. IF a bare hand is slowly extended toward the shrimp, it may leave its retreat and even attempt to clean fingers.