



International Scuba

2004 is flying!

Howdy everyone:

I hope the kids have gotten back into the grind of school and that you haven't broken the bank with new clothes and school supplies. Remember to save some money for a winter dive trip or dive toys.

We have had a great summer and we owe a big round of thanks to you as customers. We introduced certification t-shirts in May and they have gone over very well. Notice I did say May, many of you did not receive them but if you would like one please stop by and get yours. The shirts go with Open Water, Advanced Open Water, Rescue and Master Scuba Diver ratings.

I wanted to remind everyone that the movie Open Water debuts August 20th at a theatre near you. We would like to get a group and go to the early matinee on Sunday, 8/22 if anyone is interested. Please send email if you will be joining us. We can purchase tickets early so don't wait too late. More to follow on page 2.

I am going to steal a little of Brian's thunder from his article on page 2. I want to thank all of you for being kind to he and Suzanne in July. If you noticed there was no maroon Dodge Ram there for most of the month. I spent that time in supposedly sunny southern California in Course Director training. I say supposedly sunny because the course ran from 8 am to 6 pm everyday which didn't leave much time for anything but dinner and 2 hours of homework each night. I was in the pool for 3+ hours 3 different times which is how my hair lightened up but other than that no touring. I want to **Thank** all of **You** who helped me get there. Lots of certifications and time spent getting wet are just a couple of ways to get there. Lots of paperwork is the other requirement.....UGH!!!!!!

Have a great weekend and hope to see you soon.

- Patti Stewart
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Remember to visit our website!

www.internationalscuba.com

Upcoming Lake Weekends:

- Aug 28-29
- Sept 11-12
- Sept 25-26
- Oct 9-10
- Oct 23-24
- Nov 6-7

Upcoming Trips:

- Sept 2-3 Flower Gardens still space available
 - September 4-11 Costa Rica
 - October 2-9 Grenada
 - November 20-27 Bonaire
 - January Cozumel Advanced!
 - February Cozumel Carnaval!!!!
 - March—BVI with Jeff & Casey
- And much much more!

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 certifications: **If you have hit a milestone please send me an email.**

Open Water/Junior Open Water

Reagan York
Mary Hardy
Casey Lutz
Jenny Jackson
Danny Lutz
Todd Coffman
Steve Anger
KW Weaver
Tammy Weaver
Tanilia Turner
Bernard Turner
Caron Lawrence
Chuck Billingsley
Gregg Congrove
Emily Matkin
Jeff VanMatre
Jennifer Webb
Jonathan Conley

Advanced Open Water

Dave Williams
Amanda Downey
Keith Downey
Jamie Hopper
Jim Keller
Adam Rodriguez
Jeff Allen
Lina Clark
Ron Clark

Enriched Air Diver

Ann Keller
David Williams
Tim Carlock

Gas Blender

Kathleen Garrett
John Williams

Peak Performance Buoyancy

Jeff Allen
Dave Allen
Jeff VanMatre
Jennifer Webb
Chuck Billingsley
Gregg Congrove

Wreck

Greg Howard
Nick Howard
Chris Walls

Photo

Roger Alexander

DPV

TC Carroll

Rescue

Erin Reynolds

Milestones

25 Dives

Tony Cowles
Susan Gutknecht
Bill Gutknecht

30 Dives

40 Dives

50 Dives

Kim Silva

60 Dives

70 Dives

Erin Reynolds

100 Dives

500 Dives

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Living the Dream—Part 2

If you think back 5, 10 or even 15 years, how many of you are now where you thought you would be? Probably not many of you. Circumstances change, paths get adjusted, and dreams change. I would like to tell you a story about someone living the dream. 10 years ago this person was in the corporate world, and quite happy there. The dream of the time was being lived. Soon the company changed management, and the dream wasn't as good as it was. So after much deliberation, this person moved to a couple different companies. The dream changed slightly but it was still in the framework of that dream. In the midst of all that, along came scuba. Now there was a very enjoyable past time activity to do in-between refresh the mind and body and to continue to enjoy the corporate world.

Scuba became such a passionate past time that more and more classes were taken even though life in the traditional world still called. Trips became frequent and before too long, the passion had to be shared with others. First came the instructor rating teaching others to blow bubbles. Teaching scuba actually complemented the training this person already had. You see, in the corporate world this person started out as a trainer for various software applications utilizing their educational background. Sharing the passion became second nature. All the students came to enjoy the enthusiasm and the passion was spread.

So far so good, except reality set in. The economy started to go down, the technology world began to down size, and the corporate

world informed our hero that they were no longer needed. The search for a new place in the corporate world began. One day our hero realized that going back to that world was no longer the dream it once had been. A new dream was formed. Hey a scuba shop is for sale, our hero thought long and hard and decided that running a dive shop could fulfill a new dream. So our hero and spouse decided to plunge in and buy it. (OK, you guessed, our hero is our own Patti). Between running the shop and teaching the dream solidified into the scuba industry.

You may or may not know that Patti has just completed a very important step in her dream. She has just successfully returned from the Course Directory Training Course in California. Only 90 people a year are selected to go to one of two training courses. Patti and about 44 others finished one of the courses a couple weeks ago. What does that mean? It means Patti is now a full fledged Course Director. Basically it's the highest level of instructor and she can now teach people to teach people to blow bubbles.

Come in and congratulate her. If you have the desire to make scuba part of your dream, come in to talk to her about it. Even if you don't, she has some good stories that she would like to share.

Happy diving and blow lots of bubbles,

- Brian Divine
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New Movie — *Open Water*

Q: How could a boat leave a diver behind?

A: First, acknowledge that accidents do happen in almost any activity we do: sports, driving, or even walking down the street. The vast majority of accidents happen when someone breaks the rules. Scuba diving is no different. Then, point out that in order to leave someone behind, it is necessary for the crew or the diver or both do not follow the standards and/or training procedures.

Remember that non-divers and media will not be familiar with boat diving procedures. If roll calls, headcounts, sign-ins, etc. are used, it is very rare to leave a diver in the water. For instance, in *Open Water*, the crew relies on marks on a piece of paper to count the number of divers. When two divers re-enter the water the crew doesn't catch it and this results in them being double counted when they return giving the appearance on paper that everyone is back on board. A simple headcount would have shown that two divers were missing. PADI training not only emphasizes a headcount, but recommends that the dive supervisor perform a visual verification as well. Lastly, divers should use signaling devices, such as whistles, inflatable sausages, or mirrors. It is now a requirement in many areas that divers have signaling devices with them prior to leaving the boat. When both the crew and the diver follow their training, the likelihood of being left behind is practically nil.

Q: Are divers at higher risk of shark attack than other water sports participants?

A: No, actually quite a bit less. 54% of shark attacks were on surfers, windsurfers, 38% were on swimmers, only 6% were on divers/snorkelers. During the filming of the movie, the director and actors spent many hours in the water with sharks and no one was bitten during the filming.

Q: What's the best way to respond to questions that arise regarding shark scenes?

A: First, the movie is not about diving with sharks, which a completely different issue than being lost at sea. Useful facts about sharks and divers:

1. Shark attack is just not something divers face as a common threat.
2. Bees, wasps, and snakes are responsible for more fatalities each year than sharks
3. In the US, the annual risk of death from lightning is 30 times great than from shark attack.
4. Consider the number of divers, swimmers, surfers, waders, etc. in the world, then consider that only 3 shark attacks resulted in fatalities worldwide in 2002.
5. There were no fatalities that resulted from shark attacks in the US in 2003.
6. Contrast 3 worldwide shark attack fatalities to 42,815 fatalities in the US alone due to car crashes.

Point out humorously that there is an exponentially greater chance of a person being killed going to or coming from *Open Water* versus a shark attack as an *Open Water* diver.

International SCUBA Team



Trip Report—Cayman Brac

A little before 6:00 PM, we caught our first glimpse of Cayman Brac from the window of our Cayman Air Boeing 737. After a travel day with layovers in Houston and Grand Cayman, the view was beautiful.



After collecting our luggage we had a short five-minute ride from the airport to our home for the week, Brac Reef Resort. Brac Reef Resort has 42 rooms and a gorgeous view of the Caribbean. Check in was smooth and we were in our rooms by 7:00. There we found

gear bags and liability release forms from Reef Divers.

The following morning, we placed the filled gear bags outside of our room before heading down to breakfast. Reef Divers picks up your gear bag and delivers it to the boat where you will find your gear assembled on a tank when you board the boat. We checked in with the dive shop shortly after breakfast, giving them our liability releases and showing them our C-cards. At 8:00 AM we boarded the boats for our check-in, briefing and first day of diving.

Reef Divers' shop is located on the Brac Reef resort property. Two-tank morning dives leave at 8:30 and afternoon one-tank dives leave at 2:00. Reef Divers use 42-foot Newton Dive boats. These are wide, comfortable dive boats, with lots of room to move around. Upon return to the dock each morning, all you take with you is, your mask, wetsuit and computer. Your BCD, regulator and fins stay on the boat. Diving with Reef Divers is as easy as it gets. When you are ready to get in the water, you bring your mask and fins to the back of the boat, sit down, put on your fins and the staff will bring your SCUBA kit to you. Put it on, stand up, and fall in the water. After your dive, they do the reverse. I never had to assemble or disassemble my gear.



Cayman Brac and Little Cayman offer wall diving at its best. All of our first dives were wall dives, the only exception was our visit to the 350 foot long Russian frigate renamed M.V. Keith Tibbets (more on this later). Most reefs start at between 30-50 feet and drop into the abyss. Some are sheer walls and others look like mountaintops. How's your buoyancy control? The second dive typically was closer to shore and

ranged from 30-60 feet. Typical of many dive sites around Cayman Brac, the reefs form spur and grooves. The spur and groove formations provide excellent opportunities to spot nurse sharks, turtles, eels and even squid. We found the reefs healthy and extremely active.

There are several opportunities to explore wrecks around Cayman Brac. One of the most popular sites is the Russian naval frigate, M.V. Keith Tibbets. Sunk in 1996 as an artificial reef, the Tibbets has started her transformation into a living wreck. When the Tibbets was sunk, she was in one piece, however a crack formed mid-ship and she broke into two pieces during hurricane Gilbert. The bow is lying on its side and offers a funhouse-like swim through. The stern is sitting upright and also offers several more swim through opportunities.



One of our mornings was spent diving Little Cayman. Only five miles from Cayman Brac, Little Cayman offers unspoiled diving. There are numerous anchors, reportedly from the pirate ships that used to hide behind Little Cayman then raid the gold shipments from Central America. Of course the anchors don't look much like anchors anymore since they have several hundred years worth of coral growth on them, but they are still recognizable.

Cayman Brac is sparsely populated, less than 1000 people live on the island. The island is 12 miles long and one mile wide. Brac Reef resort offers loaner bicycles or you can rent a car, just remember to drive on the left. On the east end of the island, there are bluffs and caves for exploring. We chose to spend our afternoons lying around in the hammocks on Brac Reef's beach.

The week went by too fast and before we knew it, the day had come to return home. We were sad to go, but we now have a new dive destination.

-Walter Hodges

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Have you noticed that your gauges have gone blurry on your last couple of dives and it wasn't the lens being scratched? What about fish in the distance that looked blue, or was it gray?

You don't have to give up diving or continue to clean your mask thinking it is dirty. There are a couple of alternatives available to you. If all you have is short arm syndrome, we can fix that with Dive Optics press in bifocal lenses. These are nice because they can be moved between masks with nothing more than cleaning each lens. The lenses are available in 1.0 to 3.0 diopters and retail for \$39.99 a pair. Pretty cheap to be able to read depth and bottom time safely.

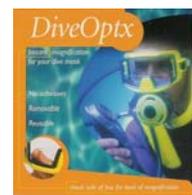
If distance is getting to you we can completely replace the lenses with prescription lenses. If you will provide us with a copy of the prescription from your doctor, we can fax that to the folks and then send the mask off to have the lenses fitted. It takes approximately 2 weeks but the process can be expedited for a nominal fee. The fees associated are much like a new pair of glasses that would run you about \$150.00.

Each lens is cut to your prescription so it doesn't matter what it is or what type of mask you have. Some of the Sea Dive masks have lenses available for standard prescriptions. Such as Sea Venture and Sea Lynx.

Please call or stop by if you have questions or want to correct your underwater vision.

-Suzanne Williams

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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

Dive Travel Etiquette - Tipping

"Wow! That was the best dive I've ever done!" Music to a Divemaster's ears! Believe us, folks, if we could give you 300 ft. of visibility, 10 whale sharks, and an unknown species of nudibranch to be named after you... we would! However, most of us are not only trying to make your dive trip the greatest one ever, but also helping you in and out of the water, keeping you within safe dive profiles, and making you comfortable on board. A common question asked of my staff at the end of the dive is, "How much tip is appropriate?" In Open Water courses, divers are rarely informed of certain dive travel etiquette. Hopefully, I can give you some insight to what is expected, appropriate, and desired.

In our line of work, divemasters/instructors, tips can sometimes be the income that puts food on the table. Some places in the world pay better or worse than others, but the fact still remains that tipping is a gesture of appreciation. Typically, Americans are the only dive clients who give gratuity because our culture has trained us to take care of service workers. Europeans pay service staff a normal salary and historically do not see it appropriate to give the help a little extra. Take a waitress for example, an American waitress makes around \$2.13/hr, and relies on tips to survive. European wait-staff commonly make above minimum wage and do not expect anything extra. While we receive tips now and then from Europeans, it's not commonplace.

Now, last time I checked, diving wasn't a cheap sport! So dive staff, don't expect you to break the bank, but it is nice when a diver shows appreciation through a few extra bucks. Even European dive leaders like receiving a monetary "thank you"! So, the question is "How much?" Well, you must first start with the basics. A universal tip of \$5 U.S. per tank is the going standard.

Or another way is to tip like you would in a restaurant with a range of 15%-20% of the total dive bill. If your guide was especially good (or bad), adjustment in your tip reflects your opinion of the divemaster/Dive Operation. For instance, what type of dive tour did you do? Was it led by a guide or self-guided? Was your dive leader informative, helpful above and below water, assist in gear set-up, or just plain friendly? What about you? Were you a troublesome client? Did you need extra assistance with gear underwater, or weighting underwater? Did you drop something and have the guide retrieve it for you? The truth is, everyone is a beginner at some point, and we've been trained to take care of you and make you comfortable. However, some experienced divers can be nightmares for the crew and fellow divers (you know that guy!)

Ultimately, how well a diver leader handles you and others on your dive to make your trip smooth and enjoyable is the basis for how much gratuity is appropriate. Just keep in mind that even if it seems like a job made in heaven, it can be difficult, tiring, and sometimes dangerous for your guides. So, remember that it isn't our fault if it's rainy, the fish decide to take a day off, or if the visibility doesn't cooperate. It is our fault if you tell us what your concerns and requests are, and we completely ignore you. Mostly, we just want a smile and a "thank you", but it's nice to be acknowledged when we go above and beyond. Hopefully, these tips will help you decide how much or how little monetary appreciation to show your dive staff!

Casey McNutt
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Creature Feature — Pipe Horse



Looks more like a limb than a critter.

Latin name: *Acentronura Dendritica*

Family: Syngnathidae of Pipefishes & Seahorses

Size: 1-2 inches with a max of 3 in.

Depth: 0-30 ft

Features: Small tail fin on curled base of tail with clusters of fleshy tabs on body. It is intermediate between seahorses and pipefish. Trumpet-like snout and small mouth with a slightly cocked head. Body varies from whitish, translucent and blotched to uniformity dark overall. Considered pelagic, drift in open water or in floats of sargassum; occasionally on reefs and other bottoms, usually on clumps of algae.

- Suzanne
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