

## Travel Reports From Our Readers: Part I

### -- *The Scars Of Spearfishing*

What do divers want? The answer is about as evident as the answer to Freud's classic question: "What do women want?" Yet one answer may suffice for both categories: the full experience, the whole enchilada, the total trip. This is not to be confused with the cry of the Marin County Californian, who says "I want it all now." Rather, it is simply to say that the diver, and perhaps the woman (though my record suggests that I am not truly expert here), wants the total experience to be fulfilling and rewarding. Good diving (or good looks) by itself is just not enough; unlimited diving (or unlimited lovemaking) is a great inducement to some, but if you put a bean in the jar for every dive you take the first week, and take a bean out for every dive you take thereafter, you might take a month to empty the jar. Everything gets old, so I am told. I'm not so sure.

As the travel editor of this monthly missive, I have read and reviewed the questionnaires sent in by divers over the past year, in which they evaluate their experiences. I'm taken by the range of wants of divers. One reader complains about his spartan stay at Coco View, in Roatan, bitching about nothing to do, while another calls it the vacation of a lifetime. Another decries the cattleboat operation at Bonaire's Flamingo Beach Hotel, while another exclaims how fun it was to dive with so many interesting people.

#### What do divers want? Who knows?

I have some idea what I want, and that indeed is the whole enchilada. So I was taken by the full page Skin Diver ad for Port Largo Resort and Ocean Divers in Key Largo, Florida. I loved the Keys years ago, when I thought I might find Bogie and Bacall there, in black and white, in a sleazy bar. Now it's overbuilt and still building. The single lane

highway at dusk is a deathtrap; many residents keep a hard and fast rule--no driving after dark. Still, I thought a dive resort in the Keys might be just the ticket. Having a few days between Christmas and New Years, I dropped into the

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Port Largo Resort for the enchilada. It was a plate of beans.

And not worth more than one more paragraph. Nearly all the dive operators out of Key Largo motor exclusively into Pennekamp Park. Diving is less than forty feet. Pennekamp is a great tropical aquarium, first rate for photographers, yet quite predictable and very crowded. Ocean Divers did a competent job, as do most other operations in Key Largo, since the high degree of competition tends to keep the prices down and the quality up. But I came to check out the "resort." I left, having never found it. There are plenty of condos at Port Largo Resort (\$130 per night for one bedroom) and during my stay all were rented. Yet, on the dive boat I met only a couple of other people staying at the "resort;" the other couple of dozen divers were staying elsewhere along a 20 mile-strip or drove down for the day. There is no restaurant at this resort, so you don't meet divers at breakfast or dinner—unless you overhear their conversation as you wait for Chicken McNuggets. Cocktail hour their lounge "Bananas" had a few locals, a couple of dive crew members; one evening another diver actually appeared. During the day a couple of nondiving spouses gathered around the pool. At a real dive resort, divers come to dive together, to eat, drink, and play together. For my money, Port Largo Resort is only a resort if you bring the resort crowds with you.

To find out what divers want, let me review the questionnaires you, our readers, sent over the past year to comment on your experiences at other dive resorts—and diving nonresorts, as well. I'll do my damndest to provide a balanced few from the comments we've received, but I recognize that people are more likely to write us when they're frustrated about failing to get the full experience than when they're basking in the afterglow. Here's what you've had to say .

Anguilla: Not much ever reported about this little island, which sits in view of St. Martin, but A. J. Ostrowe (Baton Rouge, LA) writes that he stayed at the very fine Cul-de-Sac hotel and said the "diving is a long, rough way out, but lots of turtles and blue corals were worth the trip."

Antigua: I myself visited here in January, considering a full review, but afterwards deciding that our review said enough. A few tanks at Cade's Reef were not impressive, although a resort course diver would surely find enough tropicals and coral to run home for certification. That's exactly what happened to my buddy, who went through a lecture by John Birk delivered at the speed of a Federal Express ad. Something worked, however, and she made a competent dive to seventy feet the second time out. I lodged at Galley Bay, a small, wonderful, romantic retreat on expansive grounds which surely rates among true tropical hideaways. Antigua is an expensive island (and Galley Bay dinners were overpriced) but the people everywhere were super and, frankly, the whole experience made the mediocre diving insignificant. With romance who needs diving? If you do, then you'll find shops at Long Bay Hotel, Malcyon Cove, Jolly Beach and English Harbour.

Australia: As you might imagine, everyone who writes us about their Australia

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## The Lift Of Major Flotation Devices

Listed below are buoyancy compensators of four major manufacturers. The study by Dr. Glenn Egstrom in the March issue of *Undercurrent* points out that few sport divers need more than 25 pounds of lift from their buoyancy compensators and jackets. Those with greater lift can indeed be dangerous.

COMPANY	MODEL	LIFT	
Dacor	<i>Jackets</i>		
	BXD-XL	52 lbs.	
	BXD-L	44	
	BXD-M	37	
	<i>Horse Collar</i>		
	CV 40, 41 (large)	37 lbs.	
	CV 26, 27 (small)	30	
	Sea Quest	<i>Jackets</i>	
		Sea Vest 5 (9372-E)	
		Extra Large	67 lbs.
Large		44	
Medium		38	
<i>Adv (new)</i>			
Large		35 lbs.	
Medium		27	
<i>Sea Vest 2</i>			
Large		30 lbs.	
Medium		27	
<i>Back Mount</i>			
BC Pack		41 lbs.	
<i>Horse Collar</i>			
Deluxe Whitewater	40 lbs.		
Deepwater	19		
Snorkler	15		
Scubapro	<i>Stabilizing Jacket</i>		
	XL	80 lbs.	
	L	55	
	M	40	
	S	30	
	XS	24	
	<i>Horse Collar</i>		
	B.C.	30 lbs.	
	<i>Snorkeling Vests</i>		
	Mark I	14 lbs.	
Compact	10		
U.S. Divers	<i>Jackets</i>		
	<i>Pro Line</i>		
	XL	50 lbs.	
	L	44	
	M	42	
	S	36	
	Sea Otter (jacket)	42	
	<i>Horse Collar</i>		
	L	52 lbs.	
	S	40	

diving has nothing but accolades for the undersea experience and most of the boats fare just as well. The Reef Explorer, booked by Sea and See (415/771-0077) is well regarded by our readers (however pricey) . . . Charles Garber (West Chester, PA) loved the Divemaster which he booked for eight days at \$775; writes Garber: "the diving is unbelievable, the crew most competent, and when we arrived unexpectedly a day early the boat owner, Don Cameron, put us up in his home at no extra charge." To arrange trips on this or other boats without going through a U.S. tour operator (and therefore without paying their markup) try one of two numbers Cairns (011 070 516 360) or Townsville (011 61 77 724 688) . . . Jim Henry (Sarasota, FL) stayed at a comfortable bed and breakfast inn on the Cowie sugar cane farm and took a day boat (the Down Under) out to superb diving. The advantage of such a trip is the opportunity to mingle with the Aussies each evening and do some touring; the disadvantage is long trips to the diving, fewer tanks and higher cost. But Henry loved it (write Going Places, 57 Abbott Street, 4870, Cairns, Queensland, Australia).

Bahamas: Plenty of islands and plenty of diving, with the best time not the winter months when the weather can get so chilly that paradise is lost. We've never been to Spanish Wells (800/327-7333; 305/524-0106), but George Lock (Newark, DE) writes "most diving in 40-50' depths; curiously few sponges, but coral formations reach up from white sandy bottom to near surface in many places so there's lots for snorkelers to see; fish varied and abundant; outstanding divemasters, very good food." . . . Small Hope Bay on Andros keeps a repeat crowd, due to pretty decent diving, a friendly crew and good prices. Writes Roger Rittenhouse (Cincinnati): "great relaxing resort; no pressures, large rooms, fine food." . . . Another Andros operation, the Andros Beach Hotel run by Neal Watson, gets very mixed reviews, most likely because Watson is fixing it up while trying to bring in clientele; as they search for dive sites, use the divemaster for double duty as a repairman, develop the cuisine and tile bathrooms, visitors will get very uneven treatment. I'd stay away from this outpost until we hear that Watson gets the



work done and the kinks out . . . Yes, kinks still exist, according to our readers, in Watson's dive operations on Bimini, where people complain about the slow moving and barely accomodating divemasters, when they pay attention at all. Brown's Hotel gets a continuing bad rap, so you're better off springing for a few extra bucks to room at the Big Game Club . . . Chub Cay gets good recommendations (see Undercurrent, July 1981). Jim Rosasco (NYC) writes "great variety of diving from wall dives to shallow reefs; saw five large eagle rays on one dive, rode a hawksbill turtle on another; great place for a quiet, personal, out-of-the-way dive vacation (reservations: 305/445-7830) . . . What very well may be the best diving in the Bahamas is found at Rum Cay (305/467-8355) with wall diving, aquarium diving, tunnels and caves, and a full range of fish, with even a shark or two now and then; plenty of superlatives from our readers here; if you're interested check out the review in Undercurrent, November-December, 1983). Food has apparently improved and the management and dive guide situation stabilized, with God returned to the heavens, where she belongs (you had to be there) . . . At Nassau most people forego the mediocre diving after a couple of days and find other entertainment. South Ocean Beach Hotel gets a decent rating as a resort and novices may find interesting undersea spots, but the experienced diver will be disappointed . . . On Freeport, the main dive operation is UNEXSCO, which does its best to find good diving, although Grand Bahama Island has not got a lot of it for the tourists. As one reader wrote: "shallow dives were boring, medium dives were terrific, deep dives were good." Most people find UNEXSCO well organized, but a recent report from reader Benette Davide suggests that practices such as leaving the boat unattended during dives (something I find foolhardy when one is paying for safe diving) regardless of the surface conditions need reexamination . . . As for boats touring the Bahamas, we've heard a few good things lately about the M. V. Bottom Time and one of our readers (who failed to include a name) said "the owners literally stood on their head to make this a good trip. Well worth the time and the money and as you know from some of my past reports over the years, I am not always so kind. These people are good!" (305/563-0035) "Crew nice, boat ok and comfortable. Told these people before purchase of October trip that I didn't want to dive with spearfishermen, but I wound up with a boat load of them illegally spearfishing with scuba tanks in Bahama's waters. Majority of dive sites were below average, probably because of the spearfishing. A real disappointing trip."

Barbados: Readers have supported our review of May, 1984. John McClay (Holmdel, NJ) says: "please correct one omission: Alston and Marlene Fergusson operate a quality dive operation modulated to diver's experience at Sandy Lane. A divemaster is in the water with you and a boat man stays with the boat. Goes out only if one diver is involved. All the help you want; no lugging tanks." Stuart Day (Hebron, Nova Scotia): "It's unfortunate that the government has no restrictions on divers carrying spearguns. The wreck of the Stavronikita is no exception. Any large fish that may make this ship its home is soon shot for sport or food." The Stavronikita is a fine wreck. Can't dive operators get together and get it designated as off limits to marauding spearfishermen whose selfish pursuit of the hunt will destroy an otherwise remarkable dive site-- something Barbados dearly needs.

Belize: Our glowing review of St. George's Lodge (August, 1980) still seems to hold according to several readers, and now four new cottages have been added. Diving is virgin, fish abundant, and the coral healthy. Owner Fred Good has pushed the rates to top dollar for such a remote retreat, nonetheless our readers don't bitch at all (to book: 800/527-4581; 800/854-9303). We cited complaints about Ramon's Reef Resort a while back, so many readers wrote in defense of Ramon. Ramon himself cancelled his subscription, so perhaps a traveling reader will have to carry this piece to him which shows that our subscribers put his operation back on the "recommended" list. We'll quote Jane and Larry Burke



(Bloomington, IN) as representative of the many letters received: "The diving there is unspoiled and magnificent. Ramon's staff is just phenomenal. His accommodations are unique, comfortable and well-cared for. He has a lovely swimming pool, poolside bar and food is prepared creatively and in plentiful amounts. In short, we find the diving, the food, the accommodations and the warm welcome just wonderful." (reservations: 504/522-3382) . . . Kay Lasley (Princeton Aqua Sports, Princeton, NJ) took a group of nine on the vessel Isla Mia and writes "the weather wasn't perfect, but just about everything else was." Her group rated the diving 8, food 8, accommodations 8 and service 9. The Isla Mia gets continuing supportive letters from our readers; diving is quite remote and virgin (they saw scorpion fish, friendly eagle rays, turtles and, in the remarkable Blue Hole, a hammerhead silhouetted by the sunlight. Bookings through Sea and See (413/771-0077) or Lasley at (609/924-4240).

Bermuda: Always mixed reviews: Hank Corra says "John Stephenson, Michael Burke and John Buckley who bought Dave McLeod's operation have improved it; my thing is looking for little creatures and finding clean stations. Have dived here and never tire of it." Then Art Nelson (Oakhurst, NJ) writes: "Apparently all their fish have been caught to feed the island's sizeable population. They tout their wrecks as their attraction, but most are 'ho-hum.' Don't make the mistake I did and choose Bermuda as a dive vacation, especially because it is so expensive." Whom to believe? Our October, 1980 review tended to side with Nelson.

C. C., Travel Editor

## Coping With Emergencies Abroad

### -- More Reason To Play It Safe

There you are, diving for Grecian artifacts in the Mediterranean. At the end of the day you stop off at a small cafe to enjoy a little ouzo, then return to your hotel room only to find you've been robbed. Cleaned out. Even your passport's gone.

Maybe you've been exploring the reefs off Cozumel. You overstay your limits and when you surface you start to feel that pain you've heard so much about. You're whisked by helicopter to the nearest recompression chamber and hours later you're fine. Then you get hit with the bill for the helicopter. It's millions of pesos and they want cash.

Now what? If you were in downtown London, you could toddle off to the American Embassy to see what they could do about replacing your passport and having some money wired from home. But unless you're planning your dive vacation around a visit to the murky Thames, chances are you'll be far from the nearest embassy, and perhaps no where near anyone who speaks English like an Oxford don.

There are a number of avenues available for the traveler in trouble -- insurance, assistance agencies and embassies among them. For some travelers they can do a lot; for others, not so much. Unfortunately, in most cases, diving travelers fall into the second group.

Some pre-trip preparation can go a long way

toward keeping headaches to a minimum. Most important, leave a copy of your itinerary (including hotel) with a friend, along with a list that includes your passport number, the numbers of any credit cards you'll be taking and the numbers of your traveler's checks. Take a copy of the above list with you and keep it somewhere apart from those documents and credit cards.

If you belong to one of those registry services that will notify all your credit card issuers of a theft or change of address, leave that number (usually toll-free) as well. Also find out from the registry company if you'll be able to use that toll-free number from the country in which you'll be staying, and if not, how you can contact them. If you don't have your cards registered, you might want to think about doing so.

You might also want to think about picking up an insurance or assistance package. Many regular health insurance policies don't cover treatment outside the U.S. And some won't cover treatment for diving accidents no matter where you are, so it makes sense to read the fine print on your policy or talk to your agent before you go. If your policy does cover illness or injury overseas, you should take some claims forms with you. It's easier to fill them out when you're treated than to try to do it after you get home.



## Travel Resources

For more information on travel insurance and assistance packages, talk to your travel agency or contact the following sources:

**American Express, Travel Related Services, American Express Plaza, New York, NY 10004; phone 1-800-528-4800.**

Request their Traveler's Companion guidebook which describes services available to cardholders and carriers of American Express travelers checks and lists service centers throughout the world. Services include travel accident and baggage loss insurance. The booklet is updated annually and offers tips for travelers as well.

**NEAR, Inc., 1900 N. MacArthur Blvd., Suite 210, Oklahoma City, OK 73127-9986; phone 1-800-654-6700, from Oklahoma 1-800-522-6327, from Alaska or Hawaii 1-800-654-6060.**

NEAR is an assistance agency that operates an international message center that will notify your family of any emergency that occurs while you're traveling or any change in your travel plans and will notify you in the event of an emergency at home. The \$3.50 a day charge also includes lost and found services for baggage, keys, personal belongings and credit cards and even includes diplomatic intervention. Options available include medical and evacuation insurance, trip curtailment insurance and a pocket-sized medical facts form.

**HealthCare Abroad, 923 Investment Bldg., 1511 K St., N.W., Washington, DC 20005; phone 1-800-336-3310, in Virginia call collect 703-790-5655.**

For \$2.50 a day HealthCare Abroad provides up to \$100,000 in accident, sickness, doctor and hospital insurance. Payments are made by the company directly to participating physicians and hospitals (in 130 countries), so there are no out-of-pocket expenses after the \$50 deductible. However, the maximum limit on claims arising from diving-related injuries is \$2,000. Also, the optional trip cancellation/curtailment package does not cover claims arising from participation in scuba diving.

**International SOS Assistance, P.O. Box 11568, Philadelphia, PA 19116; phone 1-800-523-8930, in Phila. area 215-244-1500.**

SOS will provide assistance in the case of a medical emergency arising 100 miles or more from a member's home. If you're overseas, they'll refer you to the nearest English-speaking doctor and will pay for evacuation if you're not close to adequate medical facilities. They'll provide up to \$1,000 in sickness benefits and guarantee hospital admittance deposits up to \$1,000.

**Assist-Card, 347 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10016; phone 1-800-221-5464, in New York State call 212-752-2788.**

Assist-Card offers a hotline service that can help you find lost baggage, replace stolen documents, send emergency messages and get medical help. They'll also provide up to \$3,000 in medical coverage and cash advances of up to \$1,000. This assistance is available for approximately \$5 a day (depending on the length of your trip) in 56 countries, including Mexico, Panama, Honduras, Egypt, Israel, Greece and Japan.

Uncle Sam is a great source of travel information -- and a lot of it's free. Before you go, you might want to write for some of the brochures available from the following offices:

**Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Gov't. Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.** Key Officers of Foreign Service Posts (locations of embassies and consulates), Health Information for International Travel (\$5.50 each), Background Notes (reading list, travel notes and maps for individual countries; \$2 each).

**U.S. Passport Agency, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Rm. 6811, Dept. of State, Washington, DC 20520.** Your Trip Abroad (includes travel tips and a list of passport agencies).

**Passport Services, Dept. of State, Washington, DC 20524.** Visa Requirements of Foreign Governments (where and how to apply for visas and tourist cards), Country Information Notices (available notices include Tips for Travelers to the Caribbean, Tips for Travelers to Cuba, Tips for Travelers to Israel, Jerusalem and Nearby Arab Countries).

An assistance or a travel insurance agency may be able to fill in any gaps left in your regular insurance plan. Generally, an assistance agency will arrange for emergency transportation and medical care and provide cash advances and replacement documents. Insurance agencies will pay for medical treatment and

emergency transportation if you become ill or injured while traveling. Sometimes one agency will do both. However, more often than not, these agencies will exclude "dangerous" sports such as mountaineering, snow skiing and scuba diving from coverage or limit coverage on them. Before you purchase a plan, ask if



you'll be covered while diving, if expenses are billed directly to the company, if you'll have to pay a deductible (some assistance plans offer options that cover this) and if they'll pay for emergency evacuation and return trip airfare. Also, since many assistance companies are geared toward travel in Europe, find out if your destination even falls within their network. Mexico is usually covered, but many Caribbean spots aren't.

If you're traveling on a tour package, ask the tour operator what insurance is included, if any. Usually

If you're in a major capital where there is a U.S. embassy or consulate, they can usually replace the passport for you in 24 hours.

Consular officers are there to help you if you're in serious trouble (usually legal, medical or financial). They won't look for your lost luggage or settle a dispute with hotel management for you.

If you lose your traveler's checks or credit cards, report the loss immediately to your hotel desk and local authorities. They can tell you how to go about getting replacements if your checks were issued by

Dear *Undercurrent*:

You recently suggested that traveling divers should confirm that their health insurance covers health care overseas and medical air evacuation. I have indeed confirmed that my health insurance covers overseas health care, but it does not cover medical air evacuation. I have checked with several health care insurers, but they were unable to direct me to any insurance which offers air evacuation coverage. Can you suggest a source?

**John Robert Mannix, Jr., Winnetka, Illinois**

Dear John:

We have found four companies which offer medical air evacuation insurance, but it took some digging. The companies are: Mutual of Omaha (Omaha Indemnity), Sentry, Health Care Abroad, and Travelers.

Health Care Abroad offers the coverage for \$2.50/day/person, with a minimum of 12 days and a maximum of 60 days coverage. The other three companies offer the coverage as part of overall travel insurance. The price runs about \$5/\$100 worth of trip expenses so where airfare and hotel run about \$1500, the insurance would cost \$75.

Any travel agent should be able to provide you with forms for insurance from one or more of these carriers when you arrange your next trip. We've included the address of Health Care Abroad in the sidebar accompanying the "Coping With Emergencies" article in case you organize your own trip.

**Ben Davison**

they can offer insurance packages at lower rates than you could obtain elsewhere.

What it boils down to is that these packages are a godsend if you have a heart attack but not a tremendous help if you get bent. One Philadelphia-based travel agent who is also a diver says she only recommends insurance when a traveler is buying a high-priced package -- say, two weeks in Australia or an expensive cruise. Then the trip cancellation insurance offered with or as an option with insurance packages is a good idea. If you have to cut short or cancel your trip to Truk Lagoon because you broke your leg, you'll get your money back.

Once you arrive at your destination, the front desk at your hotel may serve as your best emergency resource. First of all, chances are good that someone there speaks English. Hotels have safes and strongboxes where you can safely store valuables such as extra travelers checks. And when you register at many hotels, they'll want a record of your passport number. If you do lose your passport, hotel officials will have the number and will be able to vouch for your identification when you go for a replacement. Also report the loss to local authorities.

one of the more well-known companies. For example, American Express has customer service branches in such out-of-the-way spots as Pago Pago; La Ceiba, Honduras, and Aqaba, Jordan, and some can even issue temporary replacement credit cards. But their 1984 guidebook doesn't have a listing for Cozumel or Bonaire (although there are centers on Curacao and Aruba). Many major credit card companies also provide emergency cash advance and check-cashing services. At the very least, you or your stateside friend should notify the company that the cards were stolen so you won't be liable for charges made in your name.

Caution and common sense should be the keywords for any travelers, but especially for divers traveling to destinations that aren't frequently visited by the world at large. An ounce of prevention is worth at least a pound of cure, especially if the cure involves a lot of money, red tape and running around that could better be spent enjoying a dive vacation.

*The author, Cathy Cush, is a traveling diver whose work has appeared in Skin Diver, Sierra Magazine, and elsewhere.*



# The DEMA Show, 1985

## -- Has The Industry Reached Middle Age?

Las Vegas is not my favorite convention city, a view apparently shared by many who attended -- or did not attend -- this year's Diving Equipment Manufacturers (DEMA) show at the end of January. The people and the show itself seemed quiet, unenthusiastic and low-key. The usual spark was missing. Was the cause Las Vegas itself? The lack of any new, startling, innovative equipment? The routine display booths? The unusually cold Las Vegas weather? The depressing increase in costs for diving and traveling? Or is it simply that a fledgling and innovative industry has grown, matured, and now is approaching middle age.

This was not a year of great innovation, although I was impressed with the offerings of Sea Quest -- especially their Advanced Design Vest (ADV). I had the distinct impression that other manufacturers were equally impressed. Sea Quest equipment showed imagination and improvements over many of their previous models. NDS offered a useful approach to the Octopus by having the "safe-second" attached to the BC inflation hose by a short hose mounted on a swivel and positioned so it won't drag in the sand or get hung-up in coral. It would be used much like the ScubaPro AIR II. The "out-of-air" diver would take the other diver's primary regulator and the "safe-second" would be used by the diver with air. The advantage provided by this set-up over the AIR-II is that the "safe-second" is a standard second stage regulator and therefore delivers air under tougher circumstances.

Wet suits continue to rival ski suits in both styling and colors. Harvey's now has the Designer "Signature" series, as colorful and attractive as any ski suit. Dry suits were abundant and more colorful. Hopefully, with the increase in dry suit manufacturers, the cost of owning one will decrease (but wouldn't that buck the trend of continuing and absurd increases in prices?). Unfortunately, I should add, I have not observed an increase in dry suit instruction by the dive shops.

Several distributors offered novel products not directly related to diving, however still useful. One example is LIFE-A-LINE, a dual cartridge, helium-inflated, radar reflective balloon contained in a small canister that can be attached to some article of clothing. Not designed as a piece of diving equipment, it does have topside use. The balloon is visible up to three miles and detectable by radar.

There were the usual watches, compressors, and underwater camera equipment (and fortunately, no "ascent spheres" this year). I like the Nikonos V with its SB-103 speedlight which offers "through the

lens" flash metering. Underwater video systems are marked now by four firms. These systems are large and expensive, far beyond the reach of my wallet.

Underwater scooters seem to be enjoying increased popularity, particularly the Tekna which has adjustable blades on its higher priced model. No doubt these vehicles will come into fashion at resorts, just as have jet skis.

### THE FINAL LIMITS FOR TIME UNLIMITED

Several readers have written in about not being able to obtain service as advertised on their Dive Capsule watch, sold by Time Unlimited.

Time Unlimited was a German company which went bankrupt more than two years ago. Apparently they couldn't meet the competitive prices of the Japanese imports at the lower end of the market or the quality of Swiss products at the upper end. Their watches may still be available in a few stores and if you happened to buy one recently you have a watch with no guarantee.

Some repair work and battery replacement is being done by Watch Works at 5441-C, Walnut Avenue, Irvine, CA 92714 (714) 551-0204. We recommend you contact Watch Works before sending in your watch, to determine costs and how to package and ship your watch.

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*"Some Caribbean dive package prices, when combined with the roundtrip airfare, now rival the pure, the more exotic trips to Pacific Islands and the Red Sea."*

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The number of travel booths increase each year, but the cost of a diving vacation is increasing even faster. Some Caribbean dive package prices, when combined with the roundtrip airfare, now rival the more exotic trips to Pacific Islands and the Red Sea. Puerto Rico, with Culebra and Vieques, is now pushing dive trips (see *Undercurrent* May, 1982) with attractively priced packages. Howard Rosenstein of Red Sea Divers fame, has an 85 foot diving yacht, *Fantasea*, with 6 cabins, for Red Sea diving. Egypt had bigger and better booths than ever, actively promoting Red Sea diving. Word is that they have taken a lesson from the Israelis and are now more actively protecting the wonderful Red Sea reefs and marine life, which was not the case for awhile. The Philippines seem to be the "in" place for diving, with



photographer Jack McKenney particularly enthusiastic about the Philippine underwater world. pines seem to be the "in" place for diving, with photographer Jack McKenney particularly enthusiastic about the Philippine underwater world.

The DEMA organizers apparently remembered the Film Festival disaster in New Orleans last year and reserved the Las Vegas Theatre of the Performing Arts at Cashman Field Center for this year's festival. It worked well. With the exception of a silly and boring home movie made in Hawaii by the son of Dr. Eugenie Clark, the films were excellent. Stan Waterman's movie "Leviathan" is outstanding. I was disappointed that McKenney's film "Beneath the Sulu Sea" did not have more Philippine above water life and a bit more coverage of the wonderful diving yacht, *Lady of the Sea*, but his underwater footage was excellent. Jack followed the Sulu Sea movie with his fine "Seven Wonders of the Diving World," which was also just rare. The Handicapped Scuba Association's "Freedom in Depth" vividly showed that having a handicap is not a sufficient excuse to

deny one's self the pleasure of scuba diving.

One especially beneficial seminar was the CPR lectures given by DEMA and Lifeguard Systems, Inc. They provided two standard Resusi-Annies and one advanced type with digital and paper readout. One would hope this particular seminar served to impress shop operators and scuba instructors just how important it is to influence their customers and students to qualify annually in an approved CPR course.

I'll be curious if the DEMA organizers acknowledge the absence of enthusiasm at this year's show and take steps to make it more interesting and exciting next year. Las Vegas was too much of a distraction this year and Disney World at next year's in Orlando may be just the same. Nonetheless, the industry remains alive and well albeit aging – and greatly overpriced.

And, a bit of gossip. Overheard while attending a seminar for dive shop owners: U.S. Divers has become rather arrogant and many shop owners feel that U.S. Divers acts as if they are "doing them a favor" if they let them market their equipment.

-- Ben Davison

## The Art Of Breathing: Part II

### -- Helping Yourself, Helping Your Buddy

#### *HYPERVENTILATION*

You know it is dangerous to hyperventilate (over ventilate the lungs by deep, fast breaths) prior to a long breath-hold dive. You could black out from insufficient oxygen before the carbon dioxide signal to breathe is strong enough to warn you to surface.

Novice scuba divers, however, are liable to hyperventilate under water simply from apprehension during a dive. The resulting drop in carbon dioxide may cause a tightening of the chest that may be interpreted as shortness of breath. A frightened novice may breathe more vigorously thus starting another vicious cycle. Again, offering another air supply won't help. Long, slow exhalations will rebuild carbon dioxide levels. Signal the novice to slow down and exhale more slowly. If necessary, surface with him.

#### *INHALING WITHOUT EXHALING*

A novice diver may generate another vicious cycle by failure to exhale enough. He may inhale fully and exhale only slightly. He may keep this up until he can inhale no more. He feels that he must conserve air under water and holds on to it at all costs. Since he can't breathe, he may assume that his regulator is not working and try to use someone else's. Obviously, that won't help. With all that air inside, he is also

very buoyant and a prime candidate for air embolism. A buoyant diver, struggling to stay down, and venting very few bubbles, should be signaled to exhale.

#### *LUNG RUPTURES*

Autopsies have failed to show actual rupture of lung tissue following air embolism deaths. Air may escape through pores in over-expanded alveoli. However, the familiar term, lung rupture is used here. The causes of lung rupture are three fold:

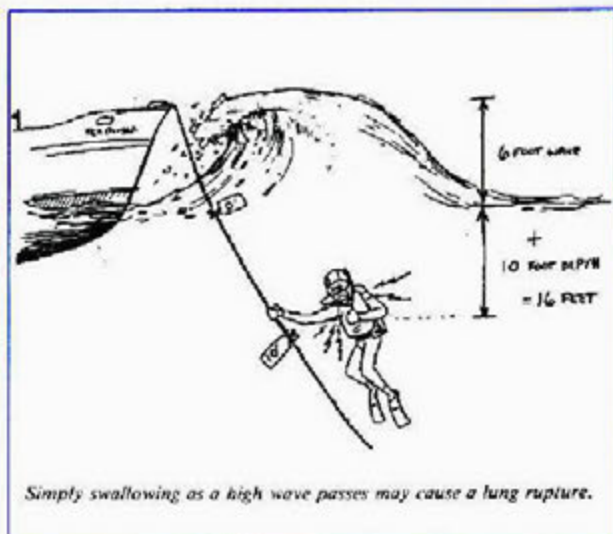
1. All or part of a lung is closed off (or partially closed).
2. That part is fully expanded. (Alveoli cannot over-expand until fully expanded.)
3. While alveolar pressure builds.

You can avoid a lung rupture by not closing off *any* airway and by avoiding fully inflated lungs during any period when alveolar pressure may be rising. There is more to this than simply exhaling while ascending.

An airway may be closed off not only by holding the breath. Small airways may also be closed off by unhealthy lungs: tumors, cysts, scars, and excess mucous caused by smoking or a respiratory illness, for instance. Some say you shouldn't dive for up to *six weeks* after a severe respiratory infection.



You may close off a small airway by exhaling too fast, or too much, or by ascending too fast. The microscopically small airways that connect to the alveoli don't have cartilage rings to keep them open. Excess air flow may cause them to collapse and then trap expanding air behind them. It should be obvious that you should not "blow and go" (exhale com-



pletely and swim fast to the surface). Blockages in the lungs are frequently only partial. If you ascend slowly the excess air will have time to escape without over-expanding the alveoli.

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*"Any restriction of air flow, even humming as you rise, may precipitate a lung rupture."*

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Dr. George Harper, of Tobermory Canada, who has done research on this, states that *any restriction* of air flow, even humming as you rise, may precipitate a lung rupture.

Remember also that the glottis closes as you swallow. Avoid swallowing whenever the water pressure may be dropping.

Since alveoli must be fully expanded before they can over-expand, you can give yourself a margin for error if you never take deep, *full* breaths.

We all know that the drop in water pressure as we

rise can cause a lung rupture if the breath is held, especially near the surface. It can also happen at depth. A quick rise from sixty to fifty feet can do it.

Diving when waves are high can be dangerous not only because they toss you around on the surface. The quick passage of a deep wave through overhead while divers were just below the surface is believed to be the cause of at least two lung rupture accidents.

Lungs may rupture even without a drop in water pressure. If air pressure in the lungs is increased, the result can be the same. Inhaling while pressing the purge button on your regulator may be another way to get an air embolism. How we breathe is very important to divers. Habits can help us by eliminating the necessity of remembering. If we *habitually* vent air as we rise (but not so much that may negate buoyancy), whether swimming, skin diving, or scuba diving, we will *automatically*, from force of habit, vent air as we rise after losing an under water air supply.

Form the habit of inhaling only through the mouth when you are wet and you'll avoid getting water up your nose. A habit of constantly exhaling a few bubbles of air through your nose will also keep the water from entering. Practice these habits while swimming.

On scuba, habitually continue deep, slow breathing either in or out. Avoid exertion, stay shallow, and surface before your tank air gets low.

Practice coughing in shallow water with your face submerged, and into a regulator, so you'll do it right if caught in deep water.

And, above all, avoid lung rupture by habitually keeping your glottis open, your lungs never fully inflated, and by venting air gently any time your alveolar pressure may be rising. If out of air, alternate venting air with attempts to inhale.

Embolism is the leading cause of diver deaths. By applying the techniques of proper breathing, you can assure yourself of continued safe diving.

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*The author of this article, Albert L. Pierce, is currently chairman of the National YMCA's Scuba Life-Saving Accident Management Program. Much of the material in this article will appear in his forthcoming book Scuba Lifesaving and Self Rescue. The drawings are by Jim Mitchell. Pierce initiated a second career in diving after spending 35 years with the FBI, 32 as an agent.*

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## FREEFLOW

In the California press and even in the national press, the superlatives about the new public aquarium in Monterey may seem a little excessive to some. But they're not. The *piece de resistance* is an enormous tank containing a true slice of undersea life so large and alive that the viewer can only wish for a wet suit and tank to join in the fun. And in fact, a couple times a day a diver does just that, feeding fish as he goes. Amid a kelp garden stretching thirty feet high, broken pilings, and rock reefs, saunters every type of pacific coast creature known to a diver. In a single minute at one of the sea windows one is likely

to see an eight foot octopus crawl up the side of the tank; any number of rays flapping by; six foot sharks casting a wary eye on the outside audience; a school of salmon, some large enough to feed a family reunion; and sea bass and dog fish and piling perch and plenty of other critters. It's a remarkable scene at which any diver will gawk for the better part of an hour -- or even more. Visitors on weekends will queue for up to an hour, but those who arrive late in the day may get in more quickly. Better yet, get tickets for a specified time and date in advance at Ticketron or BASS outlets throughout California.