

between shallow dives. It was common to see the first dive to 60 feet, a second to 100 feet, and the third to 70 feet, for example. While computers calculate these types of profiles, doing your deep dive first and then doing progressively shallower dives reduces your risk.

Many live-aboard operations face the dilemma of whether to put deeper dives at the beginning or the end of the trip. If the deeper dives are at the end of a trip then the infrequent diver has a few days to polish up skills before moving on to deeper diving. However by diving deeper at the end of a trip, the diver is then at greater risk of DCI if he intends flying home within 24-36 hours.

A newly qualified diver or an infrequent club diver would probably be at a higher risk of DCI when participating in intense multi-day diving trips. Just the increase in physical exercise and associated fatigue is likely to increase risk.

Finally, divers need to realize that vague symptoms -- fatigue, itching, memory problems, etc. -- indicate a neurological problem that needs treatment immediately, not three days down the track.

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Our thinking regarding how we dive needs to change if we are to reduce the incidence of DCI in recreational diving.

The holy grail of no-stop diving may not be such a laudable goal after all. The data suggests that staged decompression after every dive will substantially reduce a diver's risk of DCI.

While we see an increase in risk as dives get deeper, this effect is not nearly as great as with longer time. DCI can be expected to occur occasionally, even in relatively unprovocative exposures. Thus it should not be regarded as an accident because it does not always represent a loss of control.

Studies suggest that stops need to be made before significant bubbling has occurred if a benefit is to be realized. Spending, say, one minute at 60 feet, 2-3 minutes at 30 feet and 5-10 minutes at 15 feet after each dive should significantly reduce risk.

Can we trust recreational divers to discipline their diving to decrease DCI? Realistically I think not, as studies show an alarming number of divers who are unable to manage even their air supply. . . . However, I do hold out hope for those who have a genuine interest in reducing the risk of DCI in their dive practice, mainly us older, once bolder types.

The evidence is overwhelming for staged decompression -- even following a dive profile that, according to some algorithm, incurs no decompression debt. The objective after all is to reduce the probability of DCI to an acceptable minimum.

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## Gay Divers: Grand Cayman says "Stay Home"

While many divers long to return to the Caribbean of old, the Grand Cayman government has taken a controversial step back in time by refusing the cruise ship *Leeward* permission to dock. Why? It was chartered by a group of 900 gay men.

In a letter sent to the Norwegian Cruise Line, Thomas Jefferson (yup, that's his real name), the Cayman Islands' Minister of Tourism, wrote: "Careful research and prior experience has led us to conclude that we cannot count on this group to uphold the standards of appropriate behavior expected of visitors to the Cayman Islands, so we regrettably cannot offer our hospitality."

Rich Campbell, the California tour operator who arranged the charter, expected only a seven hour stop in Grand Cayman. "Sheer prejudice," he said. "We've been all over the Caribbean and never had a response like this. We were prepared to spend a lot of money [estimated at \$200,000] and the shopkeepers and scuba dive operators will be hurt by the cancellation."

A government spokesperson, according to Reuters, said a gay cruise ship called 10 years ago and residents were shocked to see men holding hands and kissing. Church groups vowed never again to allow a gay cruise ship to stop in the Cayman Islands.

Lori Tucker, a Texas PR executive representing the Cayman government, said "This is an ultraconservative, deeply religious country. The bars close at midnight. There are no bathing suits past the pool."

David Smith, of the Washington based Human Rights Campaign, responded to Jefferson by saying "Regardless of how you feel about gay issues, [your decision] would be regarded by most Americans as unfair and discriminatory."

Campbell said that the act will have serious financial implications for the Caymans. "They have underestimated how many gay travelers there are. A lot of straight people will say, 'Gee, if

they're that hostile to one group, how do they feel about another?' It does not put a friendly spin on the Caymans."

To one Cayman hotel owner, as Reuters reported, that didn't seem to matter. "Anyone who says that the Cayman Islands does not welcome gay people," he said, "is

absolutely correct. Let them go to other places."

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So they headed off to Belize, where the Tourist Board said it "has no intention of deterring cruise lines from visiting Belize based solely on the sexual preference or orientation of the passengers." Cozumel and Cancun were also on the itinerary. Grand Cayman officials said they would review their policy.

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## Travelin' Divers Update

### *-- What to watch for . . .and watch out for*

Each month we supplement the Chapbook with new and up-to-date information, gleaned from our readers, our own experiences, and other sources. We've reorganized our approach to bring you more information in, we hope, a more usable format.

Watchout if you've scheduled a trip to Loma Loma, the little Fijian resort with arguably the best land-based diving in Fiji, if not the South Pacific. Dive operator Dan Grenier (Crystal Divers) folded up tent in January, and it's currently without a dive operation.

But, watch for his new operation as he begins his search, he says "into Fiji's 'Outer Limits', venturing into undiscovered country once more to find virgin reefs and prolific marine life large and small." Ben and Buli are stying with him and I wouldn't be a bit surprised if he joins up with past Loma Loma manager Lynette Mercer in an undeveloped area far north of Nadi. He will have "a special introductory offer, to help us explore and help name some sites." Since he may be up and running by the time you read this, stay informed with his soon-to-be web site; ([www.crystaldivers.com](http://www.crystaldivers.com) or email: [dan@crystaldivers.com](mailto:dan@crystaldivers.com)) Because Loma Loma didn't adver-

tise, half its business, Grenier said, came from our article two years ago.

And, look for a great diving side-trip from Cozumel. If you want to get adventurous, follow the advice of Dr. Terrence W. Dunlop (Annapolis, MD). "Took ferry from Cozumel to Playa del Carmen (about 40 minutes and \$10 r/t). Two tank dive in two separate cenotes under supervision of certified cave diver from Seafari. Most sites are fresh water with astounding visibility. Mostly no visual sensation of being in water, more like being in air. vis: 300 ft.+ water: 70-74 degrees. All lights provided as well as very brief orientation to cavern/ cave diving. Mostly within sight of an opening, but not always. Not for the claustrophobic. Some cenotes require strenuous walks and climbs (in full gear). No marine life other than the odd cave fish, but a nice change of pace. Playa del Carmen, is nicer than San Miguel in Cozumel; plenty of nice shops and restaurants. Ferry operates from 6:00 am to 11:00 pm." Phone: 011-52-988-51447; email: [seafari@Spin.com.mx](mailto:seafari@Spin.com.mx)

Watchout for limited diving at posh resorts on diver-oriented islands. Consider Beaches Resort, on Providenciales in the Turks and

Caicos islands. Says John Foster, Waterford, CT, the "dive operation only went nearby to Grace Bay and offered limited dives each day. Beaches emphasis is not on diving but the great food and lovely rooms. I went with Dive Provo, but trips to West Caicos require a bus trip of about 45 minutes to another part of the island, with downtime sorting the divers and waiting for boats or transportation."

Bonaire's Harbour Village is another classy resort that takes its divers lightly; Sunny Morrison, Littleton, CO. says "Harbour Village Resort was lovely but only two boat dives per day were offered, and when the boat was full we were turned away. (They have three boats, but declined to open a second boat when the first was full!) And, Harbour Village required long pants for men in their restaurant, pretty silly on a hot, humid tropical island."

Since everyone isn't a live-aboard enthusiast, look for great land-based diving in Truk and Palau. If you're a serious wreck buff, say Larry and Terry Roth (Orange Park, FL) "Blue Lagoon provides excellent guides. Spent more time on the deeper wrecks *San Francisco*, *Nippo*, *Aikoku* and the *Oite Destroyer*. We brought our own doubles rigs,