

Flotsam & Jetsam

-- *News on line and in letters*

Bad Training or Bad Divers?

PADI is under scrutiny in England, after three PADI-trained divers, in separate incidents, died after panicking and dashing to the surface at the Stoney Cove Diving Centre. In December a coroner said "all diving schools should issue manuals (manuals are often returned to instructors at the end of a course), new divers should be encouraged to take additional lessons, and family doctors should complete medical forms so they could check for problems." He said that agencies should have their own quality control to identify the quality of the training, and check on selection and training of instructors.

Agencies should also make unannounced spot checks at training sites. A PADI spokesman said PADI would carefully consider the recommendations, adding that "PADI standards are monitored by the most comprehensive quality assurance procedures in sport diving. No other training agency has such an ongoing commitment to ensuring the safety of the diving public. The evidence in these three inquests indicates that in each case one or more of the basic safety rules specified by PADI was not followed."

Let's Hope It's Not Kevin Costner.

National Geographic Feature Films has purchased the life rights of Jacques Cousteau from the Cousteau Society and plans to turn the project into a dramatic feature film, and says it is talking with several "A-list" directors to head the project. Proceeds from the movie rights sale will benefit the Cousteau Society.

And Let's Hope It's Not Dead Sand

Fleas. The latest hangover cure is CORA, nothing more than coral sand, sold in sachets to be dipped into your cocktails as you imbibe. Discovered on Okinawa, where the coral reef acts

as a natural filtration system infusing the islands water supply with mineral and trace elements, it has a following in Europe and will come to the U.S. soon. That's not good news for the latest environmental problem in the Caribbean -- disappearing beaches as people mine them for sand for construction and other purposes, a long standing tradition.

Donate Those Chambers to DAN,

Guys. Several professional sports teams use hyperbaric oxygen chambers to treat sprains and bruises. Turns out, they might as well use witchcraft. Diving Doc Alfred Bove, also a physician for the Philadelphia 76ers, found that athletes treated in the chambers didn't heal any faster than subjects who breathed air at 14.7 psi. A Scottish soccer team in 1993 claimed the therapy reduced recovery time for injured players by two-thirds. Since then, anecdotal reports have made similar claims, and \$90,000 chambers have shown up in locker rooms of the NBA's Seattle SuperSonics and the NFL's Jacksonville Jaguars.

Attention Diving Docs. Do you know about the International Society of Aquatic Medicine? Formed by a group of physicians in 1975, they meet annually in the Caribbean to earn category 1 CME credits from the University of Tennessee, through programs on hyperbaric medicine, diving safety, stings and bites, and diagnosis and treatment of diving injuries. Smaller groups venture to more distant areas — Fiji, Galapagos Islands, Cocos Islands, and the Red Sea — to earn category 2 CME credits. With physician salaries getting hammered by managed care, the tax deductions don't hurt. Other medical professionals are welcome. ISAM, 6240 Turtle Hall Drive, Wilmington, NC 28409; Phone: 910 452 1452, Fax 910 799 5209. E mail- DivingDocs@aol.com.

Undercurrent is the consumer newsletter for sport divers that reviews scuba destinations and equipment. We accept no advertising. Subscriptions in U.S. and Canada are \$78 a year (addresses in Mexico, add \$20; all other foreign addresses, add #35).

Undercurrent (ISSN 1087-4771, USPS 001-198) is published monthly by Ben Davison's Elephant Socks Publishing, Inc., 125 East Sir Francis Drake Blvd., Larkspur, CA 94939, with the Nov/Dec. issue being the book-sized annual *Travelin' Diver's Chapbook*. Second-class postage paid at Larkspur, CA and additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to P.O. Box 1658, Sausalito, CA 94966. Copyright ©1998 Elephant Socks Publishing, Inc.

Editor



John Q. Trigger

Letters to the Editor/
Submissions

To contact our editorial office, write *Undercurrent*, P.O. Box 90215, Austin, TX 78709. Call 512-891-9812. Fax 512-891-9813. Internet address: ideditor@outer.net bendavison@aol.com

Subscriptions/Address Changes

To subscribe, renew, change address, or order books or back issues, call 800-326-1896 or 415-461-5906, Mon.-Fri., 9-5 Pacific time, or write *Undercurrent*, P.O. Box 1658, Sausalito, CA 94966

Printed on recycled paper.

undercurrent

Feb. 1998

Vol 13, No. 2