

Flotsam & Jetsam

EXPENSIVE TRIP: The Florida diver who feigned his death while diving for lobster off Key West on August 8, 1998, has been ordered to repay \$55,000 to rescue crews that searched for him in vain. Kerry Stephen Scheele was in the midst of a divorce and had taken out a \$1 million life insurance policy that named his girlfriend as beneficiary when he staged his death. He admitted that after entering the water on August 8 he swam to shore, ditched his dive gear in the mangroves, and hitchhiked to his girlfriend's house in Wisconsin. Authorities arrested him after he allegedly talked his girlfriend into filing a claim on the policy.

CHEAP TRIP: Divers who dream of a whirlwind tour of the Pacific should check out Cathay Pacific's month-long flight pass, an "all-you-can-travel" option with over 15 possible destination cities (plus another dozen at upgrade prices). The basic pass is \$1099 for travel from San Francisco, Los Angeles, or New York to Hong Kong, and from there to destination cities including Bangkok, Cebu, Denpasar (Bali), Fukuoka, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Nagoya, Osaka, Penang, Seoul, Singapore, Surabaya, Taipei, and Tokyo. Australian/New Zealand cities are

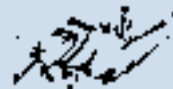
\$500 add-ons, and travelers registering online get \$100 off the price, those 55 or older an additional \$100 off. The 30-day pass is good for weekday flights through December 6, 2000 (5/15 to 8/15 travel requires a \$200 upgrade). More info available online at www.cathay-usa.com or by calling 800-233-2742.

DOWNCURRENT DISASTER: Three divers died March 10 in a dive training accident off the extreme northern part of New Zealand's South Island near French Pass in the Marlborough Sounds. Seven divers working on their "master's certificates" were on a boat operated by Nelson Dive Centre in an area a local reporter called a "notorious stretch of water with whirlpools and strong currents." Reportedly a float securing the divers' descent line deflated, the line broke free, and the divers were caught in a downcurrent that pulled them into a 300' hole. Two divers drowned and the body of a third has not been recovered. The other four divers are reportedly being treated for DCS. An *Undercurrent* correspondent in New Zealand reported seeing video footage of the area showing ripping currents, swirling eddies, and "conditions I certainly would not dive in."

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