

# undercurrent

THE PRIVATE EXCLUSIVE GUIDE FOR SERIOUS DIVERS

May, 1976

P.O. Box 1658, Sausalito, California 94965

Cable Address: Gooddiving

## Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, Bahamas

### *Safe, Pleasant, and Mostly Unadventurous Diving*

For many years I have heard about UNEXSO, the Underwater Explorer's Society, a Freeport, Bahamas, outfit. I pictured a number of brazen adventurers sitting around felt covered tables, their graying chin whiskers cropped close to the jaw, reminiscing about the wrecks that got away. I expected to see ice cold bottles of ale in their leathered hands, strong sinewy bodies still able to pack a set of doubles from the compressor to the dock, and to hear tales of ghost ships in the night, pirate's booty uncovered in forty fathoms, and mystical sharks guarding treasures that no diver could ever reach. As a child I had read every book about underwater adventure my library had stashed on its shelves, and now, in my second childhood, I was certain that decades ago the Underwater Explorer's Society had provided the setting for a once-read but long-forgotten novel.

The Underwater Explorer's Club is indeed a "club", qualifying simply by the sparse fact that over the years nearly 4000 divers have ponied up the initiation fee which today stands at \$40, for one not living on the Island, plus an annual tab of \$20. For Island residents charges are higher. In return the member gets, among other things: membership certificate; free use of the sauna, exercise and weight rooms; discount on boat dives, equipment purchases, introductory and advance courses, rentals, air fills, lockers and other facilities; consultation on underwater activity and diving technology; and, a newsletter.

UNEXSO is housed in a large building on an inlet's edge where three dive boats and an emergency boat are neatly moored. As I walked into the building, I was immediately struck with the feeling of solid management. A large sign board sits across from the doorway announcing the location, depth and time of each day's dive: 8:30, 10:30, 12:30, 1:30, and, a couple of times a week, a night dive. The service counter, with a limited range of gear, sits on the left. Behind the sign boards are several glass cases housing diving relics, including a couple of ancient SOS decompression meters which, by the way, had faces nearly identical to the present model and carried the brand name Healthways. There's a small shell museum, and outside one may step into the library, locker room, or sauna. After my first walk through it appeared that here in Freeport, divers at last had that country club of their own.

That was my superficial impression. After spending four days in and around the facility, I recognized that the potential had not been met and wondered whether the Club could ever meet the hopes of its creators.

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In mid-May, less than a month after slashed hotel rates signaled an end to tourist season, I found a clean and pleasant operation, yet behind doors the symbols of an unmet dream. A once-pleasant small restaurant, a place for divers to spin their wildest yarns, sat in disarray with apparently no plans for reopening. The sauna was not operating since, as one staffer told me, it's just not worth turning it on for the few who would use it. Locker rooms suffered from peeling paint, torn up tiles, rusty pipes and falling ceilings. Most books and periodicals in the well-publicized library had arrived prior to 1968; what I found reminded me of rummaging through a Salvation Army book sale.

I left without learning why the Club had not blossomed, but much of Freeport, the resort/second home capital of the world, now lay under countless piles of dirt along nearly finished inland waterways, serviced by never-finished roads. As a resort community, Freeport has fallen far short of the economic expectations of its creators.

Regardless, UNEXSO does make it as an operation with which to dive if in Freeport, and in fact, gets very high marks.

Upon arriving, I paid my \$19 for a single tank boat dive, noting it drops to \$12 for the second, same-day dive, and \$8 for the third; for members it's \$14, \$12, and the third is free. Those who dive for a week or so with UNEXSO may save a few dollars by joining upon arrival. I was not asked for a C-card, but rather whether I had ever dived with UNEXSO. When I replied "no" I was directed to the training tank, a 17' deep facility with windows (on the sides) for outside observation. I was told to clear my mask, take my regulator from my mouth and replace it, read my pressure gauge, signal the PSI and swim underwater. I passed, thank you.

I made several boat dives including the regular morning "deep" dive, usually about 80 feet, the 10:30 a.m. shallow dive, 6-15 feet, and the afternoon moderate dive, usually about 40 feet. I dived both with Glen Turnquest and Jack Brackett, both fine guides, but Glen is the more mellow. Jack prefers to be critical ("Boy, you don't know a damn thing about decompression or the bends"), rather than provide straight information (e.g., "you pushed the tables a bit and you can get yourself into trouble if you don't follow them"). I did push the tables, yet as an adult I respond better to straight information than a scold. Again, being mildly scolded for spending too long on the shallow dive -- after an hour I exited with 1300 PSI -- because untrained divers on board had exited long ago and were getting seasick, left me with no mercy. When I pay \$12 for a dive I expect to expend my air. If the dive is to be a short one, that information should be posted prior to payment. Regardless, both gentlemen managed the dives exceptionally well. They were notable representatives of a tough UNEXSO policy of safety first. Decompression dives are prohibited, unless one has passed the 4 day decompression course (\$180). Then the decompression dives, which go beyond 200 feet, involve elaborate safety procedures including a rule that prohibits divers from lifting their own tanks so they won't confuse a muscle strain with a bends symptom.

And, all of this with a recompression chamber sitting 30 feet from the boat's mooring! Yes, UNEXSO has it's own chamber! Even with their wise precautions, it gets its use. One reason is the attitude I had, a subconscious willingness to "Take Me to the Limits," as the Eagles would sing, knowing that the chamber sat on shore. I was not wise. The presence of a chamber led me to a sense of false security that I should never permit myself. Nor should you.

Now, what about the diving? I believe it to be average. To be good. To be somewhere in between. The very shallow reefs have a variety of fish life and nice corals, including elkhorn. On one shallow dive a half a dozen porgy hovered within six feet

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as I poked around. There were 4-eyed butterflies, nice schools of stripped grunts, trumpets, and together with good macro possibilities, I had plenty to keep me busy. For such a shallow dive, I was impressed. Visibility ranged between 40 and 50 feet.

On one 80 foot dive, we spotted a couple of 10-pound groupers, and nice schools of grunt swarmed outside a small cave. There was fair proliferation of sponges and coral varieties along with typical reef fish and an occasional Queen Angel. The least inviting dive was a mid-level, 50 footer, where the reefs were moderately silted. Fish were fewer and visibility dropped as low as 30 feet, but a friendly amberjack over a yard long stayed within spearing distance for nearly 10 minutes.

In essence, I consider diving in Freeport with UNEXSO not spectacular, but nice, pleasant, safe and certainly well-managed. Perhaps the greatest drawback is that the reef trips are designed to meet the lowest common denominator, the sport diver/tourist who wants fairly non-adventuresome diving. If you wish for more adventure, I suspect the only way it can be met is to qualify for decompression dives. Or, select an all-day two tank trip at \$40.

To contact UNEXSO, write P.O. Box F-2433, Freeport, or call 809/373-1244.

Victoria Inn and Scuba Club (SCUBAHAMAS), Freeport, 809/373-3040. A 40-room modern and clean hotel across the waterway from UNEXSO, the Victoria Inn and Scuba Club may be to the liking of many. Owner Tom Kenwright has developed a little diving resort with potential atmosphere for a group or for individuals during the high season. Food was adequate. Nicely prepared fresh dolphin, for example, was accompanied only by an enormous mound of white rice; at \$5.50 it may seem high, but not by Freeport standards. The restaurant doubles as a backgammon parlor and a 7 foot TV screen will be installed for the Olympics and Sunday football. Other restaurants and bars are a block away.

SCUBAHAMAS, the dive shop extension of the hotel, runs boats twice a day and picks up people at its other dive shop on the Holiday Inn beach. With so few diving tourists around, Tom Kenwright was running only one afternoon dive a day. His two instructors were vacationing, so he handled skipper chores. His winter season fleet and staff are adequate to handle 20 or so experienced divers. Because of my own circumstances, I could not arrange a dive with him, yet I was sufficiently impressed with Kenwright's forthrightness that I suspect his operation is indeed seaworthy. He seems to be interested in building his business by first serving divers, not first serving himself. His normal \$16 single tank dive fee drops to \$10 "when I get to know a person." For groups, he's willing to negotiate the price. Normal year round double occupancy, including breakfast, lunch and a single tank dive is \$33 per person. For ten or more divers he may toss in dinner, or add other extras. My reservation about the Victoria Inn as a dive resort is that it is not on a beach. When I travel to the tropics, I feel slighted if there's not sand on my doorstep. To compensate, Kenwright offers free bus trips to the beach at 9 a.m. and 12 p.m.

Accommodations: For the best of both worlds one may stay at a beach hotel and dive with either shop. The Holiday Inn is a 10-minute walk from UNEXSO (store your gear at UNEXSO for a \$2/week locker fee) or from the Holiday beach take a SCUBAHAMAS boat. The Holiday Inn beach, playground, tennis courts, volleyball, etc., are perfect for the family with children, but it's still a Holiday Inn. Double rates begin at \$30 in the summer and \$48 in the winter. Other hotels near UNEXSO are the Atlantik Beach and the Lucaynan Beach, with similar rates. UNEXSO may be running packages with nearby hotels so, write ahead to UNEXSO about their latest arrangements.

Getting There. Air fare and accommodations can be quite expensive, but OTC fares to Freeport are a bargain. From the West Coast, air fare and seven nights hotel runs about \$380; from North Atlantic states about \$230. The hotels used may be several miles from the beach, but one may take the scheduled bus to the Holiday Inn (about 50¢) or UNEXSO, or rent a car or motor bike.

Divers Compass: I find Bahamanians pleasant, although there are occasional reports of minor hostility toward tourists; you should have no problems . . . Of course, English is the native language . . . Part of your negotiation with SCUBAHAMAS might be to ensure that adventurous diving . . . For budget eating, there are fast food places, accessible by car from the beach hotels . . . Had a nice meal at Cafe Valencia in the International Bazaar, and enjoyed pints of good English Beer in Sir Winston Churchill's and in both Pubs, yet at \$1.75 they are not bargains; drinks and food are high everywhere . . . Freeport has gambling . . . Water temperature ranges between 74° and 78°, enough for a wet suit top . . . The big three car rental firms will charge you at least \$25/day; Holiday at the airport is 25% less, but they add a surcharge which you should attempt to identify before you sign the contract; one or two days car rental on the island is probably enough; after that, a taxi once a day for trips to the restaurants or golf courses will cost you from \$5 to \$10 . . . As a city, Nassau is much more interesting and charming than Freeport, as are many other resort islands outside of the Bahamas; come here to relax, not to tour and be turned on by a local culture . . . UNEXSO offers many different courses, including photography, which you may match to your trip by writing ahead.

(C.C. 5/20/76)

## The Farallon Digital Depth Gauge:

### *Lab tests demonstrate accuracy*

The Farallon Digital Depth Gauge (DDG) is the Cadillac of depth gauges both in price (it retails for \$225) and design. It is a compact, sealed electronic instrument consisting of a pressure-sensing transducer coupled to a computer-like circuit which produces a digital readout from light-emitting diodes (LED's). In

other words, it is read like a digital watch.

Farallon claims that this device is accurate "to 1% of full scale," which means that it is to be accurate to  $\pm 3$  feet. Full scale—its full range—is 300 feet. For models now under production, Farallon states that the DDG is not affected by temperature changes between 32° to 120° F. (Earlier models would give readings other than zero in very cold water; those faulty models can be returned to Farallon for modification at no charge.)

In addition, the DDG has the unique ascent rate indicator. Farallon claims that if the generally recommended 60 ft. per minute rate of ascent is exceeded, the LED's blink rapidly, thereby warning the diver that he is ascending too fast.

Two Farallon DDG's (serial numbers 0413 and 0228) were tested to ascertain the validity of the manufacturer's claims. Both gauges were fitted with fresh nine-volt alkaline batteries; both had been factory-updated with temperature compensating circuitry.

#### Accuracy of Depth Readout

The DDG's were placed in a pressure chamber containing water at a regulated temperature and were allowed to equilibrate for five minutes. The chamber was then pressurized and the depth determined by a master pressure gauge accurate to one-fourth of one percent.

The results of the accuracy test are shown in Table A. At both 78° and 40° F., the DDC's gave readings accurate in accordance with Farallon's claims, especially when considering the limitations of the test procedure. First, the master test gauge employed can

**TABLE A: Accuracy of the Farallon Digital Gauge at Two Water Temperatures**

Master Gauge Depth	78°F		40°F	
	Meter 0413	Meter 0228	Meter 0413	Meter 0228
0	0	0	2	0
10	9	9	10	8
20	18	18	20	18
30	28	29	30	28
40	38	39	40	38
50	48	49	50	48
60	58	59	60	58
80	77	79	80	78
100	97	99	100	98
120	117	120	120	118
140	137	140	140	138
160	157	160	160	158
180	177	180	181	179
200	197	200	201	199
220	217	220	221	219
240	237	240	241	239
260	258	260	261	259

DEPTH IN FEET

be read to about the nearest one-foot. The DDG readout also shows a deviation of at least one foot. For example, when taking a reading at 10 feet, the readout pulses back and forth between 10 and 11 feet. This is *not* a malfunction, but rather an inherent characteristic of most electronic circuits which convert analog data into a digital readout. Thus, between the master gauge and the DDG readout, a minimal deviation of 2 feet is possible. Obviously, there is a 50-50 chance that this deviation could favor one gauge or the other.

Regardless of these limitations, the gauges tested easily met the Farallon specifications. It should be noted, however, that since only two units were examined, caution must be exercised in making sweeping generalizations about all DDG's.

The results of our test indicated that the DDG's are *not totally* independent of temperature.

Each unit showed a 1-2 foot shift in the readings taken in 40° F. water as compared to those obtained in 78° water. The shifts were not consistent. One unit gave a deeper reading, the other shallower, but both were still within the 1 percent accuracy level. Gauge 0413, which read "2 feet" at the surface in 40° water, did return to zero when allowed to return to room temperature.

Because some inaccuracy can be expected from the many electronic components which are temperature sensitive, it appears that Farallon has done a reasonably good job in minimizing the problem because the gauges tested in 40° F. water still maintained the 1 percent or less error rate. We consider the 1 percent accuracy level acceptable.

### Rate of Ascent Test

For complex technical reasons, it was impossible to determine the exact depth at which the rate-of-ascent indicator began to blink to warn the diver that he was ascending too rapidly. It would appear, however, that on these two models it began at about 65 to 68 feet per minute.

The ascent rate indicator showed a very consistent performance (Table B) when the meter determined the rate to be too rapid. The alarm—the depth reading

blinks—operated reliably regardless of the depth from which the ascent was undertaken or the water temperature to which the gauge was subjected. Accuracy independent of temperature would be expected since this device undoubtedly works only on the logic circuitry.

### Conclusion

Even though based upon the test of only two units, the Farallon DDG, we believe, is a highly accurate and reliable instrument which meets standards suitable to sport divers.

The Farallon DDG has two distinct advantages over conventional depth gauges. First, the rate-of-ascent indicator is an important component, particularly for night divers who may not be able to follow their bubbles. Second, the digital readout is highly visible and easy to read, again a value for cave or night dives. Reading of a number rather than a dial just about eliminates the risk of misreading.

Before rushing out to buy the DDG, however, one might ask whether the less expensive conventional depth gauges attain the level of accuracy possible with the Farallon electronic circuitry. We'll help answer that question by soon featuring lab reports on many conventional models.

### A Late Development

As we go to press, we've received word from Farallon Sales Manager George Kladnik that an upgraded and modified DDG will be on the market by late summer. Although the circuitry will remain the same, Kladnik says that the transducer and potentiometer will be improved. The new model will permit the diver to calibrate his own gauge by adjusting a small set screw. The diver will be able to alter the gauge for diving at high altitude lakes. In addition, the case will be strengthened and the new potentiometer should make the accuracy of the meter less sensitive to shock. Also, the rate-of-ascent indicator will apparently be adjusted to approximate more closely 60 feet per second. The improved model will carry a price tag higher than the present \$225.

The changes Farallon is making would seem to be significant improvements of an instrument already demonstrated to be of high quality. Although we expect to test the "improved" meter before unequivocally waving the green flag, it would appear that the diver interested in purchasing the new model will be getting what he paid for.

A bit of insurance is Farallon's warranty. Should the new meter not work properly, it can be returned for correction. And, for those persons with older models which may not work quite right, Sales Manager Kladnik said that "if they're returned to Farallon the new transducer and potentiometer will be substituted for the old as soon as they're available.

The test and report cited were performed by Petrie Scubalab of Madison, Wisconsin, under the direction of Dr. Richard J. Boyd. *Undercurrent* takes responsibility for editorial changes necessary to publication of the report.

**TABLE B: Ascent Indication of the Farallon Digital Gauge at Various Water Temperatures (40° and 78° F.)**

Depth in feet At beginning Of Ascent	Warning signal activates At ascent rates of		
	40	60	80
30	no	no	yes
100	no	no	yes
150	no	no	yes
200	no	no	yes
250	no	no	yes

Ascent rates stated in feet per minute.

# Unconscious Divers, Dump Valves and Sharks:

## Reader response to our surveys

Since our article reporting the results of our divers' survey on BC's and the subsequent article on back pack flotation devices, we've received several letters from readers to which we should call your attention.

Fred Calhoun, of Boston, our constant yet amicable critic, had this to say: "I'm continually amazed at the paradox that seems to exist within your editorials. On one hand you demonstrate great strengths . . . You're not afraid to say something. On the other hand you've

got as cock-eyed an approach to scuba equipment as the rest of the manufacturers have. The issue is, when are they going to make things we need which are designed for human beings and intended to be taken in the water? All the hulla-ballo (spelled baloney) about the advantages and disadvantages of back-inflation units (Christ, what are we coming to?) when the simple terrifying fact that an unconscious diver with one of these things on his or her back will drown was omitted."

That seems to be pretty much the case with the back pack devices and Calhoun is correct. Divers who use the devices seem to love them, yet the ultimate safety device they are not. Thanks, Fred, for the reminder.

Scott Bolhack from North Woodmere, New York, explained that his father bought the Seatec BC-V after reading the divers' questionnaire results and "was quite pleased." Later, however, Scott himself went out to buy one and his regular salesperson "brought out what he said to be a revision of the compensator. . ." The quick pull cord on the overpressure valve was left out and there was a decrease in volume of air around the neck as compared to the original BC-V.

We called Terry Jones of Seatec and he reports that the cord has been on every model produced for more than a year and that "to his knowledge" there has been no redesign in the neck volume. Our hunch, which Jones corroborated, is that Bolhack was given an old model. The dive shop should upgrade the pull cord, we believe, at no additional cost. For those of you who have the older model, you can add the pull cord by replacing the entire overpressure valve assembly for \$4.95.

We have one complaint about the Seatec BC-V, although it is not so serious as to alter our recommendation. The BC-V, when sold without the CO<sub>2</sub> cartridges, still comes with the CO<sub>2</sub> nubs fastened to the front. Those nubs can indeed be a nuisance when climbing into a boat, and, if caught, could rip the bag. Seatec informed us that the nubs can be removed on special order, but because we believe CO<sub>2</sub> inflation to be obsolete, we think that the addition of the nubs (and the cartridges) ought to be the option.

Dave Getoff of Brooklyn, a dive shop manager, says that *Undercurrent's* call for a dump valve on any vest with an automatic inflator is not justified. If, "by a remote chance, the [inflator valve] were to stick open, you would most certainly want to stop it immediately. Holding open a dump valve while air is pouring in would hardly be the best remedy . . . There is a good reason for the disconnect system; all you have to do is pop it open with one hand and the air

### ZINGERS

We have a well founded hunch that our readers have a million ideas which would lead to excellent stories, but those ideas often don't get translated into writing. Perhaps we can prompt you a bit.

If you have an idea which we turn into an article for *Undercurrent*, we'll be more than pleased to send you a check for \$35 —and extend your subscription for a year. You don't have to write the article, but we might ask you to help out a bit in the research. If you're a writer, we may ask you to do the article. But, for the time being, let's just get your ideas.

What kind of ideas? How about a piece of equipment that demonstrates a systematic problem. Or a special service that divers ought to know about. Or false advertising claims. Or some great ways to save money. Or to make money.

We'd like the zingers. Do you know of any? Our correspondents feed them to us, yet our thousands of readers know stories we ought to be pursuing and writing about.

If we hear the same idea from more than one person, the first one to arrive earns the check. And don't worry about our stealing your idea and not paying. We're not cheap-skates.

One thing we don't need are suggestions of areas to review, and we should also point out that being mentioned in "Free Flow" only earns your name in print.

Now, for the zingers.

stops immediately."

Correct. But only if you can find the "floating snake," as one diver commented. Or, as Scott Bolhack wrote: "If a person was bringing up a heavy object from the ocean floor that required inflation of the buoyancy compensator and by accident dropped the object, quick exhaustion of the air in the vest would be necessary for obvious reasons. I feel the quick pull cord on the overpressure valve is necessary."

Reader Jeffrey C. Laufle chides us a bit for not being more safety conscious in our article about BC's and back packs, and thinks that we should not have printed many of the divers' bad habits without commenting upon them as bad—that is, dangerous—habits. He, too, cites the danger from the back packs' inability to keep the face of an unconscious diver out of the water, but he is most critical of divers using BC's as lift bags.

Laufle says: "Given the difficulty of dumping the BC in a normal swimming position, the diver must find it doubly difficult to dump while holding the weight being lifted. If for any reason the diver lets go of the weight while retaining air in the BC, he becomes a 'human lift bag,' incurring great risk of bends as he accelerates toward the surface. When combined with a difficulty of the vent valve being too small, the situation can be very serious indeed. Lift bags are available commercially and should be used. The BC should *not* be substituted."

Steve Geis of Newburgh, Indiana, says that in our article on "At-Pac vs. Scubapro BCP, I saw no mention that the At-Pac has 60 lbs of lift compared to the BCP's 45 lbs." Steve has an At-Pac and apparently likes the big lift. Yet, a diving doctor told us by telephone that

designing any BC with a lift "greater than 35 pounds for the sport diver is criminal. That extra lift, combined with malfunctions and diver error, is a great and serious cause of embolism." Any comments?

A recent television program "covering the impact of *Jaws* indicated that yellow and orange colors attract Sharks (and Barracuda) and should be avoided. If this is true, why are buoyancy compensators manufactured in yellow and orange if it may endanger the life of the diver?" That's what G.B. Walkey of Crete, Illinois, wonders. He's got a point.

H. David Baldrige, in his definitive study on shark behavior, reports there are a number of studies which show sharks' preference for bright colors (yellow and so-called international orange) while demonstrating that dark colors such as blue and black are less attractive to sharks. Yet, there is no evidence permitting cause-and-effect conclusions. For divers concerned about color, Baldrige says: "The use of bright international orange for sea survival equipment would appear to be inviting trouble. However, this color does diminish a hazard far greater than the possibility of shark attack, and that is the failure to be spotted by search aircraft." Permit us to say, "the choice is yours."

And, while we're on the subject of Baldrige's fine book, we'll conclude by explaining that for \$1.50 Berkley Publishing Corp. (200 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016) will mail it to you. It is a carefully researched, mildly academic treatise, so don't let the title, *Shark Attack*, lead you to believe it's an inside exposé. It's rather an attempt to understand the facts in some 1600 recorded shark attacks. It's enlightening reading, and has enough gore to satisfy the least academic among us.



Dick Greene, President of the Florida Underwater Council, writes that they still need \$5000 for accessories to their recompression chamber and \$15,000 a year to operate it. Although they hadn't even "opened for business," they had to treat a 58-year-old Chicago diver who embolized during a 30-foot ascent. They were forced into action because the next closest chamber, at West Palm Beach, was being used to treat another victim. Your tax-deductible guilt money is needed: 2901 S. Bayshore Drive, Miami, FL 33133.

Re: the five deaths of divers related to trips of the Michigan Underwater Schools of Diving, the Michigan Skin Diving Council President, Eunice Kennedy, wrote to the *Detroit News* that "in our judgment each of the accidents was caused by diver error. . ." State legislator David B. Bonoir, who was studying the possible regulation, refused free certification from the shop under scrutiny. . . Last we heard, however, the National Scuba Training Council had not closed its books on the investigation.

After reading the account about Saint Thomas in the September issue, Paula Craver traveled there and received her certification from Joe Daily at the Virgin Islands Diving School. In her words, "terrific." Now for the bummer: "On most of the gear we bought—Scubapro regulators, BCP's, masks, etc.—the country in which the equipment was manufactured is not stated. (The pressure gauge was 'Made in Italy.') Because of this we had quite a bit of hassle at customs and almost ended up paying nearly \$200 duty. When we indicated

that we would cancel our flight in order to get proof, the customs official let us go an hour later . . ." Hello, there, Scubapro. And hello to the other manufacturers. Can you mark your gear so divers making free port purchases don't get hassled?

Heard tell of a new underwater wagon in the testing stages which is propelled by the air from the diver's tank. Our source, who's a little salty but still seaworthy, believes the air is then returned to the diver for breathing—or the diver breathes it first, then the wagon gets it for power. S'posed to be getting an ocean testing in the Caribbean soon. If it turns out that the rumor is without truth, we will use our source's hot air as propellant for the next underwater vehicle.

Pat Calloway, a Texas diver, sent us an article advertising coral jewelry for sale. We've been somewhat appalled by the underwater treasures on the commercial market, particularly the hordes of shells available in curio shops. Great quantities are often gotten by dredging, which destroys the underwater environment for miles around. We anticipate a story and would like information and ideas from you, our readers.

Los Angeles County Supervisor James Hayes, a leader in the 1974 L.A. Scuba diving ordinance (see *Undercurrent*, November, 1975) claims that the reduction in diving deaths from 13 in 1974 to 4 in 1975 is a direct result of the impact of the law. Hayes was quoted by the *Compton Bee* as saying: "A dramatic decrease like that doesn't just happen. It's the result of a concerted effort on the part of the county and the scuba industry to make recreational diving safer. The Interagency Scuba Diving Committee has done exactly what I expected it would when I proposed [the ordinance]—provide the guidance and direction to accomplish safe diving practices."

And from NOAA comes an interesting tidbit. "Mask keeps fogging? Don't spit on it, use Lemon Fresh Joy! No kidding—it's better than spitting."

Captain Don of Aquaventures in Bonaire writes that he is grateful for the many letters expressing concern for his fine business and provides the following update: "On February 24th an auction was held and the buyer of the Hotel Bonaire was a government-owned corporation, Bonantil. Bonantil requested an uninterrupted operation while a suitable operator could be found. Inasmuch as Aquaventures is a separate corporation, it will become necessary to renegotiate our status with the new operators. We are confident that such an agreement will be arrived at but

I do not see a long-term contract. Let's face it; divers are not always the most formal clientele and the government is interested in attracting more conventional tourism to the island. The diving industry has opened up many Caribbean islands to tourism and diving is the mainstay of tourism on some of these islands while on others it is one facet of a many-faceted industry . . . I have expressed my interest [in certain facilities on Bonaire which] we would have to expand . . . but all is there for the creation of a truly dive-oriented resort . . . It is clear that the diving industry in Bonaire has a continuing place within the larger plans for tourism. Aquaventure will be here to serve its friends, both old and new. You can count on it."

Shawn Patrick of Springfield, Illinois, sent 200 photos to the Sea Library (February, 1976) for publication and they were lost in the mail! Patrick tried to get in touch with the Library but was informed they had moved without leaving a forwarding address! We called owner Jill Fairchild, learned that Patrick's photos had been located and that she does have a new address: 408 Sycamore Road, Santa Monica, California 90402 (213/454-1356). Jill reports that many *Undercurrent* readers sent photos which she'll be able to sell for film strips and other uses. Good work!

For those of you into the human potential movement, we've been informed (a bit late, we might add) of a unique scuba diving/awareness training session at Hopetown Harbour Lodge in the Bahamas, from June 10 to 17. Fee is \$400. The group will experiment with "underwater body work, meditation, non-verbal communication and intuition, with cooperation among ourselves and imitation of fishes." If you get tired of doing the same old things on your diving vacation, this is indeed a departure.

A two-passenger Mobile Underwater Free-Flying Diver Delivery Vehicle developed by the University of Redlands Engineering Senior Design group was taken down to 165 feet at Morris Dam in Azusa, California, and only a few minor leaks were found. That's quite an accomplishment for a MUFF Diver, which is the acronym that they've assigned.

We overlooked the Rare Animal Relief Effort in our article on whales, which artist Richard Ellis brought to our attention. They're a leader in the boycott of Japanese and Russian goods. For a \$1 contribution you will receive a sperm whale button, and for \$2.85 you'll get a copy of "Vanishing Giants," a reprint of the Audubon Magazine issue of January, 1975. Send your sheckels to RARE c/o National Audubon Society, 950 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022.

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Correspondents located strategically in the major diving areas of the world, as well as on all coasts and major inland waters of the continental United States.

*The editors welcome comments, suggestions and manuscripts from the readers of Undercurrent.*