

## Cinnamon Bay Campgrounds, St. John

### *A budget dive trip. Or is it?*

Camping out in the Caribbean is one way to reduce the high cost of a diving vacation, so with a budget dive tour in mind I made my reservations at the U.S. National Park Service's Cinnamon Bay Campgrounds on St. John. Because the U.S. Virgins and their immediate neighbors, the British Virgins, have average to excellent diving. I knew my underwater expectations would be met. And the idea of listening to the hum of bees rather than air conditioners and to the calls of birds rather than tourist directors made the trip even more enticing. "No more Holiday Inns for me," I thought, as I packed my bags.

My first encounter with the reservation clerk on the campground, however, was not much different than an encounter with her Holiday Inn counterpart. She had no record of my reservations, even though I had made four long distance phone calls to reserve my space and, to cover myself, sent a cable for confirmation. But, I was at my persuasive best and finally, after foot shuffling and page turning, the lady found me a tent.

Camping on St. John is organized for you. Six-person permanently erected tents rent for \$10.50 per day, with sheets and towels (reissued once-a-week), eating utensils and a cook kit. You may become a more genteel camper by renting a cabin at \$13/day, or you may rent a structureless campsite for \$3.50. At each site there is a gas-powered lantern, a picnic table and both a Coleman Stove and a gas barbecue pit. Nearby are bath houses with cold water showers, toilets, and the only electric outlets on the campgrounds. Tap water is hardly potable so we purchased bottled water from the commissary, where we also bought groceries for light meals and six-packs for cocktail hour.

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For some, the Cinnamon Bay Campground will be the ideal way to escape the routines of business and home. The forested grounds are lush and well-kept. The campsites are isolated; from ours we could see no signs of other campers. The beach is clean and unpopulated. There is no room service and no maid service. Cars are not allowed on the grounds. There is no cocktail lounge, no calypso, and no five course meals, unless you cook them. There is a cafeteria which served greasy pancakes for breakfast, common sandwiches at lunch, and boring dinners. It closed at 7 p.m. Most campers, who seemed to be in the 18-25 year old range,

cooked their own meals. Some brought frozen steaks and a few vegetables from home.

When I selected Cinnamon Bay I knew of the generally good diving in the Virgins. I was not disappointed. Tourist literature claims there are four separate diver operations, which is not far from the truth. What was once the Cinnamon Bay Waterworld, located on the campgrounds, is now the Diveshop, having merged with the business previously housed only at Cruz Bay. Divers are picked up at the entrance to the grounds, then trucked to the Cruz Bay operation for boat dives. At the other campground on the island, Maho Bay (tents there run \$25/day), the dive operation is run by a fellow who lives on St. Thomas and comes over, we were told, "as he is needed." The luxurious Rockefeller resort, Caneel Bay, has a guided dive service, but headmaster Charley Smithline would not tell me where his trips went and he would not discuss the diving with me. He would only volunteer that the tab was \$25/person per dive and then on a "space available basis only." Since I don't care much for surly divemasters, I did my diving with Jack Bosh and Stu Brown of The Dive Shop. Both were competent guides. And both were civil.

Jack is a photographer. He searched for subjects for my lens and led interesting dives. Stu provided an overview of the reefs, and covered more territory. We visited several sites and although I can point out shortcomings with each dive, the full experience was varied and pleasant. While the coral growth is perhaps not as prolific as it is around Bonaire or Roatan, I marveled at a forest of black coral in 60 feet of water. I encountered scores of drums and jackknife fish, species seldom seen at most resorts, but the sponges were not as large or plentiful as they might be at Cayman, for example. Very few parrot fish were munching on coral heads, but without the predator corals everywhere were feeding in daylight. I saw several queen angels on each dive, a couple of sting rays, a spotted ray, and always an interesting array of reef fish. There are no walls, and the visibility during our stay in mid-June was 50-60 feet, but then it was rainy season and the skies fell four out of five days. Virgin Island visibility normally runs 70-100 feet or more earlier in the spring and in the fall. For those who have been diving in St. Thomas or the British Virgins, St. John is nearly identical. It is only a short boat ride from the other islands and many of the St. John sites are visited regularly by St. Thomas guides.

But with all the money you've saved by camping and cooking out, you're soon to give it to The Dive Shop. They charge \$20 for a single tank dive if you need only a tank and weights, and \$25 if you need all equipment. They dive twice a day, at (9:30 and 2:30), so the day's cost for two tanks is \$40. A two tank dive to the wreck of the Rhone is \$50. By adding in the camping and food costs, your tariff is not much different than it would be at one of the budget dive operations on Grand Cayman (see Undercurrent March, 1978).

Shore diving may offer some remedy. Most of the reefs are too far out to reach from shore, except at Haulover, on the side of the island opposite Cinnamon Bay. But there the road to the water is rugged, so car rental companies prohibit driving their vehicles on these roads. If you don't get stuck no one will know, but if you run into trouble it'll take your wallet to be rescued. Snorkeling scenery off Cinnamon Bay is not much, but less than a mile away the 10-foot deep snorkeling trail at Trunk Bay is worth a trip, even though damage perpetrated by snorkelers is evident.

Getting to St. John requires traveling first to St. Thomas and then taking

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either the airboat from Charlotte Amalie or the ferry from Red Hook. It's \$1.50 per person for the 15-minute trip. On St. John my buddy and I rented a VW Thing for \$25 the first day, and \$20 for each additional day, gas not included. We toured the island, ate in a couple of restaurants, then returned the car. At the Lobster Pot in Cruz Bay I enjoyed the lobster rolls and conch fritters. Between dives we ate big sandwiches at The Deli. The two other establishments purportedly served native food, but we found Oscar's closed and Fred's serving roast beef. The only entertainment in town were two locals playing AM radios. People who are not guests at Caneel Bay are permitted to eat there only during the Sunday evening buffet. The fee is \$18 per person, but then the tables are covered with dishes of caviar, lox, marinated herring, and beef wellington as appetizers, a spectacular range of salads, vegetables and desserts, and lavish main courses of fish and meat. If any meal is worth \$18, this was it.

Before you pack your bags for Cinnamon Bay, consider for a moment if you really are a camper. Are you willing to spray away the mosquitoes all day? Are you prepared to sit in front of the campfire at night, rather than rock to the BeeGees? Are you prepared to cook your dinner, or eat in the commissary or the same restaurant each evening? If so, you'll probably have a ball on St. John. If not, you might be like the lady we met there. Lonely and bored, she cried herself to sleep each night. She was not the camper she thought she was.

For reservations or information, write Cinnamon Bay Campgrounds, St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands, 00830. (C.N., 7/78)

## **Journey to Mazatalan**

### *A yankee's way of knowledge*

Seven nights in a hotel and airfare from Oakland for \$189 ... such a deal ... good diving, good guides, good shops, said my travel agent ... I believed him ... the Avilas Brothers pump only 1800 psi ... their tanks are ancient ... they rent weight belts, without weights ... an hombre on a motorcycle took me to the other shop ... ancient tanks, 1800 psi ... Senor, we take you parasailing, marlin fishing ... I want weights ... they pointed at a pile of rocks ... I gave my motorcycle man \$5 to roar around town for two hours searching for weights ... I came back for the rocks ... who's the guide? ... Senor, no guides in Mazatalan ... A boat? ... Senor, ferry to the island ... a buddy? ... Senor, find one ... in three days I found none ... the fourth day I ferried to the island and went snorkeling ... the water was warm, the sun was hot, the visibility was a foot or two ... I saw a starfish ... the rest of the week I read books about Jacques Cousteau ... at night I joined the chug-a-lug contest at Senior Frogs, listened to jazz at the Shrimp Bucket, tipped the mariachis at Tony's Plaza ... great seafood, nice hotels, nice beaches, nice people ... \$12 for two at the Hotel Cantamar and the Hotel La Gaviotas, \$6 for two at the Hotel Belmas and La Siesta ... the day before I left I met two divers ... 10-25 foot visibility, some fish, some coral, some urchins ... they didn't care, they liked Mazatalan ... so did I. (S.M., 5/78)

## **5000 PSI Tanks**

### *Not far for U.S. divers in the future*

In a couple of years it may be easier than ever to get bent. Tanks capable of being pumped to 5000 psi

will be on the market and depending upon the volume of the tanks, divers will have far more air to

breathe and far less weight to pack around.

Tanks capable of 5000 psi are already available outside the U.S. In Nassau recently we saw a 40 cubic foot German tank which, according to the dive shop manager, provided just about the same bottom time as a 72 foot steel tank.

Right now U.S. Divers is developing a 5000 psi tank and although rumors persist that other companies are considering the product, none we have talked with indicated they had proceeded past speculation. How soon the U.S. Divers markets its new tank is uncertain. Complex problems extend beyond tank design.

First, a 5000 psi tank needs a submersible pressure gauge capable of registering 5000 psi. No present gauge is suitable.

Second, the high pressure tanks require a new line of regulators. According to U.S. Divers' Director of Engineering, Tom Cetta, no first stage regulator on the U.S. market can handle 5000 psi. Any company entering the high pressure market will need a new product line.

Third, once a diver owns a 5000 psi tank a new pressure gauge and a new first stage, he will have to locate a compressor to fill his tank. The 3000 psi compressors of most manufacturers can be upgraded with a booster, but smaller compressors will have to be replaced to fill 5000 psi tanks.

For the sport diver, the advantage to the 5000 psi tank is either less weight or more bottom time, depending upon the specifications of the tank. For example, a 50 cubic foot tank — the size apparently being considered by U.S. Divers — would deliver roughly the same amount of air as the common 80 cubic foot, 3000 psi aluminum tank. The "80" weighs nearly forty pounds, while the "50," according to

Cetta, will weigh about thirty pounds. Getting ten pounds off your back will be a welcome improvement, particularly if you're one of Randy Newman's short people.

If weight is not an issue with you, then the potential of a larger tank and more air may be exciting. If a 72 cubic foot 5000 psi tank were developed, the air supply would be double that of the standard 72 foot steel tank.

Highly experienced or professional divers will exalt the advantages of more air. Their dives will last longer. They will not have to truck back and forth between the dive shop and the water for air fills. For decompression dives they won't need a second tank hanging on the line.

For most sport divers, however, there can be trouble in a big tank which, if fully spent, will throw every dive into the decompression tables.

And, there's another potential problem. Some call it "hypothermia." The less delicate call it freezing your grommets. Regardless of your ilk, hypothermia is dangerous. The colder one gets, the more his judgment is impaired and the less skill he has in performing mechanical tasks. In addition, getting cold increases one's susceptibility to the bends. Thus, increased bottom time made possible by large, 5000 psi tanks, can also increase the sport diver's chance for mishap.

With every advance in the industry, there are safety side effects. In the case of large, 5000 psi tanks, the side effect may not be in favor of sport diver safety. So far, U.S. Divers is working only on the 50 foot tank, a sensible size. But we have no doubt that larger tanks will someday be manufactured by someone. And we have no doubt that there will be consequences we are yet to anticipate and never prevent.

## For a Couple of Bucks, At Last a Bargain

### *A lens for your mask*



**THE MICROLENS**

Underwater closeup photography permits inspection of the seldom-seen parts of marine life. The colors and structures are often surprising. I've tried carrying a magnifying glass to inspect reef critters, but as a photographer I like to keep my hands free. Not long ago, however, I discovered such a simple little device for close-up viewing that I'm embarrassed to not have developed it myself.

The MICROSIGHT is a magnifying lens, the size of a nickel, to be cemented inside your faceplate, just an inch or so below the eye. Underwater it neither obstruct my view nor annoys me. When I edge in close for study I get about a three-fold magnification of my subject. Watching coral polyps feed, staring

eye-to-eye with a hermit crab, or viewing the colors and textures of nudibranchs has become an exciting and intimate treat I have never so easily experienced.

The MICROSIGHT is fastened to the faceplate with silicone glue. It can be removed easily by slipping a thin knife or razor blade under the edge and lifting upward. If your mask is fitted with eye glasses the MICROLENS would be difficult to mount,

When I was getting certified several years ago, my dive instructor told me to purge my regulator before I put it into my mouth for the first breath. Although I had taken my first dive fifteen years before my certification, I had never purged my regulator prior to putting it into my mouth. Yet, my instructor convinced me to follow his lead. One of the persons in his shop, so he said, had not purged his regulator and when he took his first breath a carpet tack lodged in his throat. I got the point.

A couple of years ago, NASDS patented a regulator mouthpiece plug to insert for regulator storage. Its use makes plenty of sense. With the proliferation of octopus rigs, the regulator plug has another virtue recognized by NASDS. During a dive a lot of air can escape from an octopus as it swishes back and forth and freeflows. The NASDS plug prevents that loss. With a lanyard the plug can be attached to your BC, to your back pack or to a pressure hose and the octopus mouthpiece can then be attached to it. No air flows, it keeps the octopus handy but out of the way, and when the octopus is needed it can simply be pulled off.

## Never Dive Alone

Yesterday, as I have over the years, I went diving alone. I can't tell anyone about it. I'm a scuba instructor. In fact, if one of my students asks me about diving without a buddy, I must express distress and disdain, proclaiming loudly that diving alone is dangerous and should *never* be done. You *must* always dive with a buddy, I have told and retold my students.

But, I don't believe that and I don't always practice it. Suppose however, I express my beliefs to a student and tell him that diving solo is for some an important part of the sport. If my student interprets my words as a blanket endorsement of solo diving, then he may

however, for divers with faltering eyesight it comes in handy for reading gauges and camera settings.

Each lens comes with instructions on how or where to mount it, but it does not come with silicone glue, which can be picked up at any hardware store. For the MICROLENS send \$3 to Waterlou Enterprises, P.O. Box 374, Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY 12520.

## A plug for your regulator



THE NASDS REGULATOR PLUG

The plug is available in many dive shops, especially NASDS shops, or can be ordered from Aquacraft, 3280 Kurtz Street, San Diego, CA 92110. The price is \$3.00. California divers add 6% for the Proposition 13 support fund. (C.C.)

## An Axiom in need of a challenge

dive alone — and die alone, underwater. I'd certainly be sued for malpractice.

During the legal proceedings the experts — my contemporaries in the instruction business — will swear they teach and practice buddy diving to the exclusion of solo diving. Buddy diving will be declared the standard of practice. And because I have espoused solo diving, which is *not* the accepted standard of the industry, my chance for escaping the liability for my student's death and my own bankruptcy are slight.

Is buddy diving the "standard of practice?" Legally, it seems to be. Do all the experts and instructors

dive always with a buddy and never alone? Certainly not.

### **A Solo Diver**

A solo diver is one who when in the water cannot communicate with any other person. If you are in the water with other divers but cannot attract anyone's attention, you are alone. If you pass through the surf with your buddy and separate to hunt lobsters you are both diving alone. If you and your submerged buddy are on the opposite sides of a patch reef or separated by clusters of kelp, you both are alone. If the visibility is twenty feet, but you are thirty feet from your buddy, you are diving alone. If you are inside a wreck and your buddy is outside, you are diving alone. If everyone is topside in the boat, and you're decompressing or just burning up the last few hundred pounds of air, you're diving alone. Everyone who has been diving has been diving alone.

Some people decide to dive alone, either because they can't find someone to dive with or because they prefer it. The swingshift worker who has the early daylight hours free often can't find another diver with the same hours off. He dives alone. Some divers prefer not having to worry about a buddy's safety or a buddy's boredom. Those divers like to dive exactly as they please, whether it's finning their fanny off or sitting in one spot for the entire dive. Some avid photographers never find anyone who cares to stay down with them through their continual clicking. Others don't want a buddy disturbing their subjects. Many spearfishing enthusiasts dive without a buddy because a squeak from his buddy's fin or a bubble from his snorkel may spook the long sought pelagic prize before the hunter gets his shot. Many ab and bug divers dive alone so as not to disclose their lairs, while plenty of bottle collectors, shell hunters and treasure seekers stay solo to keep their secrets intact.

### **A Buddy Team**

A buddy diver is not just the opposite of a solo diver. Besides being able to communicate with each other, buddies must agree to stay together and be able to assist each other. If one buddy cannot assist the other because he is too small or because he is without the skills or knowledge, the duo is not a buddy team. For example, consider the instructor who takes his students through the surf for their first open water dive. Who is his buddy?

We all know the safety reasons for buddy diving, but consider the other virtues. Having a buddy to share the emotional and tactile experiences underwater is for me part of the overall attraction of diving. People begin to share in the dive from the moment it is a glimmer in the mind's eye. The planning exercises, arranging time away from work or

routines, getting the groceries, buying a new light, arranging air fills, stashing a keg — all become the experience of my dives. We share the long rides to the water, getting suited up on the beach, the snorkel swims to the site, the conditions and decisions that may cancel the dive, and, of course, our love for the underwater world. My best dive buddy also shares the rest of my life and that makes diving with her even more special.

Buddies enhance the underwater experience for each other. Aren't additional pairs of eyes better for spotting attractions? Isn't the discussion of the dive afterwards almost as important as the dive itself? For me, solo diving often lacks soul.

While some photographers don't want interference, others relish it. People as secondary subjects often improve photographs of creatures and reefs. Plenty of people hunt fish, lobster and abs together, and many teams hunt for relics and treasures. These are divers who are mainly involved in the experience of diving, rather than in the exploitation of diving. In a sense, they are complete divers.

### **Is Solo Diving Safe?**

How much more dangerous is diving alone than diving with a buddy. I don't think anyone knows definitively. Researchers who study statistics of diving deaths have inadequate data about the number of people who dive alone or dive in pairs or groups, so conclusions are only speculative. In fact, some people speculate that those who dive alone have fewer accidents because they are more skilled as divers and take fewer chances than those who rely on a buddy.

In fact, buddy diving can contribute to deaths. Dave Desautel's continuing study of Florida cave deaths finds that when a cave diver runs out of air and one of his buddies attempts to share air, someone errs and two or even three divers die for the mistake of one. Furthermore, there are cases of shared air emergency ascents where the buddy with the remaining air has embolized, while the diver who ran out of air has escaped with no problem. Buddy diving saves plenty of lives. But it can also take some.

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*Dive with a buddy, unless you accept the risk of diving alone.*

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It is not uncommon for one buddy in a team to succumb to the pressure of the other. Although a sensible diver will tell his buddy, "no, I'm not diving, the conditions are too rough," or signals that he will

not enter the mouth of a cave, the psychological make-up of some people allow them to be persuaded beyond their own limits. One's inability to say "no" can cause him problems.

The solo diver, however, has no one other than himself to say "no" to. His diving decisions are his own, so if he is a good diver and a cautious diver, he should be able to dive safely. A careless diver, or one who just can't say no, will operate unsafely, whether alone or in a buddy team.

But the solo diver enters the water without the safety surely provided by a buddy. A competent solo diver can handle sea sickness, he can handle a stomach cramp, and he can handle most out-of-air situations. But, he can never handle unconsciousness. I can cite plenty of cases with which I have first hand experience where a buddy saved the life of another. And I have my own experience. Twelve years ago a partially tripped air valve left me with no air at 75 feet. I was in the midst of a thick forest of kelp and an emergency ascent was impossible. I shared air with my buddy safely to the surface. At that point in my diving career I needed the help of my buddy and I would have been foolish diving without one.

Since 1966 I've made 2000 dives. Now and then I dive alone.

### Time For A New Rule

So what we all tout as an inviolable rule — *never dive alone* — we all violate, intentionally or unintentionally. Instructors never speak about it. Books, magazines and manuals never talk about it. Nevertheless, diving alone is an integral part of our sport. Since it's practiced, it ought to be taught. And since it's practiced, there ought to be a new rule about buddy diving which makes sense. My rule is:

Diving alone has its risks. If you are a responsible diver, if you accept the risks and have prepared yourself for them, then your solo dives can be enjoyable and safe. That's what good diving is all about.

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*The author of this article, Lou Fead, is an instructor, guide, and diving activist. There is hardly a diving publication in which his articles have not appeared. He is the author of Easy Diver, a Deepstar Publications paperback.*

## Now, Music to Dive By

### *Bawdy ballads from the Barefoot Man*

I got a buddy that smokes ganja  
A girl that takes the Pill,  
My brother rides a motorbike,  
That's how he gets his thrill,  
And my sister she can rock and roll,  
And turns up all the sound,  
Me — I'm a scuba diver,  
I get high by going down.

That, dear readers, is the first verse of a song called *I Get High By Going Down*. If you dig it, there are nine more like it on a new LP called *Come Scuba-Do With Me*. The artist will be unfamiliar to anyone who has not visited Grand Cayman. But if you have sipped rum in the bar at the Galleon Beach Hotel, and listened to ballads of the Barefoot Man, who holds forth there just about nightly, then you'll be delighted to know that Barefoot has served up on a platter his ten best diving songs.

Barefoot was born in Germany, grew up in North Carolina, and stumbled into Grand Cayman eight years ago. Barefoot and his group of locals have an eclectic style which, in unpredictable measures, combines calypso, country and western, and pop. *I Get High By Going Down* spans several styles and, accor-

ding to Barefoot, has been picked up on the syndicated U.S. radio show of Dr. Demento, an appropriate show for Barefoot's demented music.

In his tune *Barracuda*, ("I was doing a dive about sixty feet, when I saw this dude with a million teeth: Barracuda") he employs his version of Johnny Cash. *It's A Moray*, sung to the tune of *That's Amore*, is complete with mandolin, just like Dean Martin used to do it. *Divers Do It Deeper* is a fraternity house song that should have been written in the 50's. While likely to titillate many, it will still offend a few. *Planet Ocean* is a decent little ballad, not unlike what one might expect from an effervescent but early John Denver serenading to Jacques Cousteau. I liked this album, but that's because I'm a diver. If it were about skydiving, I'd forget it. I played it for several nondiving friends who politely tolerated a tune or two, then after hearing *It's A Moray*, they said "it's a 'boring,'" and went home.

But who cares. It's not written for dullards who don't dive. It's our album and not a bad one at that. The musicians are competent: they play straight away, doing nothing fancy. The recording quality is surprisingly good. Most cuts were recorded in a Cayman studio set up for this album. A few tracks

were recorded with studio musicians in Greenville, South Carolina. Most songs were written by the Barefoot Man, himself.

Although the music was handled professionally, the cover art by Mrs. Barefoot seems corny and unprofessional. I think it might turn away buyers. Ayris Radich, however, both a diver and artist, explained to *Undercurrent* that the art is reminiscent of a legitimate school of art called the *Hairy Who School*, developed essentially by prominent artist, Jim Nutt. So, what do I know. Maybe the cover is worth more than the record.

*Come Scuba-Do With Me* is a novelty album, and most people play novelty albums two or three times and never listen to them again. That's probably what most people will do who purchase this, but if a group of divers drop in for drinks a few tracks from Barefoot can pick up dwindling conversation. I suspect several cuts will be used as background music

at gatherings of dive clubs, scuba fairs, or whatever, and dive shops might use it to convince people to sign up for diving. The people most attracted to *Come Scuba-Do With Me* will probably be those who have visited Cayman and passed a few hours listening to Barefoot and his group in the Galleon. It will bring back fond memories. It certainly did for ex-Cayman dive guide Dave Woodward who listed: "Four things I miss from Grand Cayman: Diving the Northeast wall. The people of East End. Dinner at the Grand Old House. Listening to Barefoot sing his songs of the island. Now if I could just sit down to dinner at 90 feet and listen to this album..."

For the album, send \$8.50 U.S. to the Barefoot Man, P.O. Box 1249, Grand Cayman, British West Indies, or try your local dive shop. Dive shops and clubs can get the LP for \$4 in quantities of ten or more.

(C.C.)



If you're the dude who lifted a couple of dozen regulators from the Divers Den in Seminole, Florida, then *surprise!* Most of the regulators had been recalled by *U.S. Divers* and were in the shop for repair of a potentially deadly problem. Divers Den owner, Tom Schneider, told the *St. Petersburg Times* about a diver whose regulator failed at 100 feet in Grand Cayman, but who luckily survived; it's doubtful Schneider wishes the yeggs the same fortune.

When we learned, a few months back, that *U.S. Divers* had to recall a year's supply of regulators, our thoughts turned to the safety of Captain Jacques Yves Cousteau. As you may have noted in *U.S. Divers* advertisements, the Captain is touted as Chairman of the Board of *U.S. Divers*. We wondered whether he had been using one of those faulty regulators on a routine dive, and if so, had any misfortune come his way or the way of his crew. No, we later learned, Captain Cousteau had survived the recall. It turns out that he and his crew don't use *U.S. Divers* gear, preferring instead, the French-made *Spirotechnique* (of course Cousteau himself is French-made). The Captain's role with *U.S. Divers* doesn't

require that he do much more than lend his face and name to the company. For putting out the six figures Cousteau is purported to receive, *U.S. Divers* probably gets a seven figure return, which is ample reason to keep the Captain aboard, regardless of his gear preferences.

For years the U.S. Government has discussed constructing a second sea level canal across Central America. Batelle Institute has determined that of the 10,000 species of marine life on the Pacific side of Panama, only 1,000 are identical with Caribbean species. A new sealevel canal could introduce coral eating snails, starfish, and pufferfish into the Caribbean, and without natural enemies, they might raise havoc with the reefs. The poisonous yellow bellied sea snake from the eastern Pacific would find no natural competitors for food in the Caribbean and might thrive, much to the concern of bathers and divers. Since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, 118 species of Red Sea life have become established in the Mediterranean.

As we search for that key to lifelong health, that fountain of youth, that great secret to end our psychological suffering, we must not underestimate the value of scuba diving. In the Nov/Dec issue of *Undercurrent* we noted that diving may reduce serious headaches; this month we'll note that it might have a similarly beneficial effect on a far more serious problem: fear of the opposite sex. That's the belief of Jacqueline Bisset, who told the *Associated Press*: "I must admit that men used to frighten me. I suppose that goes back to my upbringing in England. My father was the voice of authority and little girls were supposed to look pretty and not ask questions."