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2,000 hours and reported as follows: 'Temperature of the water during these tests was 1-30°C. Medium diving depth 35-40 meters. Maximum depth 112 meters — but in this case using a blend, not pure air. The maximum depth with pure air has been 94 meters. Our regulators have been tested by amateurs, by divers with medium experience, and by coral fishers who, in Italy, normally work at 100 meters of depth with peaks to 112 meters. Our tests have been in salt water in various parts of the world, in lakes on the plain, in rivers, and in mountain lakes (altitude 1500 meters).'

"4. Even though we were told the PDXL production models would perform satisfactorily under dive conditions, our employees dove the reconfigured regulators and, in our opinion, confirmed that the breathability was good. We sent the 700 and 1000 series to 16 test divers around the country, including active instructors, commercial divers, and dive magazine personnel with thousands of dives in all. They were asked to note their personal reaction to breathability at various depths and in various positions, to evaluate general comfort, and to consider any other issue that might concern a diver. All respondents said both models were satisfactory. The only qualification was from a commercial diver who stated that the adjustable second stage of the PDXL 1000 did not adjust to the extremes like his commercial units, but was certainly safe and acceptable.

"5. The PDXL 1000 and PDXL 700 production models were first offered to our customers in the Spring 1994 issue of our catalog.

"6. Except for a new customer this week, I knew of no customer complaints about breathability.

Our recent survey on breathability yielded the following responses:

Excellent	56.4%
Good	37.6%
Average	4.0%
Poor	1.0%
No answer	1.0%

"7. Performance Diver is a reputable company that deals only with suppliers and manufacturers we know to be reputable. We qualify them for not only quality of their products, but also for their track record as manufacturers, their financial stability, and their willingness to stand behind their products.

"In summary, we never sold the regulator models that failed the U.S. Navy test. The models we are selling were reconfigured by the manufacturer to acceptable standards."

Although we usually avoid publishing what distributors say about their regulators without hard data, we agreed to Curry's request to clear up any possible misunderstanding. But when we

asked him to give us the name of the manufacturer, so we could verify the changes and obtain empirical data to support the claims to confirm that the PDXL 700 and the PDXL 1000 are indeed up to snuff, he responded that "because of our vendor agreements (which request us not to disclose their other branded customers), the additional information you requested can not be provided." He told us to refer to the above letter for information about the tests and reiterated that his customers were satisfied with the breathability of the PDXL regulators.

So although we have U.S. Navy independent empirical data that the USD Micra will get us out of a pickle in the Galapagos or Cozumel, we have no such data on the Performance Diver regulators, only the word of the distributor and some anecdotal data. Curry would serve his customers well by resubmitting the PDXL 700 and the PDXL 1000 for retesting to remove all doubt. ■

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## Carib Inn Misunderstood?

### *America Online lawsuit explained*

In June a message appeared on America Online's scuba bulletin board accusing an instructor at the Carib Inn on Bonaire of using drugs: "Since I'm a little new to diving, needless to say diving with a stoned instructor was a little scary. . . . I won't mention his name but he is the only white instructor there." The message was signed "Jenny TRR."

Last month *In Depth* reported that Bruce Bowker, owner of the

Carib Inn, and John Joslin, the instructor, had asked a judge to force America Online to reveal Jenny TRR's real name so that they could sue the person for libel. Since then there has been much speculation generated on online services about the consequences of losing anonymity, freedom of speech, and millions of lawsuits arising from disagreements about what is being said on the Internet and similar services.

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Some Internet users have even called for a boycott of the Carib Inn over the issue.

Bruce Bowker, evidently successful in obtaining TRR's real name from AOL, has now released information describing a situation that is a little more complex. His statement has been edited for space:

"Since legal proceedings are still pending it is not appropriate to say a great deal at this time. However, I do want to clarify several things, because some people appear to think freedom of speech may be involved and at risk.

"The single posting reported in the press was not the reason for the lawsuit. The person who adopted the alias 'Jenny TRR' merely used the posting to draw other AOL subscribers into e-mail dialogues. In the course of these dialogues that person impersonated an FBI agent, a Florida state trooper, and others. The person did not, as many appear to believe, express opinions, ideas, or comments on bad service. Rather the person stated numerous false facts and accused our staff of repeated acts of criminal behavior. The person used the many false identities to create the

impression that these accusations were backed up by many persons of authority.

"The person who created these bogus facts did not stay at the Carib Inn and was not even on Bonaire as claimed. This kind of attack has nothing to do with free speech.

"I hope that this message will help to clarify what has occurred to date and why we had to act to protect the Carib Inn and those whose lives and reputations were being injured."

J. Q.

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# Caribbean Roundup

## *Readers report from Hurricane Country*

The Caribbean has scores of islands, but only a few make it as destinations for dedicated divers: Bonaire, the Bay Islands of Honduras, Dominica, the islands of Belize, Turks and Caicos, and, of course, the Caymans. Because you're a current subscriber to *In Depth*, we want to give you a head start on picking the best land destination for your next trip. Next month the 224-page *Diver's Chapbook* goes in the mail, and all those new diver-subscribers will be jumping to make reservations. Let us clue you in ahead of time.

With this year's bad Caribbean weather, **Bonaire's** location out of the prime storm belt has made it the hurricane-season destination of choice. Easy diving, especially from the shore, beautiful coral, and abundant tropical fish population make it great for beginning

divers, occasional divers, and underwater photographers.

On the other hand, stock in **Divi Flamingo Beach Hotel** — accommodations, at least — seems headed south. Some readers have commented on its deteriorating facilities — for example, Janice Parmelee of New Orleans: "I visited Divi Flamingo in 1990 and 1984 and was pleased. But in July the resort was in desperate need of maintenance. Employee morale was horrible. However, the dive operation is still good. We have no complaints about that." My visit to Divi's Tiara Beach in August uncovered similar problems. Makes me recall the deterioration of Divi properties in the late '80s and a subsequent bankruptcy. Hope you didn't own stock in it then.

Of the three Bonaire operations preferred by our readers, all

seem to have first-rate dive services. **Captain Don's** has the spottiest track record, and an uneven kitchen, but super shore diving. The **Sand Dollar** boasts the popular Green Parrot restaurant, and its condos are well liked by nearly everyone. Readers tell us that **Harbour Village** is the "best hotel." As Jay Erlich (Washington, D.C.) says, of his April visit, "Our second time at Harbour Village; the only really good hotel and the best restaurant on the island. It's never full and the dive operation never seems crowded. Extremely pleasant attitude of dive and hotel staff. More expensive than elsewhere on Bonaire, but well worth it for the landscaping, shade trees, and marina. The highlight was a course with **Dee Scarr** — 'Touch the Sea.' Shook hands with an octopus, petted a scorpion fish, stroked a moray and a spotted eel, was kissed by some grunts, and generally partied with some very friendly critters."

One note: development has affected visibility, reduced the number of unique critters,