

Paradise Dive Club

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President's Log

Keeping Current

Michael Ring
President

As the new school year starts I thought it might be a good idea to talk about keeping current as a diver. We all know that being on top of your game is important for diving. Making sure your equipment is in good working order. Know that your mind is sharp and focused. Keep your body ready for whatever might confront you in the water. (read: "steel bars at 85 feet"). General things that help make diving fun and safe.

In addition to the usual stuff, this might be a good time to look into taking that class you have been thinking about to get an advanced certification. You know the one for Nitrox. Or possibly underwater photography. Maybe you've been thinking about getting dry suit certified. Perhaps you want to finally get that rescue diver cert that you have been talking about for the last few years.

The local dive shops offer a number of classes in various certifications that would be of use to each of us. I know that they would be happy to help. Especially since that is how they make their living. The more we provide for them, the more they can provide for us. You not only will learn some new things, but you will get to meet new people and find out about trips to some wonderful places that you might be able to go to and have some fun.

But advancing your certifications is not the only thing that you need to focus on to advance your dive life. Remember, it is important to keep up with the general introductory basic skills, since those are the things that will keep you alive down there. I try to take a trip at least once a year where on at least one dive my buddy and I practice some of those silly little things that they taught us to do in the intro class. How often do you actually practice buddy breathing? Or do a controlled ascent simulating out of air conditions? Do you know if you would be able to handle an emergency dive situation if one presented itself to you or your buddy? Wouldn't you feel more comfortable and confident having an affirmative answer to that question?

We all like to think that we can handle it, whatever it is. But, as the saying goes, practice makes perfect. And the only place to practice your dives skills is in the water. Even if it is only in one of the local pools, brushing up on your skills can pay off.

As divers we owe it to our buddies, to ourselves and to our families to be ready physically, mentally and experientially once we jump into that water. After all, as we each can attest, when you get into that water, sure you may have a buddy nearby, but you are on your own to a great extent down there. It can be challenging, to say the least. Make sure that you are up to the challenge. Keep current. ■

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Aboard the Flying Dutchman

By Valerie Lent

You think a dive boat is a dive boat, and nothing much could go wrong? Wrong!

I recently had the misfortune to get onboard the infamous cursed vessel. When cruising the waters of Maui Island, it goes by the deceiving name of "Extended Horizons" and claims to be a reliable dive operation that will take you to the famed dive sites "the Cathedrals", off the coast of the island of Lanai. Unfortunately, the well-known, well established dive operators such as Mike Severns and Ed Robinson do not go to Lanai any longer, so it is iffier to make a good choice. In any case, be more prudent than I was: If you check out a dive operator's website and it does not mention the guide/divers ratio, does not have a current "meet the crew" biography but, instead, a hall of fame for all the staff with excellent credentials---who have left the company, investigate further before booking. Naively, we did not. We called them, and they candidly told us that they took no more than twelve divers. When we arrived at the harbor, we saw that they did not know how to count, but that was too late.

The first real bad surprise, though, came as we were told that we would not start with the deeper dive, the one at the Cathedrals which was the purpose of this trip. Instead, we would first stop at a shallower site with no name, that the crew perfunctorily told us we could name "wash rock" if we needed a name for our dive log. Over the deafening noise of the engine still running, we were announced that we would keep the first dive short, as we were going to do the deep, main dive secondly. Most of us could not even hear this, and once the captain killed the engine there was apparently no time for a proper briefing, which made me assume that our dive master would check our air, let us know when to turn around and be generally very directive once at the bottom, since we had not been given any clue as to what the dive would be like or what we should do, at what point. We found out afterwards that one kid on the boat was on his last open water certification dive, and therefore could not do the Cathedrals, a deep dive, first. It would have been nice for the rest of us to know that this trip would be organized so as to

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTHLY MEETING

WHEN & WHERE: TUESDAY NOVEMBER 17TH, 6:30 AT PETRINI'S

BOARD MEETING

WHEN & WHERE: TUESDAY NOVEMBER 10TH, TBA

MONTHLY DECOMPRESSION STOP

WHEN & WHERE: FRIDAY NOV. 6TH, 5:30 AT ENDLESS SUMMER CAFÉ

ANNUAL GOLF BALL HUNT

WHEN & WHERE: GOLETA BEACH 14TH @ 10:00 AM

PRE-HOLIDAY PARTY DIVE

WHEN & WHERE: DEC. 5TH, LA JANELLE PARK IN OXNARD.

CLAM DISHES WELCOME AT THE PARTY

HOLIDAY PARTY

WHEN & WHERE: SUNDAY DEC. 6TH, TBA

accommodate this one person. Now, the lucky first group gets to gear up while seven of us, group two, are told to go stand at the tiny bow and, considering the swell, possibly feed the fish. By the time it is our turn to gear up, we are rushed through the process, jump out with no time for any buddy check, no checking of the weighting once in the water (some divers were undoubtedly on their first dive in a warm water outfit). Once at the bottom, we soon reach a cave. The guide signals to two divers to enter (the cave was never mentioned at the surface, let alone it being a go-through so we have no idea it is more than a peek in), then to two more, my husband and son, and after a few minutes, everybody, including the dive master, has disappeared in the cave, except for the non certified kid, his uncle, and myself. By now I am pretty upset at missing all the fun that is keeping the group occupied in there, and this is when the guide reappears, signals to the kid and uncle to follow him inside, while I stay outside, alone, fuming (or bubbling, whatever it would look like in a cartoon balloon)---- then, no longer fuming, because I am struggling not to panic: I am all alone, have no idea how to surface near the boat, and my dear husband, usually so caring and thoughtful, chose the attraction of a cave over me and did not come out to get me. After what seems like long, long minutes, the guide, the kid and uncle reappear, and he signals us to follow him, around the cave, where we meet the elated rest of our party---except for my husband, who had suddenly realized I was missing, thought I was in the cave, and had gone back inside

to look for me. His quest fruitless, he comes back out, finds me, and I wish I could speak to vent my frustration with our guide.

But just like in the fictional “series of unfortunate events”, more misery awaited. My husband and I were the first to head back up for lack of air (I wonder how we managed how to burn it so fast in this unemotional , stress free excursion?) . Little by little group one and two divers were joining us on the boat, chatting (about the cave---arrgh!) and devouring the snacks. Oh, guess who had come back up, made himself comfortable and was snacking too? Our guide. Guess who had NOT yet shown up, of the entire load of tourists? My son and another guy. After fifteen minutes, and considering my fourteen-year-old and that man were the only ones still not here, I asked the crew to find out what was going on (fighting the panic again). The first answer was “Don’t worry; they are doing their safety stop”. Seven minutes later, I mentioned hat the safety stop should be well over. As the two dive masters were busy eating, they send the captain free diving to take a look. He comes back, saying he spotted them but way too deep for him to go and signal to them. Then the captain and the two dive masters start joking about how “These two down there are screwing themselves up for the deep dive at the

Cathedrals’. I want to scream, but my husband, always the decent person, keeps me in check and prevents me from making a scene. When my dear little one and the other diver finally come up, they explain that they were given a very confusing, misleading hand signal and believed they had been assigned each other as buddies to stay down as they both had air left. They had not heard anything about the planned shortness of this dive. Instead of the crew apologizing to them, they are greeted with “Well guys, too bad, your next dive, the best one, is going to be pretty short for you!”

I will not tell you how the Cathedral was, because I did not go. I stayed on the boat, mad, miserable, and thinking up this article to at least make this experience useful to you. Do not put your expectations of a fun dive(or of knowledge about the local marine life , as they know naught about that), your money and your time in the hands of the Flying Dutchman, aka Extended Horizons, Maui.

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LIONFISH

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PDC Thursday Night Dives!

To find out where the group will be diving, or to be added to the night dive e-mail list, sign up at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PDC_midweek_dive, or send e-mail to PDC_midweek_dive-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

<p style="text-align: center;">Membership</p> <p>\$25/year for individuals, \$40 for families. Membership runs May-April and includes a monthly newsletter, free air-fills, and other benefits. For details or to join, contact Noah Philips at: membership@paradisediveclub.org.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Newsletter</p> <p>Send newsletter items to Stuart Ponder at: webmaster@paradisediveclub.org</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Website</p> <p style="text-align: center;">www.paradisediveclub.org</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Join the Coolest Club in Town!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Monthly meetings with entertainment.2. Raffle prizes (we all need new dive stuff)3. Great dive buddy pool4. Beach and boat dives, AND weekly night dives5. Club BBQs, and other activities6. Free air-fills and gear discounts at local dive shops7. Right to proudly wear the official PDC T-Shirt (nobody has a logo as cool as ours).
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Dive Club Officers		
President	Michael Ring	info@paradisediveclub.org
Vice President	Geof McFarland	
Treasurer	Mark Silva	
Secretary	Akiles Ceron	
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Many thanks to our sponsors for their generosity including air/fill donations and gear discounts!

Meeting Place

The Nov. 17th meeting will take place at
Petrini's Restaurant in Santa Barbara.
14 West Calle Laureles.

Feeding frenzy at 6:30pm, meeting at 7pm