

Paradise Dive Club

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President's Log

Responsible Diving

Michael Ring

President

REFLECTIONS

As this year comes to an end I thought it would be a good time to look back at 2009 to see where we have been, and where we might be going.

The year started for me in the Caribbean. My daughter, son-in-law and I were in Curacao for a vacation, and did a series of New Year's Day dives at Habitat Curacao. If you are given a chance to go there, it is truly a fine place, with an aesthetically pleasing resort, good food and a great spot for easy shore diving right in front of the resort. They have an all-you-can use tank policy, with air or Nitrox. There are a couple of resident barracuda that hang around by the boat dock, welcoming you into the water. And oh the water! Crystal clear and warm. While we did not stay at Habitat Curacao, I will do so if ever I go back to the island.

On return to the states we all got ready to swear in a new president. No, not me. Obama. The excitement of the new era was palpable. Various different segments of our society were projecting

great things. Have they come to pass? I will leave you to be the judge. Suffice it to say, from my friends in other parts of the world, I am hearing that we, as Americans, are being given a new start. A fresh look. What that will mean in the long run only time will tell.

As the calendar turned its pages we as a community found ourselves challenged by another fire that spread rapidly through parts of the surrounding area. Many people lost their homes, and the community again was called upon to help. I am happy to say that this City has some very generous and civic-minded residents. Even while recovering from a fire that had occurred in November, we rallied around our neighbors and helped out.

Summer came and people's minds started turning to the water. Members shared their experiences in far off-lands, showing pictures from their shark encounters, and far away trips. We had visitors to our meetings who enchanted us with stories and displays of the products, boats and just cool pictures.

One constant was that Petrini's opened its doors to us on a monthly basis with its food and cozy room for our meetings. What a perfect place for us.

As the summer waned we went to San Diego to dive the Yukon and Ruby E. A good time was had by all in attendance. We all took away reminders of the trip (read: bump). We had a hot Club Bar B Q at Hendry's beach, and got to try out cool fins at Aquatics from Force Fin. The annual beach clean-up was well attended and heavily successful. The annual underwater pumpkin carving was a real cut up, and the golf ball challenge brought in dozens of balls.

All in all, 2009 was a good year for local diving and our Club.

So what does 2010 look like? I think we will have a great year. We have some truly fun things

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planned, including a camping trip to the islands, wreck dives, rig dives and social and civic gatherings that have come to be our calling card.

But what will make 2010 truly special? Our members. We have a bunch of wonderful people who are willing to put in the time and effort to make our Club experience top notch. And the sky is the limit. Each of us has something special that we can add to our Club. Whether it is sharing experiences and pictures, or finding speakers for the meetings, or just lending a hand at one of our events, you all are appreciated and welcome.

Let's get involved and make 2010 the best year in the long and wonderful existence of Paradise Dive Club. Go ahead. Dive in!

The Buddy System of Dive Operators

By Valerie Lent

Never having owned a business, I always assumed that outsmarting and generally fighting the competition was standard and logical practice. Our recent trip to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, though, provided us with a befuddling, though not unpleasant, experience. We were staying at an out of the way resort nestling between a secluded beach (the famous John Houston "Night of the Iguana" beach) and the steep cliffs of the jungle, far away from the hustle and bustle of the town, from the marina and harbors, and all the dive companies' slips. The dive operator we selected for our week of diving informed us that he would conveniently pick us up every morning with his boat. We would just hop on the boat after some wading from the shore. It turned out that what they call a "wade" happens to be a swim, but in 82 degrees water who would mind?

The first morning, we got a call which confused us a bit, informing us that we would get a boat ride not from Alex, our operator, but from Chico, his main competitor. Chico's little panga would take us to Chico's big catamaran anchored at our dive site and we would dive with Chico's tanks but with Alex's dive master. The other divers on the boat that day were as confused as we were, but everything went perfectly well that day. Day 2, we were told that Alex's boat would pick us up.

Off we went, sailing to an idyllic dive site, with little extras like a long stop to enjoy the company of two gray whales who wouldn't part with us and entertained us for half an hour, and an hour stop at the captain's native village, a remote National Geographic type of place which we accessed swimming to shore. This time, Brad, Erwan and I were on Alex's boat, diving with his steel 100's he advertises on his website as a reason for his higher prices. However, there were four other divers on the boat, with their own dive master, and aluminum 80's (the buddy system only goes so far!), and they were totally confused when they found out that we were not diving, like them, with Banderas Scuba Republic. We told them we had never heard of the company, and for a second they seemed to think they had boarded the wrong boat. Their dive master clarified for them that the two companies were sharing the boat and the food for the day. By then we were not trying to figure things out any more. We were happy with the dives, our dive master, the little boat with 9 people total on board, which felt like a private charter.

The rest of the week followed the same pattern, and we had ceased to wonder who owned what boat and who bought the sandwiches. We had the consistency of the same excellent dive master, of the steel 100s, of the excellent diving experience. But what made the experience even more pleasant is that it goes beyond the sharing of the costs and facilities by at least three dive companies. All the dive masters would share briefings, information and advice with all the divers in a spirit of camaraderie which is one of our reasons for diving. No competition there, no trying to outperform the other guide in order to get the other divers' business next time. Same process under water: When the two groups met, signs were exchanged about the spotting of an interesting creature so the other group would get a chance to see it too.

What is it again they keep telling you in the PADI manual? In addition to its practicality, the buddy system is FUN. This applies to the dive operators too. Way to go, Alex PV Scuba, Banderas Scuba, Chico and others!

Christmas Party

The annual PDC Xmas Party was hosted by Jim and Lynn Axtell, at their beautiful hilltop ranch house. The day was clear and from their house, we had a wonderful view of the islands. John Kushwara BBQ'd terrific turkey and salmon and the rest of the gang provided an assortment of complimentary dishes and desserts. Lively discussions of dive destinations and equipment were peppered with tales of dive adventures and lies about lobsters caught and lost.

The drawing, for submitting articles to the newsletter was won by Steve Trainoff. Steve submitted numerous articles and photos last year. Thanks from all of us, Steve!!

The white elephant gift exchange brought lots of laughs as we ended another great party.

We all wish to thank Jim and Lynn again for opening their home to us.

JAN 1ST NEW YEARS DAY DIVE AT REFUGIO 10:00AM



PHOTO BY JERRY SORICH

Gear and Gizmos



If you have a hard time keeping your weight belt on, these weight belt suspenders work great. Cost about \$20

MONTHLY MEETING

PLACE: PETRINI'S

TIME: JANUARY 26TH 2010, 6:30PM

Dive in to the food, stay for the entertainment.

History of the Wetsuit

It is hard to decide on a single person that created the modern wetsuit as people here and there were doing the same things. In the year 1951 a guy named **Hugh Bradner** who was working for the navy got the idea that a thin layer of water that is trapped under "something" could be an insulator against the cold water in the sea. His buddy suggested that neoprene would be a great "something" material to use. But Hugh Bradner was not that interested after all in the practical use and influences that a neoprene wetsuit would have on the water sport world (and elsewhere) and he never did anything about it. He never patented his design. But still Bradner is the first person that we can confirm (a letter dated June 21, 1951) way playing with the idea.

Even with the use of neoprene the first neoprene wetsuits could not be compared to modern wetsuits of today. The early wetsuits from the 1950's were stiff and did often not fit very well, so they were uncomfortable and you got a lot of flushing. The neoprene used for the first wetsuits was raw foam-rubber neoprene that was unlined - it was without any backing material. The problem with unlined neoprene is that it is very sticky and very fragile. If you pulled your wetsuit on too hard, you could tear it apart which was not very hard as it was sticking against bare skin. So divers used talcum powder to slip into the wetsuit. When nylon was developed, it was a perfect solution for a backing materials. A layer of nylon was applied to one side of the neoprene. Nylon is still used today, but its performance is much improved. Single nylon lined neoprene made putting on a wetsuit much easier than it was before. Nylon took most of the strain of pulling on the suit so the neoprene did not tear. But the outer side of neoprene was still exposed and the first nylon was very inflexible, so the wetsuits were also quite stiff. Double lined neoprene was "invented" in the 1970s. Double lined neoprene is protected with nylon from both sides. Protection and tear-resistance of the neoprene was increased, it was also possible to color the outer nylon layer and make colorful wetsuits.

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

Membership

\$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 Sharon Coffield at: membership@paradisediveclub.org.

Newsletter

Send newsletter items to Stuart Ponder at: webmaster@paradisediveclub.org

Website

www.paradisediveclub.org

Join the Coolest Club in Town!

1. Monthly meetings with entertainment.
2. Raffle prizes (we all need new dive stuff)
3. Great dive buddy pool
4. Beach and boat dives, AND weekly night dives
5. Club BBQs, and other activities
6. Free air-fills and gear discounts at local dive shops
7. Right to proudly wear the official PDC T-Shirt (nobody has a logo as cool as ours).

Dive Club Officers

President	Michael Ring	info@paradisediveclub.org
Vice President	Akiles Ceron	
Treasurer	Jim Axtell	
Secretary	John Kushwara	
Membership	Sharon Coffield	membership@paradisediveclub.org
Newsletter	Jerry Sorich	mailto:jasorich@cox.net
Circulation	Rich Cirincione	
Entertainment	Steve Trainoff	
Webmaster	Stuart Ponder	webmaster@paradisediveclub.org
Sgt At Arms	Steve Senesac	



PO Box 21311
Santa Barbara, CA 93121

5822 Hollister Ave
Goleta, Ca 93117
805/967/4456

1171D Harbor Way
Santa Barbara, Ca 93109
805/564/6677

301 W. Cabrillo Blvd.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805/962/1127

22 Anacapa St
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805/963/8917

Meeting Place

The January 26th meeting will take place
at
Petrini's Restaurant in Santa Barbara.
14 West Calle Laureles.