

PARADISE DIVE CLUB

VOLUME 13
DECEMBER 2006

WWW.PARADISEDIVECLUB.ORG



President's Log

After an austere start to the monthly President's log it is time to have some fun. Let me tell you about a dive I have recently been on. A couple of months ago I signed up for an outer islands trip on the *Truth*, despite the fact that I have only made it once in the last 7 attempts. Hope springs eternal. The boat made a 4:00 am departure, which meant boarding the boat the night before. Accompanying me from the club were Nick Martarano, Akiles Ceron, Noah Philips, and Danielle DiSimone. It was a nice smooth crossing and despite my best hopes I woke up and found that we were moored on the back side of Santa Cruz, although there was an (incorrect) rumor going around that we on Santa Rosa. According to the captain, the swell in the Potato Patch was too large to complete the trip to San Miguel. I was quite surprised since I hadn't felt any unusual swell, but the Captain knows best, and besides, given my record, I think of an outer island trip as just a way of making a 6 hour voyage to Santa Cruz.



Oh well, I set up my camera with a 100mm macro lens and went in search of small subjects. As I was setting up for an image of a Spanish Shawl, a friendly harbor seal pup decided to buzz me. One drawback of a DSLR camera is that you have to choose your lens before closing the housing and you inevitably make the wrong choice. I would have preferred a wide-angle lens for the harbor seal, but what can you do?

When life hands you lemons, make lemonade! I decided to get a head and shoulders portrait of the harbor seal. It didn't turn out too bad.

At the end of the trip, one fellow, who apparently had heard the rumor about our location, came up to me and said something to the effect, "These outer island trips aren't worth it. The dive sites are *just* like the ones on Santa Cruz". I had to surpass a laugh and point out that was because we had spent the whole day diving on Santa Cruz!



On the way back, I was comparing photos with a woman on board who had the same camera and lens combination I was shooting. As we oohed and ahed over each other's photos, a call came from the bow that a humpback whale had been spotted. Since we had to get back to the harbor at a reasonable time, we couldn't get close enough for any really good photo-ops, and besides I again had the wrong lens on. Even so we were treated to a beautiful breach and tail slap. Since we were a bit too far for decent images, my new photography friend and I didn't get anything worth keeping.



As we were reviewing each other's nearly identical dross, a sneaky thought came over me. When I started the dive trip, I had forgotten to clear out the memory chip in my camera. Better yet was that the images that I had forgotten to delete, were from the whale watch trip Gretchen and I had taken a few weeks earlier. I scrolled back through the camera memory and sure enough I had some beautiful images of humpback whale breaches. I showed one to my new friend and politely ask if she had gotten that shot. She gasps "No, what side of the boat where you on?" Then I scroll to another image of two whales practically touching the side of the boat. "How about that one? Did you get a good shot of them?" At this point she was crestfallen, thinking that she had missed a golden opportunity. However, I could

no longer keep a straight face and let the cat out of the bag and nearly got tossed overboard with my camera for my little practical joke. Oh well, it was just another day in Paradise.

Important News!

The December meeting and holiday fest will take place Dec. 10 at the home of Jerry Sorich! The cost will be \$15. To keep things fresh we will be having a different format for the holiday party this year. Come to the meeting on November 28 to hear about the exciting changes.



Welcome to Our New Members!

Mike Braniger
Molly Houston
Suzy Zrake

November Meeting Entertainment

"Swimming With Sea Monsters"

Tom Kendrick will give a lecture/slideshow on his 22-year sea urchin diving career. He'll be telling dive stories from Santa Barbara to the shark-infested Farallon Islands.

Need a gift for the holidays?

Check out our selection of PDC T-Shirts! We have a wide variety of sizes and colors in stock.

Underwater Pumpkin Carving Contest

article by Carl Gwinn, photos by Christine Macko

BCD, weights, releases, air, ... pumpkin. I picked up my vegetable rind and staggered into the surf at Goleta Beach. I managed to get my fins on while keeping the thing afloat, then pushed out far enough to reduce surge a little bit before dropping to the bottom. The visibility was initially about 3 ft, but dropped rapidly as I swam outward, so I headed back in and began to slice the veggie. After a long cut for the lower lip I recognized the figure: subconsciously, I was carving an image of Condoleeza Rice! I grooved with the pleasant buzz of narcosis at 11 ft depth, adding buck teeth, a delicate nose, and wide but slanted eyes. By this point I'd used up half the pumpkin's surface with facial features. Nevertheless I "stayed the course", and added helmet hair to the back.



Carl before his morning coffee

The custom of carving vegetables into lanterns, in the forms of distorted heads, apparently did not evolve during the long winters of medieval Europe before invention of video games, as one might guess. Instead, it is apparently a native of the Americas, like the pumpkin itself. No one knows the precise origin. Somehow it has become associated with the remnants of the ancient pagan autumn festivals: Samnis and Wälpurgis Nacht.

In somewhat the same way, divers in the Paradise Dive Club, and UCSB Dive Club, continue to go underwater to carve pumpkins each year, on the last weekend of October. No one knows why this is done, other than the fact that it has been so for many years. We must do as divers before us have done; only this can give meaning to our existence.

After surfacing with my creation and emptying the water from it, I extracted a second mask from my BC pocket and slipped it on, then stuck my regulator back in. I was tremendously gratified during the surf exit, when the resulting wolf head seemed to shock a couple of beach-goers and terrify their young children! By frightening innocent children, I'd completed another ancient ritual of the season.

Of course, I was more than delighted when the traditional randomly-selected trio of passers-by voted my pumpkin, "Condi", as the champion in this year's election. I'd successfully defended my title from last year! (I don't recall many details of last year's pumpkin, aside from a quick undersea repair to the caved-in face using a few golf balls, and disgust when it collapsed again during my exit). Thanks to the generosity of the club sponsors, and the efforts of the UCSB dive club, I got a nifty dive light as prize. I plan to retire before next year's election, and before re-introduction of other ancient customs such as... well, other ancient customs.



The Contenders



"Urchin" You to Pick Your Fave!



Codoleeza

Santa Cruz Island Beach Clean Up

Story and Photos by Jack Dawson

Dr Jack Dawson, local chiropractor and Paradise Dive Club member, organized the first semi-annual Santa Cruz Is. Beach Clean-up, which took place on Oct.21st and 22nd. The Channel God's shined on them with great weather and calm seas. Together with his son Peter and Claysen Wychkoff, both Paradise members, Jack sailed, with Harbor Commissioner, Frank Kelly to the north side of Santa Cruz. They almost hit a small whale that surfaced 20 yards ahead and a small pod of pacific dolphin playfully greeted them at the halfway point. After cleaning Fry's, Cueva Valdez, Hazard's, and Lady's anchorages of debris, they set course for Prisoners Harbor on Sunday to meet up with the rest of the cleaning crew; 90 volunteers and 10 boats in all.

This picture of Peter and Claysen reveals a fraction of the debris that the team removed. Though conditions were pretty murky, the boys had the opportunity to snorkel and both received 24 hours of community service for their efforts.



The operation was a huge success. The entire island was covered and a team is returning to Chinese Harbor in November to remove 2-3 truck loads of debris left behind. Many thanks to the PDC newsletter editor and members, and to Tom Hendericks, for helping get the word out, to City and Waterfront staff that volunteered and provided free parking, and to Jackie Kelly of The Nature Conservancy, who managed the event from the "Spirit" and provided lunch at Prisoner's.

For next year, they designated Channel Islands Clean Up "months" for April(Earth Day) and September (Coastal Clean-up) to address all the islands, weather permitting, and coordinate efforts using a data base of volunteers and vessels. Please let Dr. Jack know if you want to be included on this list. He can be reached at 965-3302 or john.dawson@cox.net.

An Underwater Photo Adventure with Bahama Sharks and Dolphins

Article and Photos by William Chen

Lemon and Tiger Sharks

Fast forward to the third day of a five day Bahamas live aboard on the MV Shearwater out of Palm Beach, Florida. The previous night, we anchored at the infamous Tiger Beach, a shallow sandbank sitting in fifteen feet of water with no land in sight. Six milk crates of stinky fish carcasses were thrown overboard to soak overnight. This was a grand relief to the passengers and crew because the crates of bait had been fermenting in the 90 degree sun for two days. Jake, the first captain, said when we woke up, the sand would look like it's moving as it would be carpeted by lemon sharks. The next morning we woke to an awesome sight of at least 20 lemon sharks.



The routine was to wake up early to take over/under pictures of sharks attacking bait hanging from a fishing pole; then to "wrangle" incoming tiger sharks; and finally to dive into the water with a thick layer of wild sharks. Quite simply the photography was an experiment of luck and nerves. The art of over/under photography is to split the image so that you have two main features; something interesting on the topside (in this case a beautiful red sunrise); and something interesting underwater (an open jaw and teeth of a 300 plus pound lemon shark attacking a hanging bait). Our charter master, David Haas, said that we would all scream like little girls during our early morning photo shoot. The previous two days he kept showing us an eight inch dome port (the front part of an underwater camera system) with very deep teeth marks from a previous trip

while shooting over/unders. Great!? At about 6:30 AM, I was the first one to step up to the plate. Jake instructed me to sit on the swim step with my bare feet on top of the final step which sat in about a foot of water. Is this safe? Then I had the thought that I actually spent money to do this so I started snapping pictures to get my money's worth. About five minutes into this craziness, some of the excited sharks tried to swim up the platform aiming at my feet. I deflected the sharks with my camera. After some close calls and letting out several embarrassing little girl screams, I knew I had enough good pictures. Even if I didn't I was done. Did I mention that I was sweating, and it was only 7AM?

Tiger shark wrangling is the art of attracting and getting these sharks interested in hanging out. It's an integral part of a successful underwater tiger shark encounter. After the over/under session, the shark wrangling began. At first several tiger sharks swam out in the peripheral of the boat. The splash of a large tuna attached to a rope attracts the tiger sharks. For about an hour the crew teased several tiger sharks within a few feet of the boat.



Now that the tiger sharks were interested and were hanging out close to the boat, we had our 20 minute dive briefing. It was repeated several times that no one had ever been bitten, but if bitten, that we could bleed to death. Yikes. The basic rules were to maintain eye contact with the tiger sharks; to make sure that you brought and used your stick; and if a shark bit down on a camera, not to fight it. I was in a state of shock and just wanted to get this over with. After Jake got in the water, I was next. I slid off the swim step to minimize the splash. Using an additional five pounds of lead, I quickly descended the 15 feet to the bottom and found myself standing on the sand surrounded by sharks everywhere. Oh sheesh! I forgot my stick! What now? Luckily my camera worked well to fend off 7-14 foot sharks. About a half hour into the dive, I started relax-



ing. The first dive was about 1.5 hours. It's quite a psychological test just getting out of the water. Basically you hit your power inflator and popup to the surface and quickly slide onto the swim step, all the while, imagining a shark biting off one your limbs that were still in the water. After a surface interval we did another dive. This time, everyone had a better time because the shock factor had passed. Overall this experience is not for everyone, but if you have a high threshold for thrill, this may be for you.

Dolphins

The dolphin encounter was the main reason I signed up for this trip. On day 5, we spent several hours looking for dolphins. The routine was to find a pod; get them interested by providing a nice bow wave to surf on; jump in and snorkel after them; and the cycle repeats. Out of the 10 times that we were in the water, we had two encounters that lasted about 15 minutes. Long encounters happened when we played games with them. The favorite game was a form of tag where you hold out a piece of seaweed, a dolphin swims up and catches it with a flipper, and the dolphin tempts you to take it from him. Overall I would highly recommend this to everyone.



Diving in the Bahamas

The general diving is decent at best, but the main attraction for diving the Bahamas is to have fairly reliable shark and dolphin encounters. There were a few dive sites with decent coral, but in general most of the coral that I saw was in very bad shape. Notably are schools of eagle rays and many old and massive loggerhead turtles.

Diving West Palm Beach

Jim Abernethy's MV Shearwater is docked in West Palm Beach. If you arrive a day early or leave a few days after a live aboard with this operation, the local diving is surprisingly good and reasonably priced. Jim has a day boat that comfortably holds about 14 people. Drift diving is the mainstay in these local waters. Many dive sites are within two miles of the dock. The average depth is about 70-80 feet. The local reefs are in good shape. They're covered by colorful sponges and fans; host a good variety and abundance of sealife; and in summary pretty impressive. Even more impressive is the Blue Heron Bridge which is about .5 miles from the dive shop. The marine diversity in this relatively small footprint is almost as impressive as I've seen in Indonesia. Different types of frogfish, seahorses, nudibranches, eels and fish live here. On my midnight dive, I looked up and saw an eagle ray six feet from me, also on that dive I spotted several very large snook. Neat stuff!



I spent an additional week to have a few days of manatee encounters in Crystal River. This part of Florida is a six hour drive from West Palm Beach. It was well worth the drive.

Summary

Jim Abernethy runs a great operation. I would definitely like to do this trip again in the future. The diving in Florida well exceeded my expectations and I would highly recommend doing at least a few local dives, especially the Blue Heron Bridge. This trip concludes my extended vacation. Images taken on this trip can be found at:

<http://www.pbase.com/wychen/uwbahamas2006>,

<http://www.pbase.com/wychen/uwflorida2006>

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.

December Dive Calendar

Truth Aquatics 962-1127, call for prices boats, and destinations

12/2, 12/9, 12/16 4am departure to the outer islands

12/8-10 4am departure Limited Load, 3 day

12/2-12/3 4am departure, 2-day dive

12/30-1/1 4am departure 1/2 of the boat, 3 day

12/3, 12/12, 12/17 6am departure to Santa Cruz

12/16-17 4am departure, 2-day dive

12/9-12/11 4am departure 1/2 of the boat, 3 day



Dive Club Officers

President	Steven Trainoff	571-1622
Vice President	Mike Macko	687-7176
Treasurer	Mark Silva	453-2001
Secretary	Barbara Brown	
Membership	Roy Phillips	968-8452
Newsletter	Gretchen Beckert	571-1622
Circulation	Ovidio Mora	683-4999
Sgt at Arms	Craig Adams	693-5835
Entertainment	Mark Bursek	564-1923
Raffle	Ralph Goldsen	681-0400
Webmaster	Bruce King	284-3648
Historian	Cheryl Weakliem	967-2827

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 Roy Phillips - 968-8452

Newsletter

Send newsletter items to Gretchen Beckert
gbgreymutt@cox.net

Website

www.paradisediveclub.org



P.O. Box 2131

Santa Barbara, CA 93121

Sponsors!

Aquatics

5822 Hollister Ave
Goleta, Ca 93117
805-967-4456
www.sbaquatics.com

Blue Water Hunter

117-D Harbor Way
Santa Barbara, Ca 93109
805-564-6677
www.bluch2O.com

Truth Aquatics

301 W. Cabrillo Blvd.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805-962-1127
www.truthaquatics.com

Anacapa Dive Center

22 Anacapa St
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805-963-8917
www.anacapadivecenter.com

Many thanks to our sponsors for their generosity including air-fill donations and gear discounts!