



San Francisco Reef Diver Christmas Party

Everyone and their guests are invited, especially children. The party starts as early as 6:30 - come and help set up - but the festivities will not begin in earnest until 7:30 and last about two hours. Please help stay to clean up if you can!

Since we are absent an oven or a stove, try to bring dishes that do not require on the spot preparation and need a minimum of heating. All we have is a microwave (if some one brings one?) and, if it doesn't rain, a propane fired gas stove.

To avoid having everyone bring eggnog and sugar plums we are proposing a division of attendees and their potluck contributions by category and Surname. Try to stick to this scheme:

Appetizer A-G dips, dip, pickled mushrooms (magic?), salsa, crackers, dim sum, etc. Main Course-H-L pasta, chicken, pasta, fish, chili, pasta, meatballs, pasta, etc. Desert - M-S cakes, pies cookies, bad boys and girls, fudge, fruitcakes, candies etc. Beverages T-Z eggnog, sodas, grain neutral spirits, juices and, of course WINE etc. If you absolutely have a KILLER dish that is always a hit. bring that regardless, or change your name for the evening. But do bring something. Please no potato salad from Safeway.

Raffle: As we are eating, please buy as many raffle tickets at \$1.00 apiece as you can. The proceeds will go in their entirety to the Pacific Grove Recompression Chamber, a non-profit organization manned by volunteers who will accept any and all in need of Recompression treatment (please go to an emergency room first for evaluation and stabilization). Patients are not dogged the rest of their life if they don't have insurance, so they deserve all the help they can get; you may need their help someday. The Raffle items will consist largely of dive gear and accessories donated by local dive shops and businesses, but if you have something you would like to donate for the good of the cause, please bring it. Raffle items need not be wrapped but can be if you so choose. The Raffle will take place after the ...

Thieves Gift Exchange: Each person who wants to participate (and you do) should bring a gift worth \$10-\$15.00. The gift can be old or new, serious or humorous, useful or useless. The more unique the better. Try to bring something a diver would find useful. Obscene off color gifts - wrong party! The gift should be wrapped but do not put any nametags on the gift indicating whom it is from. All the gifts will be put in a pile for display and scrutiny by interested swap-a-teers. (sorry, no space for the rules. Two steals allowed per round, 30 seconds to make your decision, and the first picker gets to swap at the end. Curtis will email out the full explanation over the weekend.)

Get it? If not, bring a gift anyway. You will get the picture in short order. —The evening will end with dancing to the JAWS soundtrack. And other assorted Christmas Tunes.

The Reef Rap

December 19th - December General Meeting - Christmas Party

December 24th - Christmas Eve kayak paddle in Berkeley the Sunday before Xmas. See page 3.

January 1st - New Year's Day dive at Point Lobos. Pierre Hurter is in charge of this, though it may well be too late now to join. Contact him ASAP at p.hurter@worldnet.att.net.

January 13th - Open charter gathering the on the Monterey Express, and visit to PB chamber. See page 3.

January 27th - Night dive at the Breakwater along with dinner, lead by Frank Matzkies. See page 3.

February - Skiing and Hot Tub in Tahoe!!! Bhushan coordinates. Check it out on (where else?) page 3.

January 16th - January General Meeting

January 30th - Please mail in your year 2000 abalone card. The information will be useful for resource management. Send to California Department of Fish and Game / 20 Lower Ragsdale Dr Suit 100 / Monterey CA 93940

April 6th-8th - Abalone Opener at the Van Damme State Park group campsite. Ray Will is the coordinator; cal him at 510-531-5971 or by emailing rwill@toddengineers.com. Ab diving, scuba, kayaking and more!

Join the E-mail Discussion site! The club forum on egroups is getting good use now. In addition to reminders of upcoming planned events, members have used it to put together short notice dive trips. You can join it at <http://www.egroups.com/group/sfreedivers>. If you have any questions about how to join or use his forum, e-mail Curt Degler at cdegler@best.com.

AND THE NEW PRESIDENT IS....

Pierre Hurter was elected President of the San Francisco Reef Divers for 2001, by acclamation, at the Club's November 2000 general meeting. Congratulations Pierre, and good luck leading this almost-30 year old Dive Club into the 21st Century. You can reach Pierre at p.hurter@worldnet.att.net or phone him at 415-285-6293. He wants your feedback on planning future diving events that you will want to participate in, and your help in volunteering to coordinate these same activities. The Reef Divers are strictly a volunteer non-profit community association and if we want to have diving fun we each have to work to make it happen. But that is the magic of this outfit.

In addition to Pierre we elected a complete slate of willing and able officers as follows:

Vice President - Frank Matzkies - matzkies@chabot.cchem.berkeley.edu or 510 528 2140

Treasurer - Bill Donnelly - bdonnelly@1-800-4-INJURY.com or 415-924-5627

Newsletter Editor - Noreen Mangabay - No-Mango@pacbell.net

Entertainment - Bhushan Mudbhary - mudbhary@roguewave.com or 415 386 3714

Ken Gwin - Artfxsf@aol.com 415-648-7046

Cencal Rep - Robert Foster - robert.foster@teligent.com or 510-622-6113

AMRC - Gene Kramer - gene.kramer@adecco.com or 415-359-2785

Membership - Kharmen Roman - kharmenr@melibe.com.

Webmaster - Curt Degler cdegler@best.com or 707-570-0457

With only a few exceptions, the new officers have not previously held any jobs with the club and bring that often-sought quality called New Blood and Fresh Energy. While some are new to the club, many are distinguished and experienced divers, possessing certifications as divemasters, rescue divers, and not a few with qualifications in technical, deep and overhead diving. None are warm water wimps I am glad to report!

Upcoming Reefdiver Events - No excuse to stay home!

Christmas Eve Day Paddle Sunday, December 24, 2000 - Pam Radkey Join me for a short, leisurely paddle on the bay. We will meet at 9 AM at the Berkeley Marina and paddle past the Emeryville marshes and towards the eastern end of the Bay Bridge. Dress warmly (Santa hats are optional) and don't forget to take your car keys on the boat with you (Norm). Those of you who don't have boats can inquire at California Canoe and Kayak. Brunch or lunch after the paddle is a possibility if anyone is interested. Rain cancels. Don't own a kayak or never used one before? We use sit-on-top kayaks like the ocean kayak scupper pro. Besides being the best style for kayak diving they are very easy to use, even by first time beginners. There are sometimes "extra" kayaks and they are easy and inexpensive to rent. For more information call me at (510) 527-5282 or e-mail pradkey@earthlink.net if you want more information or directions to the Berkeley Marina. Pam Radkey

New Year's Day Dive At Point Lobos State Reserve Carmel CA 01/01/01 -Pierre Hurter Currently this event is fully booked but there are always last moment cancellations. To get on the waiting list or for information if you are one of the lucky signatories, contact Pierre Hurter at 415-285-6293 or p.hurter@worldnet.att.net

Monterey No-Host Charter Boat Dive on the Monterey Express Meet at 7:30 a.m. for 8:00 boarding. Call the Monterey Express at 1-888-422-2999 or 659-3009 (in the 831 area code) and make your own reservation for 1/13/01. For details on Monterey's Fastest Dive boat www.montereyexpress.com/ Kharmen Roman Coordinates. Let her know you are coming. kharmenr@melibe.com (415) 302-0682

After the Boat Dive we will try and arrange for a tour of the Pacific Grove Recompression and present them with the donation of the proceeds from our Christmas Raffle. Curt Degler will coordinate the tour 707-570-0457 cdegler@best.com

Monterey Night Dive 1//27/01 Frank Matzkies, matzkies@chabot.cchem.berkeley.edu, 510 528 2140 coordinates the night dive at the Breakwater followed by dinner, maybe, at Peppers (UMMMM HOT!) Restaurant in Pacific Grove (170 Forest Ave.) Meet at the breakwater at 4PM for orientation and descent by 5:30PM. (Sunset) You will need at least two waterproof dive lights and a cyalume or waterproof strobe. Bad weather cancels. Potential for a "day dive". Never made a night dive but would like to try? Tell the coordinator and we will try to arrange for an experienced night diver as a buddy.

TAHOE SKI WEEKEND February, XXXX, 2001 Bhushan Mudbhary, 415-386-3714 coordinates this event. We will rent a ski lodge for Friday Saturday and Sunday somewhere around Lake Tahoe. This is the cheapest and best way to go and maybe there will be a hot tub! Definitely a pArTy!

The following from David Clayton (drc@ccnet.com): The next Monterey Underwater Harbor Cleanup will be on Saturday, February 10, 2001. Our last Underwater Harbor Cleanup netted over 5,000 pounds of items. 120 divers participated and received about \$3,000 in prizes. We had both television and press coverage of this event publicizing the diving community cleaning up our Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The dive shops of Monterey provided most of the prizes and a BBQ for the divers.

It is not required to contact us to attend. We can take as many divers as show up. It is helpful though to provide us with a head count though so we can figure out how much food to prepare. Providing a scuba certification card and signing a waiver is required to participate in underwater activities. We welcome shore help, please let us know if you can help. We also need a couple of boats to help ferry divers to and from the dive sites.—

December Beach Dive Report

Sky and Sea Gods being benevolent, a bunch of us went beach diving December 2 in Monterey. A half a dozen divers are neither too few nor too little a group - in fact it's the best size. Myself (Curt Degler), Pierre Hurter, Kharmen Roman, Bill Donnelly, Robert Foster and Frank Matzkies made up the underwater crew, while surface support was provided by Gerda Hurter who, although a certified diver, has the sense to avoid 50F water.

We met at the parking lot of the Aquarius Dive shop at Delmonte, perfectly timely. After using their excellent facilities (changing room, bathroom, rental area and sales floor) and a brief assessment of the conditions as understood remotely, we decided to follow my lead and head south to my secret spot south of Pt Lobos. Unofficially known as the Lagoon on the Southside of Soberanes Point, it's a hike down a meadow followed by a short yet hazardous slide and slip down a rotting quartz headland. I demonstrated that the final few feet were doable, but this didn't convince anyone to dive as the sheltered lagoon had the appearance of a washing machine set on high agitation and overflowing to boot.

Heading north again on highway one we agreed to stop at another secret spot on the north end of Monastery, down a little road past a children's nursery center. This leads to a small legal parking lot and a trail down to a beach, normally sheltered from the tsunamis characteristic of this strand. A few minutes looking at the break convinced us again to head back to the relative safety of Monterey Bay, but not before we saw some SCUBA divers body surfing the center of Monastery Beach.

Absolutely hating to dive with the "kiddies" at the Breakwater, I was somehow able to convince the group to head for Otter Cove, just between Lover's Point and Otter Point in Pacific Grove. Also known to us as Stinky Cove due to the accumulation of dead kelp, it is typically calm, almost stagnant, and a good place to park and start out.

As we pulled up, a couple of divers, reacclimating themselves to cold water diving, were holding hands and edging into the water when a sudden wave caught them, dropping them thrashing into the shallow surfy area. Rescue training does come handy and several in our group helped them up and out of the water and back into their cars and away. Now we suited up.

Timing is everything. The first group into the water, Kharmen Robert Frank, and myself walked into the water during a lull, put on our fins quickly and swam out beyond the surf area. Pierre and Bill, well, like I said, timing is everything! After the spray settled, Pierre had lost both fins and Bill just one. Dive over. Luckily for Pierre, his fins float. Sorry Bill.

The four of us decided to enjoy what we could before the scary inevitability of having to exit the beach. Taking a compass course with me in the lead, we headed down and out. Viz was 5-10 feet (or less), moderate surge and with lights on, we were able most admirably to stay together for the whole dive. Lots of stuff to see - crabs, nudibranchs, kelp and sponge and a few rockfish, but the best was probably a little monkey faced eel.

Heading back, well timing is everything. We caught the surf just right and found ourselves dripping on the cool gleaming sands of serenity.

For our second dive, Bill Donnelly got some more fins and he, Frank and I headed for the Breakwater while the rest decided that the day's agenda included activities other than diving. Breakwater was full of students, but once we got past the turn in the rocks and into 40 feet of water it was just great. Lots of buzzing beautiful sea lions, Giant Kelp, and the usual spineless suspects.

The three of us met on the way back and stuffed ourselves on Original Texas Barbecue in Castroville. Definitely worth the sawdust! --Curtis

On the Pacific Grove Rescue organization

After the boat dive with the Monterey Express on January 13th, we will be visiting the Pacific Grove recompression chamber. Here is a bit of information on the organization, from their web site at: <http://www.pgfire.com/pgor.html>. We will also have a raffle for their benefit at the Xmas party.

Pacific Grove Ocean Rescue

The Beginning: The Pacific Grove Ocean Rescue is a volunteer organization that was formed in 1963. In its earlier years, as an auxiliary of the Pacific Grove Police Department, the team had many tasks.

The Patrol: Initially, members patrolled the local shoreline on weekends in four hour shifts. It was their goal to warn out-of-town divers of hazardous diving conditions and to make sure everyone respected the marine environment. Their official name was the Pacific Grove Marine Refuge Patrol, because the city had waterfront known as the Marine Refuge. One of the primary responsibilities of the team has always been to provide emergency ocean rescue to persons in distress. Whether it's a struggling SCUBA diver, a boat floundering in the surf, or a wave watcher engulfed by the sea, the dedicated team always responds.

Medical Aid: In 1965 the city purchased it's first decompression chamber with funds provided by diving clubs, local service clubs, and city funds. The portable, single lock, six-and-a-half foot long steel tube with a single window was housed at the Pacific Grove Fire Department, but operated by members of the Patrol. The chamber is utilized for treating victims of SCUBA diving related injuries. Because of the chamber's single person design, there was no method for a physician to access a serious patient to assist with treatment procedures

The Journey: Those victims suffering from air embolism or severe decompression sickness had to be transported to a better equipped facility. Once the patient was placed inside the chamber, the unit was pressurized. It was then loaded into the rescue van and driven to the airport. There, it was loaded into a C-130 cargo transport plane along with team members and flown to a U.S. Navy S.E.A.L. team chamber in San Diego. On arrival at the airport, the group was met by a military truck and the police provided a Code-3 (red lights and siren) escort to the receiving facility. The small chamber was placed into their chamber. When the larger chamber was pressurized, the patient could then be removed and additional medical treatment would then begin.

Time of Change: In 1970 the new official name was the Pacific Grove Marine Rescue Patrol. Patrolling the shores eventually became impractical, so the week-end shifts were retired. The jurisdiction also changed from the Police Department to the Fire Department. Today In 1989 the team's name changed again to what it is today. The Pacific Grove Ocean Rescue. The team now consists of 30 members and all are notified of an emergency by pagers.

The Rescuers: When the pagers say "Coastal Incident", and give the incident location, the team is activated. The rescue van, numbered 6561, has an initial response zone of roughly forty miles of coastline. As water related recreation becomes more and more popular, the cries for help have also increased. The diversified group of rescue divers train together every month. Since the unit works closely with other agencies during emergency incidents, the training is also combined with those agencies, including U.S. Coast Guard, State Park, and local fire departments.

Hyperbaric Facility: The original mono-place chamber is still under the roof of the fire-house, but no longer in use. In 1984 it was replaced with a larger, double lock, multi-place hyperbaric chamber.

All emergency patients can now be treated at our facility. Victims suffering from life threatening carbon monoxide poisoning are also treated with hyperbaric oxygenation in the chamber. In both cases, the injured are first examined and stabilized at the hospital prior to admission to our facility. Most of the rescue divers have received additional special training in hyperbaric chamber operations and have been certified as such by the National Board of Diving and Hyperbaric Medical Technology. Only certified personnel are involved with patient treatments. Certification is maintained by monthly training sessions, attending lectures, and participation in treating the injured. Specially trained volunteer physicians are always present and in charge of treatment operations.

The all volunteer team is available for rescues or hyperbaric treatment twenty-four hours a day. The entire unit is progressively growing to meet the needs of the local communities it serves. Specialized medical, rescue, and safety equipment for personnel is always needed. Constant training, and equipment maintenance is essential. A chamber facility use fee was recently adopted but is not a consistent source of income. Therefore the entire organization is dependent mostly upon donations.

If you agree that this is a necessary service, please help by sending donations to:

Pacific Grove Ocean Rescue

600 Pine Ave. Pacific Grove, CA 93950

(408) 648-3110 (fax)648-3107

Down Time in Texas

Haven't been able to do much California diving lately, because an assignment has me commuting to Texas. (The commute time is better flying to Austin once a week than driving to Silicon Valley every day). Well, I had a few weekends to kill last month and thought I'd check out the Texas diving scene.

Armed with the only book on Texas diving that I could find (including horrible driving directions), I made my way to Windy Point Park in Lake Travis. Fifteen minutes in green, muddy murky water gave me a whole new appreciation for the hundreds of divers that get certified here every year. A few catfish and perch - big deal. Next day, I drove three hours then spent another two lost while I looked for the Blue Lagoon in Huntsville. My book calls this artesian spring quartzite quarry the "Cozumel of Texas". At only 35 feet deep, with very blue water, these dual lagoons are limited to divers only. On any week-end there will be over 200 diving students. No fish, lot's of mud. The numerous underwater platforms with their "knee grab" wooden benches are a clever way to keep novices from silting up the water. By the time I got there late afternoon it was pretty murky. Hardly Cozumel, but not without a certain charm.

The next weekend, I had the opportunity to do some REAL diving. I broke speed records to make it to Freeport before the boat launched. The live-aboard MV Fling, operated by Rinn Boats left at 10 o'clock for the seven hour ride to the National Marine Sanctuary, The Flower Gardens. Comfortable bunk accommodations and an excellent, friendly, experienced crew rivaled any of the boat trips we've taken to the Channel Islands. Woke up the next morning to sunny skies, 90 foot visibility and 85 degree warm water. (Funny, they thought the viz was bad and the water was cold -what do they know from cold?).

Wow, now THIS was like Cozumel! The Flower Gardens are the northernmost coral reefs in the United States. The existence of these two massive reefs 500 miles north of any other coral reef has long baffled scientists. But there it is: brain coral covered by brilliant colored sponges, star coral, finger coral and tropical fish galore. Puffer fish, queen angels, wrasses, parrot fish, filefish, spotted eels, bristle worms, bat rays, barracudas and more.

I paired up with an Austrian diver named Thomas who had considerable experience diving in Indonesia. He told me of diving with mantas and hammerheads, but that he's never seen a whale shark. It was also his first Flower Gardens trip. As we jumped into the warm water on our first dive we were met by a friendly loggerhead turtle who curiously swam within 2 inches of my mask. What a great beginning to a fabulous week-end.

It didn't stop there, dive after dive was a stunning visual feast. The Rinn Boats crew run this trip for maximum dive action. After mooring at each new dive site, the "gate time" was only about 15 minutes. Once out of the water, all divers were required to sit out for two and a half hours. Not a bad idea considering how deep it was and how many dives were possible. It's timed to fit in up to 6 dives on the first day, including a 10 pm night dive. Between dives we relaxed on the huge upstairs deck, ate and ate more, napped and watched videos.

On day two we left the Flower Gardens and headed for Stetson Bank. Lying atop a salt dome, this bank has the rocky substrate that we're more familiar with in California. It forms a magnificent wall with encrusting sponges. Oh, and there's firecoral too. Supposedly it's in the shape of a Stetson Hat.

As Thomas and I were suiting up for the second dive, we hear the two words that divers all over the world pray someday they will experience. "Whale Shark!" There it was, an unmistakable flat head and white spots. At only fifteen feet long, our visitor appeared to be a young one. A frenzy of dive gear ensued on the deck. My buddy, Thomas was the first one in the water making a beeline for the beast. I was about the tenth diver in and followed the crowd. After about five minutes of chasing other divers, I decided it wasn't worth it. We probably scared the poor thing away. So I dropped down the wall and chose to sight see on the reef instead of chasing big animals that I had no chance to catch.

Sitting in 80 feet of water, about 10 minutes later I looked up and had to laugh as the whale shark leisurely swam overhead in 40 feet followed by twelve frantically swimming divers trying to photograph it, touch it, catch a fin or just get close to it. I could hear dive computers beeping loudly as the divers swam up and down through the water column ignoring all good sense of safe dive profiles. Too funny.

Chasing the whale shark caused most of the divers to become low on air and return to the boat. That gave me a bit more time to explore on my own and enjoy the scenery. Coming up the ascent line with only one other diver, we had the chance to enjoy Senor Whale Shark by ourselves. Hanging on at the 15 foot safety stop, it swam near. It hovered about 15 feet away from me - it must have been wondering why I wasn't chasing it. Big eyes staring straight at you - what a thrill. I came very close to letting go of the anchor line and doing the obvious, but for some reason I decided to just stay still and watch it.

The last dive of the trip was one of the Oil Rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. While it was another chance of a lifetime dive, including tricky maneuvering to swim into the dive site, encrusted pilings that descend into an abyss and hundreds of schooling fish. It was hard to erase the images and magic of the Whale Shark. On the trip back to Freeport, the shark grew from fifteen to forty feet. The telephone lines would certainly be busy that night with all of us feeling an adrenaline high from a full week-end of excitement, Texas style.

-- Loretta Lowe

Warm Water Trip for 2001!

It's been a few years since our last organized club warm water trip.

I'm thinking about coordinating one next year. Perhaps May or June. Any ideas or preferences? Belize? Bonaire? Florida Keys? Jamaica? Mexico? Hawaii? Let me know if you are interested, what dates work best for you, what your primary concerns are (cost? type of diving? comfort or rugged? time away? other activities in addition to diving?)

Please email (lorettalowe@earthlink.net) or call me (415) 305-7517

About SFRD (San Francisco Reef Divers): The Reef Diver Times is the official newsletter of the San Francisco Reef Divers, a not for profit community organization dedicated to safe sport diving and the preservation of our ocean resources. Membership is \$25 annually, dues payable to SFRD. There is a general Club meeting on the third Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm. We meet at the Presidio Alliance Building, Room B, 563 Ruger Street, The Presidio, San Francisco. Ruger is the first left after entering via the Lombard Gate Entrance.

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SFRD

<http://www.sfreefdivers.org>

Reef Diver Times

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