



## IT'S A JELLYFISH – NO, IT'S A – WELL, WHAT THE HECK IS IT ...?

By Gerda Hurter

The second Saturday of the month, November that is, could not come fast enough for me as October had turned out to be quite dry – well, from a saltwater immersion focus at least. So Pierre and I headed down Friday afternoon to wander around Carmel and getting our Oyster fix at AW Shucks before indulging in another seafood extravaganza at our favorite restaurant, Passionfish. There we were joined by Norm and Lupe discussing and solving the worlds problems over a wonderful bottle of Blaufrankisch, one of the three main red wines of Austria. What a great way to start the weekend!

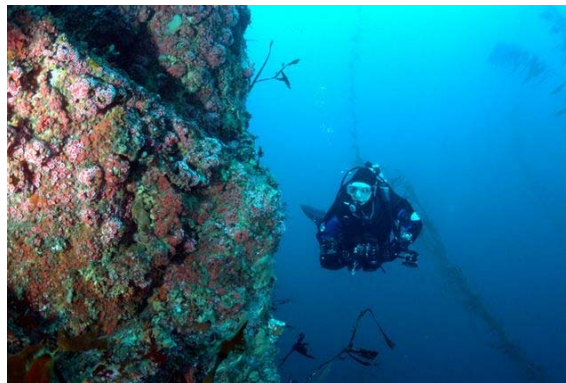
The next morning, fortifying ourselves with a Peet's cappuccino and latte and a fresh bagel straight out of the oven, still warm and steaming, we headed down to the pier to meet up with all the divers scheduled to be on board the Cypress. Capt. Phil was at the helm and Jean and Eric ready to tend to our dive needs.

The ocean was calm and the ride down south a smooth affair. It promised to be a great day.

The first stop was at Mal Paso, named after Mal Paso Creek.

Hmm, not to dwell on the name to much, as Malpaso" is Spanish for "bad step" or "misstep, Capt. Phil informed us that this is where Eastwood, yes, Clint that is, has spent much of his life and thought it to be an appropriately ironic choice for his

production company - *Malpaso Production*. Ironic, because Eastwood's agent had told him that taking on the role of the *Man with No Name* would be a "bad step" for his career...



Well, no mal pasos on this dive day either. All three dives were good, with varying degrees of good in a sequence of best – good – better.

Pierre and I contemplated on this on our drive home, 'What makes a dive a good dive and what criteria do you use to then rank for better and best?'

Quite a subjective subject in my opinion.

Would love to hear from all of you regarding what your take on this is.



So, to start that thread, the 1<sup>st</sup> was the best dive for me that day. Why? When comparing all three I am thinking of visibility, the amount of kelp and light filtering through the water column, the colors and marine life encountered, the water temperature, how quickly or long it took to start relaxing and go with the flow / surge, the current ...

Continue on page 4

### GENERAL MEETING DECEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2009 AT SINDBADS

Pier 2, Embarcadero Street, San Francisco

MEET at 7:00p.m. for socializing, DRINKS &  
FOOD and 7:30p.m. for CLUB BUSINESS



*Der Stammtisch*

By Pierre Hurter

As you may have heard, our November Cypress Sea dive was epic. Gerda and I managed to cut lose the mortal coils that bind us to work around noon on Friday, so we headed to Monterey in the early afternoon. The weather was crisp and clear and even the traffic seemed to be enjoying the day. We checked into the Lone Oak around two o'clock, dropped off our bags and set off to ramble the streets of Carmel.

Carmel by the Sea has always appealed to me, I remember going to the Mediterranean Market, located on the corner of Ocean & Mission for 48 years, when I was ten or so and reveling in the smell of the cheeses, fascinated by the sausages hanging from the rafters and mesmerized by the rows of exotic wines in the back. Remember there was a time even in California where cheese that wasn't orange or white and sliced and individually wrapped was rare and generally held to be suspicious. The old Mediterranean Market was one of those oases that catered to people who liked stinky cheeses, suspicious sausages and wine that didn't come from Modesto, either for reasons of heritage or affectation.

Today's Carmel is poised on the crossroads, torn between an idyllic past of cottages, gnarled trees and artists and the hard edged reality of an ongoing recession that's knocking the stuffing out of the T-shirt shops and galleries' with equal fervor. Founded in 1902, the town began as an enclave devoted to artists, poets and writers. There are parts of town that still have a vaguely bohemian feeling, but they are few and far between. With a population of around 4,000 it doesn't take long to see the sights. Nowadays it seems to be on the cusp of change, its population is 95% white, mostly over 50, and mostly part timers. According to the local chamber of commerce only 27% of the homes in Carmel are occupied full time. The only bright spot is that the business climate has slowed the pace of teardowns.

**Continued on page 6**

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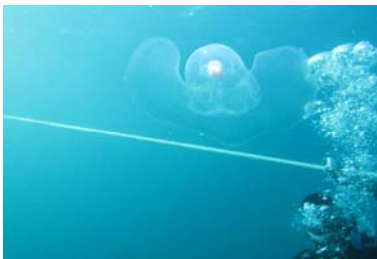
## Reefer's Rap 2009 – 2010

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DECEMBER '09</b></p> <p>02 - Officers Meeting 02 - CenCal Board Meeting 12 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat - Pierre - 415.810.6851 <b>16 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>JANUARY</b></p> <p>01 - New Year's Day - Point Lobos Dive 06 - Officers Meeting 09 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat - Pierre - 415.810.6851 <b>22 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b> 23-31 - 41<sup>st</sup> International Boat Show - Dusseldorf - <a href="http://www.boot.de">www.boot.de</a> 30-31 - 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Texas Dive Show - <a href="http://www.divechronicles.com">www.divechronicles.com</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FEBRUARY</b></p> <p>03 - Officers Meeting 03 - 07 - SF Ocean Film Festival 13 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat - Pierre - 415.810.6851 <b>17 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b> 19-21 - Our World Underwater - <a href="http://www.ourworldunderwater.com">www.ourworldunderwater.com</a></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MARCH</b></p> <p>03 - Officers Meeting 05-07 - The Boston Sea Rovers - <a href="http://www.bostonsearovers.com">www.bostonsearovers.com</a> 13 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat - Pierre - 415.810.6851 <b>17 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b> 26-28 - Beneath the Sea - New Jersey - <a href="http://www.beneaththe.sea.org">www.beneaththe.sea.org</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>APRIL</b></p> <p>01 - Abalone Opener - Fort Ross - CenCal 07 - Officers Meeting 10 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat - Pierre - 415.810.6851 10-11 - Bay Area Dive Show - San Jose - <a href="http://www.divechronicles.com">www.divechronicles.com</a> 16-18 - Ocean Fest - For Lauderdale - <a href="http://www.oceanfest.com">www.oceanfest.com</a> <b>21 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MAY</b></p> <p>05 - Officers Meeting 08 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat - Pierre - 415.810.6851 15 - 16 - Scuba Show - Long Beach - <a href="http://www.scubashow.com">www.scubashow.com</a> <b>19 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b> 21-23 - Dive &amp; Travel Expo - Tacoma - <a href="http://www.diveandtravelexpo.com">www.diveandtravelexpo.com</a></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>JUNE</b></p> <p>02 - Officers Meeting 12 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat - Pierre - 415.810.6851 <b>16 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b> TBD - Abalone Closer</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>JULY</b></p> <p>07 - Officers Meeting 10 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat. - Pierre - 415.810.6851 <b>21 - Meeting - Sinbad'</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AUGUST</b></p> <p>TBD - Abalone Opener 04 - Officers Meeting 09-11 - Channel Islands - Jim Vallario - 415.566.0784 <b>18 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SEPTEMBER</b></p> <p>01 - Officers Meeting <b>15 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b> 11 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat - Pierre - 415.810.6851</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OCTOBER</b></p> <p>06 - Officers Meeting 09 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat. - Pierre - 415.810.6851 <b>20 - Meeting - Sinbad's - Officer Nominations !!!</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NOVEMBER</b></p> <p>03 - Officers Meeting 13 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat. - Pierre - 415.810.6851 <b>17 - Meeting - Sinbad's - Officer Elections !!!</b> 17 - 21 - The Dema Show - Las Vegas - <a href="http://www.demashow.com">www.demashow.com</a> TBD - Abalone Closer</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DECEMBER</b></p> <p>01 - Officers Meeting 11 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat - Pierre - 415.810.6851 * <b>15 - Meeting - Sinbad's - Christmas Party !!!</b></p>		

What the heck is it ..? - from page 1

What sticks out the most is the marine life. Not only did we encounter a school of juvenile Mola Molas and an older one coming close to check us out, it must have known we weren't seals and interested in biting of its fins, but we also encountered *Corolla calceolas*, pteropods or pelagic opisthobranchs, for which the common name is *Sea Butterfly*.

What is it? Well it's a flapping, swimming nudibranch. They are gelatinous zooplankton, a relative of the snails. They do not possess a shell and look like jellyfish.



They reminded me of the creatures from the movie Abyss, except being only 10 centimeters long, the most.

What great company while hanging and doing our safety stop, not knowing at that point what I was looking at, all the while enjoying the sight. Ralph Larson, a fellow Reefer pointed them out in the invertebrate identification book on board during the surface interval and with this tipping the scale to make this the best dive of the day for me. Fascinating creatures for sure!



All dive photos in this issue courtesy of



Curt Degler

&



Royston Nguyen

**OCTOBER SAN DIEGO TRIP  
(OR...BETTER LATE THAN NEVER)  
(OR...GERDA! PUT DOWN THOSE SCHNITZEL SCISSORS!)**

By Jim Vallario

So...a wreck diving trip to San Diego?

No biggie.

Armin Luggen organized one of those a few years ago and it was great.

Diving San Clemente Island?

Once again, big whoop. Didn't we just do that in August on our Channel Islands trip?

But wait (as the TV commercials say): How about wreck diving on Saturday and San Clemente on Sunday?

That's just what Bhushan and Jim did, along with Bhushan's friend Nir. And here is their story:

We drove down Friday, and since Bhushan was driving, we were only subsonic a couple of times. Actually, it was a relaxing trip down, except for getting caught in the L.A. rush hour traffic, which was a nightmare.

Naturally, given Jim's bad karma, he was driving for that stretch.

Naturally.

Anyway, we spent the night in a hotel across the street from the boat dock, boarded the Humboldt bright and early, and had two terrific dives on the Yukon and the Ruby E.

Did we know in advance that we would have flat calm water and 70 foot viz?

We did not, but we took full advantage of the conditions.

The Yukon was just about visible from the surface and seemed to be covered with white metridium. With such great viz you could get a better perspective on the size of the ship. The Ruby E is a much smaller wreck and covered with multi-colored life. Circumnavigated the whole boat, which you can't do on the Yukon.

Jim couldn't resist dropping into some of the cutouts to see what he could see, even though he is not "certified" for penetration. (We are talking wreck diving here folks, so please stop with the snickering).

Back at the dock by 1pm and we had the whole day to explore San Diego before boarding the Horizon at 10pm. This is a boat the size of the Peace (maybe

Continue on page 5

San Diego Trip from page 4

bigger), with bunks and a huge galley. While we slept, the Horizon motored all night to San Clemente.

Woke up to breakfast, a site briefing and into the water. We did three dives (Inside Boiler, Petters Rock, Little Flower) and we could have squeezed in a fourth if we had been so inclined. Once again, flat calm water and great viz. Kelp forest, lobsters (everywhere), schools of barracuda, garibaldi, sheephead, swim-throughs, etc, etc.

Another great day of diving. And to top it all off, the return trip to San Diego in late afternoon was so calm you didn't know you were on a boat. Some of us remember other return trips that were less than serene. Since this trip was so wonderful, we are thinking of doing it again next year. Any interest?

Stammtisch from page 2

I did see a beret or two, but I get a sense that the Bohemians of the past have mostly moved on in search of cheaper rents. Not that I have an issue with age, or affluence for that matter, but I foresee the day when it will be neither Bohemian, artistic nor interesting. Picture wall to wall RV's, diesel fume belching tour buses and T-shirt shops catering to passer's through anxious to stop snap a few photos, maybe buy a fleece pullover and a fake fur sea otter on their way to parts unknown, an aging hoi polloi demographic. I suppose on a positive note, at least I'll feel right at home, but still change is always hard, goodbye Edward Weston and Ansel Adams, hello



“painter of light”, no not William Turner, the other one, Thomas Kinkaid. Clint Eastwood may yet have to return “to go ahead, make my day.”

One of the changes I lament is the passing of *La Bohme*. The restaurant is long gone, even though its website still lingers on in the ether, with their last *prix-fixe* menu of November 2005, *Escalope de Veau à la Moutarde* or my favorite *Entrecôte, sauce Bordelaise*. When you wander around you can't help but notice the shuttered shops, even Wilkes Bashford is gone, though he seems to maintaining a toe hold in San Francisco. Thank God I still have someplace to buy my bespoke suits and John Lobb shoes; other than their yearly trunk show, where else could I buy decent footwear without going to London, Vienna or Budapest?

Back in Carmel, it was quiet as we checked out the local haunts. There are a couple of excellent photo galleries which even though I can't afford most of their offerings, are always fun to look in on. Edward Weston did much of his work here beginning in 1929 and ending in 1948 with the onset of Parkinson's disease. Ansel Adams moved to Carmel in 1962 and published the majority of his work in his Carmel studio. Other famous denizens have included Doris Day, Robert Heinlein, Upton Sinclair and lets not forget Jennifer Aniston and Kim Novak; a truly eclectic village by the sea.

After an afternoon vicariously building my collection of work by

Adams, Weston as well as Roman Loranc and Ryuijie we grabbed a couple of barstools at Aw Shucks Oyster & Cocktail Bar. An always reliable haunt for fresh oysters, chowder, a good selection of beers on tap and with a back-bar chock-a-block full of all the brown and clear liquors you could ask for. A dozen oysters, a pint of Carmel Wheat for Gerda and a Hegarrden White Ale for me and we were off to do some more sight seeing, a quick look at Fourtane's Estate Jewelry to see if they had any of the vintage watches I lust after, a Rolex Comex, or an Omega 300 or a Blancpain Fifty Fathoms all watches from the 60's originally used by military and commercial divers in the era before quartz or computers.



Friday evening found us back at Passion Fish for dinner. We meet up with Norm and Lupe and had a great dinner. I'm not sure which I like better about this place, the wine list or the menu, there were three different *Zweigelt's* as well as a *Blaufränkisch* or two on the wine list. There's nothing like a long enjoyable dinner with good company before heading out to sea.

Saturday morning found us bright eyed if not exactly bushy tailed down on the dock waiting for the Cypress Sea. Nothing goes as well with the tangy salt air of an early morning as a fresh bagel and a latte from Peet's. The pier was awash with doubles, stage bottles and paraphernalia of every type. In all there were seven sets of doubles on board with a total of thirteen divers. The Reef Dive contingent consisted of Norm, Royston, Curtis, Ralph, Gerda and I. Tim

had planned to be onboard but unexpected joys of home ownership kept him shore bound. With Captain Phil at the helm and Sean and Eric as the able bodied crew we headed south towards Mal Paso.

We managed three dives, Mal Paso where a group of six Mola Molas came sailing by along with a solo flyer who kept us company at the anchor line. The second dive was at Que Paso Creek where we followed the ridge that extends from the creek into the sea; we experienced a touch of current on this one, especially trying to get from the gate to the anchor chain. Our final dive was at Pinnacles, always a favorite site. We tied off a reel, though not the Pathfinder Extreme I had seen online, a special order job with 3700 feet of #24 braided nylon cave line. I'm not sure I have enough air to reel that far, out and back. We made due with my poquito reel as we set off to explore the surrounding blue.

We spent a little more time poking around then anticipated and ended up hanging around the anchor chain for ten minutes of deco; a great time to watch all of the little critters hanging about the kelp or swaying by in the current. Also a good reminder that every dive you do is a decompression dive. That three minute safety stop is a decompression stop no matter what you chose to call it. It doesn't pay to rush, people do get hit, even those who have been diving for a long time and it is often what some people refer to as an undeserved hit.

One of the divers onboard who I have been on a few trip with recently had a hit (decompression illness) in her shoulder. She had been doing repetitive dives on air and noticed that afterwards her shoulder was sore. After awhile it became obvious that it was not

a pulled muscle but decompression sickness, DCS, divers' disease, the bends, caisson disease or whatever you want to call it. Fortunately, the hit was mild and oxygen therapy relieved the symptoms. The point being, it pays to watch your times, your exposure and the cumulative impact of your dives. You don't have to be deep to get hit.

A highlight of the trip back to Monterey was the soundtrack. Phil and Gerda both had their I - thingies loaded with obscure and slightly bizarre music. Gerda has a large collection of obscure and mostly subversive German language 70's pop. As for Phil, Google "Gogol Bordello", then search for the "Wanderlust King" and crank it up as loud as you can. For those of you who haven't had the pleasure, Gogol Bordello is not the favorite haunt of Nikolai Gogol, it's much more complicated than that.

Picture Jimmy Hendrix, but in this alternative Bizarro World he comes from the Ukraine, has deep Gypsy roots and plays and electrified accordion. That begins to give you a sense of what we listened to on the way home from our dives.

Managed to survive the trauma of Thanksgiving relatively unscathed; the orgy of gluttony having come to the inevitable end. Of course when you start with a chicken instead of a turkey, it's pushing the limits to call the activity gluttony. It certainly didn't feel as if we were participating in one of the deadly sins. For those who don't remember or where never exposed to formal church teachings they are; pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath and sloth. The whole thing was always too complicated for me, who can keep track, is it a venal sin or a capital sin. As if it were not all confusing enough, Thomas Aquinas went so far as to parse

gluttony into constituent parts; eating too soon, too expensively, too much, too eagerly, too daintily, too wildly.

At any rate, we survived with the help of a few well chosen digestifs. Leave it to the Europeans to come up with a pair of bookends like aperitifs and digestifs. A drink to get your juices flowing and one to top off the whole smoldering affair and hopefully bring you some relief. The word aperitif comes from the Latin verb *aperire*, which means "to open." Leave it to the clever Latin's to come up with a name for everything we do.



The range of flavors boggles the imagination from the artichoke leaf flavor of Cynar to the rhubarb and orange infused Aperol, there's something out there for every taste and ailment. Who would have thought that Jägermeister, once kept on hand to quell an unruly stomach would become the chuggers choice? I tend towards a shot of Kirschwasser or Kirsch myself. I keep a bottle of homebrewed Alpine white lightning on hand for such occasions. This is not to be confused with the Schnapps you might pick up at your corner liquor store along with a bottle of Mad Dog, Thunderbird, or Ripple. Kirsch is an *eaux de vie* (water of life) that is made by double-distilling some 22 pounds of cherries per liter of joyous liquid.

I'm off to rent "A Christmas Story", try it ... "I triple dog dare ya!"

So until next year, enjoy the holidays!



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**SINCE JANUARY 1<sup>ST</sup> 1973**

**ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO REEF DIVERS (SFRD):**

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". The General Meeting is held the 3rd Wednesday of the month at Sinbad's, located at Pier 2, Embarcadero Street, SF, CA 94111. Meet at 7:00pm for socializing, drinks and food and 7:30 pm for club business and entertainment. For more information, visit <http://www.sfreefdivers.org/>.

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