



## COZUMEL TRIP

By Jim Valario

Norm, Lupe, Jim & Mary Chris spent a week in Cozumel last December with about seven other couples. Stayed at Scuba Club Cozumel (AKA Galapago Inn). Right on the water and all meals included (along with daily two-tank boat dive and unlimited shore diving).

In a word...BORRRING!!

Day after day of nothing but 80 degree water,

Day after day of 100 foot vis,

Day after day huge coral and sponge formations, tropical fish, colorful walls, large eagle rays and glimpses of the elusive Splendid Cozumel Toadfish (\*) (no, that's NOT the new nickname for Norm).

Where was the excitement of trying to re-board the boat as the swim-step gyrated in a 50-degree arc?



Where was the adventure of trying to find your buddy in 10 to 15 foot vis while the surge swept you from pillar to post?

Add to that the fact that you're not diving with the equipment you've come to know and love; dry suit with comfy, tight latex seals, heavy underwear, heavy, HEAVY weight belt, thick confining hood and gloves.

Does the word masochist come to mind, boys and girls?

In the interests of scientific objectivity, I'll probably drag myself back to Cozumel next

December, just to make sure my first impressions (or in my case, fourth impressions) were accurate.

It's the least I can do for the club.

(\*)The Splendid Toadfish aka Coral Toadfish, is quite an interesting fish. This toadfish is unique in that it has only been found in one place. Cozumel Island, Mexico! (<http://www.thejump.net/id/id-page-3.htm>)

## DEEP DARK ENTERTAINMENT FROM THE GOLDEN ERA OF THE PAST

*Some collaborative fun from the Entertainment Czar and his Evil Twin*

We owe so much to Mike Nelson. Whether we are old enough to remember him or not--it doesn't matter. Like Cousteau, Mike Nelson changed the world and introduced diving into the living rooms of everyone with a TV and an imagination.

Pierre has a number of original episodes acquired by entirely legal means (of course).

We'll check out a couple of these, tell some stories of our own, and generally have a great time.

Ken

**Der Stammtisch**



Following up on last month's column I'm starting off on a slightly different tact than normal, with a dive report. January found our hearty band shuffling around the ice rimmed dock at Fisherman's Wharf, stomping our feet, hands thrust deep in pockets to ward off the early morning chill while we waited for the Cypress Sea.

The Cypress Sea came around the bend as we stood on the now steaming dock. Captain Phil, Steve and Dan handed out the obligatory waivers and started hoisting aboard doubles, stage bottles and cameras. It looked like the staging area for a local deep wreck dive. Gear stowed and moorings slipped, we made our way out of the harbor past the restaurants on their rickety piers and into a glorious sun rise. We headed south; and kept going and going and going ...

Our first dive was at Que Paso, the visibility was in the 40 to 50 foot range. *Corynactis californica* covered the walls, huge schools of fish. Lots of nooks and crannies, combined with surface conditions that made a mirror look rippled, it was just the ticket for the day's warm-up dive.

For our second encounter, we headed even further south, by now we had been instructed to keep a lookout for Mexican Navy patrol boats. We dropped anchor at a spot called Point Rock and after a quick briefing dropped down to the rocky reef below the boat. Saw a good sized wolf eel, cooly poking his head out from the rocks. This is as far south as I have been, south of the Bixby Bridge in Big Sur. You know the one, built in 1932, it pops up every so often in car and promotional ads for the area. You can almost picture yourself blasting across the span, hair in the wind, the *Ducati's* throaty roar keeping you company as Steppenwolfs *Born to by Wild* blares in your head ... Get your motor runnin' ... head out on the highway ... Lookin' for adventure ... and whatever comes our way.

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**Payments for membership and activities  
should be mailed to:  
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515 Diamond Street  
San Francisco, CA 94114**

## REEFER'S RAP 2005

<b>JANUARY</b>	<b>FEBRUARY</b>	<b>MARCH</b>
<p>01 - New Year's Day - Breakwater Pierre - 415.285.6293</p> <p>05 - Officers Meeting</p> <p>15 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat Pierre - 415.285.6293</p> <p>19 - Meeting - Sinbad's</p>	<p>02 - Officers Meeting</p> <p>12 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat Pierre - 415.285.6293</p> <p>16 - Meeting - Sinbad's</p>	<p>02 - Officers Meeting</p> <p>05 - Birthday Beach dive - Gerda</p> <p>12 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat Pierre - 415.285.6293</p> <p>16 - Meeting - Sinbad's</p>
<b>APRIL</b>	<b>MAY</b>	<b>JUNE</b>
<p>02 - Abalone Opener - Fort Ross - CenCal</p> <p>06 - Officers Meeting</p> <p>09 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat Pierre - 415.285.6293 *</p> <p>20 - Meeting - Sinbad's</p>	<p>04 - Officers Meeting</p> <p>07- Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat Pierre - 415.285.6293</p> <p>18 - Meeting - Sinbad's</p>	<p>01 - Officers Meeting</p> <p>11 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sun Pierre - 415.285.6293 *</p> <p>15 - Meeting - Sinbad's</p> <p>TBD - Abalone Closer</p>
<b>JULY</b>	<b>AUGUST</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER</b>
<p>01 - Channel Island Payment Due</p> <p>06 - Officers Meeting</p> <p>09 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat. Pierre - 415.285.6293</p> <p>20 - Meeting - Sinbad's</p>	<p>TBD - Abalone Opener</p> <p>03 - Officers Meeting</p> <p>13 - 16 - Channel Islands Jim Vallario - 415.566.0784</p> <p>17 - Meeting - Sinbad's</p>	<p>07 - Officers Meeting</p> <p>09 - 11 - Lake Tahoe Dive Norm Knutson</p> <p>10 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat Pierre - 415.285.6293</p> <p>17 - Monterey Beach Cleanup Debra Gilmore</p> <p>21 - Meeting - Sinbad's</p> <p>TBD - Abalone Opener</p>
<b>OCTOBER</b>	<b>NOVEMBER</b>	<b>DECEMBER</b>
<p>TBD - Alcatraz swim/paddle - Tim invitational@south-end.org</p> <p>05 - Officers Meeting</p> <p>08 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat. Pierre - 415.285.6293 *</p> <p>19 - Meeting - Sinbad's – Officer Nominations !!!</p>	<p>02 - Officers Meeting</p> <p>16 - Meeting - Sinbad's - Officer Elections!!!</p> <p>19 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat. Pierre - 415.285.6293</p> <p>TBD - Abalone Closer</p>	<p>07 - Officers Meeting</p> <p>10 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat Pierre - 415.285.6293 *</p> <p>21 - Meeting - Sinbad's - Christmas Party!!!</p>

## “ADD-ON” CHANNEL ISLANDS TRIP MAY 2005

For those of you who may want to do more than one Channel Islands trip this year, two of our “seasoned” members (“seasoned” is code for “old”) are doing a northern islands trip on the Vision. It’s a Friday, Saturday, Sunday trip, offered by Aqua Safaris in Santa Cruz. Trip cost is \$449 and the dates are May 27, 28 and 29. (***NOW YOU KNOW WHAT A BARGAIN OUR PEACE TRIP IS.***) Don’t forget that Monday, May 30<sup>th</sup> is Memorial Day.

If you’re interested, you can contact Aqua Safaris @ 831-479-4386.



P.S. – The “seasoned” members are Norm Knutson and Jim Vallario.

### Stammtisch – from page 2

All right, alright ... back to the diving. The dive was great, on the way back to the anchor I couldn’t seem to find it, no problem at 70 feet all you had to do was look up and there was the hull of the ship. The anchor can’t be far away.

Our third dive found us at a place imaginatively named, Locals Ledge. I dropped into the water and made my way to the anchor. I looked back and noticed that Gerda was already working a little harder to make any headway. By the time Joerg jumped in the current had picked up to where he was heading towards the stern. Phil dropped a length of line and started towing divers to the anchor line. The current was fierce as we made our way hand over hand down the anchor line. Once at the anchor we used the surge and went from kelp stipe to kelp stipe until we



dropped into a canyon where it was current and surge free. Another great dive and once topside we got to watch just how quickly a surface current can take a diver away.

One of the doubles teams had shot a bag while doing their hang, they must have been holding on with all they had, the bag looked like a flag in a gale force wind. When they let go, they took off like a rocket. Points out why it is handy to have a surface marker, you don’t always know where you’ll be coming up.

On the cruise back we watched schools of *Ricco’s* dolphins tagging along besides us, gray whales spouting and diving. Just another gorgeous day in paradise, best of all no one had a parking ticket waiting for them when we returned. To celebrate we wandered over to the London Bridge Pub and commemorated

Gerda’s 200<sup>th</sup> dive with a couple of pints of *Strongbow* cider. We also met our newest prospective member, Bhushan and Blues daughter, Indigo.

It’s odd when you stop to think about it, for all of our technology and curiosity as a species, we are only scratching the surface, literally, of the ocean. At about 220 feet, the air we like to breath becomes toxic and can kill you. Drop down to 558 feet and only two people, Audrey Mestre and her husband Pipin Ferreras have been there on a breath-hold dive and Audrey didn’t make it back alive. Keep going until you reach 1,010 feet and you will experience what John Bennet did in 2001. Around 1,969 feet and nuclear powered submarines start to creek and groan. The elephant seal can make it all the way to 5,000 feet, beating our the sperm whale who max’s out at 3,200 feet. The *Titanic* lies in state at 12,500, alone except for the occasional couple getting

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## CHANNEL ISLANDS TRIP DIVE BOAT "PEACE"

It's filling up fast!!!



When	: 8-14, 15, 16-2005 (Sun, Mon, Tue)
Destination	: Southern Channel Islands (Including San Clemente)
Departure Info	: Departs 10:00PM on 8-13-05 from Ventura, Ca
Cost	: \$360 (Includes fuel surcharge for San Clemente)

As usual, the Reef Divers have chartered ½ of the boat for 2005. This equates to 14 spots.

If you want to go on the trip, please do the following:

Mark the dates on your calendar/planner/PDA.

**Send Jim Vallario (415-566-0784, 117 Chaves Ave, San Francisco, 94127) a check for \$100, made out to San Francisco Reef Divers.** Receipt of your check by the coordinator puts your name on the list.

On 7-01-05, send the remainder (\$260) to our treasurer (Pierre Hurter, 515 Diamond St., San Francisco, 94114)

The Peace has Nitrox capability. The fee for unlimited fills on a three-day trip is \$75, payable when you arrive on the boat. The requirements are:

A Nitrox certification card (to be shown to the Divemaster).

A full tank of Nitrox prior to boarding the boat. (Their system does not require an oxygen-clean tank).

The tank must have a Nitrox ID sticker, or some other form of Nitrox ID, visible on the tank.

Some reminders:

Bring all of your dive gear, including weight belt and one tank.

If you've let your DAN insurance lapse, now would be a good time to renew.

Each bunk has a pillow and blanket, so if you require more, i.e. sheets, a sleeping bag, etc. plan accordingly.

Food and non-alcoholic drinks are included. If beer and wine are part of your diet, please bring your own. (Remember the rule: Your first drink is your last dive).

**We will attempt, once again, to dive San Clemente Island. It is the southernmost island in the Channel Islands chain. The fuel surcharge increased dramatically this year, hence the increased fee for the trip. Last year, we also dove Santa Catalina. The consensus from the group was that Farnsworth Bank was great, but the rest of Catalina was pretty tame. We will, therefore, attempt to concentrate on the other southern islands and not do Catalina. Lovers of Avalon (Marlin Club, Chi Chi Club, et al) will have to get their Jagermeister fix some other way.**

**It's a plot to avoid the ongoing investigation of 'skip' – editor's comment**

**EXTEND THE FUN, OR JUST MEET US THERE**

**Wednesday, August 17, 2005**

**KAYAKING THE CAVES OF SANTA CRUZ ISLAND**

*“After diving the Channel Islands in August on the Peace last year, we thought it would be fun to kayak the caves of Santa Cruz Island ...It was unbelievable and one of my best days of the year...”*(Norm Knutson)

Ocean Kayak sit on top: Single\$24 for the day and double rents for \$44 a day. Includes a quick lesson, advice on where to go and a map.

The rental folks will meet up with us 1 hour before the Island Packers boat leaves. They will load the kayaks on the big boat and take them off and bring them to the beach. Also, they will pickup the boats later and return them to the mainland where the rental folks will take them. **CAN'T GET ANY EASIER THEN THAT!!!**

Check out Sea Kayaking Santa Cruz Island's photo gallery at <http://www.islandkayakers.com>

**ALL YOU NEED TO DO:** Call ahead and make reservations. No credit card is needed to hold your spot. Phone number is (805) 390-8213

**Coordinator:** Norm Knutson 510-381-1670..mobile

**Stammtisch from page 4**

married or the evermore common souvenir hunters. This is close to the average depth of the ocean. It's pitch black, there's no light and the water temperature is near freezing.

In 1960 Jacques Piccard and Navy lieutenant Don Walsh reached a depth of 35,800 feet in the submersible *Trieste*. Outside of their porthole a strange otherworldly fish swam by. It's been over forty years since that day and we are right back where we started from, scratching at the surface.

Closer to home, but still near the surface, at our January, meeting, Jacob Rosenstein, long time diver and member since 1988 shared his slides from his trip to Fiji. Armed with a Nikonos V and a venerable Nikonos II and a 20 mm lens, Jacob floated in waters

ranging from 74 to 79 degrees, just right for a 3 mm shorty. One of my favorite shots was of a gray reef shark veering off at the last moment as Jacob's strobes fired. Made we want to grab a couple of Hawaiian shirts and a pair of flip flops and head for warmer climes, maybe next year. In the meantime, those of you who have occasion to visit exotic climes, don't be shy, contact our entertainment guru, and you to could be in the spotlight.

While on the topic of entertainment, do you ever check out the adventures of Opus, the "politically, fashionably and aerodynamically incorrect" penguin who appears in the Chronicles Sunday' Pink Section? Well never mind, a couple of Sundays ago, they finally ran a strip which I not only understood, but could relate to. Opus has just

completed his first book *Computers for Idiots and Penguins*, his *magnum opus* (no pun intended) running to 6 million words. He is about to enter ... The Grand "SAVE"! The next scene shows a broken window and two bystanders looking at Bill the Cat crushed underneath a computer. The child utters these words "I think that's why they called it "WINDOWS"- (now that's what I call defenestration)

That's it for this month, February's Cypress Sea dive is already full, and the year is starting off well. I'd like to do some more beach diving this year. A little diving, maybe a BBQ or two, lying on the sand, beach dives ... they're priceless. See you all next month, until then, hit the save key often and get wet whenever you can.



# Time to Renew Your Membership

*We highly encourage you to also support the other organizations listed below when you pay your annual dues. (Please indicate your membership options with the checkboxes below.)*

- |                                                                              |           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> San Francisco Reef Divers (SFRD)                    | \$25      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Central California Council of Diving Clubs (CenCal) | 15        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sonoma County Abalone Network (SCAN)                | <u>10</u> |

*Show your support for all three! \$50*

Name:	_____				
Address:	_____				
City:	_____	State:	_____	Zip:	_____
Home Phone:	( ____ ) _____	Work Phone:	( ____ ) _____		
Email:	_____				
How would you like your newsletter delivered? ( <b>Choose one</b> ):					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Online at the SFRD website (preferred)				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mailed to my home address				

Please make checks payable to "San Francisco Reef Divers" and mail to: Pierre Hurter, SFRD Treasurer, 515 Diamond Street, San Francisco, CA 94114



**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 3rd Wednesday of the month at 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/>.

SAN FRANCISCO REEF DIVERS  
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