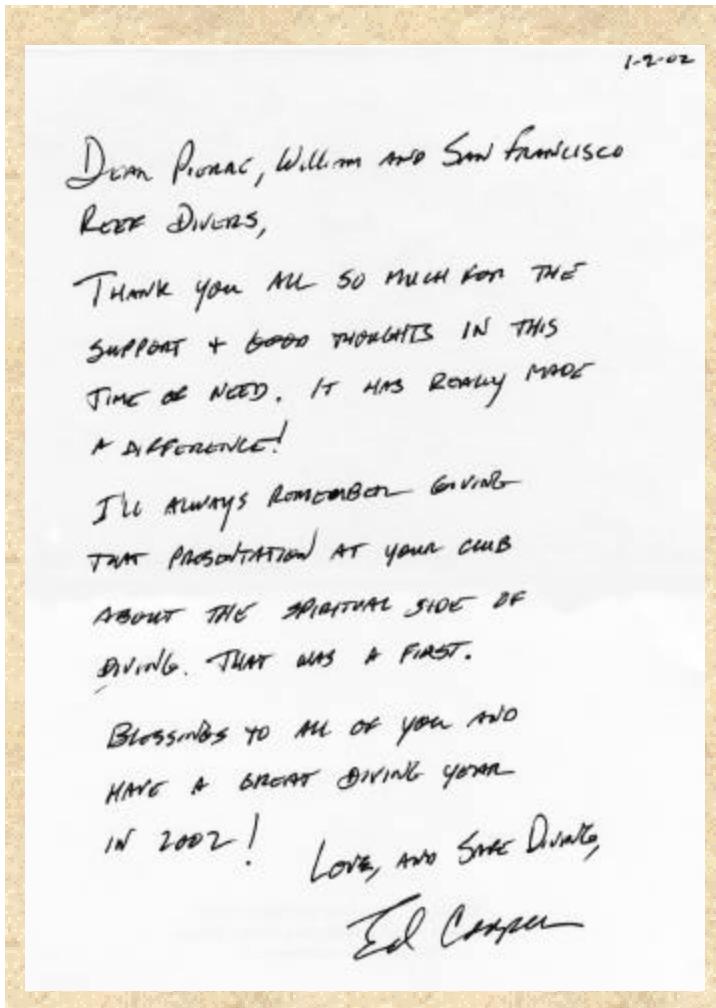




### A NOTE FROM ED COOPER...



### FEBRUARY ENTERTAINMENT



**Cocos Island** is a world class dive destination. Situated over 300 miles off the coast of Costa Rica it teems with fish and ocean pelagics. Join Frank King and Kathy Klein as they share their photos and experiences during a 2 week live-aboard dive trip on the Undersea Hunter.



### MEMBERSHIP - RENEW FOR 2002

If you have not done so yet, now is the time to renew your SFRD membership! If you don't, you'll miss out on our thrilling articles and guest speakers, dive community information and eyewitness accounts of exiting dive events. Please see the Membership Form (page 11) for details or contact Kharmen Roman (415) 519-4655 or [kharmen@melibe.com](mailto:kharmen@melibe.com) if you have further questions

**President's Corner**

By Pierre Hurter



Sunday, January 13 found a hardy band of Reefer's setting sail on the Cypress Sea heading south to the Outer Pinnacles. We had a stiff breeze and some light chop at the surface, enough to keep two of the boats passengers leaning over the rail for the better part of the trip. All of that was forgotten as we dropped down the anchor line and the visibility opened up to 50 feet plus. Our second dive was at Ling Reef opposite the "Lone Cedar" at Pebble Beach. Gerda and I dropped to the anchor at 65 feet and looked up to see the boat outlined in the sun above. We were surrounded by schools of fish numbering in the hundred's. Sightings included an octopus by Pam Radkey a Leopard shark by Ali, one of the other divers on the boat. Besides fish sightings I saw a nifty new toy, an "EyeSea" a sonar navigation system that you strap to your wrist. Drop the transmitter over the side, strap on the receiver and you're off. If you have to have one or there's a roll of 100-dollar bills weighing down your pockets, take a look at [www.xiosusa.com](http://www.xiosusa.com).

While on the topic of toys and gadgets, Nikon has announced that they will be discontinuing the Nikonos V in the near future. The market apparently isn't robust enough to warrant continued production. So much for a camera that started life as a collaboration between Jacques Costeau's company, *La Spiro Technique* and *Nikon*. Originally sold in France in 1961 under the name Calypso, the cameras went on sale in Japan with the more familiar Nikon label in 1963. The current model, the *Nikonos V* was introduced in 1984, in September 2001, Nikon issued a new release that the company would stop making the camera in the near future. In the words of the news release, "we are sorry for any problems

continued on page 4

**2002 SFRD OFFICERS**

|                                |                  |   |
|--------------------------------|------------------|---|
| <b>President</b>               | Pierre Hurter    | (415) 285-6293<br><a href="mailto:p.hurter@worldnett.att.net">p.hurter@worldnett.att.net</a>  |
| <b>Vice President</b>          | Robert Miché     | (415) 661-5540<br><a href="mailto:miche@mindspring.com">miche@mindspring.com</a>  |
| <b>Treasurer</b>               | Bill Donnelly    | (415) 924-5627<br><a href="mailto:bdonnelly@18004INJURY.com">bdonnelly@18004INJURY.com</a><br>P.O. Box 151223<br>San Rafael, CA 94915 |
| <b>Webmaster</b>               | Curt Degler      | (707) 570-0457<br><a href="mailto:cdegler@aquagraphy.com">cdegler@aquagraphy.com</a>  |
| <b>Newsletter Editor</b>       | Gerda Hurter     | (415) 285-6293<br><a href="mailto:p.hurter@worldnett.att.com">p.hurter@worldnett.att.com</a>  |
| <b>Entertainment Committee</b> | Bhushan Mudbhary | (415) 386-3714<br><a href="mailto:mudbhary@hotmail.com">mudbhary@hotmail.com</a>  |
|                                | Ken Gwin         | (415) 648-7046<br><a href="mailto:artxfxf@aol.com">artxfxf@aol.com</a>  |
| <b>AMCR Representative</b>     | Gene Kramer      | (415) 339-2785<br><a href="mailto:gene.kramer@adecco.com">gene.kramer@adecco.com</a>  |
| <b>CenCal Representative</b>   | Bill Galarneau   | (510) 451-2370  |
| <b>Membership Chairperson</b>  | Kharmen Roman    | (415) (415) 519-4655<br><a href="mailto:kharmenr@melibe.com">kharmenr@melibe.com</a>  |



Payments for membership and activities should be mailed to:  
Bill Donnelly  
P.O. Box 151223  
San Rafael, CA 94915

## REEFERS RAP

| <b>JANUARY 02</b>  | <b>FEBRUARY</b>  | <b>MARCH</b>  |
|--|--|---|
| <p>01 - <i>New Year's Day Dive</i><br/>Point Lobos</p> <p>13 - <i>Cypress Sea Boat Dive</i><br/>Coordinator: Jim Vallario<br/>(415) 566-0784</p> <p>16 - <i>General Meeting</i><br/>New Location: BOAT HOUSE</p> | <p>16 - <i>President's Day Dive</i><br/>Coordinator: Peter White<br/>(415) 775-2052</p> <p>20 - <i>General Meeting</i><br/><b>BOATHOUSE</b></p> <p>23 - <i>Cypress Sea Boat Dive - FULL</i><br/>Coordinator: Jim Vallario<br/>(415) 566-0784</p>   | <p>20 - <i>General Meeting</i><br/>BOATHOUSE</p> <p>23 - <i>Cypress Sea Boat Dive</i><br/>Saturday - 3 dives<br/>Coordinator: Jim Vallario<br/>(415) 566-0784</p>   |
| <b>APRIL</b>   | <b>MAY</b>   | <b>JUNE</b>   |
| <p>12 - <i>14Abalone Opener at Russian Gulch</i><br/>Coordinator: Ray Will<br/>(510) 531-5971</p> <p>17 - <i>General Meeting</i><br/>BOATHOUSE</p>   | <p>15 - <i>General Meeting</i><br/>BOATHOUSE</p> <p>23 - <i>Cypress Sea Boat Dive</i><br/>Saturday - 3 dives<br/>Coordinator: Jim Vallario<br/>(415) 566-0784</p>  | <p>19 - <i>General Meeting</i><br/>BOATHOUSE</p> <p>22 - <i>Cypress Sea Boat Dive</i><br/>Saturday - 3 dives<br/>Coordinator: Jim Vallario<br/>(415) 566-0784</p> <p>TBD - <i>Abalone Closer</i></p>  |
| <b>JULY</b>  | <b>AUGUST</b>  | <b>SEPTEMBER</b>  |
| <p>17 - <i>General Meeting</i><br/>BOATHOUSE</p> <p>27 - <i>Cypress Sea Boat Dive</i><br/>Saturday - 3 dives<br/>Coordinator: Jim Vallario<br/>(415) 566-0784</p>  | <p>18 - 20 <i>Channel Island Trip</i><br/>Coordinator: Jim Vallario<br/>(415) 566-0784</p> <p>21 - <i>General Meeting</i><br/>BOATHOUSE</p> <p>TBD - <i>Abalone Opener at Salt Point</i><br/>Coordinator: Pam Radkey<br/>(510) 527-5282</p>  | <p>18 - <i>General Meeting</i><br/>BOATHOUSE</p> <p>22 - <i>Cypress Sea Boat Dive</i><br/>Sunday - 3 dives<br/>Coordinator: Jim Valario<br/>(415) 566-0784</p> <p>TBD - <i>Alcatraz swim/paddle</i><br/>Coordinator: Pierre Hurter<br/>(415) 285-6293</p> |
| <b>OCTOBER</b>   | <b>NOVEMBER</b>  | <b>DECEMBER</b>   |
| <p>13 - <i>Cypress Sea Boat Dive</i><br/>Sunday - 2 dives<br/>Coordinator: Jim Vallario<br/>(415) 566-0784</p> <p>16 - <i>General Meeting</i><br/>BOATHOUSE</p>  | <p>20 - <i>General Meeting</i><br/><b>2003 OFFICERS ELECTIONS</b><br/>BOATHOUSE</p> <p>24 - <i>Cypress Sea Boat Dive</i><br/>Sunday. - 3 dives<br/>Coordinator: Jim Vallario<br/>(415) 566-0784</p> <p>TBD - <i>Annual Sea Ranch Weekend</i></p> <p>TBD - <i>Abalone Closer</i><br/>Coordinator: Robert Miché<br/>(415) 661-5540</p> <p>TBD - <i>Salmon Swim</i><br/>Coordinator: Frank King</p> | <p>18 - <i>Christmas Party</i><br/>at the BOATHOUSE !!!</p>   |

**President – continued page 2**

that this may cause, and ask you to understand our need to make this decision.” There will be a final run of 3000 cameras and then it’s over. Well there is always Ebay, did you happen to see the Nikonos III for sale the other day?

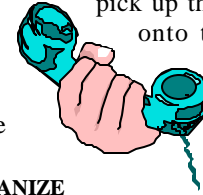
Back to the ocean, there have been fourteen sightings of Lionfish in Atlantic waters so far. Lionfish, Pterois volians, native to the western Pacific and the Indian Ocean, have been showing up from Palm Beach to Long Island. The jury is still out as to where they are coming from. They are popular with saltwater aquarium owners and there is some speculation that they may have outgrown their tanks and been released into open waters. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Corp (NOAA) is investigating. NOAA has two major concerns; the possible negative impacts on native species and that divers who are unaware of their poisonous nature may be tempted to handle them. Maybe they’re just taking advantage of the low airfares.

Saturday, January 27, Gerda, Armin and I took a leisurely drive to Monterey and made a dive at the Breakwater. We got there late enough that most of the classes had long ago towed off and gone home. The water was fairly flat and visibility in the 20 foot range. Some large dungeness crabs, a host of white sea pens and a market squid being devoured by a mob of hermit crabs where the highlights of the dive. While there we also ran into Frank, Kathy, Bhushan and Pam. We topped the day off with a trip to the Fishwife Café in Seaside, once again sand dabs figured heavily in the menu. It was just another great day of cold water diving.

Tim Howe brought a great article to Gerda’s attention, *A Dying Breed*, by Will Harper, appeared in the Jan 23, edition of the *East Bay Express*. (<http://eastbayexpress.com/issues/2002-01-23/feature.html/1/index.html>) It chronicles the life and times of Joel Roberts, professional abalone diver, conservation advocate, and poacher. It’s a long article, and as Curt points out there are the usual inaccuracies, tanks filled with “oxygen”, and it doesn’t mention sea otters, withering foot disease or other factors in the decline of the abalone population, but it makes for a great read and gives an insight into the abalone underground.

I’m still looking for copies of old *Reef Diver’s Times*, I’ve been getting some great tidbits from a source I’ll call *DeepThroat*, those of you who have been members for awhile will understand why they prefer to remain anonymous. Among the highlights, in the 70’s club member Robin is attacked by a great white shark (Ursula Bernhart and Rudy Erler were witnesses). Robin is alleged to have yelled, “take pictures!!!” as he was airlifted off the boat. He made it into the *National Enquirer*. That’s the kind of story that keeps me going with this column, a chance at the *National Enquirer*, the pinnacle of investigative journalism. At least my column, unlike Emmett Malone’s, isn’t titled: *Far, Under the Cold Kelp*. Now that sounds like a *SNAFU* in the making. There is the sordid tale involving an evil alter ego we’ll call Skip, a toga party and banishment from the Chi Chi club in Catalina. It’s an illustrious history, the bar has been set, the gauntlet cast, are we up to the challenge? Is there any chance that we will ever see the return of “Snorkel Talk” by the infamous Snork? Only time will tell, in the meantime take a look

at the calendar; there are plenty of dive events coming up. If you missed signing up for the February Cypress Point dive or don’t see anything that interests you, pick up the phone, get onto the e-mail site or write up an article and



**ORGANIZE**

something that appeals to you.



**HIGH FIVE SPEARFISHING TOURNAMENT**

By Mike Staninec

Every January, usually the first Sunday, Cencal puts on a fun spearfishing tournament called the High Five. This is because, unlike most contests, you can only enter five fish, and they must all be from different species. You may have read my last story from January 2001, when I dove with Wynn Matsumura. The following is this year’s story, the contest took place on Saturday, January 19. The staging area was Fanshell beach, in the middle of the 17mile drive in Pebble Beach/Carmel. The beach has no protection and straight west exposure. The takeoff point was a small cove just south of Fanshell beach. A six-foot swell was running, but no wind. There is a 10-15 foot wide channel in the middle through which one can paddle out, avoiding large breaking waves and rocks on either side.

The contest started at 9:30 a.m. and everyone was to be back on the beach by 2:30 p.m.. Most of the 28 divers paddled out on kayaks, a few swam out.

**continued on page 5**

**Spearfishing from page 4**

I paddled out with Brian Ishida and we went south, maybe 3/4 of a mile. We looked in vain for a spot that was a bit calmer and not too deep, as I don't do much over 30 feet with any regularity. Brian sounded the bottom, but the spot we found was a bit too rough for my taste, so I paddled in. I found a somewhat protected cove and anchored inside some rocks which kept the big swells out, but not the chop. A moderate current ran through as well. I anchored in about 15 feet and proceeded to scour the entire cove for about 2 hours. I managed to find a squeaker of a cabezone, a china cod and a couple of greenlings. An occasional glance outside revealed no trace of Brian, I figured he moved elsewhere. I noticed that the wind was picking up and around 1 p.m. I decided to call it a day. I stowed my gun and fish, but with the current, wind and chop going straight into some wash rocks with serious wave action only 20 feet away, I didn't dare pull up anchor and screw around with the boat while sitting on it somewhat helpless. I dove down to pick up the anchor and swam, pulling the boat against the current to a small beach with an easy landing.

It took every bit of strength I had, but I managed to land. I pulled my top off and rearranged my gear in the boat and secured the hatches. Someone looked down from the golf course directly above me and asked if I was OK. I assured him I was fine. I rested about 15 minutes when a couple of guys in a golf cart showed up and also asked if I was OK. I said I was fine and just resting up for the paddle back. One of them said I better not go back out there and offered to give me a ride back. I assured him I



would be fine, but when he told me that there were rescues going on and boats being broken, I reluctantly accepted a ride back. When I got back and saw all the action with a fire truck, two ambulances, surf rescuers, sheriff cars, helicopter and who knows what else, I knew I had made the right decision. The swell was now up to 10 feet every 10 seconds, wind was 25-30 knots. The channel we all paddled out through was now replaced by a washing machine. Divers were getting trashed in the surf, separated from their boats and coming in ass over teakettle. The surf rescue guys were in the water pulling out boats and divers.

I watched the carnage for a few minutes and then I changed and hopped in my van. The guy in the golf cart, probably some kind of a Pebble Beach golf official, then guided me back. I followed him in my van and drove right over the golf course greens to pick up my boat. It felt deliciously sacrilegious. Where was my beat up old pick-up truck when I needed it? Coming back to the staging area, I found that Brian was unaccounted for, but in a few minutes another diver came up and said he was safely in, flushed in somewhere else, less boat and gear. He got a ride back and was rather depressed over the loss of his kayak with all his gear, including two spearguns, camera, carbon fins, and other stuff, some \$2,000 worth. He had anchored in a rougher spot and after he finished diving, he sat on the boat and was pulling up anchor with the hatch open. A wave came and filled his back hatch with water, sinking most of the boat, a Scupper Classic. The rear pointed straight down to the bottom, and some 1/4 of the front was out of the water, pointing straight up, since there was still air in the front hatch. Brian, now without his fins, hung around for a while

until Dennis, another diver, paddled over and offered help. They fought the swells and chop and wind together, Dennis trying to tow Brian, then



switching places, because Dennis had his fins, until they made it to a spot where landing was possible, just under Cypress Point lookout. They came in tumbling through the surf, the two of them trying to hang on to one boat, much to the amusement of some 50 tourists and two sheriffs standing on the lookout.

After Brian spent some 15 minutes crying over his lost gear, someone drove up and told us that his kayak was towed into Stillwater Cove by a powerboat. We drove down, and a guy there told us that someone just took it back up to the staging area. We drove back and sure enough, Brian's kayak was there, gear and all! The only thing missing were his fish, anchor and float line.

I guess I had it pretty easy compared to most people. I am glad I decided to take the easy way out and still come home with four fish, two of them even big enough to weigh in! I sure am glad no one got seriously hurt and sorry for the people who lost gear. One boat was crushed in the surf and a whole bunch of gear was lost. On the way back Brian got a call on his cell phone from Jean, another diver who was in the tournament. She had retrieved his fish and even weighed them in for the contest, so Brian got on the results board after all! He told her to keep the fish and eat them. I guess I should comment on the safety lessons from this experience: Have an alternate exit downwind or down current. Have a pump, flotation, or something in

**continued on page 6**

### Spearfishing from page 5

your kayak to save it in case it gets swamped. Have plans for what to do if conditions worsen considerably. I am sure there are many others. **Dive safely!**



### BAY AREA RESTAURATEURS ACT TO SPARE SEA BASS

Chilean sea bass are off the menus of 65 Bay Area restaurants, including such notables as Chez Panisse and the French Laundry. The restaurateurs, hoping to start a nationwide trend, have taken a pledge to remove the heavily fished species from their menus for at least five years.

Patagonia tooth fish, the real name for Chilean sea bass, lives to 35 years and grows to 200 pounds and up to 7 feet. The fish obtained its more common name in the United States because the Chileans were the first to catch it commercially.

In the frenzy to fill a lucrative market, commercial longline fishers so depleted the cold southern waters that scientists began to warn three years ago that the species was in danger. Several nations with economic and research interests in Antarctica have signed a treaty to manage the ecosystem.

Overfishing has almost eliminated some populations, particularly off the coast of southern Africa. For every ton of legally caught fish, 5 or 6 tons are taken illegally, according to a new report by the National Environmental Trust.

The environmental group, based in Washington, D.C., released the 16-page report on the troubled

species yesterday to coincide with the "Take a Pass on Chilean Sea Bass" campaign begun in San Francisco. Campaigns have succeeded on the East Coast to protect the Atlantic swordfish and the Caspian Sea sturgeon.

Among the restaurants just saying no to the succulent sea bass are Bacar, Bay Wolf, Bix, Boulevard, Cafe Kati, Fleur de Lys, Farallon, Fringale, Gordon's House of Fine Eats, Hayes Street Grill, Jardiniere, Mustard's Gtill, Oliveto, Rubicon and the Zuni Café.



### DIVING THE BRITISH SOUTH COAST AND WALES

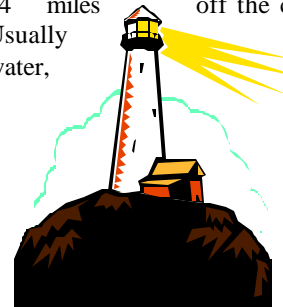
by MJWitt

I recently had the delightful opportunity to spend six months on work assignment in the United Kingdom. I wasn't sure what sort of a diving community that I would find, but as per my usual fashion, if I'm traveling, my gear goes with me. Hey, it's an island; they have to have diving right?

Fortunately I was correct. After a period of adjustment and settling in, I located the local diving club in my community and arranged to attend one of their meetings. As are most clubs in England, the meetings were held in the back of a pub. Never miss an opportunity for a pint. Besides, we all know how thirsty dive club meetings can make you. Well, I arrived and found about 5 members there. It seemed that the vast majority were in Wales all that week diving and 'wreck hunting'! I paid my dues, did the ritual dance and conversation/interview routine that one always does when meeting fellow divers. You know the one I'm talking

about..."So, where have you dove? How long have you been diving? etc.) Luckily, I was able to hook up with one of the local diver's who was going over to Wales that very weekend and was looking for a ride/room share for the weekend. I was on my way!!

I turned in some karma and managed to do my first dives in the UK in some of the best conditions that they have to offer, in one of the best areas. Pembrokeshire, Wales is one of the truly premier dive destinations in the British Isles. Located on the far western tip of Wales, it contains all the small country charm of the rolling green hills of Wales, yet allows for even the most versatile cold water diver to slake his or her thirst for slipping beneath the waves. Most of the diving is done off of small 'RIB' boats (rigid inflatable boats). Given the incredible conditions that weekend, I got a rare chance to dive 'The Smalls', a small island with a lighthouse that sits some 24 miles off the coast. Usually rough water,



weather, and distance prevent this site from being accessed. The Smalls is populated by a large group of seals who are very playful and curious of divers. Both of our dives there were accompanied by a companion seal or two watching us watch it. The remainder of the weekend consisted of a couple drift dives off of 'Crow's Rock' and a investigating some wreckage from an old wreck site. Truly a

**continued on page 7**

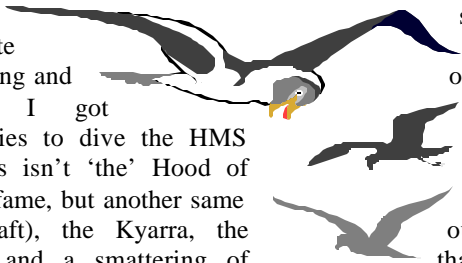
UK Diving – continued page 6

blue ribbon diving experience. The remainder of my stay included trips to dive on the south British coast in Weymouth, Portland, and Swanage. Most of my diving there focused on basic to intermediate wreck diving and drifts. I got opportunities to dive the HMS Hood (this isn't 'the' Hood of Bismarck fame, but another same named craft), the Kyarra, the Spaniard, and a smattering of smaller wreck sites. The drift dives were what I would call 'intermediate' at this time of the year (summer/fall), however, with the Spring tides, they get to be quite challenging and move into a move 'advanced' dive category. Diving conditions on most of the British waters runs around 10 to 20 feet of vis, with water temperatures running in the fifties. Overall the conditions are very much like we see here in our home waters in Monterey or the North Coast. Wrecks!! If you love wreck diving, there are few better places than the coast of Britain. With all the shipping trade that has centered in Britain for the last several hundred years, there is no shortage of foul weather wrecks of every type and size. Add to these all the wrecks sunk during the two world wars, and you have a wreck divers paradise. Depending on the location, many of the wrecks have made, or are in the process of making, that transition from 'wreck' to 'wreckage', especially those that lay more exposed to the beating that comes in with the North Atlantic storms. Skill level ranges from basic to highly advanced, depending on depth, state, tides, and the amount of penetration desired, but even for the novice that just wants some

pictures, there is plenty of possibilities.

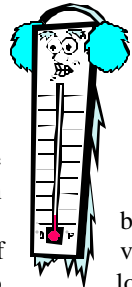
One of the diving memories that I will never forget is diving on the Hood. We were in one of the holds, only a little light filtering in, when this gray 'ghost' swims by and 'bumps' us. We about swallowed our regs!! Once our heartbeats came back down, we looked closer and it turned out to be a seal that makes the wreck his playground. We watched him dodge in and out of the holds for about 10 minutes before moving on to take a quick look at the remainder of the ship. We were the only divers that saw him that day. Truly an honor and an unforgettable dive. Here are some helpful links below for anyone who is interested in learning more. You can also please feel free to ask me if you have further questions. If you get the chance to dive the British Isles, grab it. It's not one of the first diving destinations that pops into ones head, but if you are a cold-water diver here in Northern California, you certainly won't be disappointed at the offerings that the United Kingdom has to offer.

**Related Links:**  
<http://www.mikesww.com/stores/reading.htm> - The Reading, England dive shop and club that I was associated with  
<http://www.dive-pembrokeshire.com/> - a site on Wales and Pembrokeshire diving  
<http://www.ukdiving.co.uk/ukdiving.htm> - site on general UK diving info  
<http://www.divernet.co.uk/wrecks/best211199.htm> - info on the Kyarra, one of the best wrecks I dove (#21 on the page)



**-SATURDAY, JANUARY 26, 2002**  
by Kathy Klein

I hadn't been in the water since August, due to assorted health, personal, and business challenges, so when Frank said, "Well it's not going to be the most pleasant weather... Do you still want to go?" I replied with an unequivocal, "Yes!" despite a case of runny-nosed sniffles on Friday night. So on Saturday morning, I popped a couple of Sudafeds, donned my slicker and, with the infamous "Tin Can" in tow (everyone STILL expects to see Phil at the helm), headed south to meet Pam Radkey and Bhushan Mudbhary at Aquarius. Pam was also suffering from the remnants of a cold, but hey, we're a couple of staunch Reefer babes, right? Even in the on and off downpour, the Breakwater was teeming with classes of newbies heading down the beach like lemmings, and quite a few other boat-launchers like ourselves. We suited up and headed off to check out Point Penos, but decided to forego "turning the corner." Monterey Bay was pretty calm but we weren't sure the waters we'd have to travel to get into Carmel Bay would be so pleasant. Instead, we made a beeline for the dependable (albeit tricky to locate) submerged Eric's Rock, where there was another team of two divers already anchored. The water was CHILLY according to wetsuited Bhushan (time to go dry brother!) We followed the line down to a depth of about 60' and found the anchor cradled in some large boulders 15-20' of viz, we were able to locate the



continued on page 8

**Rainy Monterey from page 7**

main attraction, not far off. Eric's Rock was festooned with strawberry anemones in shades ranging from rose to orange, each decorated with a little white fringe of tentacles. Yellow and orange sea stars added to the bright hues so, compared to the grey day above, the color down below was cheering enough to keep us warm-hearted if not warm-fingered. There were also quite a few large dungeness crabs and I noticed one lonely brittle star. We saw a number of medium-sized ling cod and a couple of cabazon, as well as many rockfish hiding out in the crevices. Bhushan and I both noticed a species that was dark grey, almost black, with bright violet stripes running down its gills and a yellow patch in its tail -- anybody know what kind that is? Doesn't seem to be in my book.

After a good, long 45-minute dive, we surfaced -- in the frigid drizzle -- and motored back to the Breakwater for some hot chowder and snacks. I did my good deed for the day, offering aid to a confounded new female diver whose buddy I heard recommending that if she was having difficulty donning her fins, she just needed to grab the strap and "give a good, hard yank..." I interjected that she might do better to ask someone her own size (rather than Prince Charming!), and suggested brain over brawn when pursuing a technical sport like diving. I suggested that Cinderella try loosening those straps before shoving in her dainty foot... otherwise she might just end up kicking her buddy in the teeth with that mighty yank. Works every time -- almost... (Alright, I confess, early that morning I did need to solicit Frank's assistance

to loosen the cap on my light when it needed new batteries.) We still hadn't had enough, so we headed back out to a kelp bed off the Aquarium. The water, like the skies, had gotten significantly cloudier. With only 610' of viz, we circled around for awhile, didn't see much to write home about other than some interesting large white metridium, and so curtailed our second dive after only 25 minutes. On the way up, I was almost "aliened" in the face by a 10" diameter brown jelly -- which, of course, no one else even saw in the murk. Heading back, we hailed the Monterey Express anchored in a similarly unexciting location and chitchatted with Bruce Watkins who confirmed that it wasn't the best of days to see Monterey -- either above or below sea level. Nonetheless, fun was had by all.

**TAMPA/SHARKS**

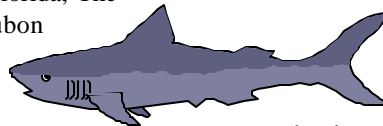
In a lawsuit filed on Monday, February 28, in U.S. District Court in Tampa, Florida, The National Audubon Society and The Ocean Conservancy, represented by Earthjustice are alleging that the National Marine Fisheries Service has failed to prevent overfishing of sharks and to rebuild U.S. coastal shark populations. The increasing use of shark meat, coupled with the value of the fins as the key ingredient of Asian soups, has made sharks the prized target of commercial fishers along the U.S. east coast and the Gulf of Mexico. As a result, scientists say populations are declining rapidly. As an example, the sandbar shark, one of the most commercially popular species, has declined by about 80 percent since the 1970s, said

Sonja Fordham, a fish conservation manager with The Ocean Conservancy.

"The lawsuit is intended to get the government to follow the law in terms of shark fisheries to rebuild the population," she said. "We need to manage them in a precautionary way for the public good." The environmental groups said NMFS managers "caved" to pressure from commercial fishers by suspending reduced shark quotas that it decided on in 1999 in order to settle a lawsuit filed by the industry.

Chris Rogers, chief of the NMFS highly migratory species division, called the lawsuit "counterproductive" and said the agency was moving ahead with new stock assessments this year to come up with new commercial fishing quotas. "Hopefully we can all agree in consensus fashion that this is best available science and move ahead with quota reductions," he said.

Despite their reputation as "trash" or "pest" fish, sharks actually need more protection than some other marine species because they grow slowly, mature late and produce few young, leaving them vulnerable to overfishing, Fordham said. "This combination of lacking restrictions and their strained reproductive capacity leads to troubled populations not just here, but all over the world," she said.



**CARMEL/VENTURA 01/13-14**

by Kenneth Gwin

Gee, I finally went diving with the club again. Actually, it was a two part journey starting with the Cypress

**continued on page 9**

Sea, early morning. Believe me, it was cold waiting on the dock. With help, I was able to pry my frozen hands off my now iced cappuccino, and lug my gear down the ramp and set off for an otherwise sunny adventure.

After spotting a few whales and some radio chatter about conditions with other boaters, Capt. Dave ropped anchor at the Outer Pinnacles. Definitely not a lake that day.

But, we're tough. And, soon we were all over the side following the anchor line into nice blue water. The Outer Pinnacles are a fairly large and semi-defined area of large and smaller rock structures separated by maze like wandering sand channels. For the second time in our last two trips here, we were dropped on fairly big structures, with wide sand channels going out in all directions.

Franko and I tried to get lost, but the boat was too easy to see above us with all the good viz, sunlight, and all that white paint along the side. Great spot.

Our second dive was at Lingcod reef. It's another spread out area running along the 17 Mile Drive. It was a little more protected from the respectable swells we had to deal with at our first site. The bottom here is made up of drop-offs, swim throughs, all kinds of Swiss cheese (sorry Pierre) and pock marked rocks making hiding places for lingcod and other reef fish.

Afterward, Franko and I continued down the coast to Ventura to once again dive one of the Santa Barbara Channel oil rigs. The weather reports were promising, but not definitive. Well, it was okay. A little grey, and a little current, and a little swells....It all sounded good, but in the water, it was challenging. The swells created great excitement close up as they

tended to toss you up against the heavily barnacled pilings that made up the oil rig. There was heavy swell action down past 50' and then quickly diminishing in strength in the deeper waters. (The bottom here is 320,' if you're interested.) The viz was pretty good and the color at depth was great with an HID light. Franko and I enjoyed two arduous dives, managing, of course, to get our limits on the largest scallops we could find. By the way, I will be keeping you posted, as I am working on a group dive on one of these rigs in late summer or early fall, when the temperatures tend toward warm, the conditions are more consistent, and the viz could be inspiring.



#### STILLWATER COVE 02/03

by Curt Degler

Planning a beach dive months in advance is a frustrating process if it is winter and Northern California. Very large storms (with 30ft swells) can blow up over a period of 5-7 days and the "best laid plans"...etc. On the bright side, when the ocean has been tranquil for a week, you often find the very best visibility and diving conditions as the reduced sunlight keeps the plankton from blooming and the afternoon wind chop is hardly a problem. How to take advantage of these momentary periods of diving ecstasy? Real time satellite imagery and sea surface measurements combined with weather predictions made by supercomputers are available on the Internet and brought together on one page thanks to Chuck Tribolet. If you haven't been to his page and bookmarked it yet, go to <http://www.garlic.com/~triblet/swell/wamglance.html>.

There are separate pages for Monterey, the North coast and the Channel Islands. Best thing since BCs!

As January came to a close, predictions were for a calm period and some quick plans were made through the club's Yahoo web site (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sfreesdivers/>) for a dive on Sunday February 3. Bill Levine and his Sacramento Seahorse Buddy Keith Price, Gerda and Pierre Hurter, Armin Luggens, new club members, but formidable divers, Pete White and Mike Witt all met at my place in Santa Rosa. After arranging car pools we headed off for South Gerstle Cove at Salt Point State Park in Sonoma County. Now weather predictions are just predictions - there is no substitute for being there, and the sea swells rolling into Gerstle Cove looked downright lumpy. However Stillwater Cove - a Sonoma county Park we passed on the way north looked really good, so back south we went. Diving Valhalla! Sunny and windless with little transparent waves dribbling onto the beach. The actual lines of the quotation above are "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft a-gley" and were written by the Scottish Poet Robert Burns in 1785. True to his heritage, our resident Scot, Pete White, discovered that his contact lenses were in a toolbox that was no where to be found in Armin's van, which sorely affected his sense of visibility. As Kurt Vonnegut writes in Cat's Cradle "so it goes" and Pete prepared for a Braille dive with Armin. We all suited up in our drysuits except for the soon to be shivering Bill and Keith and headed out to the inviting cove in waves, leaving someone on the beach to guard our boxes.

continued on page 10

**Stillwater - Cove from page 9**

I buddied with new Reef Diver Mike Witt, a DM and cold water enthusiast from S Dakota, with plans to become a NAUI Instructor in a class to be taught by another Reef Diver, Wayne Mitchell. After a short surface swim we dropped into 20 ft of clear and cold (49F) water and finned straight out. I immediately spied some diving swag - a sea soft weight belt (with a resident little octopus.) Too much to take along into deeper waters, too valuable to leave behind, too much trouble to swim in with and restart the dive. ??? Hey who is that masked man swimming back to the beach in the bright red suit? Why that's Pierre! Hand signals sufficed to get him to relieve me of my treasure and Mike and I continued our dive. Viz was about 25-30 ft (real good!) and the bottom was rock and sand with lots of Pterygophora C. kelp on the bottom but not a lot of bull kelp. We saw a few small fish, nudibranchs, decorator crabs, abalones and some nice rocky reef structure on the south side of the cove. A little reel practice and we headed in after our 40 minute dive to a sunny beach and some snacks. Pete and Armin decided to make just one dive - and Bill and Keith just chilled after one wetting. Gerda and Pierre headed out again - earning Gerda a Nitrox certification and Mike and I decided to swim out a little deeper for our second dive, which was not quite as interesting except for the large aggregations of big abalone I saw in 50 ft. of water. Back on the beach I discovered that one of my BC quick drop weights had escaped and was no where to be found. The Ocean giveth and the ocean taketh away. Postscript: my neighbor later found lucky Pete's toolbox and lenses in the road.

So watch the weather reports and if you have the time and see clear weather ahead, alert us all and lets get in some more superb winter diving.

**Note from the Editor:**

At the first time around I had not really taken the time to think about an editors column. For one, I got so excited and mesmerized with formatting and re-formatting, applying colors and themes and styles. Call me weird, but I really enjoy playing around with that. Secondly though, I found that I could keep Pierre from spending too much money on Ebay. "Sorry Schatz (Viennese endearment), you can't log on know, I am using the Laptop for the newsletter!" Do you know, that there is someone out there who wants to sell a complete Russian made Ex-Ukrainian Navy hardhat diving dress for only, well never mind, but you get my drift.

In earnest though, articles have been swarming in, giving testimony of some good and pleasurable outings and making my task a fun undertaking. So let's keep them coming! And if you have pictures you want to include send them along. Still working on issue #2 but looking forward to the next 10 to come!

**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!**

Officers meet the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every month. Club members in good standing are welcome to attend. Location varies, call 415.285.6293 prior to next meeting.

**DIVER DISCOVERS WW2 MINE ON GREAT BARRIER REEF**



A tourist diver snorkeling in just 3m on Australia's Great Barrier Reef came across an unusual spiky object. It turned out to be a highly corroded WW2 anti-shiping mine. The Australian navy diver who inspected the device warned that it could contain hundreds of kilos of explosives and should be regarded as highly dangerous. The Defense Department is considering how to tackle the device, and a wide exclusion zone has been implemented around the site until the mine can be rendered harmless.



**READY FOR SOME WARM WATER DIVING?**

**WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO?**

**BONAIRE - BELIZE - FLI???**

Nina & Joe Steiner are coordinating a trip to sandy white beaches, palm trees and azur skies. When? The months of August - September- November are open for discussion. They know of some great deals and need to hear from you to finalize their planning.

Interested in hearing more details? Make sure to talk to them at this month's General Meeting (2/19<sup>th</sup>) or contact them at (415) 759-6708 oremail: [justmej69@hotmail.com](mailto:justmej69@hotmail.com)



The San Francisco Reef Divers is a not for profit community organization dedicated to safe sport diving and the preservation of our ocean resources. The San Francisco Reef Divers general meetings are open to the public and are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at the Boathouse Sports Bar and Grill, (415) 681-2727, located at 1 Harding Rd, San Francisco, CA 94132 (For driving directions and a map for this location, visit our club web site: <http://www.sfreefdivers.org/>.)

**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"/> Abalone Marine Resource Council (AMRC)              | 10   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Central California Council of Diving Clubs (CenCal) | 15   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sonoma County Abalone Network (SCAN)                | 10   |

*Show your support for all four!\$60*

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Name:  | _____  |
| Address:   | _____  |
| City:  | _____ State: _____ Zip: _____  |
| Home Phone: ( _____ ) _____  | Work Phone: ( _____ ) _____  |
| Email:   | _____ Birthdate (year optional): ____/____/____                      |
| Diving Certification Agency:   | _____ Level: _____ Number: _____                                     |
| SFRD Membership:   | <input type="checkbox"/> New member <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal |
| Are you a member of Divers Alert Network (DAN)?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No             |
| Please select the method of delivery of your monthly club newsletter ( <b>Choose one</b> ):              |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I will download the newsletter via the Internet from the SFRD website (default) |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want the newsletter mailed to my home address                                 |  |

Please make checks payable to "San Francisco Reef Divers" and mail to:

Bill Donnelly, SFRD Treasurer, P.O. Box 151223, San Rafael, CA 949



**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 the Boathouse Sports Bar and Grill, (415) 681-2727, located at 1 Harding Rd, San Francisco, CA 94132 in Harding Park on the shore of Lake Merced. 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  
Reef Divers Times  
C/O Gerda Hurter  
515 Diamond Street  
San Francisco, CA 94114