



PREVENGA SU MUERTE

by Bhushan Mudbhary

I had never dove a real cavern/cave before. It was the last diving day for me and we were in Playa del Carmen in Mexico. I could go to Cozumel for a day's diving or I could go inland(!) and dive a cenote. I chose to go to the cenote.

Cozumel Shmozumel I said to myself unconvincingly as the SUV made a right from the southbound highway and into the jungle. We bounced over a dirt road for a few miles and arrived at a dirt parking lot, carved out of the hot dusty Yucatan brush.

I had selected a dive shop for this trip the night before in Playa Del Carmen. Which BTW is far superior to Cancun, in my opinion. While Cancun is really nothing but big self-contained resorts, Playa on the other hand is concentrated for the most part along a mile or so long promenade named Avenida de Cinco. Anchored on one side by the ferry terminal to Cozumel, the strip is bustling with hotels

and restaurants and shops. And it was off of one of the many "calles" that I came across a dive shop that is now easily forgotten, and run by an expatriate from France. Besides taking my money and giving some reasonably ok equipment he took not much ownership in my outing to the cenotes other than to farm me out to one of many free lance contractors

that take the unsuspecting divers spelunking in caves that are flooded. So as we parked our Suburban, my dive guide told me that he was in fact not the person to take me and a German lady that had joined us, diving that morning. Our dive guide, a fellow named Gibran was to show up at some point and take us cenote diving in



the cenote called "Dos Ojos" or Two Eyes, and of the Imax fame I was told.

So there we sat in the hot and humid jungle waiting for Senor Gibran.

But Gibran showed up with a few of his friends and the day was saved after all. Gibran as it turned out was really a cave diver photographer who had been roped in at the last minute to accompany us. He took good care of us.

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ENTERTAINMENT FROM THE ABYSS - General Meeting, July 16th

By Kenneth Gwin



It looks like I can get three of the local deep diving celebrities to be in one room at the same time to show us some images and equipment used in their deep explorations. Alberto Nava, Susan Bird, and Jim Thompson are familiar faces in local diving and have been leaders in the diving scooter mania that has been going on in Monterey and Hawaii. All of these divers are deep diving specialists, use mixed gasses, multiple tanks, and follow what is called a DIR configuration. But, their real specialty is having fun on any dive and bringing a scooter whenever they can.

DER STAMMTISCH



“The coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco.” There’s some debate as to whether Mark Twain ever uttered those words, but he certainly came up with many other memorable lines. Two of my favorites are “for every problem there is always a solution simple, obvious, and wrong” and “the finest Congress that money can buy.” I don’t know about today’s Congress of course, but his weather line didn’t seem to fit on the last Saturday in June.

While some intrepid Reef Divers headed up the coast to search for the elusive mollusk, Gerda and I wandered down to the corner of Market and Castro, hopped aboard a 1915 trolley, on the “F” line, dedicated to Herb Caen and made our way toward the Ferry Building and on to Pac Bell Park. As an aside, did you realize that Herb wrote more than 16,000 daily columns? What better way, aside from getting wet, to enjoy a gorgeous summer afternoon than watching America’s pastime?

It was our first game at the new ballpark and as luck would have it the Giants were squaring off against the “A’s”. San Francisco truly is a strange and wondrous place. Even the New York Times Sunday sports page ran a front page article about the behavior of local fans, right down to the hybrid Giant’s / “A’s” hats worn by many of the fans. Can you imagine wearing a Cubs / White Sox hat in Chicago? Aside from the seven bucks for a Coors Light in a plastic cup it was a great game in a tremendous venue. There really are no bad seats, no cheap ones either.

On Friday, June 20, Gerda and I got up at a little past “O dark thirty” threw tanks and gear into the dive mobile and after stopping to tank up on latte’s at Martha’s on 24th Street made a run for Monterey. Gerda and Dionna had taken Captain Phil’s advanced nitrox class and were set to do some more “hands-on” diving. We met Phil at the Breakwater along with John and Jessie who were also in the class. With tanks and gear stowed onboard we roared off towards Hopkins Reef. This is really an interesting spot to explore, large jumbles of rocks with sandy bottom in-between.

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REEFER RAP

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
<p>01 - New Year's Day Dive - Point Lobos</p> <p>11 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat</p> <p>15 - <i>General Meeting</i></p>	<p>05 - Officer's Meeting</p> <p>08 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives)</p> <p>15 - Ed Cooper Memorial</p> <p>19 - General Meeting</p>	<p>05 - Officer's Meeting</p> <p>09 - Pt. Lobos</p> <p>19 - General Meeting</p> <p>22 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat</p> <p>29 & 30 - Pt. Lobos</p>
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
<p>02 - Officer's Meeting</p> <p>04 through 06 - Abalone Opener</p> <p>16 - General Meeting</p> <p>26 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat</p>	<p>07 - Officer's Meeting</p> <p>21 - General Meeting</p> <p>24 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives)</p>	<p>04 - Officer's Meeting</p> <p>18 - General</p> <p>21 - Monterey Beach Dive Coordinator: Pierre - 415.285.6293</p> <p>22 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sun Coordinator: Pierre - 415.285.6293</p> <p>TBD - Abalone Closer</p>
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
<p>02 - Officer's Meeting</p> <p>11 - 13 North Coast Weekemd Coordinator: Armin Luggen 415.479.3240</p> <p>16 - General Meeting Meeting - SINDBAD'S on Pier 2, San Francisco</p> <p>26 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat Coordinator: Pierre - 415.285.6293</p>	<p>01 - 03 Abalone Opener Salt Point Statepark Coordinator: Ursula Bernhart 415.586.0357 ursulabernhart@juno.com</p> <p>06 - Officer's Meeting</p> <p>20 - General Meeting</p> <p>16 - 20 - FULL- Channel Islands - Coordinator: Jim Vallario 415.566.0784</p>	<p>03 - Officer's Meeting</p> <p>05 - 07 Lake Tahoe Dive Coordinator: Norm - 510-520-3186</p> <p>13 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat Coordinator: Pierre - 415.285.6293</p> <p>17 - General Meeting</p> <p>19 - 20 Abalone Campout Coordinator: Jack Dietzen 415-566-0703</p>
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<p>01 - Officer's Meeting</p> <p>04 - Alcatraz swim/paddle Coordinator: Pierre - 415.285.6293</p> <p>11 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat Coordinator: Pierre - 415.285.6293</p> <p>15 - General Meeting Officer Nominations !!!</p>	<p>04 - Officer's Meeting</p> <p>TBD - Annual Sea Ranch Weekend</p> <p>19 - General Meeting - Officer Elections</p> <p>23 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sun Coordinator: Pierre - 415.285.6293</p> <p>TBD - Abalone Closer</p>	<p>03 - Officer's Meeting</p> <p>13 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat Coordinator: Pierre - 415.285.6293</p> <p>17 - General Meeting - Christmas Party</p>

Cenotes – from page 1

One of the two entrances to Dos Ojos, and the one we were taking consisted of a swimming pool size pond of clear water under an overhang. We suited up and took the stairs from the parking lot to the platform by the pond/pool. Gibran briefed us well, gave us lights and we giant strided in. Once in the water, we checked equipment for tell tale signs of air leaking, then descended in clear water to about 10 ft or so and practiced the “frog kick” so as not to kick up the silt in the cave. The German lady and I am just going to have to call her Fräulein Luftwaffe. She never quite got the hang of doing the frog kick and instead reverted frequently to the long kick. The effect of the turbulent eddies from her fins on the fine limestone dust explain the moniker I have so unkindly labeled her with. Other than her bombing runs, we got along fine.

There is a line that runs along the passages of Dos Ojos open for guided tours such as ours. The rule was to always stay above the line so as to avoid the hazard of getting entangled. Gibran led the way, with Frau L following and me bringing up the rear. We entered a passage and immediately were in the presence of awesome beauty. The water was as clear as air, especially if one looked into passages that disappeared into darkness.



Stalactites hung from the ceiling like gothic chandeliers. Stalagmites rose from the floor. And where they met they formed

columns in halls that clearly pulsed with magic. In my initial state of anxiety, I beheld a view tinged ever so slightly with a brooding darkness. But as I relaxed, the frog kick providing a steady rhythm for my breathing, the possibility of evil faded away and only grandeur remained. Everywhere around me I was surrounded with this medieval presence of the cave, dark forms and passages at a distance sent out invitations promising much risk and reward.

The two dives at Dos Ojos consisted of two separate routes that took us to many different halls and along passages and around pillars of limestone.



Ambient light was never very far away but there were stages where such was not the case. As cave or cavern diving goes this was just the bunny slope, but an excellent way to get introduced to the sport. There was a sign in one of the passages that declared “Prevenga Su Muerte”, exhorting us in Spanish and with the help of a caricature of the Grim Reaper and dead divers that indeed there was nothing here worth dying for, in these caves and the miles upon miles of passages. The sign was a counterpoint to the experience, I not having any sort of a death wish myself, could understand the wisdom of avoiding death in pursuits that are ultimately trivial. But, I could also appreciate the illogic of cave divers with their doubles and reels and other accoutrements of the trade, and who explore the realms such as of Dos Ojos. Having just beheld the enchantment of the flooded passages and halls immediately

below, I understood exactly why some divers seek out this specialized form of diving even with its dangers. The rational world above ground is without magic.

Metaphysical musings aside, the rational world above was also without our Suburban. When after the second dive we got back to the parking lot, we beheld the space that until recently was taken up by the Suburban. There in the hot and dusty jungle I was reduced to my bare essentials. Literally. My clothes, wallets and other worldly concerns were in that missing vehicle. While me being of South Asian stock took this in stride, Frau L’s sense of Teutonic order and determinism I think was somewhat shaken. In Mauritius I had the pleasures of drifting towards Madagascar, courtesy of a missing dive boat, but for a missing dive van, this was a first. With the kindness of other dive guides and their vehicles, we ultimately found at some other parking lot for a cenote called the Taj Mahal, the missing Suburban. Our original guide was nowhere to be seen but we were reunited with our worldly belongings.

If you visit the Yucatan by all means consider diving a cenote. By no means go with a smallish outfit in Playa run by an expat from France. If you run across Gibran, give him my regards since he was solid all the way. If you take a certain brown Suburban to the jungle to go diving, hide the key when the driver isn’t looking.





AB SEASON REOPENS AUGUST 1.

Camp, Dive and Feast on Abalone Fri. Aug. 1 to Sun. Aug. 3

We have two reserved campsites at Salt Point State Park (Woodside Campground, to the right (east side) of Highway 1 on the Sonoma coast). Check-in time is 2 p.m. Friday, check-out 12 noon Sunday. I will arrive early to try and get two adjoining campsites. Check the Bulletin Board at the campground entrance for site numbers.

Only 8 overnight campers can stay in each site. Let's try to carpool as only one car is permitted in each campsite. (Extra cars can be parked nearby and have to pay an additional nightly fee). There will be opportunities for both free and scuba diving. Remember to bring fishing license and abalone punch card.

Late Saturday afternoon we'll get busy preparing for the big potluck abalone banquet. Seems there are a number of newer Reef Divers who have not yet experienced this ancient ritual. If you need information on what to bring and how to get there, give me a call. We can also talk about it at the June and July meetings.

Since we are limited to 16 campers, it's important to call me as soon as possible to reserve your space.

Ursula Bernhart - Phone: 415 586-0357. E-mail: ursulabernhart@juno.com



**LAKE TAHOE DIVE, HIKE, BIKE, CAMP AND WHATEVER.
FRIDAY, SEPT. 5 THRU SUNDAY SEPT. 7.**

It has been a few years since I've organized a dive to Tahoe so here we go again. This is a high altitude dive at D.L Bliss State Park along the famous Rubicon wall. We enter the water at Lester Beach in the park and snorkle out to the wall. It drops down to approximately 900 ft. but we will stay above 60 ft. If you have never dove this, it is definitely worth doing and as for me, I enjoy Tahoe so much that I enjoy doing this at least once a year. The water is fresh, so you will not need as much weight and you won't have to rinse your gear. The water is cold but warmer than the ocean. Full wet suit is still necessary. Because this is high altitude diving, one basic rule is you never go shooting up to the surface. Make your ascent to the surface, twice as long to the surface and make a safety stop at 12-15 ft for a minimum of 3 minutes. I usually come back up and stay in the shallow water diving to accomplish this. The underwater landscape is like another planet and fun cruising along the wall and thru a few swim thrus. I will give out more safety guidelines to those that are going. For the dive, meet at 10 a.m. at Lester beach.

On Sunday, I'm doing a day hike into one of the lakes near Tahoe. It is a lake that a neighbor and friend took me when I was a young teenager that got me excited about hiking and backpacking.

Hope to see you all there. Let me know if you are going.

Norm Knutson
510-520-3186...(cell phone)

Stammtisch – from page 2

This is really an interesting spot to explore, large jumbles of rocks with sandy bottom in-between. The visibility hovered around 10 feet, but we were on a mission, so what did it matter? A reel, particularly when the visibility is poor is a great navigation tool. After tying off and exploring the neighborhood we practiced our buoyancy, stopping at 30 feet to “shoot a bag” a surface marker buoy or SMB.

This is another great skill, the buoy lets people at the surface know where you are, particularly handy if there is any current and it gives you a reference point while you are doing your safety stops. It’s also at this point that we switched to our pony bottles with their 50% O₂ mix. All in all, things went well on this dive.

In between our first and second dive we headed back to the Breakwater to switch to fresh tanks, use the facilities and enjoy some of the chowder the deli is renowned for. Refreshed, with vital fluids drained and replenished as appropriate we motored back out, this time to outer McAbee for our second dive. With Gerda and Dionna as dive buddies we set out to explore the area using the many abandoned sardine pipes as navigation guides. I was one of those dives where everything went just the way you want it to. We ended the day with a late lunch, early dinner at the Sea Harvest Market with a couple of Ahi tuna sandwiches, rare, washed down with a couple of Carmel Hefeweizens.

Saturday, we slept in, having stayed overnight in Marina. We finally rolled out of bed, stocked up on poppy seed muffins and coffee at the “buffet” and headed for the Manta Ray Dive Shop

where we hooked up with Dionna and waited for Armin and Bill Donnelly to drive down from Marin. Since it was late morning by the time our erstwhile team had tanks filled and gear loaded, we decided to give the Breakwater a shot. We arrived about the time that the morning classes were starting to break up. We once again grabbed some chowder and then watched as the area’s considerable rescue resources were brought to bear.



Fortunately it turned out to be a false alarm, a student had become separated from their buddy. Somewhere along the way the “lost” student wandered back to the grassy area where the group had piled their gear. The “lost” student was relaxing in the sun blissfully unaware that the police, fire, and lifeguard commotion where all there looking for them. A sobering reminder to work out what you will do in the even you get separated form you buddy before hand.

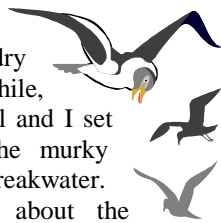
At about this time as we where suiting up, Dionna realized that she had left her dry suit behind the night before. We did a quick check with the local dive shops with no luck. If you have been following ba_diving on the Yahoo groups, you know that this story has a happy ending. A dive instructor from Sacramento found the suit and Dionna is once again a happy, dry diver.

Meanwhile, Gerda, Armin, Bill and I set out to explore the murky realm of the Breakwater. The great thing about the Breakwater aside from the showers and great chowder is that there really is a lot of macro life there. All you have to do is get close to the rocks and look.

Sunday morning found us at Fisherman’s Wharf waiting for the Cypress Sea to pull alongside. We had a full complement of Reef Divers with only a few folks on the other side of the boat; we set off with a total of 13 divers on the boat. Now I know that “13” is not normally considered a lucky number, but it was for us. With Captain Phil at the helm and John Eagle as divemaster we set off toward Butterfly House. We had some great swells on the way, definitely an “E ticket” ride. Visibility was an honest 30 feet, quite a change over the last two days. I buddied up with Dionna and Gerda and had a great dive. As on the previous day’s diving we practiced our stops at 50, 30 and 20 feet. Slowly but surely, I’m getting good at this buoyancy control thing.

For dive two we headed for Pescadero Rock, unlike previous dives we dove the back side (shoreward) of the rock. A great dive, we took a compass bearing on the surface froth, dropped down the anchor line and headed towards the maelstrom. The secret is to not get to close; we tied off a reel and set off to explore the surroundings. Gerda discovered a good-sized wolf eel, the first one I’ve seen in these waters. We had a good dive, exploring the wall down to 90 feet. On the way up we once again practiced our stops, 50, 30 and 20 feet.

Our third dive was at Dolly’s (Dali’s) Wall. This is an other terrific dive; you drop down the anchor and head towards the wall on a compass bearing (don’t forget to get your bearings before you jump off the boat). Once on the wall we tied off a reel and slowly meandered down the wall’s face.



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Stammtisch from page 6

Once again we practiced some of the skills we learned in the advanced nitrox class, reels, surface marker buoys (SMBs) and gas switches on the way up. All skills that will come in handy once we get to Alaska. I'm not sure yet where I want to go with these skills, but it is interesting to take an advanced class of some sort once in awhile. A little theory mixed in with some "task loading" is a good way to practice for the unforeseen. I may yet join Ken and his gang of merry pranksters at 200 feet.

If you hadn't noticed, the Fourth of July weekend brought a virtual marathon of James Bond movies to "the first network for men". Now I'm not exactly sure what that means, but I am a fan of the old James Bond movies, the one's that featured Sean Connery, the real Bond. I know there are those who are partial to the latest Bond incarnation vis-à-vis Pierce Brosnan, but I like the classics. Anyway, I was watching

"Thunderball", the year was 1965, Connery was James and SPECTER had just hijacked two nuclear warheads. As always it was up to 007 to set the world right. Who could resist Sea Island cotton shirts, a Walter PPK, twin-hose regulators and a Nikonos III, cum Geiger counter and of course the scooters with their onboard spear-guns.



I love the climactic underwater battle scene, lots of hose cutting in the best tradition of Mike Nelson. I noticed that the good guys all had single hose regulators and wore red suits. James Bond uses a great spare air setup that looks like two CO₂ cartridges set end to end. Even Pamela Anderson in Bay Watch never got that much mileage out of such a small gas supply.

That being said, it's time to settle down for the evening and finish writing this column. I think I'll whip up a "Vesper" named after James Bond's love interest in Casino Royale. So, to make a Vesper; pour three measures of Gordon's gin (I prefer Bombay Sapphire) into a chilled shaker add a measure of ice-cold vodka. Add a half-measure of Lillet and fill the shaker with ice. Shake until it is ice cold. Garnish a chilled deep champagne goblet or martini glass with a large slice of lemon peel. Pour the martini into the glass and enjoy. To quote James Bond "I never have more than one drink before dinner. But I do like that one to be very large and very strong and very cold and very well made."

Till next month, dive deep, dive long, but what ever you do, don't dive after drinking a "Vesper". And if I ever win the lottery, I promise to name my yacht the "Disco Volante".

FOR SALE

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Used by little old lady on Sundays only, before going to Church. (Not true!)

Tanks are in excellent condition, with May '01 hydro dates, August '02 VIP's, rubber boots and valve covers. Just upgraded to steel 100's, so no longer need these tanks. \$60 each. (All this is true!)

If interested, contact Jim Vallario @ 415-566-0784.

**SFRD
NEW MEMBERS**

Linda Rudolph
Marc and Tina Linowitch
Roman Mueller

WELCOME

MORE FROM THE ABYSS

By Kenneth Gwin

A couple of months ago I wrote a report of some dives Curtis and had been doing at Pt. Lobos that can only be described as "technical." These sound exciting when you describe going way past the recreational limits, way past 130 feet, way past the no decompression limits, way past nitrox 32 where you start mixing gasses, and on to carrying multiple tanks, regulators, canister lights, all just to have a little fun.

I can't say if there is more fun to be had by going deeper. As some may know, I can be perfectly happy freediving for the day. But the call of the abyss is a muse I can't ignore, and for me it has been well worth it.

It has taken me deeper locally, as well as in remote locations, given me access to exciting deep wrecks, canyons, and vistas that are all the reasons I started diving anyway. You just gotta do what you gotta do.

"What is down there?" is the age-old question.

Any diver knows what I'm talking about.



But, after the recreational limits for time and depth have been crossed, you have entered a different realm. According to the old Navy tables, a 20 minute dive to 200 feet gives you a 40 minute decompression obligation. A modern interpretation of proper decompression theory could give you as much as 110 minutes of decompression, for the same dive (if you were only breathing air). If

something goes wrong at the end of twenty minutes, you could be in big trouble.

(Read *Deep Descent* by Kevin F. McMurray and *The Last Dive* by Bernie Chowdhury for descriptions of things that can go wrong.)

Fortunately, things have been going right, for the most part. I've filled my logbooks with wild stories, and finished many days of diving with a big smile on my face.

But, there was a close call.

Lately (back at Pt. Lobos) we've been diving some outrageous pinnacles that sit in front of Whaler's and Blue Fish Coves. (As you know, this is just around the corner from Monastery, and the famous Trench.) The water can reach 100 feet just at the mouth of these coves and it gets deeper fast. The spots we've been diving start at 100-140 feet and bottom out at 185-205 feet typically. (With all the modern mixes and gas bottles, a 20 minute dive means a 40-50 minute decompression.)

A couple of weeks ago we went on a typical planned dive looking to explore the deep end of a reef called Deep E3. (I wrote about a similar dive in May.) There were three of us on this trip, planning to live boat it (not returning to the anchor line for our ascent and instead doing a drift decompression using marker buoys or lift bags to alert our surface support boat of our whereabouts).

Our dive went fine. We didn't go exactly where we planned, kept to 185 feet, but it was beautiful anyway. Saw strange and wonderful things, big China rockfish, graceful tall sea pens standing in the sand, and the colorful rock faces of the huge structures that mark this spot.

After the 20 minute turn around and a planned ascent we reached our 70 stop where we were to deploy two lift bags and perform a gas switch to 50% oxygen.



As part of the three-man team, I watched as one diver sent up his bag, switched regulators and then I turned to watch the other perform the same maneuver.

After a minute or so I turned back to the first diver and he was gone. There was only the line up to the lift bag and a reel falling down, unraveling line as it disappeared into the depths.

But, no diver.

We still had about 40 minutes of decompression left. There was nothing we could do but continue with our plan. Definitely no going up or down to look for our missing diver.

A few minutes later we heard the engines of our chase boat start up. No telling if he spotted the diver on the surface or if he was just following our markers.

After our decompression (while hoping for the best) we arrived at the surface to big swells and an empty sea. Not a boat in sight as we were rounding the outside of Pt Lobos on a NW current.

Twelve minutes later the boat shows up. Our buddy had been picked up, taken to shore, and sent to the hospital. He was conscious the whole time and put on oxygen the minute he got in the boat.

Somehow, a number of small events cascaded into a panic situation.

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Abyss – from page 8

Something caused him to panic and bolt to the surface. He never reached out or signaled to his buddies.

We figured he was in for a long evening in the chamber.

But, it was a miracle. He was examined by the doctors and released. No decompression illness. Remember, people get very bent for just this type of thing, and people get bent even while following all the rules.)

It made no sense.

We were relieved and happy that, somehow, all was well.

Only a stage bottle was lost and the anchor, line and all, had been jettisoned in the process.

So, now we could take the opportunity to go back and retrieve the anchor.

Another day and another dive to the same great spot.

And, another miracle, returning, we dropped anchor within a few feet of the missing anchor line. Minutes later one of our team had attached a 50LB marker buoy to the anchor and sent it like a missile to the surface in a stream of bubbles. We watched the beautiful trajectory with sunlight behind it, then finished our dive dropping off the side of this reef, heading north towards the Trench, finally turning back at 214 feet.

Why do we do it?

Coming back up from the sand, shining our lights on the amazing colors, returning to the ridgeline at 140 feet where the anchor line had been strewn across the brightest corynactis imaginable with the deepest blue beyond, going where few had gone before, I will keep coming back.

Carefully.



(photos for this article courtesy of Marcos Perreau Guimaraes)

CURT D'S FAMOUS BREADED ABS

(photos courtesy of Don Davis)



Cut your cleaned (*) AB into strips. Don't pound too hard or you'll

- One or two abalone, cut and pounded
- Pnako Flakes- Japanese Style Bread Crumbs
- Two eggs, beaten
- Cooking oil



strips steaks. Pound the steaks until limp. tear the steaks.

Dip the AB steaks into the eggs then transfer to the bread crumbs. Turn a couple of times in crumbs to completely cover both sides. Press firmly to make the crumbs cover the AB well.

Fry in about 1/4 - 1/2 inch of hot oil about 20 seconds to a side. Turn back to first side for another 10 seconds.

Drain well on paper towels and serve hot.



Leftovers are great in sandwiches

fat chance with this crowd!

Abalone, Abalone, Abalone

Despite an uncertain conception as a "TBD" dive event (in my experience "D" usually stands for deferred) the June 2003 Abalone Closer on June 28th at Ft Ross ended as an unqualified success with special thanks to Don Davis and Marc Linowitch. Now a little back ground on abalone diving for those newcomers to the club who are unfamiliar with the practice...

Abalone season runs from the beginning of April until the end of November with a short closure in the month of July for reasons that have nothing to do with biology but everything to do with political accident. Despite the sad state of fisheries worldwide, North Coast abalone divers can have a very satisfying experience without being concerned that they are exacting permanent harm to the health of abalone populations. There is no commercial harvest of abalone anywhere in California and North Coast sport abalone divers are restricted to using breath hold diving techniques when harvesting abalone. This creates a refuge for these sought after marine snails by depth and diver skill ensuring a large breeding pool of abalone will remain. The absence of any kind of refuge for abalone in Southern California plus other factors ended in the widespread elimination of abalone from most areas and the closure of the fishery to all comers, probably for many years. Refugia and carefully enforced restrictions on seasons, annual and daily limits, etc. means that there are enough Red Abalone- *Haliotis rufescens* (and the largest, most tender and best tasting abalone in the world), to both sustain their kind and provide an exciting hunting experience and delicious and healthy wild food for sport divers. Poaching remains a threat

as abalone can sell for as much as \$50-100 a piece on the black market, but undercover law enforcement and certain prosecution by county prosecutors have kept this problem in check so far. For more information go to www.abalonenetwork.org and consider joining S.C.A.N., a non-profit grass roots organization that makes sure that crimes against abalone are treated seriously. Dues are just \$10.00 annually. Now back to the Reef Divers...

Don Davis, to whom the club may owe its continued existence for finding a great general meeting place in the Presidio in San Francisco a few years ago (after we got kicked out of the Boathouse by a Motorcycle Gang that wanted out meeting slot and just took it,) had been out of diving for a few years but wanted to get back. He called me about the dive and seeing that nothing was really planned, we decided to make it happen. After a short campaign on the club's Internet discussion site we generated some active interest for a day dive followed by an abalone picnic and potluck at Ft Ross in Sonoma County.

Despite a few no shows - notably club old timer Norm Knutson who couldn't get away from his job at the last moment, we had a total of 7 divers and 5 guests. Here they are: Don Davis, his girlfriend Claire and mother Janet, Maria Mithos, new club members Susan Reneberg and Marc Linowitch, who also brought his wife Tina and son Andrew, Debra Gilmore, Joe Hamilton and his wife Tine and my self, Curt Degler.

We geared up, walked down the steep rocky path to the middle cove and easily got in the water, as the ocean was unnaturally calm and windless. The experienced among us headed right for the Point while the rest tended to practice our skills near the entry

point. On the positive side, the bottom was heavily bouldered with intense kelp growth and lots of fish and invertebrate life. Balancing this was a plankton boom that reduced visibility to just a few feet. A dive light was helpful if not essential. Abalone were not as plentiful or as large as hoped for, especially at the entry point, but limits of three were garnered by the experienced. Those there for their first, or second time, got some more valuable experience at abalone spotting and free diving and also learned about the equally important process of extracting the meat from the shell, and skinning, slicing, pounding, egging, breading and frying the world renowned and much sought after delicious gastropods.

We picnicked at a spot just a short distance down the road from the main parking lot. It was warm with filtered sun and little wind. Four abalone were prepared for pan frying in Canola Oil when Don and I realized that neither of us had remembered to bring a frying pan! Some exquisitely awkward moments passed before Mark came to the rescue with a well-seasoned iron pan and literally saved the day. Don expertly cooked the abalone to perfection, which we consumed down to the last morsel. The rest is history. For pictures either go to the club's home page web site and click on "Events" or go directly to http://www.sfreedivers.org/sfrd_events.html. The next opportunity to dive for and consume abalone is not far away! On August 1 through August 3 Ursula Bernhart will coordinate a whole weekend of diving camping and eating at Salt Point State Park. You can contact her at 415-586-0357 or ursulabernhart@juno.com. See you there!



Pew study urges swift action to protect 4.5 million square miles

The United States' reach over ocean waters has expanded sixteen fold in recent decades to 4.5 million miles. And yet those waters are governed under a "hodgepodge of ocean laws and programs," according to the Pew Oceans Commission report, released yesterday.

"America's oceans are in crisis and the stakes could not be higher ...," the report begins. "What we once considered inexhaustible and resilient is, in fact, finite and fragile."

The report -- the result of three years of intense study by a panel that included Republicans, Democrats, scientists, fishermen and environmentalists paints a bleak picture of ocean health but highlights dozens of opportunities to turn things around.

Reactions, as expected have been mixed. Environmentalists hope the report, expected to be echoed later this year by a second commission appointed by President Bush, could lead to the creation of an independent federal agency to manage ocean policy.

Conservatives in Washington, D.C., dismissed the study as yet another call by "radical environmentalists" for bigger government and more regulation.

To read the complete report, go to: www.pewoceans.org.

Fish porn research or Leave it to the Swiss

It seems that fish can be turned on by an aquatic equivalent of pornography, according to new research revealed today. Scientists

at the Swiss University of Fribourg have discovered that male sticklebacks are more "active" if first stimulated by a "soft porn" film showing flirting fish.

It is thought that the image of finned Romeos swimming nearby sparks off a competitive instinct in the spectating sticklebacks to ensure they stand the highest chance of fertilizing their female's eggs.

World Record for holding your breath

Italian Giancarlo Bellingrath smashed the world record by 13 seconds in a swimming pool in his hometown of Naples. He managed to hold his breath for 12 minutes and 47 seconds. Kind of leaves you speechless doesn't it?

Shark whisperer sets great white free

When a 15-foot long Great White becomes trapped inside a tuna farm's perimeter fence, whom do you call? Turns out that Ian Gordon, known, as the shark whisperer is your man.

Mr. Gordon of Port Lincoln, South Australia, cut a hole in the netting and released the shark. "She was pretty laid-back, totally relaxed and of a beautiful temperament," said Mr Gordon "She did exactly what I wanted her to do."

"It's the first time a free-swimming white shark has been released from a pen like that," he said. Mr. Gordon, known for wrestling great whites and tiger sharks, earlier had considered lassoing the sharks' tail and hauling her out, but the one-ton shark was "too big to rustle".

I guess it's not just the beer cans that are bigger in Australia.

Naked man scares shark to death

A British comedian may face charges in the death of a "sensitive" shark after he jumped into the shark's tank in the buff, according to the Daily Telegraph newspaper.

The shark, a 12-year old smooth hound shark which measured three feet, died two days after Guy Venables jumped into its tank as a publicity stunt at the Brighton Sea Life Center, in southern England.

It seems that this shark variety is particularly susceptible to stress and may have died as the result of Mr. Venables antics. The exact nature of the dive, swan, cannonball, triple gainer or the judge's scores are unknown at press time.

Salmon once again swimming up the Rhine

Thousands of salmon are returning to the Rhine River to spawn after a huge campaign by the German government to cut water pollution. More than 1 900 adult salmon have been confirmed returning to the Rhine from the North Sea, the government said.

Hundreds of thousands of young salmon have been released in the Rhine during the past decade to re-establish the population, which was destroyed by water pollution.

The Rhine originates in Switzerland and flows along the German-French border before cutting through Germany and then the Netherlands to flow into the North Sea.

San Jose Man Fined \$25,000 for Poaching Abalone

A San Jose man has been fined \$25,000 and placed on four years

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Flotsam from page 11

probation for violating California's abalone harvesting moratorium. Myungsoo Shin pleaded guilty yesterday in Monterey County Superior Court to being in illegal possession of 86 abalone. He was caught by a state Department of Fish and Game warden just south of Soberanes Point on April 19th.

Zeagle regulator recall



Zeagle Systems, Inc. is recalling 931 first stage Scuba regulators sold between January 20, 2003 and May 19, 2003. If you think you have one of these regulators, take it to your authorized Zeagle dealer for a free inspection and repair. Further information is available at www.zeagle.com or 1-800-771-5568.

'Nazi Gold' In Austrian Lake Proves to be Disappointing

After decades of rumors, speculation, mysterious maps and books detailing the likelihood of Nazi gold in Hallstaettersee lake, Salzburg, Austria, divers found nothing more exciting than a large pile of boots at 125m (400ft).



Gerhard Zauer who runs a dive school close to the lake has spent years researching the possibility of Nazi gold in the lake, fuelled by reports that people saw a large number of boxes

being emptied there at the end of WW2. The decision of the Austrian authorities to ban diving in all but a few designated sites added to speculation that something of value was waiting to be discovered.

Zauer managed to obtain permission to dive and assembled a team of divers to investigate the rumors. What they found were thousands of army boots and shoes, piled up several meters high in places.

Hallstaettersee lake is a famous archaeological site with ice caves, historic salt mines and evidence of human habitation going back 5,000 years. The water temperature at depth is 39 degrees and ice forms on the surface in winter. The team of divers used trimix, drygloves and argon suit insulation to cope with the cold. Reaching a depth of 125m (400ft) their total dive time was 5 hours for a 20-minute bottom time.

Dolphin meat widely available in Peru - Despite Protected Status

In Peru, there is a twist on "the other white meat, it's "chancho marino," or sea pork. It's dolphin, the kind you see on "Nick at Night", our old friend Flipper, a protected mammal under Peruvian law.

By conservative estimates, 3,000 dolphins a year are trapped in Peruvian fishermen's nets, harpooned as they feed in shallow water or trapped, hauled to the beach and clubbed to death for human consumption. Fishermen kill many more for shark bait.

For more information, Mundo Azul has an English- and Spanish-language Web site at www.peru.com/mundoazul or www.iucn.org ... The World Conservation Union.

Great White Wasn't a Great Catch After All

A Los Angeles fisherman who caught a 6 1/2-foot white shark on the Hermosa Pier will be cited by the State Department of Fish and Game for killing a protected species.

Abraham Ulloa had posed with the shark on the pier on June 7 along with two local lifeguards. When the photo appeared in a story in a local newspaper, local sports and commercial fishermen called Fish and Game officials and the media.

Ulloa faces a misdemeanor charge, a fine of \$1,000 and/or six months in county jail. A fish and game official commented, "It's a violation even though he (Ulloa) claims he didn't know what it was. If you don't know what it is, don't take it."

Is it Moby Dick or Flipper?

Dolphin and porpoise meat is widely and illegally sold in Japan as whale meat and all three foods are so riddled with mercury that just a tiny meal could exceed safety levels, according to a European study released Wednesday.

"Contaminated cetacean (whale, dolphin and porpoise) products are widely available in Japan's retail outlets," according to the report, conducted by a British-based environmental watchdog which made seafood purchases in stores across Japan and then had them analyzed for toxicity and genetic ID.

Norway, the only other country that kills significant numbers of whales, last month advised pregnant and breastfeeding women against eating whale meat because of worries about mercury.





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 3rd Wednesday of the month at Sinbad's, located at Pier 2, Embarcadero Street, SF, CA 94111 (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: _____
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Home Phone: (____) _____ Work Phone: (____) _____
Email: _____
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 (<i>Choose one</i>):
<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: 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
Reef Divers Times
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