



### DIVING THE HMS YUKON

by MJWitt

A few weeks ago I was presented with the opportunity to throw my gear together and dive the HMS YUKON located in Mission Bay off the shore of San Diego. I jumped at the chance. For anyone remotely interested in wreck diving, even if that only entails 'looking' at the outside of wrecks, the Yukon is a must see trip, especially considering it's relative closeness to us that reside in the Bay Area. For those of you unfamiliar with the Yukon, San Diego Ocean's Foundation had this to say on their website:

"Probably the most ambitious project ever undertaken by the San Diego Oceans Foundation was the acquisition, preparation, and sinking of the decommissioned Canadian warship HMCS YUKON. Working in cooperation with the Artificial Reef Society of British Columbia, SDOF brought the YUKON to San Diego from Canada, stripped it of toxic and hazardous materials, and placed it on bottom to serve as an artificial reef offshore from Mission Beach."

The Yukon is a 366' Canadian destroyer. She sits in-between 65 and 100 feet of water, listing heavily on her port side do to an unfortunate 'last laugh' by Mother Nature, and is just under 2 miles off Mission Beach. She was a victim of 'premature-sinking'. SDOF had scrubbed her top-to-bottom, cut holes to facilitate sinking, placed charges, and were planning on setting

continue on page 9



JUNE...

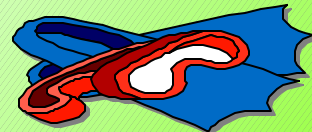
... SWAP MEET ...

... ENTERTAINMENT ...

*Garage full? Closet overflowing? Are you tripping over your dive gear when you navigate in the wee hours of the morning to clean up pet up-chuck?*

*Would you like to trade your Mike Nelson twin hose regulator for a genuine Soviet Navy Rebreather? Or would you just like to have a Mike Nelson twin hose regulator?*

*If you answered YES to any of the above and related questions make sure to show up at the JUNE 19<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL MEETING featuring a SFRD Swap Meet*



**THE SEARCH IS OVER!**

**SFRDS**

**HAVE A NEW MEMBERSHIP CHAIR**

**for details check page 9**

**PRESIDENT'S CORNER**



June! Is it just me or are the years flying by at an ever-increasing rate? So what's happened lately? A group of Reefers meet at Salt Point State Park, Saturday, May 5. The weather was gorgeous, warm, flat seas, great company. Curt and Alicia had an intimate encounter with an octopus. The rest of us, Geoffrey, Yann, Armin, Gerda and I, had our own encounters. Afterward we drove south to the County Park and had a BBQ. Armin brought his super grill and we gorged ourselves on chicken, sausage and an assorted smorgasbord of goodies.

Saturday, the 25<sup>th</sup> found us on the Cypress Sea with Captain Phil and crew. The diving was great. We started at the Outer Pinnacles then moved on to two spots at Mono Lobo. Afterwards we hooked up at the English Pub for a snack and my favorite electrolyte replenishment fluid, a pint of Guinness. We finally got to meet Bhushan's better half, no wonder he keeps her hidden, and he pales in comparison.

The continuing saga of cruise ships in Monterey seems to be taking care of itself. Representatives of Royal Caribbean and Crystal Cruises have agreed not to allow any dumping while in Monterey Bay. The next scheduled arrivals are the Royal Caribbean in September and a Crystal ship in October.

To round things out, the Birmingham National Sealife Center is experimenting with romantic tunes to encourage its captive sharks to mate. The shark's favorite artist appears to be ... Barry White. Until next time, dive deep, dive safe, dive often ... pierre

**2002 SFRD OFFICERS**

<b>President</b>	Pierre Hurter	(415) 285-6293 <a href="mailto:p.hurter@worldnet.att.net">p.hurter@worldnet.att.net</a>
<b>Vice President</b>	Robert Miché	(415) 661-5540 <a href="mailto:rmiche@mindspring.com">rmiche@mindspring.com</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Bill Donnelly	(415) 924-5627 <a href="mailto:bdonnelly@18004INJURY.com">bdonnelly@18004INJURY.com</a> P.O. Box 151223 San Rafael, CA 94915
<b>Webmaster</b>	Curt Degler	(707) 570-0457 <a href="mailto:cdegler@aquagraphy.com">cdegler@aquagraphy.com</a>
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Gerda Hurter	(415) 285-6293 <a href="mailto:p.hurter@worldnet.att.com">p.hurter@worldnet.att.com</a>
<b>Entertainment Committee</b>	Bhushan Mudbhary	(415) 386-3714 <a href="mailto:mudbhary@hotmail.com">mudbhary@hotmail.com</a>
	Ken Gwin	(415) 648-7046 <a href="mailto:artxfsf@aol.com">artxfsf@aol.com</a>
<b>AMCR Representative</b>	Gene Kramer	(415) 339-2785 <a href="mailto:gene.kramer@adecco.com">gene.kramer@adecco.com</a>
<b>CenCal Representative</b>	Bill Galameau	(510) 451-2370
<b>Membership Chairperson</b>	Armin Luggen	415-479-3240 <a href="mailto:armin@luggens.com">armin@luggens.com</a>



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



## REEFERS RAP

JANUARY 02	FEBRUARY	MARCH
<p>01 - New Year's Day Dive - Point Lobos 13 - Cypress Sea Boat Dive 16 - General Meeting 31 - Stillwater Cove Beach Dive</p>	<p>16 - President's Day Dive 20 - General Meeting 23 - Cypress Sea Boat Dive</p>	<p>20 - General Meeting 23 - Cypress Sea Boat Dive 30 - Monterey Beach Dive</p>
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
<p>12 - 14 Abalone Opener at Russian Gulch 14 - Cypress Sea Boat Dive - CANCELED 17 - General Meeting 18 - Point Lobos Boat Dive</p>	<p>15 - <i>General Meeting</i> 18 - Beach Dive - North Coast 25 - <i>Cypress Sea Boat Dive</i></p>	<p>08 - Monterey Clean Up Dive <b>moved to August 3rd</b>  19 - General Meeting &amp; Swap Meet <b>BOATHOUSE</b>  22 - Cypress Sea Boat Dive Saturday - 3 dives Coordinator: Jim Vallario (415) 566-0784  28 - Great Annual Fish Count Fish ID - (831) 372-9235  30 - Abalone Closer - meet at Fort Ross Parking Lot at 9 a.m. Coordinator: Robert Miché (415) 661-5540</p>
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
<p>06 - Great Annual Fish Count <a href="http://www.fishcount.org">www.fishcount.org</a>  17 - General Meeting BOATHOUSE  27 - Cypress Sea Boat Dive Saturday - 3 dives Coordinator: Jim Vallario (415) 566-0784</p>	<p>03 - Monterey Clean Up Dive <a href="mailto:drc@astound.net">drc@astound.net</a>  18 - 20 Channel Island Trip Coordinator: Jim Vallario (415) 566-0784  21 - General Meeting BOATHOUSE  TBD - Abalone Opener at Salt Point Coordinator: Pam Radkey (510) 527-5282</p>	<p>14 - Alcatraz swim/paddle Coordinator: Pierre Hurter (415) 285-6293  18 - General Meeting BOATHOUSE  22 - Cypress Sea Boat Dive Sunday - 3 dives Coordinator: Jim Valario (415) 566-0784</p>
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<p>13 - Cypress Sea Boat Dive Sunday - 2 dives Coordinator: Jim Vallario (415) 566-0784  16 - General Meeting/Officers Nomination BOATHOUSE</p>	<p>20 - General Meeting 2003 OFFICERS ELECTIONS BOATHOUSE  24 - Cypress Sea Boat Dive Sunday - 3 dives Coordinator: Jim Vallario (415) 566-0784  TBD - Annual Sea Ranch Weekend  TBD - Abalone Closer Coordinator: Robert Miché (415) 661-5540  TBD - Salmon Swim Coordinator: Frank King</p>	<p>18 - Christmas Party at the BOATHOUSE !!!  TBD - Beach Dive</p>

Reefer Rap ... need to know more ...



**One cabezon, two cabezo, three cabezon ... ready to count?**

The "**Great Annual Fish Count**" is an event coordinated by the Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF) that trains volunteer divers to document fish diversity and population trends in marine sanctuaries and coastal areas. The year 2002 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the fish count (formerly the Great American Fish Count).

If you are interested in participating, there will be a Fish ID seminar on Friday, June 28, from 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm, at the Pacific Grove Natural History Museum, 165 Forest Avenue, Pacific Grove. For more information and registration contact Jonanne Garden at 831.372.923 or e-mail at [USGardens@aol.com](mailto:USGardens@aol.com). The kick off dive will take place on July 6. Details are to be arranged. For more information see [www.fishcount.org](http://www.fishcount.org)



**CHANNEL ISLANDS TRIP  
DIVE BOAT "PEACE"**

A reminder to the members who have signed up for the Channel Islands trip this year: The final payment of \$210 is due by July 15<sup>th</sup> at the latest. Please send your checks to our treasurer, Bill Donnelly. (P.O. Box 151223, San Rafael, CA 94915).

Since we only have half the boat, Eric (the skipper and owner) has sold all but "one or two" spots to another group. The remaining spots are single bunks and the price is \$390. (There really ARE some advantages to being a club member).

If you're inclined, you might want to check out the boat's web site ([www.peaceboat.com](http://www.peaceboat.com)). Has some interesting information, including directions to the boat.

**GONE ONCE ... GONE TWICE ... AND  
NOW FOR THE THIRD TIME...**

by Armin Luggen

Aren't you getting tired of reading the same stories over and over again? I mean, how much can one absorb in a month or a year about diving in Switzerland?? Well, I am sorry, but I headed that way again last month for another short trip to visit my homeland. Don't worry, it gets me too, especially when I see my family and friends more often in four months than I had seen them in the last five years. But life at times just directs you in the funniest ways and directions. You can look at it how you want, but for myself, it seems as much odd, as it is wonderful. To keep this story short, I was fortunate again to dive in Switzerland's lakes. This time in lake Zurich. It was on a lovely Sunday, just two days before returning to the States, that Roman Lorenzetti, "Zetti" for short, and I were heading out to the lake. Unlike we do here in San Francisco, we only took a short ride through the city and ended up at lake, parking right on the street only 15 feet away from the water. The locals call it "Riff Williams". A little grass section with two cute benches make it a very attractive dive site.

The dive was discussed and we agreed to head in the direction of Zurich, while descending to about 130 feet we would follow the wall back up and return to our entry point. Ready for the adventure, we both got dressed, put our gear together, and and and .... #\*%^\$#%&! it. I didn't have my hood! At water temperatures of about 40 degrees Fahrenheit, I didn't need to get the gray mass between my two ears frozen. Now I know why they make those attached hoods.... Luckily, Roman Muller, who was supposed to meet us later, was still at the dive store. Cell phones do come in handy and just about 20 minutes later I was outfitted with a hood. Service par excellence!

"Zetti" was diving with his Buddy Inspiration Rebreather, while I headed down to the bottom with a single 15-liter tank (95cu.ft.).

The diving is certainly different. Sand, Mud, and ..... 'Oh look, is this fish still alive?' Well it was not quite that bad, but when you are used to dive in the Garden of Eden, (California's Coast) it is hard to compete. The dive was still quite interesting, and I got a better understanding, why you dive deeper and shorter, then shallower and longer.

After about 40 minutes we surfaced and were

**continue on page 9**

**Lake Zurich - from page 4**

greeted by Roman, who took pictures of us.

If I wouldn't have known that he was a local, I would have said he was a tourist – taking pictures and serving dried mangos freshly imported from the Philippines. A short break in the afternoon sun, and it was my turn to try out another rebreather. I was quite excited, since it provided the opportunity to compare this one to my last dive with a rebreather.

The *Buddy Inspiration*, a closed circuit rebreather, was different from the *Drager Dolphin*. No bubbles, no noise, and, and how do I get down?

It took me a while to figure it out, but eventually I made it to about 15 feet and tried to enjoy the funny feeling. It definitely requires some practice. Since you don't exhale the air into the water, you have to think differently about your buoyancy, and that is not an easy task. After about 10 to 15 minutes, "Zetti" was running low on air from what I had left him in my tank and we surfaced again. Ascending my mouth was getting bigger and bigger and was ready to burst. Well, good certification agencies, teach you about that coke bottle, that expands when you surface, or do they? Finally, I remembered it and equalized the terrible pressure in my mouths from the air, by venting it through my mask. What a feeling, when you can breathe again and don't feel like you get a fifty cent fill of air when you only paid twenty five cents.

It was an incredible experience and a lot of fun. Those rebreathers got my attention, and if I ever hit the Jackpot, I will probably show up soon with one. But then, considering the odds of winning... At any rate it was a

great way to get a feeling for something new, especially in the world of rebreathers. I would recommend to anyone to take a discover scuba-rebreather session before going ahead and buying one. It is a real eye opener, and requires a lot of interest and willingness for longer and extensive training. But it is well worth it.

So until next time from somewhere else... Happy diving and stay safe.

Don't miss to contact or see Stingray Dive Center in Zurich / Schlieren. A fully equipped facility for diving in every aspect, training, gear sales and air fills 24 hours a day. Ask for Roman or "Zetti".

**HMS YUKON – FROM PAGE 1**

them off in the morning to let her glide evenly to the bottom, but swells rolled in and she took on water causing her to sink ahead of schedule, thus the reason for her tilt on her port side. The nearness of the wreck and depth have made the Yukon one of the most dove wrecks on the west coast.

I dove the Yukon for the first time April of 2001, and other than some small residual silting and a very fine layer of growth, she was in pristine condition. Part of what made this last trip in May, 2002 such an interesting set of dives was being able to contrast how much growth had occurred in little over a year's time. While still obviously in

great condition, the marine life was much more abundant as nature established it's grip on the wreck. More fish, including a 3-foot ling cod that I came nose to nose with are now making the ship their home, and a variety of anemones, metridium, and other flora and fauna are also setting up residence. As the visibility was somewhat down this trip (around 10 to 25 feet), we took the opportunity to shoot some macro and give various parts of the ship a close inspection.

I went down with a group out of a SSI shop located in Visalia, California called "Underwater Excursions". They are a good group of divers and I've dove with them several times in the past. Always a fun trip. This adventure, my companion's were the owner of the shop Blair Jensen, and 4 other experienced divers, including 2 members of the local county dive rescue team. With the depth

**From page 1  
- New Membership Chair**

No, no, no, no chocolate bribes or promises of more newsletter articles or other kick backs. Honestly, he volunteered and got voted in by the current Officers at the June Officer's meeting. Here is your ONE and ONLY – *Aaarrmmnn Luugggeen* ... *Come on dooown...* and meet him at the next General Meeting!



**continue on page 10**

**HMCS Yukon – from page 9**

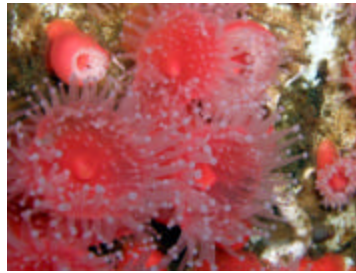
being what it is, the Yukon is an intermediate to advanced dive, and I was taking this opportunity to re-introduce myself to advanced nitrox diving, and had a sling bottle slung for some basic deco stops.

The boat operator that we used was Lois Ann Charters, and they run 2 trips a day on the weekend. The first day we took the afternoon boat out and did two dives on the Yukon, allowing us to get a feel for the ship again and get our bearings. With the established mooring lines, descent and ascent is relatively simple, and makes it difficult to lose your way. Simply swim to the top of the ship, find the nearest mooring line, and make your way to the surface. Our plan of attack the first day was, as we were doing two dives, to descend the line attached mid-ship, and dive the aft the first dive and the stern the second, taking half the ship each dive. Diving nitrox, this allowed us to take our time and enjoy the dive without feeling 'rushed'.

The following day we took the morning boat out. The plan was to do one more dive on the Yukon, then finish the day with a lighter dive on another wreck called the "Ruby E." and a kelp dive. For our dive on the Yukon, we took the time to focus more closely on the mid-ship area, and to photograph some of the macro life. Every time you go down you see something new and different on this wreck. San Diego is very lucky to have it available, and we as Californian divers' share in that fortune.

Our second dive on the Ruby E. was my first at that particular site and my companions and I were frankly amazed and enthralled. You know it is a 'good' dive when the first words out of your mouth when you surface is

'wow'. The Ruby E. is a 180' Coast Guard cutter that was sunk about 11 years ago. As the site is much older than the Yukon, the sea has definitely been hard at work, and the contrast is really fascinating. It struck me that the "Ruby" was aptly named, or maybe "Rose" would have been better yet, for when you reach her at the bottom in 65 feet of water, you can't help but take a minute to observe the amazing plenitude of rose anemone in every subtle shade that come in. Every square inch of surface was covered in them.



It reminded me somewhat of some oddly beautiful underwater version of a Rose Bowl Parade float. Sitting upright, and in less depth than the Yukon, she was a joy to dive, and we even took the opportunity for some very mild penetration into some of her holding spaces and wheelhouse. I've dove a good share of non-technical cold water wrecks, can't stress enough how much I enjoyed this dive.

Finally we wrapped up our day with a relaxing kelp dive in relatively shallow water (about 35 feet). For those of us that dive the kelp of Monterey and Northern California, this was nothing new, but it was a good way to unwind a bit and relax before heading home.

If you are interested in wreck diving or what I like to call "wreck sightseeing", San Diego and the Yukon has a lot to offer for the experienced diver. With airfare still fairly reasonable, it is only a short hop down the coast

to dive world class cold water wrecks and enjoy a relaxing weekend in the bargain. There are many shops, including Underwater Excursions, that run trips several times a year if you are more into the group diving activity, or if you and your buddy want to head down and take it on yourselves, several dive charters take divers out to the local wrecks. Dive safe and dive often.

*Photo courtesy of Underwater Excursions*

Related Links:

San Diego Oceans Foundation:

<http://www.hmcs-yukon.org/index.htm>

Project Yukon:

[http://www.hmcs-yukon.org/project\\_yukon/index.html](http://www.hmcs-yukon.org/project_yukon/index.html)

Underwater Excursions:

<http://www.underwaterexcursions.com>

**AND YOU THOUGHT  
THE BREACKWATERS  
WAS BORING!**

Certainly not for Alicia Langer who has taken up underwater photography and was out on her first practice run. Way to go Alicia!!





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*

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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 94915



### **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