



## FOLLOWING ROCKET MAN INTO THE DEPTHS

More on diving the Frenchman's Barge  
By Kenneth Gwin

This spot continues its allure.

The last trip's discovery of the white vase sponges spouting up intermingled with the giant white metridiums had set my mind spinning. I was more than curious to get down and add to my piece-of-the-puzzle-quilt understanding of this massive pile of stuff. Each little glimpse adds a bit more information.

The 200-watt HMI light Denzil brought was more than an eye opener.

Surface conditions were (as described) a little worse than glassy (I like to say "glycerin" or "polyethylene

seas"), but the color of the prop wash was the most promising. Similar topside conditions a few attempts ago were disappointing when some unexplained and unexpected mystery currents nearly sunk our marker buoy and we decided to abort the dive.

This time our flotilla of markers peacefully floated on the clear blue waters like a little family of happy ducks.

1 The yellow line ran nearly straight down forever.

The visibility was stunning. No jellies, no noticeable particulate layer, algae, or visible plankton.

As we continued downward, the current picked up mid-water. Past 100 feet there was a noticeable shift and the line turned in a graceful arch towards the bottom.

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## ENTERTAINMENT OF THE MONTH:

### THE DISCOVERY OF THE FRENCHMAN'S BARGE-- WE'VE GOT STORIES AND PICTURES



We've been diving on this Monterey Wreck for over a year now. As far as we know, until us, there had been no successful dives to the Art Riedel, Sr., the 235 foot long dredging barge that sank, relatively unnoticed in the middle of the night 16 years ago in Monterey Bay.

Fun discoveries this close to home are a great deal of fun.

This month's entertainment will be our first public presentation of our story--how Marcos and Phil, working with rumors and new bathymetric maps scratched the sleepy surface of diving life in Monterey and found the first significant wreck within some reasonable diving depths, and only a few minutes from the harbor.



**Der Stammtisch**

By Pierre Hurter

Every so often you'll hear about an accident involving a diver or you are in Monterey and hear the sirens heading for the Breakwater or Monastery. Usually you don't think much about it, maybe you'll catch a brief notice in the Monterey Herald or some chatter on ba\_diving. This time was different. I had heard about the missing diver, given the boat and where they had been diving, I knew it might be someone I knew or at least knew of. It turns out that I did, his name was Bob Crawford.

Gerda and I had met Bob when we took a two week trip to Mexico, the *Islas Revillagigedos* or Socorro Islands. I remember watching his silver mane of hair coming up from the blue waters, his smile, his stories. He was a passionate man, a man who stuck with what he believed to be important. Every so often you meet someone, even if only briefly, who stays with you, that was Bob.

As usually happens after a diving accident, there is rampant speculation, some of it out of a genuine interest in wanting to know, some from that primal need we all have for some reason behind all events in life. We may never know and perhaps that is the bigger lesson to take away, diving is a terrific sport, activity, pastime, however you see it, but there is a risk attached and it deserves our respect.

That being said, Gerda and I joined up with a number of other hardy Reef Divers as well as Flipper Dippers and headed south on the Cypress Sea for our October dive. We had come down the night before and stayed at the Royal Oak. To paraphrase Dinah Washington, "What a difference a day made; twenty four little hours; brought the sun and the flowers." Well maybe no sun and certainly no flowers, but a good nights rest all the same.

With Captain Dave at the helm and Josh and Mark as crew we headed south to the Outer Pinnacles. The weather was overcast, the seas calm and only one passenger hanging over the side, just the way I like it. The first dive was murky at the surface and dark at the bottom. Kept dropping down to see if it would open up, but even at 100 feet the visibility didn't open up much past 20 feet. My canister light was in the shop and I realized just how much you miss when you don't have a Kelp Burner 2000 to peer into those crevices, ledges and tuck-aways in the rock.

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**2005 SFRD OFFICERS**

President	Gene Kramer	(650) 359-2785 <a href="mailto:genekramer@pacbell.net">genekramer@pacbell.net</a>
Vice President	...	In an undisclosed but secure location
Treasurer & Secretary	Pierre Hurter	(415) 285-6293 <a href="mailto:sfreesdiver@comcast.net">sfreesdiver@comcast.net</a>
Webmaster	Curt Degler	(707) 570-0457 <a href="mailto:cdegler@aquagraphy.com">cdegler@aquagraphy.com</a>
Newsletter Editor	Gerda Hurter	(415) 285-6293 <a href="mailto:sfreesdiver@comcast.net">sfreesdiver@comcast.net</a>
Entertainment Committee	Ken Gwin	(415) 648-7046 <a href="mailto:artfxsf@aol.com">artfxsf@aol.com</a>
AMCR Representative	Gene Kramer	(415) 339-2785 <a href="mailto:genekramer@pacbell.net">genekramer@pacbell.net</a>
CenCal Representative	Debra Gilmore	<a href="mailto:gilmored2@yahoo.com">gilmored2@yahoo.com</a>



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

## REEFER'S RAP 2006

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
01 - New Year's Day - Point Lobos 04 - Officers Meeting 14 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat - Pierre - 415.285.6293 <b>18 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b>	01 - Officers Meeting 11 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat - Pierre - 415.285.6293 <b>15 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b>	01 - Officers Meeting 11 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat - Pierre - 415.285.6293 <b>15 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b>
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
01 - Abalone Opener 05 - Officers Meeting 08 - CANCELLED <b>19 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b>	03 - Officers Meeting 13 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat - Pierre - 415.285.6293 <b>17 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b>	07 - Officers Meeting 10 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sun - Pierre - 415.285.6293 <b>21 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b> TBD - Abalone Closer
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
05 - Officers Meeting 08 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat. - Pierre - 415.285.6293 <b>19 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b>	04 -06 - Abalone Opener – Radkey's at (510) 527-5282 02 - Officers Meeting 13-15 - Channel Islands 16 - Peace Trip Extension: Oil Rig Dive - 1.866.984.2025 <b>16 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b>	06 - Officers Meeting 08 - 10 - Lake Tahoe Dive - Norm Knutson 16 - Monterey Beach Cleanup 17 - Ursula's Walk for ALS - Lake Merritt <b>20 - Meeting - Sinbad's</b> 23 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat - Pierre -415.285.6293 30 - Alcatraz swim/paddle - Tim - <a href="mailto:invitational@south-end.org">invitational@south-end.org</a>
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
04 - Officers Meeting 14 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat. - Pierre - 415.285.6293 * <b>18 - Meeting - Sinbad's - Officer Nominations !!!</b> 20 - 22 Van Damme State Park - Sacramento Sea Horses - Tom & Kathy Moorse - 916-989-0555	01 - Officers Meeting <b>15 - Meeting - Sinbad's - Officer Elections !!!</b> 11 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat. - Pierre - 415.285.6293 TBD - Abalone Closer	06 - Officers Meeting 09 - Cypress Sea - (3 Dives) - Sat - Pierre - 415.285.6293 <b>20 - Meeting - Sinbad's - Christmas Party !!!</b>

## Rocket Man from page 1

Following Denzil and his scooter and the screaming bright light was as close to interplanetary space flight one might experience in this world. Falling into a sub-orbital, upper-atmospheric approach was the image that came to mind. Marcos remarked that the light effects that halo-ed in the glow created dazzling refractions, turning portions of the flaming circle of light into a rainbow plasma of white light, red and blue. He tried to take a picture of the image.

We continued to follow Rocket Man into our destiny.

Ahead of us, Denzil fell straight down through the darkness, riding his brilliant fireball.

The reassuring line of metridiums came once again into view in the distance to our right.

Denzil had landed on the sand at the base of the steeply angled hull. In his glowing circle of white light, each grain of sand seemed perfectly clear. He was surrounded by dozens of medium sized rockfish swirling around him. He looked like an attendant at the aquarium feeding the spoiled and impatient fish for the pleasure of tourists. They seemed to rush in out of the darkness, bug-eyed to see what this radiant, alien, bubble-less being might be about.

The hull was tilting nearly straight up in front of us. Visibility was easily a hundred feet. There was some significant ambient light for a change--still, not quite enough light to clearly read our instruments. Our grapple, lying at the end of a tidy line in the sand, rested where a portion of the hull formed a small gully along the bottom. A much

larger rusty anchor chain ran in rings around us and disappeared around the corner.

It was clear from this perspective that the hull had buckled and twisted along its length. Here it raised nearly straight up, looking two stories tall. In other places it lay closer to horizontal.

On this side, opposite the rubble field, there was much less clutter. In the outlying areas there was a generally unmarked field of sand sprouting the typical little things that made these sands their home.

Under this imposing precipice we turned the corner into the cavernous open area created by the up turned bow (or stern, I guess with a barge its hard to tell).

Denzil's light washed deeply into the recesses. Marcos hovered high above, surveying the upper railings and abstract shapes of steel. More incomprehensible pieces of metal, machinery, and pesky fish cluttered the view.

On the way back to the line I retrieved Phil Sammet's reel that I failed to get last year (8/27/05) on our exciting BPOS dive (otherwise known as the 1000-dollar halibut dive). Even the fine anodized aluminum, delrin, and stainless steel that Halcyon provides may need a little lubrication.

Again, mid-water, the current picked up. At 160 feet, the line was vibrating. At 70 feet, it was a lazy, useless and limp entanglement hazard.

Only the very faint haze in the water that was finally noticeable

at forty feet contrasted the amazing clarity at depth.

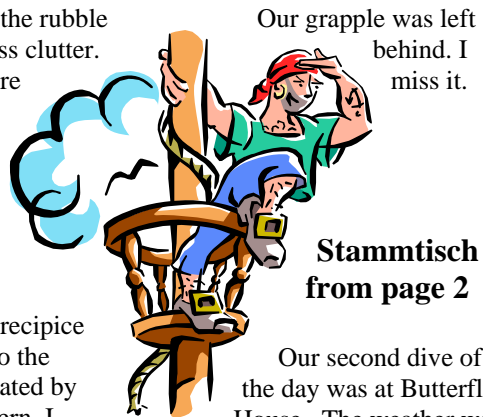
We ran a little long along the way.

308' max depth

50°F

121 min. run time

Again, visibility at depth, an estimated 100' or better



## Stammtisch from page 2

Our second dive of the day was at Butterfly House. The weather was still overcast but it was warm both topside and below, with water temperatures in the high fifties. I love the canyons that run perpendicular to shore here, like a giants outstretched fingers, with lots of nooks and crannies to explore. The visibility seemed to perk up a little on this dive or maybe the coffee was starting to kick in.

Our third dive was at Ling Cod Reef where we promptly met the places namesake a huge laid back ling cod. Managed a nice leisurely dive and then back to the docks. Gerda decided that her zipper was definitely leaking; there was no other way to explain the wet spot. So after topping off at the Pub, it was off to Any Waters to drop off her suit and my regulators for a well deserved servicing.

Finally figured out all of the time keeping devices around the

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**Stammtisch from page 4**

house and car and got them to “spring forward or fall back” or whatever it is they are supposed to do. Time zones were first used by the railroads in 1883 so that they could standardize their schedules. It would hardly do to have each major city set their clocks by local astronomic time, especially when you have more than one train on a given track. So in 1884 a Canadian, Sir Sanford Fleming, was instrumental in establishing an international time standard at the International Prime Meridian Conference in Washington in 1884. That was in the days when we were more partial to international conventions. So if you are still not sure what time it is, visit the U.S. Naval Observatory’s web site ... <http://tycho.usno.navy.mil/> .

Meanwhile the officer’s meetings have taken a culinary turn. Gene has been finding these little gems for us to meet at. The meeting for November took place at the Front Porch located in the Mission on 29<sup>th</sup> Street. The first thing you notice is that they actually have an outside sitting area which while not quite a porch certainly comes close. It’s small inside, cozy with seating made from the bench seats of some long forgotten American car classics. One of the officers who will remain unnamed even professed to having gotten “lucky” on just such a seat.

We each tried something different, Dungeness crab on hominy grit porridge with habanera, lemon and scallion, deep fried chicken livers on toasted brioche with onion gravy, tuna tartar topped with flying fish roe and scallions with plantain chips, deep fried ocras, a Porch

Burger with fries and corn bread on the side.

In the immortal words of Joe Pesci ... "How long does it take to cook a grit?" Whether you call them hominy grits, little hominy or just plain grits, this is one of America’s quintessential foods, at least in the south. Three-quarters of all the grits sold in the United States are sold in the "grits belt" stretching from Louisiana to North Carolina. South Carolina went so far as to declared grits its state food in 1973, writing, “Whereas, throughout its history, the South has relished its grits, making them a symbol of its diet, its customs, its humor, and its hospitality, and whereas, every community in the State of south Carolina used to be the site of a grist mill and every local economy in the State used to be dependent on its product; and whereas, grits has been a part of the life of every South Carolinian of whatever race, background, gender, and income; and whereas, grits could very well play a vital role in the future of not only this State, but also the world, if as The Charleston News and Courier proclaimed in 1952: An inexpensive, simple, and thoroughly digestible food, [grits] should be made popular throughout the world. given enough of it, the inhabitants of planet Earth would have nothing to fight about. A man full of [grits] is a man of peace.”

Now I’m not sure that the grits with Dungeness crab were good enough to bring about world peace, but they certainly warrant another visit. Next time, I have my eye on the fried chicken with ocras.

All this talk about southern cooking lead us to Memphis Minnies over the weekend. No, not Memphis Minnie the blues

singer, born June 3, 1897 in Algiers, Louisiana; but the barbeque place on lower Haight. We had come for brunch, we even found a parking spot out front, but it was not to be. The sign stuck on the door announced that due to circumstances beyond their control, no more brunch. You have to wonder, maybe it was the whole daylight savings debacle, many never really recover from the change.

Anyway, we came back for lunch.

The inside is brightly colored, with lots of piggy kitsch and dusty “T” shirts including one for Piggly Wiggly a grocery chain found throughout the south and curiously in Wisconsin. The place was quickly packed with more than a few folks disappointed to hear about there being no brunch. We bellied up to the counter and ordered Memphis style pulled pork and Texas style brisket sandwiches. For sides we settled for the tangy vinegar cole slaw and the sweet and sour potlikker green. Each table has big squirt bottles of classic red barbecue sauce, spicy vinegar and Carolina-style mustard sauces along with a roll of paper towels in case things get out of hand.



It’s clear that Gerda and I are overdue for a road trip to the heart of barbeque country. No

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**Stammtisch from page 5**

offense to Memphis Minnies or any of the other BBQ joints in the Bay area, but ... I have a craving for Fresh Air Barbeque in Georgia or some mustard based BBQ from South Carolina, there's more to life than tofu, that's all I can say.

Here's a shocker, Pink Flamingos, you know what I'm talking about, the ones that aunt Myrtle has in the front yard next to the whirly gigs. That bit of Americana some of us are ashamed to admit is going on in anybody's yard that we might be related to. Well it seems that Union Products which in 1946 started manufacturing "Plastics for the Lawn". Is going belly up as of November 1<sup>st</sup>, they are no more. Now maybe it's me, but I think is all of a



this part

dangerous trend. I first noticed it

when we were in Europe and all of the Garden Gnomes were stamped "made in China", now this.

Last month I mentioned a quirky car that I had spotted out behind Arch, the art supply store. I'm beginning to think that area is a magnet for unique autos. Car spotters, you've heard of birders and train spotters, well I'm a car spotter and the other day as Gerda and I were driving back from perusing the wine selection at the Bargain Bank, there it was. We'll what was it? Not an old Range Rover as I had first thought, no something much rarer, at first I thought it was a Peugeot 4 wheel drive military jeep, judging by the logo on the steering wheel and some other parts, but no it was something much more obscure, a UMM or União Metalo-Mecânica, a Portuguese manufacturer of off road vehicles.



It was an exciting day for spotting interesting vehicles. Not more than fifteen minutes after the UMM sighting we rolled by Zeitgeist, on Valencia just in time to see a swarm of classic two wheelers. Matchless, Moto Guzzi, Norton, a couple of Indians and a Vincent very much like the one my parents honeymooned on.

So, that's it for the month. I still have to wade through my absentee ballot(s). I'm glad I don't have to pay the postage, because this one would put a dent in the budget. Still it is November, Remembrance Day, Veterans Day, the day when at 5:00 A.M. on Monday, November 11, 1918 the Germans signed the Armistice, an order was issued for all firing to cease; so the hostilities of the First World War ended. The war to end all wars ... the least I can do is vote.

So until next time, don't eat too much turkey, easy on the gravy and dive safely.

**HI ALL YOU OUT THERE IN REEFER LAND!**

Although I (Curt Degler in case you have forgotten my name) am presently in another hemisphere, I am still hooked into what's happening to the State's abalone resource, and the news is not good. We need your help, so here goes...

As some of you may be aware, the (former)commercial abalone divers, who were shut out of job in the late 90s due to their stewardship of the loss and destruction of the State's abalone resource south of San Francisco, are attempting to reopen commercial abalone diving at San Miguel in the Channel Islands. SCAN, CENCAL, RFA and GLACD as well as a vast majority of sport divers and sport diving clubs vigorously oppose this attempt to remove a remnant population of red abalone from an area only now just recovering from the essentially unregulated rape of the resource for 35 years by a small bunch of in-it-for-the-money-only guys.

An online petition to the State has been set up here: <http://actionstudio.org/?go=2511>

PLEASE!!! NOW!!! click on this link and send a message to the State that the reopening of San Miguel is absolutely not acceptable and get your friends, neighbors, relatives and anyone who has ever eaten sport-caught abalone to do the same. You will be helping only yourself and the State's most favorite and imperiled mollusk.



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

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

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

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Email:	_____				
How would you like your newsletter delivered? ( <b>Choose one</b> ):					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Online at the SFRD website (preferred)				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mailed to my home address				

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



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

The *Reef Diver Times* is the official newsletter of the San Francisco Reef Divers, a not for profit community organization dedicated to safe sport diving and the preservation of our ocean resources. Membership is \$25 annually, dues payable to “SFRD”. The General Meeting is held 3rd Wednesday of the month at 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 Diver Times  
C/O Gerda Hurter  
515 Diamond Street  
San Francisco, CA 94114