

DIVE LOG

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the United Divers of New Hampshire

We just LOVE to dive!!!



From the Editor

Greetings, fellow divers!

The year is nearly over, and I haven't done any diving this year at all. As much as it pains me to miss it in person, at least folks are sharing enough stories and pictures to keep me vicariously amused.

Keep those pics and stories coming, and hopefully next year will be another good one for the club.

And lest you think I'm closing out the year, never fear ... there's another issue on the way, shortly on the heels of this one. I've gotten way behind, but there's lots of material in the queue. If you don't see your stuff in this issue, it may get in the next one. Pics are so numerous, that you might not see them until next year! That's the way I like it ... lots to choose from!

This issue we welcome aboard two new board members ... Adam takes over as Vice President, and Brandy takes over as dive coordinator. In addition, Ken will be helping Brandy, and coordinating some fun pool activities for the new year.

Happy Diving,

Karen Marion



President's Corner

Steve is resting this issue. More interesting dive stuff next issue.

Corrections

Last issue's photograph of Steve, Wayne and Mike in Don's pool was incorrectly attributed to Steven Cantelli.

That photo was taken by Jacqueline Small.



Editor: Karen Marion

Submissions

Editorial contributions may be e-mailed to Karen at kmarion@smscomp.net

Submissions can also be sent on paper or PC floppy to:

Karen Marion
4 Wildwood Lane
Amherst, NH 03031-2107

Please include a brief byline and author contact information with your submission. Submission shall automatically constitute an expressed warranty by the contributor that the material is original and is in no way an infringement on the rights of others. While no compensation is paid for published submissions, a byline indicating the source of an article will always be provided. Authors grant *Dive Log* and United Divers of New Hampshire first print rights to the submission. *Dive Log* and its editors reserve the right to edit all materials as needed. The opinions stated in the articles in *Dive Log* are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the United Divers of New Hampshire or the editors of the *Dive Log*. For further information, please contact Karen at (603) 423-9055.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions to *Dive Log* are included in the UDNH membership fees. Non-members may subscribe to the newsletter for \$15/year. Subscription inquiries should be addressed to Karen Marion as well.

Advertising

Rates for a full year placement (6 bimonthly issues) range from \$75 to \$360, depending on placement size and location. For detailed information on advertising in *Dive Log*, contact Don Eva at (603) 672-5608 or dpeva@aol.com.

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Website:

Newsletters and other current info are available at our website: <http://www.udnh.org>, graciously hosted by Jake & Linda Richter.

This year the club did the annual Christmas tree dive, right on schedule, the weekend of Thanksgiving. The tree was courtesy of Gary, who made a new one special for us this year. Photographs were sent to me by Steven Cantelli. Enjoy ... Karen.



Here's the before picture ... thanks, Gary, for providing such an awesome tree this year! -Karen.



Flying the flag for the club (above), and preparing to sink the tree (below).



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The Deadly Weight of Fear

by Jacqueline Small

Underwater regions can be enchanting, but because they are out of the human's natural element, the potential for hazard should be appreciated. Recreational scuba diving is easy, fun and enjoyable, but it must be taken seriously. The skills needed to master diving are not difficult to learn, but must be learned well and practiced responsibly. Responsible divers must make efforts to keep proficient in the skills of diving. Open Water Diver, Scuba Schools International, Page one.

Dive Log: #23,

August 13, 2002,

Monhegan Island, Maine

Maximum Depth: 69 feet

Total Time: 13 minutes

At the tail end of July 2002 there were shark sightings at beaches near our home in southern Maine. We were experiencing a sweltering heat wave and although it was the height of tourist season, authorities were compelled to impose a swimming ban while the sharks continued to appear. For nearly a week, several sharks, some as large as twelve feet, had been spotted in water as shallow as 4 feet. A specific species was never definitely identified but several had been surmised as the rare visitors—mako, thresher, porbeagle. It was also reported that although many sharks, including great whites, inhabit the deeper waters of the Gulf of Maine, no one had ever been attacked.

On Sunday, August 11, my husband Michael and I prepared to depart for our summer vacation to be spent at a rented cabin in Port Clyde, Maine, a two and a half hour drive north. On the following day we planned to relax, perched on the cabin's deck overlooking a stunning view of the St. George River. On Tuesday we would join Captain Dave Sinclair aboard The Lady Anne for a cruise to Monhegan Island. There we would scuba dive the cove and explore beautiful anemone covered rock walls. In light of the recent shark sightings, I confessed to Michael that I was unsure I would feel comfortable diving. He, as well as several trusted fellow divers, assured me that the danger to us was extremely remote, as sharks are indifferent to divers, usually afraid of them. "They're only fish in the water, nothing to worry about. It would be a shame to allow this media hype to ruin a potentially great experience." After much discussion I dismissed my fears as silly and illogical. I felt determined to put it out of my mind, relax and enjoy myself.

Tuesday arrived sunny and windless with calm seas. We looked forward to the day's adventure, forgetting about the phones and the office back home as well as...the *sharks*. Our planned time of departure for the boat dive was 9:00 a.m. With all our gear loaded aboard the Lady Anne, we climbed in and were quickly introduced to the crew, two dive masters that would accompany us and another couple.

The ten mile cruise to Monhegan Island revealed a panorama of beauty amidst the icy blue sea; forests of tall firs topped the rocky coastline of small islands we passed. As the boat cut through the water, a froth of refreshing white spray spilled up along the gunwale where I sat.

Within 45 minutes we approached the island and our dive site. Captain Dave backed off the throttle, circled the boat into position and deployed our decent line. A bright yellow float was marked "DIVERS BELOW" and was secured by line to a lead weight now sitting on the ocean floor. The boat rode

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the subtle swells of our wake, and although I was fitted with wrist bands to help prevent sea sickness, the queasiness began to creep in. As the motion persisted, I grew anxious and filled with dread.

The sun beat down on the little vessel as the divers scurried to don their gear. Above us, hikers on the island crowded to the cliff's edge to watch. I leaned against the cabin and nervously pulled on my wetsuit, stretching the 7mm of neoprene into place. After I tugged the snug fitting hood on over my head, Phil, one of the dive masters offered to tuck it in for me. I hesitated, searching the cluttered deck for Michael who was suiting up on the other side, then mumbled, "Well, Michael does it for me." But realizing time would not allow the luxury of his usual attentiveness, I said "Ok." Phil commenced tucking the skirt of my hood into the collar of my wet suit with the effect of a wimpy handshake, not with the gusto Michael had employed. There was a growing sense of detachment and isolation in me with all that was unfamiliar.

Heat and sweat smoldered under my thick black suit. My breath quickened as I grew more agitated. When I was certain my gear was all in place, I said to Allison, a crewmember standing near, "I have to get in the water." My stomach lurched with the boat's constant rocking and its noxious exhaust fumes. At my left, Allison firmly clasped my elbow as I gingerly padded my finned feet across the deck to the stern. I awkwardly threaded the two fat fins between the narrow rails of the boat's ladder and fought the weight of the tank pulling me backwards. I didn't think to bend my knees or my body to shift the weight forward. Allison tried to assure me, "I have you. I won't let you fall." Michael called out, "Be sure she has air in her BC." I'd forgotten that too. He instantly appeared at my right side. Allison inflated the BC as I prepared to jump.

The viridescent sea loomed before me, swaying the boat back and forth. My brain swam in dizzying fear and confusion. I so wanted to escape the assailing motion and the sickening fumes—to feel the coolness of the water. Gripping the handrails, I slowly extended my right leg and lunged forward,

dropping into the great abyss I felt certain was about to swallow me up.

My heart hammered furiously as I darted down through the water then quickly floated upward in a flurry of bubbles. Like a weightless cork, I popped up, instantly focusing my sights on the boat. I gave Allison the ok sign, a tap on the top of my head. She called out instructions for me to swim to the descent line and to hang on there. I finned the twenty feet to the yellow float and grabbed the line with a trembling hand. The water washed over me, seeping cool refreshment into the wetsuit. I bobbed in the swells believing that the slight relief I felt could only improve.

I clung to the thin yellow line, sucking air from my regulator when Inka, the second diver in the water, joined me there. She smiled with warmth and enthusiasm but nervously grasped the line too. I noticed she was breathing through her snorkel and was reminded that I should be conserving my air until we descend. I made the switch.

Within moments, Dave, one of the dive masters was with us in the water. He asked me if our plan was to accompany the group. He informed me they'd be hitting eighty feet. I told him I didn't want to go below sixty. He agreed to accompany Michael and me on a less aggressive tour of the rock wall below us.

Two others splashed into the water, Steve, Inka's husband and Phil, the other dive master. I looked for Michael who was still gearing up. Knowing his meticulous care, I figured we would be waiting there for a while longer. This time, I didn't mind. The captain instructed Phil to go ahead with their dive. Dave and I waited patiently for Michael who, soon enough to my relief was by my side in the water. He asked me if I was ok. I responded "Yes," denying the urgent message crying within my mind and body.

We did not follow our usual protocol which was to do a bubble check before descending. To me, Michael seemed

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distracted and the sense of relaxed fun we'd usually shared wasn't apparent.

Since my course of study two years ago and subsequent certification, I have had difficulty with feet first descents. I've been more successful executing surface dives to gain the first few feet of depth. Today I was wearing three additional pounds of weight to assist in a feet first descent. So when I began releasing air from my BC as usual, the strangest and most unfamiliar thing happened. I sank with ease.

Through the tiny window pane of my mask, I watched the waterline pass over me as the amber light of the surface quickly disappeared into the dusky brine. My hand still clenched the descent line. I feverishly sucked air from my regulator looking wildly about into the darkness. Water began to seep into my mask which I constantly worked to clear. I'd forgotten to hold my mask when I jumped. Michael signaled me to let go of the line and I did so reluctantly replacing it with the hand he held out to me—a momentary dose of comfort. He pointed to the lead weight that held the bottom of the line. He asked if I was ok. Again I signaled, *Ok*, stubbornly determined to accomplish this dive without being found out.

By necessity our hands separated as we finned about. Suddenly I became self-conscious of my buoyancy. It felt all wrong. I continued to fall, feet down. I added air to my BC and tried to fin myself upward. There was Dave, asking me if I was ok. I signed back, *Ok*. Where was Michael though; I couldn't see him. Then I noticed him right above me. I finned trying to stay near him until my calves grew tired. I rested but felt myself spiraling downward again. I struggled to elevate myself in the murky tugging current. Suddenly I felt a huge hard object crash into my back. My heart leaped and I spun clumsily around to face my monster. I gasped at the sight of a massive black wall of hulking rock that rose up from the depths of the sea. Dave appeared above me shining his light on large anemones attached there. My mind shouted, *I don't care! I don't want to be here!*

Again I searched the shadows for Michael, slowly rotating in the bulky gear, straining my gaze in all directions. I screamed into my regulator, "Where are you?" Finally I caught a glimpse of him still hovering above. He moved in closer, looked squarely into my eyes and once again asked if I was ok. Finally, resigned to my distress, I shook my head no and gave him the thumbs up sign, calling the dive. Michael readily returned the thumbs up sign, saying to me—*no problem, the dive's over, let's go*. He'd seen the wide-eyed panic in my expression. He gently took hold of my arm.



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We slowly started our ascent, leaving Dave happily buoyed in the gloom. I searched the water trying to keep Michael in view. Then in my mind's eye, as I peered over my right shoulder, I saw my regulator hose catch on his manifold. I watched the slow surreal movement of the regulator tugging then slipping from the right side of my mouth. My jaw relaxed with its expulsion leaving my mouth and lips feeling naked, cold yet unencumbered. *But surely this was a nightmare!* I frantically grabbed at the run-away regulator as it swayed about in the water, but before I could retrieve the thing, a gulp of cold salty water entered my lungs. Finally clutching it, I stuffed it back into my mouth and immediately breathed in. But there was no air, only water piercing my lungs. My wild-eyes cried out to Michael, *no air!* He quickly snapped up the regulator in his mitted hands, purged it and gently shoved it back into my mouth. I breathed in—still, there was no life in the thing!

My thoughts screamed, *It's no use!* Terror and panic dictated that I must flee and just get to the surface. I looked up and saw only darkness, unfathomable gallons of water with no sign of the surface or that veil of sunlight shining through.

It seemed I'd left Michael behind and journeyed alone, finning my way upward, desperately stifling the urge to breath. I screamed expelling air, sucking water back in. My mind traveled to an account I'd read of the phases the human body undergoes through the process of drowning. I was certain that this is what was happening to me. Yet, I thought how amazingly much water my lungs could tolerate. Finally, I remembered my training and knew I couldn't ascend too quickly lest I suffer an air embolism and surely die.

At long last a hint of hope, sunlight began to brighten the water above, but still there was a distance to go. I continued to fin toward that glassy break between water and air. My nasal passages burned with the backwash of salty fluid and just when I could no longer hold out for air, I broke the ocean's surface. As my body shot up into the air, I wailed my despair in bursts of gurgling screams. My lungs heaved in violent gasps for breath. I coughed, ripping sharp spasms of pain through my chest; then

spewed the salty bile from my gut. For a few moments I saw nothing, not even Dave who was beside me in the water and Michael right there inflating my BC. I just felt shock.

Then there was the low growl of the boat's engine as Captain Dave immediately maneuvered around to us. From the stern, he called out instructions to remove my weight belt which Michael quickly released and handed up to him. I felt my fins being pulled off, then the captain's enormous strength lifting me up, plucking my sopping body out of the water and gently laying me down onto the deck.

My throat burned as I continued to cough and spit up sea water. My body trembled and I fought the urge to burst into tears. I felt embarrassed and ashamed for this blunder, for my stupidity. Captain Dave helped me off with the rest of my gear and led me to the cabin doorway where I sat and drank the fresh water he promised would wash away the sea water. Then he calmly asked "What happened?"

Within minutes Michael was on deck kneeling before me still weighted by the double tanks upon his back. "I'm so sorry this happened!" he cried, then pulled me toward him and held my shivering body.

For the next couple of days, I felt tired and as fragile as a china tea cup. I often caught myself blankly staring off. The ordeal haunted my thoughts around the clock. Tears welled up at each remembrance. Fear held fast in the blackness of night in our tiny cabin. Sleep did not come until daylight. In the morning I had to turn my gaze from the fearsome sea.....the thing I'd loved so dearly.....the thing that had taken some part of me.

Although a strange biting cough lingered, the days passed with many happy distractions as well as my husband's unwavering love and support. Each morning we were visited by Sadie, the Sinclair's cheerful golden retriever pup and her pal Bucky, the black cat. Michael and I explored the woodlands



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and the cove surrounding the cabin. We drove to Camden to the top of Mt. Battie for a view of Penobscot Bay. We feasted upon seafood and enjoyed scarlet sunsets over the Saint George River.

Throughout our time together, Michael and I scrutinized each detail of the dive. We found that there was much I couldn't remember and much I just hadn't seen, such as his constant nearness to me in the water. My perceptions of things throughout the dive were drastically convoluted by fear. And to make matters worse, I'd given no indication to him or to Dave that I was in trouble. They both thought I'd looked fine and was doing very well.

Yet my reluctance to admit my distress at any time posed more of a danger to me than a shark or any other sea creature ever could have. My state of terror, however founded, prevented me from executing simple tasks or making rational decisions. The fact that I was not practiced in many important dive skills was undeniable, i.e. buoyancy control, alternate air source location and use, as well as emergency ascents. We also had not been aware just how profoundly I trust and depend upon Michael. Changes in our routine had been unsettling to me.

Finally, most astonishing to me was the revelation that throughout the dive, Michael and I were never positioned in such a way to cause my regulator hose to catch on his manifold and that none of my equipment had malfunctioned. We felt the likelihood of narcosis had to be considered. In any event, we agreed that I had no business being in the water that day.

Michael has felt strongly that I should not wait too long to get back in the water, either in a pool, a lake or more shallow beach site, so that I might overcome my fears, commit to mastering dive skills and just enjoy myself. He insists that I am a good diver with two successful seasons behind me.

As cold winds begin to blow and the memory of that dreaded August day slowly fades, I do find myself pondering the prospect of diving again, beginning with a series of pool exercises over winter and then a fresh start in open water come spring. But for now I'm content to observe the wondrous sea from the vantage point of my little chair with my feet planted firmly in the sand.



Club Meetings

Meetings are held the first and third Mondays of each month, January through November. We encourage potential members to attend a meeting or two to experience our club before joining. The meetings are held at the YMCA on 30 Mechanic St. (off of Elm Street) in Manchester. The meetings start at 7:00 PM. Each meeting consists of a short business portion followed by a variety of presentations and discussions. Immediately following the club has an hour of pool time for swimming, trying out gear, and the occasional game of pool volleyball or underwater hockey. Members and guests often meet afterwards at a local restaurant for food and drink.

Extreme Weather

Meetings will be held if the YMCA is open. You can call them at (603) 623-3558. Check close to the meeting time as the front desk often has no advance warning of early closures.

Membership

Annual dues for membership for 2002 in the United Divers of New Hampshire are \$30/individual or \$45/family. Dues are not prorated for members who join later in the year. To join, please contact Don Eva at (603) 672-5608

Get in the Swim

After every meeting, the YMCA pool is open to our dive club for an hour of fun and fitness.

Don't wait for the ice to thaw before trying out that new equipment, the pool is the perfect place. Check out the club calendar for special presentations in the pool like dive knife use or trying out a dry suit. So bring a suit and a towel to every meeting and get into the swim.

United Divers of New Hampshire Contact Information - 2003

President	Stephen Cantelli	(603) 772-9906
Vice President	Adam Baker	(603) 895-9561
Treasurer	Jim Mayo	(603) 895-4090
Secretary	Don Eva	(603) 672-5608
Dive Coordinator	Brandy Derickson	(603) 436-6424
Dive Log editor	Karen Marion	(603) 423-9055

Meeting Schedule: (winter hours) 7:00-8:30 pm - meeting & presentation, 8:30-9:30 - pool time, 9:30-9:45 - hot tub!

Meetings and Events

TBD - see next issue ...



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Force Fin Pros-sz XXL \$50.00. This is a steal, anyone who knows me can verify how much I like these but they were for my old drysuit and the new suit I have has fitted boots making the fins too large. This is the equivalent to a size 11-6mm boot.

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Weekend Tides

The following abbreviated tide tables are for High Tides only, based on Portsmouth Harbor. This guide is a quick reference only and should not be used for dives requiring exact times for slack tide. More detailed information is available at www.maineharbors.com.

	Saturday		Sunday
December			
	7	1:20 PM	8 2:13 PM
	14	7:30 AM	15 8:16 AM
	21	12:05 PM	22 12:46 PM
	28	5:56 AM	29 6:56 AM
January			
	4	12:14 PM	5 1:02 PM
	11	5:44 AM	12 6:35 AM
	18	11:05 AM	19 11:46 AM
	25	4:58 PM	26 5:27 AM

Weather

Current marine weather for New England can be accessed on the world wide web at NWS.FSU.EDU/BUOY/



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Forward and Address Correction Requested



Dive Log is the bi-monthly newsletter of the United Divers of New Hampshire, an organization dedicated to educating divers and expanding the knowledge of diving in the State of New Hampshire and New England

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