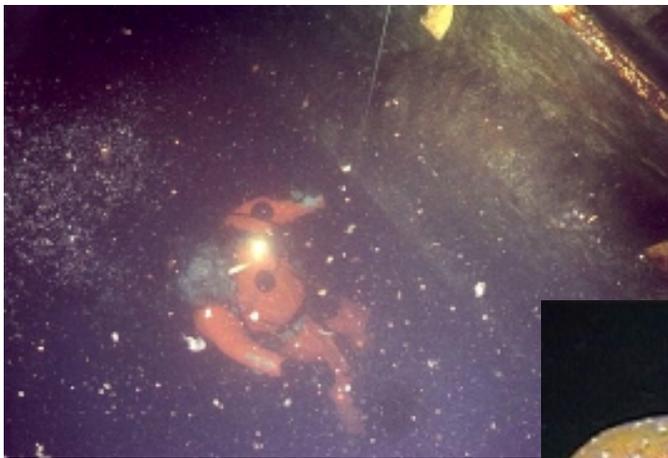


DIVE LOG



The Bimonthly Newsletter of the United Divers of New Hampshire

photo by Gary Thuillier



This issue takes you from a bone chilling Vermont quarry to a recap of the tropical Bay Islands



photo by Bob Gamache



photo by Gary Thuillier

As cold as it gets

story and photos by Gary Thuillier

Last May I had the fortunate experience of joining Mike Griffin and Steve Lindblom on a trip up to the Green Mountains for a most exhilarating dive in an abandoned marble quarry. I'm sure many of you have heard of the place before this, it's one of those often spoken of but rarely ventured to dive sites which turned out to be well worthy of the 3 hour ride.

We headed to West Rutland, Vermont where air would be available at the local dive shop (we hoped, since none of us bothered to call ahead that *Sunday* morning). Luckily the first place we came to was having it's Grand Opening, and taking this as a sign, I just knew this was going to be a good day. Once the bottles were filled and after helping ourselves to some complimentary cookies we were off and at the site in no time.

The quarry was once worked in an open pit/shaft mining combination making it an interesting dive for open water divers as well as those with cave certification. On one side you have a typical open hole full of water, you know the place, steep rock walls where kids do kamakaze leaps into the abyss. I'm told there are a couple of vehicles down below (of course, what respectable quarry would be without!) and ledges at varying depths. Also in this section is the much talked about cavern which starts around 60-70 feet. There are a series of openings in one wall leading into a chamber said to go some 1200 feet into the rock making this an ideal place for divers to come train for cave certification.

A couple of years ago UDNH posted a map of this location at the Boston Sea Rovers and raised quite a stir among those cavers who believed that once they had reached their level of qualification the quarry should be deemed off limits to those who might try to follow. You know the scenario, we've all heard it before, "We don't want all kinds of beginners in here getting hurt or killed..." so in the interest of peace, we pulled the map. I, however, firmly believe that we are all responsible for our own actions and such limitations are ridiculous. Our dive training stresses safety from the beginning and we are told by every agency to know and fully understand the limits of our individual certification levels. One very important lesson all divers have been taught is never penetrate anything beyond the light zone without the proper training and equipment. If a person wants to break that rule and suffer the unfortunate circumstances, it is that person's prerogative. Let us only hope that no one else gets hurt in the process.

continued on next page



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DIVE LOG

The Newsletter of the United Divers of New Hampshire

Editors: Gary Thuillier
Don Eva

Submissions

Editorial contributions may be e-mailed to
Diveknits@aol.com

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

Gary Thuillier
PO Box 372
New Boston, NH 03070-0372

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 Gary Thuillier @ (603)487-3001

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 Gary Thuillier 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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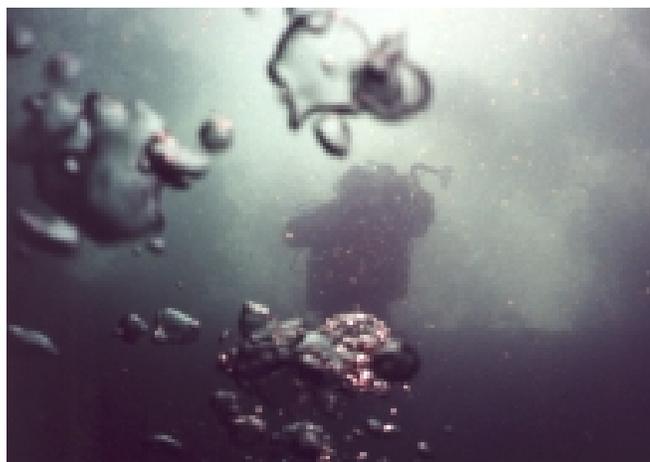
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Website:

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

With this being enough said about liability, I'll move on with the day's events. I had heard from Steve, Mike and others about an air shaft in another part of this quarry, and envisioned a small opening leading down into the darkness and connecting with the chambers which are accessed from the open pit. To my surprise the shaft had more the appearance of a swimming pool from the surface being some 40 feet from one side to the other. It also had a ladder making an exit possible since without which you would be in a serious situation. This shaft bottoms out near 110 feet, and at 60' you reach the ceiling of the cavern. This is where we planned our dive for today. Steve was to practice some of his cave training techniques with Mike while I dropped down to the bottom to try out a new battery housing I developed for my camera strobe. After a short hike from the road, we had all our gear in place except for Mike's dry gloves. Uh Oh!!!! It was decided that since my only real agenda was to test the housing at depth, then I could get by on only one dive. Besides, I figured how can you see in a forty foot swimming pool regardless of depth. Down they went, Mike with my gloves, and Steve following, while I floated on the surface with camera in hand, frozen hand that is, I had to keep the other out of the water it was so cold. This was reminiscent of a March ice dive with not only the chill but the clarity of the water at that time of year. I had lowered a hang line which we extended with another 50 feet of clothesline. Looking down I could clearly see the knot which held the two together, "Not bad!" I thought. Soon the ascending bubbles dissappeared, the guys had gone into the cavern and I'm out of here to thaw out my fingers. I took a quick walk around to check the area out, exploring the heaps of bullet riddled appliances. Did I mention this is also a hot spot for local target shooters? It can be of some concern when diving here, but a simple introduction to the shooter to let them know you're in there is all it should take to set the direction of fire. Finally on their way back to the surface I jump in to get another photo. The shot you see on the cover of this issue is Steve doing a stop at about 20 feet. Who can miss that blaze orange suit? (I'm forgetting the hard copy of this newsletter is BW) anyway if you're looking at this on our website he stands out quite clearly in that crystal clear water, as does the barrel sitting at 90 feet. After a sufficient surface interval for Mike, I retrieve my drygloves and he borrowed Steves mitts for a second dive with me. Since this was my first visit to this quarry I was glad to have a guide, so in we

went. First stop was to be the bottom, but on the way down I noticed my computer had shut off and I hadn't rebooted it so dive #1, a bounce to somewhere around 60 to 70 feet. Dive #2 got me where I wanted to be in order to check the integrity of my battery canister, 105 feet with no bubbles, good sign! At 106 ffw there was a mysterious smokelike haze, kind of purple in Mikes video lights (really!). All we needed was some Hendrix music piped down to us to make the scene complete. Since there was nothing visible on the bottom which I think I was standing on we went up to the chamber opening and explored for a while. Mikes hands were extremely cold but he took the time to bring me into the darkness to the edge of the light zone. We followed a set line into the cavernous room but even his extremely bright lights were swallowed up by the blackness. I turned my head to see the dim glow of daylight dissapearing behind us and decided this was far enough, time to head back to the surface. Mike, as I later found out, was more than happy to end the dive and swore never to forget his drygloves again. I don't know what the water temperature was but this was the first time I had ever experienced icing in my regulator and I've been ice diving many times over the last 10 years. Well, we're back on the surface where it's one of those rare nice days which were so few and far between this spring, thrilled at all I had just seen and anxious to return. One last thing to do, open the battery case, it's bone dry! What a perfect day, now for the 3 hour ride home.



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RENTALS

Bay Islands Agressor

Last Winter it was announced that the Agressor Fleet had put a new boat into service off Honduras in the Bay Islands. With a 2 for 1 deal there was a scramble to take advantage of the opportunity. I for one failed to snag a ticket, but some of our other members lucked out. Kerry Hurd and Karen Marion took the trip in February. You may remember Karens article in our March/April issue. While she published some fascinating photos from her adventure, she also painted a rather poor picture of the Agressor's new boat. The following two articles in this month's issue shed a less damaging light on the boat and focus more on the diving itself. I think you'll find them both enjoyable reading, making you consider the Bay Islands for future excursions. Also, I've heard that some changes for the better are being made to the boat.

Warm and comfortable wetsuit

by Gary Thuillier

For years our good friend Don Stevens from *Atlantic AquaSport* has been lecturing us on the importance of a good fitting wetsuit. One that can be layered starting with a one piece design and preferably made of US made *Rubatex* neoprene, which does not shrink like most others will. Last Fall, my wife Sue and I went to **OceanFest** in Ft. Lauderdale where we found a wetsuit fabricator specializing in just that. Since Sue is not the "off the rack" type of fit, I saw this as the perfect opportunity to have her sized up for a new suit. With most of our trip being ruined by Hurricane Floyd, (didn't spend anything on diving) I figured we saved enough money to splurge. While it did take some time to get the suit, it was well worth the wait. We ordered a 7MM one piece which fits her like a glove. Sue claims to be warmer than she had ever been in the typical Farmer Jane/Jacket suits and I can attest to her added bouyancy control and freedom of movement, it's like diving with a completely different buddy. She is also able to don her new suit without my help, no more tugging and shaking her into it. I do feel a bit guilty not purchasing the suit from Don but thank him for a lesson well taught. The company that made the suit is *Aquatic Fabricators of So. Florida, Inc.* Anyone interested in learning more about the manufacturer can call us @ 603 487-3001

Some of the My Favorite Bay Islands Dives

by Kerry Hurd

People have asked me about my favorite dive in the Bay Islands. Well, I can't answer that directly. Some great things happen with every dive.

I can tell you about the most exciting thing that happened during a dive. It was the deepest dive during the week - on the wreck of the Jado Trader, a 180' freighter. Some moray eels live in the wreck, and they are quite used to divers. As we descended, the rather large wreck came into view, along with lots of groupers. A large - no, make that **extremely** large - eel came swimming towards us. He was between 6 and 8 feet long, and his body was as large around as my leg! He first approached one of my dive buddies. It was funny watching her trying to go backwards away from the eel! As he swam in front of me, he passed close enough to touch. I refrained from touching him however. He continued swimming on by.

I have this thing about seeing how deep a site is, and so I went all the way to the bottom. It was a sandy bottom, so I didn't have to worry about hitting reefs. As I knelt down on the bottom at 107 feet, concentrating on my gauges, I felt something rub along the back of my leg! I nearly jumped out of my skin! As I hopped up, I ruined the visibility nearby. I ascended a bit and turned around and there was the moray eel, quickly heading in the opposite direction! I guess I startled him as much as he startled me! Oh no, I thought, that would have made a great video - if I had known he was approaching me! Instead I felt very badly that

(continued on next page)



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(continued from previous page)

I had startled him. He went under the wreck and stayed there. Sorry about that!

I ascended to about 80 feet for the rest of the dive, hanging out at the top of the ship with my buddies and the groupers. After we got back on board, my buddies kept laughing and laughing - they said I jumped so much when the eel touched me! And so, I had refrained from touching him, but he had not refrained from touching me!

I can also tell you about the best thing that happened during a dive. This was my squid encounter, which happened at Connie's Dream. Thanks go to Karen for spotting them. I slowly approached the group of six Caribbean Reef Squids, hoping they would stay put - and they did! I think they were curious about us, as we were of them. I was totally amazed, and yes, even awed, while viewing these incredible creatures.

I saw the group as a family. There were two larger ones (what I called the "father" and the "mother"), and four "youngsters." As I approached the group, the "father" led me away. I stayed with him, and he eventually led me in a large circle right back to the group. Nice navigation! I was enthralled with all the color and pattern changes - they do happen instantaneously!



photo by Kerry Hurd

I taped the "mother" for a little bit and noticed the "father" approaching from the side. He had turned white with a black line down the middle. I think he was a little distressed at how close I was approaching his mate. I decided that I had annoyed them enough, so I taped all of them on the way to the next area of the dive. They were such amazing animals that I could have stayed the entire dive with them!

I think my overall favorite dive site was our last one, the Valley of the Kings. One factor was the weather - it was finally sunny. Another factor was the life. There were plenty of fishes, Pederson's cleaning shrimp, soft and hard coral, a lobster, and even an eel being cleaned! The main thing I liked about it was the variety. If I wanted to do a shallow dive, I could stay on top of the plateau at about 40'. If I wanted deeper, I could explore the edge of the wall that goes deeper than 1000' (yes, that's one thousand!). I could explore rocks and crevices. But if I wanted a sandy bottom - well, that's here too! And if I wanted a pretty site - well, it couldn't get much better than this - floating between two walls of an underwater ravine, with loads of coral and sponges sticking out, and plenty of fish for company.

One regret I have is doing only one night dive. For some reason, I just didn't feel like doing them. Unfortunately, it was on night dives that the octopus were out. Fortunately, on the night dive I did, there was an octopus out. Unfortunately, I saw him too briefly to tape him or even for Karen to see him. Fortunately I did see him, and identified him as an Atlantic Pygmy octopus, which has been described as rare. I feel lucky to have seen him at all. He was very alien looking, as were his movements. He did not use his legs to crawl along the rocks, but more like flow along them, and into them.

I have been asked if I would go to the Bay Islands again. At first, I said no, since there are so many other places around the world to visit. But I've been thinking about it, and yes I would go again. The major difference is it would not be in February, so the weather should be better. I am also tempted by the diving around the island of Utila, which we did not do on this trip. Utila has been the location of sightings of whale sharks, turtles, and manta rays.

Did I like the Live-Aboard experience (my first) and would I do it again? The answer to that is a definite, without a doubt, resounding YES! In fact, it is such a yes, that I have already booked my next one!



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Winter Island Camping Trip

W

July 21,22,&23 are the dates decided on for this years UDNH Campout. The new location is Winter Island in Salem, Massachusetts. It was decided at the last meeting to secure a block of campsites for three nights thus allowing us to spend the entire day on Sunday with the option of staying the extra night. The cost is \$45 per site for the weekend. Anyone wishing to attend should sign up and bring their deposit of \$15 to the next meeting.

For more detailed information contact
Ron Mann @ 603 879-9911



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More Favorite Bay Islands Dives

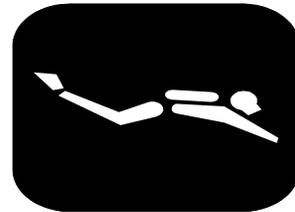
By Rose Gamache

The reefs of the Bay Islands are characterized by a prolific coral development intermingled with lush sea fans, sponges and gorgonians revealing a daytime rainbow of colors to a nighttime explosion before your eyes. Many of the walls are punctuated with layers of sheet coral creating huge overhangs.

Exploration of large cavities stimulates cautious anticipation. No reciprocal swim is necessary as you ascend to the shallows where hard and soft coral intermix with sea grasses and a myriad of typical Caribbean fish. As the sunlight filters through the clarity of the water, pronounced outlines of pillar coral greet the carefree diver. You marvel that you've entered a magical underwater wonderland. Varying coral formations and sand canyons create a labyrinth for meandering divers. Interdependence between the reef and its inhabitants becomes evident. Enormous boulder corals form hideaways for smaller, nervous marine animals. Black durgons guard the reef outfitted in black and white formality. Endless convoys of creole wrasse cruise by undisturbed to a seemingly established destination. Teams of blue tang swim together under the protection of the group. Patrolling jacks plunge into the sands ridding themselves of marine parasites. Garden eels take refuge in the safety of their burrows waiting for the passing diver to exit peeking out only they think the coast is clear. The scorpionfish expertly blends in with the colors of the reef while the trumpetfish serenely hangs suspended among the swaying blades of the seagrasses. Divers hover in silent awe at the beauty of the sleek and slender scrawled filefish stealing attention away from the mundane white spotted filefish. But the queen angelfish wins the beauty pageant with its symmetrical coloration and body shape. The bluehead wrasse remains a photographer's challenge as it hurriedly flits around the coral. The cute sharp nose puffer doesn't even seem to notice the masked spectator in its living room while the graceful spotted drum entertains its guest with a choreographed ballet. The translucent comb jelly pulsates through the water propelled by the synchronized beating of cilia along its body, and infinite

clumps of blue bell tunicates appear like grapes on the stalks of sea rods.

Daytime serenity is abandoned as night blankets the reef dismissing the timid to the safety of the boat, especially if you're diving from the Bay Islands Aggressor. Compasses were needed to guide us back to the boat twice as the strobe was forgotten about one night and broken another night! Nonetheless, as we illuminated our lights, we were besieged with plankton as nocturnal creatures emerged from their daytime seclusion. We fixated on a hovering squid changing colors as fast as its fins undulated bringing a deluge of divers. Outstretched basketstars appeared stationary with their network of arms fully extended to catch unsuspecting prey. Various brittle stars crept along the coral for quick cover. We spotted a partially closed anemone appearing to be dining on a struggling prisoner crab. When the video was played, it revealed the crab actually tearing and snacking on the flesh of the anemone! As we continued, we discovered a small orange ball corallimorph expertly hidden among the seagrass balancing an orange ball on the end of each transparent tentacle-like arm. It's commonly referred to as an orange ball anemone which we learned is a misnomer. Another oddity perplexed the crew when we described a tube-like protrusion from a coral head with reddish tentacles that slowly curled and retracted when our lights hit it. After giving it a moment of darkness to stretch its tentacles again, our lights detected nothing at that spot. The tube-dwelling anemone was gone! Night diving produced the usual excitement of seeing octopus, stingray, shrimp, moray, barracuda and an abundance of urchin. The Bay Islands Aggressor offered us nothing riveting on this April trip- whale shark or seahorses- just delightful memories of peaceful tranquility.









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Meeting schedule: (winter hours) 7:00-8:45pm - meeting & presentation, 8:45-9:30- pool time, 9:30-9:45- Hot Tub!

Meetings and Events

June 30 Night Dive. Nubble Light

July 3, 2000 NO MEETING due to holiday

July 8 Annual Great American Fish Count. Nubble Light, York, ME. Contact Don Eva 603-672-5608 for details. **Night Dive** that evening.

July 9 Annual Great American Fish Count (Part II). Great Island Common, Newcastle, NH. Contact Kerry Hurd @603-672-8325 for details.

July 14 Night Dive. Nubble Light.

July 17, 2000 Meeting

July 21-23, 2000 Camping at Winter Island, Salem, MA. Contact Ron Mann @603-879-9911.

August 5 New England Aquarium Dive Club Annual Picnic. Fort Getty, Jamestown, RI

August 7 Meeting

August 21 Meeting

August 26, 2000 Annual Jay Lewis Picnic, Great Island Common, Newcastle, NH

August 23-27, 2000 Annual Les Escoumins (Quebec) trip w/ New England Aquarium Dive Club. Beautiful cold water diving, whale watching, kayaking on the north shore of the St. Lawrence.



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 2000 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 - 2000

President	Gary Thuillier	603-487-3001
Vice President	Kerry Hurd	603-672-8325
Treasurer	Jim Mayo	603-895-4090
Secretary	Don Eva	603-672-5608
Dive Coordinator	Tom Tremblay	603-625-8459

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The logo for The Bellows Pine Shop features a stylized illustration of a bellows, which is a traditional tool used in carpentry. The bellows is depicted in a dark, solid color with some internal shading to suggest its three-dimensional form. It is positioned to the right of the shop's name.

TECH TIPS

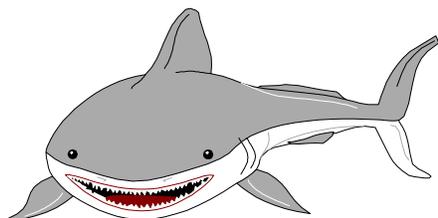
Tech Tips is a column for members to share their knowledge, ideas and/or inventions. All submissions welcome.



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Great American Fish Count



As part of a regional effort to track fish populations, we have been conducting an annual count of fish species at Nubble Light and at Great Island Common. This is an easy, fun activity. No marine biology degree required! This year's counts are scheduled for Saturday, July 8 at Nubble, and Sunday, July 9 at Great Island Common. Basically, we do a normal recreational dive, and keep a rough count (1, several, or many) of the fish we see. Instruction will be given on identifying the species. Meet at 9am (earlier if you want a better tide). Contact Kerry Hurd @603-672-8325 or Don Eva @603-672-5608 for more info.

Equipment Mart

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Contact Lea Nichols @ 603 487-2726.

Dive Computer: Orca Marathon- excellent condition w/ new battery. \$100. Contact Mike Griffin @ 603-673-9250.

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Contact Willis Corson @ 668-5829

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 maineharbors.com.

SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
JULY			
1	11:37 AM	2	NOON
8	6:13 PM	9	7:12 PM
15	11:57 AM	16	NOON
22	4:14 PM	23	4:58 PM
29	10:24 AM	30	11:22 AM
AUGUST			
5	4:43 PM	6	5:38 PM
12	10:47 AM	13	11:29 AM
19	2:59 PM	20	3:39 PM
26	9:09 AM	27	10:11 AM

Weather

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

DIVE LOG

United Divers of New Hampshire
P.O. Box 4176
Manchester, NH 03108-4176

Forward and Address Correction Requested

DIVE LOG

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

Note: There will be NO meeting on Monday, July 3. Next meeting is July 17.



IN THIS ISSUE:

-
- Quarry Diving
 - Two New Views of the Bay Islands
 - Winter Island Camping