

# DIVE LOG



The Bimonthly Newsletter of the United Divers of New Hampshire

## Fiji Adventure



*Karen Marion experienced the diving and culture of the Fiji Islands. Here story inside . . .*

*Photos by Karen Marion*

# A Fijian Vacation

by Karen Marion

My Fiji trip was awesome!

That's the short version. Now perhaps you'd like to hear the long version of my trip report. :-)

For a little background, Fiji consists of about 300 habitable islands in the Pacific ocean, east of Australia and north of New Zealand. They're 17 hours off from our time, and just over the international date line. About half of the population is native Fijian and half are originally from India. The Fijians are mostly (if not all) converts to Christianity, though they've managed to retain their local dialects and many other cultural traditions.

The group that was sponsoring the trip worked out of the Northampton, MA area, so we flew out of Bradley International. Since that's over a two hour drive for me, a friend drove me out the night before and I overnighted at the airport Sheraton. Very nice place, though quite pricy.

At the crack of dawn I awakened and took the elevator down to the airport entrance and very quickly found divers waiting around the terminal. We had a moment of dismay when we found out (after half of us already had seating assignments!) that our flight had been cancelled and they had to get us on another plane. Sigh. Reticketed, the rest of the trip was relatively uneventful. We flew direct from Bradley to LAX, then boarded a 747 for the international flight to Fiji. This flight is about 10 hours, and they showed three movies. For you movie buffs they were: Seven Years in Tibet, George of the Jungle, and Men in Black. Not bad. We had the top room mostly to ourselves, so we had the opportunity to get to know each other a bit. Most of these folks had travelled together before, but to me they were all new.

24 hours after waking, we landed on the big island in Fiji. We drove across the street to the airport hotel there and crashed for the night. At the crack of dawn we again woke to take a 2-hour bus ride to the harbor. On the ride out we took a break at a handcraft store, but since we'd just arrived we really didn't really know what we might want to buy. I satisfied myself with a handful of postcards and a batik "sulu", a kind of wraparound skirt worn by the native Fijians. Once at the harbor we caught a harrowing boat ride to Beqa, our home for the next 11 days. There had been a storm recently and the seas were rather high. Add a sometimes-heavy rain and the hour-long boat ride was not the best introduction to paradise.

The seas continued to be rough for the first couple of days. I was wiped out by the travel and had a headache, so decided not to go



The Newsletter of the United Divers of New Hampshire

Editors: Lea Nichols  
Gary Thuillier

Support: Don Eva

## Submissions

Editorial contributions may be e-mailed to [COMPTUS@aol.com](mailto:COMPTUS@aol.com) or FAXed to 603-487-5513. Submissions can also be sent on paper or PC floppy to:

Lea Nichols  
342 Lyndeboro Road  
New Boston, NH 03070

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## Advertising

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## Website:

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*continued from previous page*

out on the boat dives the first two days. Good decision on my part, as most of the folks who went got quite seasick. The diving was reported to be ok, but with much lower vis than expected. On day two I got out for a snorkel and saw a big moray eel, and I did a shore dive as well. Conditions were ok, which means great compared with New England. The water was a fine, warm, 80 degrees, and the vis was 30 or 40 feet. I saw lots of fish that I'd only seen in aquarium stores before, as well as many that I'd never seen anywhere. Cool!

Beqa consists of nine native villages and one resort: The Marlin Bay Resort. Each of us stayed in 2-person bures, or huts. Very nice. Meals were served in a large bure with a bar and tiny store. The people there were very friendly and made every effort to make our stay a pleasant one. In addition to diving we could snorkel, walk, kayak, beachcomb, or just hang out playing cards and such. We also were treated to a traditional firewalking ceremony and some traditional music and dance, as well as a visit to the local village where one of my fellow travellers fascinated the school children with his digital camera. Nothing like instant results to charm the kids!

On the third day I went out for my first boat dives. We had 13 people in our group, plus there were two other divers staying there, so we used two dive boats. One handled up to six divers and the rest of us were on the Harmony. It was an ok boat, having nothing to compare to, this being my first boat dives ever. Well, we got out there and there was a change of plans. I'd been told

this was going to be nice, easy diving. This was to be my tenth dive, EVER, and they then inform me that we're doing a wreck in 100' of water!!! Perhaps needless to say, I was upset. I told one of the Fijian divemasters that I didn't feel comfortable diving that deep. I'd only done 53' before, and this was only my second dive in Fiji, my first boat dive ... I was apprehensive. To make a long, traumatic story shorter, he and I dived a pinnacle above the wreck to about 55' while everyone else did the wreck. I had a wonderful time with Joe pointing out nudibranchs, blue ribbon eels, lionfish, and all kinds of cool things that I might have missed on my own.

I was off and running. That dive broke the spell and I was not apprehensive for the rest of the trip. It was pure, exhilarating, diving pleasure. I took my camera in for most of the rest of the day dives I did. I did a shore night dive that night to make up for lost time, and saw an octopus and a few squid. The diving at Beqa was interesting, though not perfect. They've had some reef damage there from agricultural runoff, storms, and Crown of Thorns. Visibility was as low as 30' and only as high as 60'. The diversity of marine life more than made up for the so-so conditions. Even the most jaded of my diving companions felt that the variety of life was among the best they'd ever seen. Marlin Bay was very nice, but it gets better ...

*(continued on next page)*

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After eleven days of relaxing tropical paradise, we packed up our things and moved on to the Jean-Michel Cousteau Fiji Islands Resort. I'm still not entirely sure why no one else agreed on this, but I MUCH preferred the Cousteau resort to Marlin Bay, which puts me in the decided minority of our travel group. Cousteau seemed more upscale to me, the pool was bigger, the dive boat MUCH nicer, and the dive team VERY professional. They had a much more ecological focus, with a marine biologist on staff and diving with us each day to help us identify things. I really got into the life that I saw and asked her billions of questions. They had E-6 processing so I was able to see and get tips on my photos. They had kayaks, a small catamaran, a bar, and more food choices. I LOVED it there!!! I could have stayed for MONTHS!

The reefs were MUCH healthier at Cousteau, and as far as I could tell, they were in perfect condition. Visibility tended to be better as well, and I would guess we saw up to 80'. The reefs seemed richer to me, and I continued to see animals that I'd never seen before on just about every dive. One dive stands out: a night dive to a site called Golden Nuggets. No one else was in the mood to dive that night so I dove alone with a Fijian guide. The Nuggets is aptly named, because at night there's a wall covered in feeding soft corals that are every shade of gold. Beautiful!!! We saw three types of scorpionfish: Volitans and two others whose names escape me. We saw a two foot long puffer fish! We saw sleeping parrotfish and a slipper lobster. It was fabulous! I saw little ghost shrimp, a dancing red flatworm, and probably tons of other things that I won't remember until I happen to see their picture somewhere. We were on the smaller of Cousteau's two dive boats, which can do 30 knots or so. The water was calm and on the way back I stood on the dive platform revelling in the speed of the boat, the clear, starry sky, the memories of an awesome dive, and the bioluminescence of the water. It was a great experience.

Another dive stands out for it's huge schools of barracuda and the playful batfish that liked to follow our fins. If we held out our fingers the batfish would approach to within a

couple of inches before veering off and wandering away. Several of them accompanied us throughout the dive and they were hilarious. Even the divemaster who'd been diving there for years had a huge smile behind his mask.

All the dives were great at Cousteau!

One day preparing to board the boat we saw a school of about 50 squid. Another day half the group decided to do a shore dive and the rest of us took out the kayaks and the catamaran. Much of our non-diving time was spent in or around the pool. We also spent an afternoon on a private island with a picnic and some stunt kites that a couple of the divers brought with them. It was fabulous.

I began this trip as a novice diver. Now I've dived to as deep as 96'. I've done a total of 27 dives, 4 of which were at night. I feel much more confident, and really like my equipment. I even got some underwater pictures that I like and am having a couple of them enlarged to hang in my house. I feel like a real diver now and am already planning my next two dive trips. My certifying shop is co-sponsoring a trip to Bonaire's Captain Don's Habitat this July and I'm planning to go. The Fiji group is going to Cayman Brac next March and I'm planning to go there as well. There's no stopping me now ...

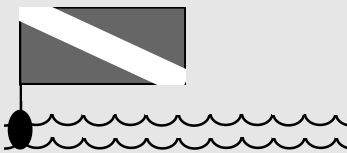
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### Great American Fish Count

On July 11 & 12, UDNH members will participate in what will hopefully be an annual data-collecting dive to help determine trends in sea life. On the 11th, we'll hit Nubble, then on the 12th we'll check out Great Island Common.

The plan is to do the same place(s) each year at this time, to see what changes occur from year to year.

The actual count is pretty easy -- just do a dive as you normally would, keeping track of the critters you see along the way. Contact Don Eva (603-672-5608) for more info.



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protected, as the most heat is lost from these areas. Protect the patient from the cold, rain and wind. Cover the patient with blankets if available.

If the patient is in mild or moderate hypothermia, try to rewarm the patient. Wrapping the patient in blankets with other divers is an efficient way of transferring body heat. A reflective survival blanket placed over normal blankets improves their efficiency. Heat packs placed around the head, neck, chest, and groin can also be effective. The patient can also be given warm drinks, as long as any uncontrolled shivering has stopped, the victim has a clear level of consciousness, and has the ability to swallow.

If the patient is in severe hypothermia, the goal becomes the prevention of further heat loss. **Do not** attempt to actively rewarm the patient in the field! Rewarming of the severely hypothermic patient may result in cardiac dysrhythmias (abnormal heart rhythms). Keep the patient laying down and handle him very carefully, as rough handling can induce cardiac dysrhythmias as well. Seek medical treatment immediately.

The best treatment for hypothermia is, of course, prevention. As mentioned above, the body normally reduces temperature loss by generating heat through metabolism, exercise and shivering. The rate of heat loss also depends on such factors as temperature of the water and the presence of a wetsuit or other insulation.

However, a wetsuit, no matter how well fitting or designed, prevents only an initial rapid heat loss. Heat loss still occurs and as a dive progresses, a diver may become dangerously cold. Even drysuit divers are not immune, as heat loss still occurs, though at a slower rate than in a wetsuit.

The key to preventing hypothermia while diving is to recognize the early signs and to call a dive when you are too cold. You should also refrain from making another dive if any of the symptoms are present.

While it may be tempting to work on your tan while doing a surface interval, restoring your body's core temperature to normal should be your top priority. Therefore, after coming up from a dive, regardless of whether any of the symptoms

are present, you should take measures to prevent further heat loss, since some heat loss has almost certainly occurred. This usually means putting on some type of covering to reduce the exposure to wind. Don't forget about that wet hair too!

You should also make sure that your body is capable of rewarming itself. This means having sufficient fuel (i.e. food) to support your body's metabolism as well as being adequately hydrated. So, in between dives, take the time for lunch or a snack.

Diving in New England offers some wonderful and exciting experiences. If you enjoy diving in the cold New England waters, go with adequate protection and monitoring for the onset of hypothermia. Be careful and you will enjoy your diving even more.

*About the author: Philip Morrison is an Emergency Medical Technician - Intermediate. He is a volunteer with the Weare Rescue Squad in Weare, NH.*

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### Catch the Wave!

The 3rd annual Catch the Wave party has been tentatively scheduled for January 23, 1999. For those of you unfortunates who haven't attended either of the previous parties, this is an event to bring together members of the dive clubs from the area. The first party drew over 150 people, and this year's crowd topped 175! Raffle & door prizes were abundant, and a good time was had by all.

Enough money was made this year to donate \$1000 to each of two worthwhile charities.

This year's party will include an art show, with an aquatic theme. So, all you Rembrandts out there, get busy!

Anyone interested in participating in the organization of the party please contact Don Eva. We meet the 2nd Wednesday of each month in the Boston area, and are currently doing the initial groundwork to set up as a non-profit organization.

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## Les Escoumins Trip

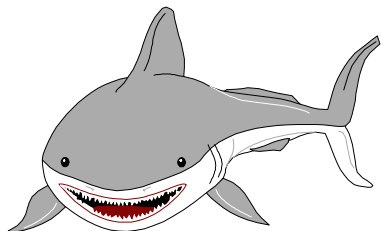
*Don Eva*

About 3 hours drive northeast of Quebec City, where the Atlantic tidal waters flow in and out of the St. Lawrence River, is a wonderful small village which provides some excellent cold water diving and quaint Quebec charm.

Members of the New England Aquarium Dive Club, as well as several of our club members, have made the trip a number of times— for diving, whale watching, and socializing with some of our Canadian diving counterparts. Last year four of us stayed at the L'auberge de la Plongee de les Escoumins, a youth-hostel-like hotel, which provides inexpensive, basic lodging and meals, plus access to dive sites and air. Other, more upscale accommodations are available for those wanting more privacy or services. At the other end, there is also a campground in town.

This year's trip is set for August 27-31, and there should still be some space left. Some divers will probably be making a week-long trip of it, while others will make it just a long weekend.

Contact Don Eva (603) 672-5608 or Jean Stefanik (603) 647-1063 for more info.



*Imagine how deep the ocean would be if it weren't for all the sponges!!*

## Tides

The following tide times are for the weekends in July & August 1998, based on tables at Boston, MA. When diving midweek you add roughly one hour to each day. \*CAUTION\* For dives which require strict adherence to slack times, use published tide tables for the specific area.

Sat July 4	H-7:59am	L-1:47pm
Sun July 5	H-8:52am	L-2:40pm
Sat July 11	L-7:11am	H-1:24pm
Sun July 12	L-7:55am	H-2:09pm
Sat July 18	H-7:00am	L-12:49pm
Sun July 19	H-8:04am	L-1:51pm
Sat July 25	L-7:09am	H-1:25pm
Sun July 26	L-7:53am	H-2:08pm
Sat Aug. 1	H-6:21am	L-12:09pm
Sun Aug. 2	H-7:16am	L-1:04pm
Sat Aug. 8	L-6:00am	H-12:12pm
Sun Aug. 9	L-6:45am	H-12:57pm
Sat Aug. 15	L-11:49am	H-6:09pm
Sun Aug. 16	H-6:46am	L-12:31pm
Sat Aug. 22	L-6:03am	H-12:19pm
Sun Aug. 23	L-6:44am	H-12:59pm

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Subtract 10 minutes for York Harbor, ME

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### 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 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 1998 in the United Divers of New Hampshire are \$25/individual or \$40/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 - 1998

President	Mike Griffin	603-598-0151
Vice President	Tom Tremblay	603-625-8459
Treasurer	Gary Thuillier	603-487-3001
Secretary	Don Eva	603-672-5608
Dive Coordinator	Ken Anderson	603-622-8224
Ass't Dive Coord.	Ron Mann	603-883-9015

## Meetings and Events

*Meeting schedule: 7:15-8:15pm - meeting & presentation ,  
8:30-9:20- pool time, 9:20-9:30 - Hot Tub!*

### **June 27 Weirs Beach Public Docks Cleanup.**

Contact Tom Simonelli at Aquatic Escapes for info  
(603-432-DIVE)

### **July 11 Great American Fish Count (GAFC)**

**Nubble Light, York, ME**

Contact Don Eva 603 672-5608 for info.

### **July 12 Great American Fish Count, Part II**

**Great Island Common Newcastle, NH**

### **July 24-26 Hermit Island Camping/Diving Weekend**

Contact Tom Tremblay (603) 625-8459 for details &  
directions

### **August 15 New England Aquarium Dive Club**

**annual Picnic Jamestown, RI**

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### **August 16 Annual Jay Lewis Picnic. Lobster Raffle**

### **August 27-31 LesEscoumins Quebec Dive Trip**

with Aquarium Dive Club

Contact Jean Stefanik 603 647-1063

### **September 5-7 (Labor Day Weekend) Newport, RI**

**dive trip.** Contact Jean Stefanik 603-647-1063 for  
details.

### **September 27 National Coastal Cleanup**

**January 1999 Catch the Wave annual multi-club  
party**

**More Dives & Activities in the works! Contact Ken  
Anderson - 603-622-8224 for details.**

## TECH TIPS

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



Who needs weights?

### Galvanic Reactions:

*by Mike Griffin*

This is the result of placing dissimilar metals in contact in an electrolyte. This reactions starts to work as soon as your aluminum tanks with stainless steel bands are submerged in salt water. This electrical current likes to dissolve less noble or softer metals.

This will cause pitting on the inside of your tank, where the bands are located, and will eventually shorten your tank's life.

To slow this reaction, you need to insulate the stainless steel bands from the aluminum tanks. Tank bands are not designed to have anything thick like mesh tank protectors or inner tube rubber under them. This material will cause misalignment of the manifold.

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Forward and Address Correction Requested

# DIVE LOG

*Dive Log* is the 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.

## In This Issue:

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- Tech Tips
- Fiji trip
- Cold Water Dangers
- Les Escoumins trip
- Weekend Tide info
- Dive/Activities schedule

