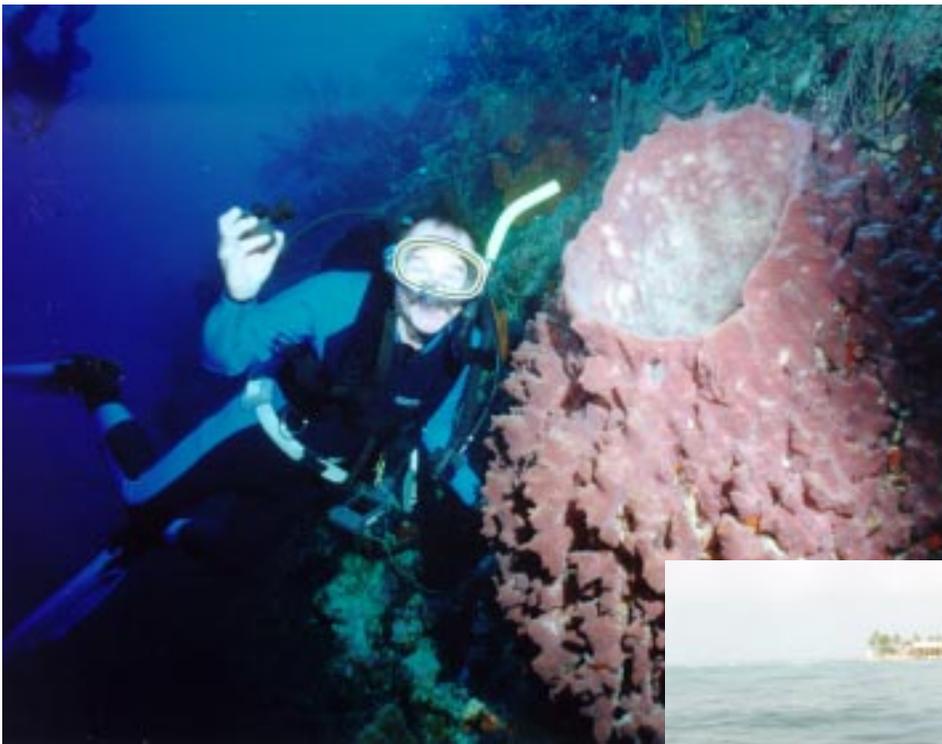


# DIVE LOG

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the United Divers of New Hampshire



## *Belize 1999*

*story & photos by Jim Frederick*



It is always a treat for us cold water, New England divers to venture down to the Caribbean and our recent trip to Belize was no exception. The trip is an annual sojourn that Divers Den Dive Shop in Manchester has been organizing for a few years now. With Dick Kurisko in the lead, we boarded a bus at the shop at 5:30 a.m. and began the first leg of the trip to Boston for a flight to Houston, Texas.

*continued inside...*

The flight was pleasant and the atmosphere fairly smooth and we arrived in Houston around Noon time with plenty of time to get to the gate for the next leg of the trip to Belize City. It was overcast as we got out over the Gulf of Mexico but cleared up before we crossed over the Yucatan area of Mexico as the flight progressed. The airport at Belize was much busier than I had envisioned. Evidently a lot of the cruise ship passengers pass through this airport on the way to Cozumel to meet the ships.

From Belize City we caught a local shuttle to Dangriga which is about 75 miles down the coast. That leg of the trip was the most interesting as 16 of us and all our tons of gear got loaded into the single engine plane. We made it into the air without much effort which really amazed me, but that gas turbine was really cranking the whole way. The "airport" at Dangriga turned out to be a 1500 foot strip of asphalt cut out of the brush with one end a swamp and the other end the ocean. The first pass at the field ended with too much altitude over the strip so the pilot put the power to it and we went out over the ocean and made a sightseeing trip of the area and came around for a second try. We landed on the second try and were greeted by the crew from the Blue Marlin Lodge who took us to the dock for a sixteen mile boat ride out to South Water Caye to our accommodations for the week.

Divers Den has been taking groups down there for a few years and we were treated wonderfully and fed very well the whole week. The island is very small and all we did was dive and relax. My wife, Judy, and I have only been diving since 1992 and we were the rookies of the group. The other divers have more than a total of over 200 years of diving experience. Dick Kurisko, Arthur "Art" Delisle, Wayne and Diane Russell, Don and Mary Cheseborough, Bruce Edwards, Phil Gagnon, Bruce and Judy White, Ed and Shirley Carvello and Don Belcourt.

The island is out on the edge of the reef so it took just a few minutes every day ,on the 42' *Miss Mariel* equipped with twin diesel jet pump drives, to reach the various dive sites. All the dives were drift dives which allowed us to cover more area on each dive because you didn't have to make it "back" to the boat. The very able crew followed our bubbles and were ready every time we made it back to the surface. The water temperature was comfortable and the visibility very good, most of the time. Turtles and eagle rays were seen on just about every dive in addition to some very pretty sponge and coral formations. It was not long before we learned to



## 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

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 Lea Nichols at (603) 487-2726.

### 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 Lea Nichols 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](mailto: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.

(continued from previous page)

start looking around as soon as we hit the water because the turtles were swimming around near the surface when we looked up during the initial descent. The dive master and some others had rubber band strips with plastic balls around their tanks that they would snap to signal when they saw something of interest. It was quite effective and you could hear the pings even if they were out of visual range. There was such a variety of critters that someone was constantly pinging and motioning so that everyone got to see plenty. There were a lot of crabs and different varieties of fish that I had not seen on previous trips to the eastern Caribbean. After one morning dive as we headed back to our island between dives, the boat captain spotted a big blue southern ray floating around in the shallows on the top of the reef. He was able to get us close enough so that we could pile in with our masks and snorkels and follow it around for ten minutes as it floated along effortlessly on the sandy bottom 15' below us. It was about 4' across and was a powder blue in color. I was able to get close enough to surface dive down and swim along beside it.

Between dives, we sat around under the palm trees on the island and enjoyed the tropical air and shared our experiences from the previous dives. If we walked out onto the pier in front of our dining area, it was like a nursery for the big things we saw on our dives, octopus, moray eels, small 2' eagle rays, bat fish, little small southern rays the size of my hand and numerous juvenile fish of all kinds. The women came across a giant hermit crab that was big enough to evict a live adult conch from its shell and take over its shell as its new house leaving the conch behind as lunch for the fish in the area. The only draw back to snorkeling in the surrounding area were small jellyfish floating around on the surface which were about the size of

the tip of a finger. They cause a bit of irritation if they get against bare skin.



During the week, we took a 20 mile boat ride to Glovers Reef which is further out to sea from our location. It is really an isolated area but there is an active dive operation on the island. The hurricane last year just about washed a smaller island away that the boat stops at for our surface interval between dives so we tied up on the main island and had lunch. The reef at Glover dropped off quickly but had more canyons and swim through areas along the top of the wall. It was a very relaxing week and the time to leave came too soon. The last night on the island was highlighted by a thunder and lightning storm that lasted for 6 hours. Most of it was out over the ocean and had the sky lit up continually. It cleared up early on Sunday morning as we were getting ready for the return to the mainland. It's only been a few weeks and we are already thinking about the "next" time.



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<b>INSTRUCTIONS</b>		<b>RENTALS</b>

## BUDGET U/W PHOTOGRAPHY

by Gary Thuillier

Or better yet, *taking snapshots of your favorite underwater experiences.*

This article dedicated to the concept of economically bringing home memories without the expense of professional photography equipment.

Since I consider myself an expert at doing things as cheaply as possible I thought an article on low cost underwater cameras might be a good idea. With over eight years worth of photos from Lake Champlain to Turks and Caicos Islands I feel I've tested the field pretty well.

I got my first AquaShot when they came out around 1991 and used it on almost every dive. These housings were originally made for the popular Kodak and Fuji disposable cameras. After about two years the camera companies decided to change the format which meant AquaShot 1 was soon to become obsolete if not for the quick thinking engineers at Ikelite. They soon adapted a retrofit making it possible to use *some* of the new throw-aways. I say *some* because anyone who has used these housings knows how lousy they worked. Along came AQ2 to the rescue. I soon replaced my trusty #1 and got a couple of good years out of the new one.

However, not to be outdone by the Ikelite guys, Kodak and Fuji strike again. Now we have AquaShot 3, a housing which they say will take any and all disposable cameras now on the market, and if you don't trust things to come they've now added AQ3e. This baby comes with a Fuji Endeavor fully automatic, point and shoot camera (no more throw-aways for me). Actually, I personally have not tried either of the #3 models since just before they came out I moved up to the Bonica

Snappa, a basic point and shoot camera and housing. Having an auto advance in such a low priced package was just the ticket. Now that I've told you my u/w camera history I'll try to put together some comparisons so that you may benefit from my experiences.

The keyword here is CHEAP, or maybe I should say budget. All of the housings I've used and tested came in under \$100.00 so forget about the MX10 or even the Sealife Reefmaster, these are no doubt great cameras but just out of my reach.

The first thing you'll have to ask yourself is "what kind of photos am I looking for?" If you're seeking anything more than some really nice pictures to put in your photo album or WOWing your non-diver friends, then you better mortgage the house and spring for a professional package and some serious tutorial help. If not, then these will do just fine. Keep in mind you're dealing with a camera that was designed to work on land with optimal light. Underwater, even in the shallows you'll need some extra help of a flash.

Here is where the biggest problem lies in these budget units: Point & shoot and even disposables come with built in flash but when submerged into a world of suspended particles you have to expect these reflective little specs to show up in front of your lens. Enter, the slave strobe (add on around \$175.00). AquaShot had the first package and except for the crummy strobe arm design, worked extremely well. I broke mine in the first month and came up with a great system I would still be using today had the housing not become obsolete [but then, anybody who knows me can tell you I have to modify everything I get]. My AQs strobe has given me 8 years of dependable use and I would recommend it over the Bonica flash anytime, more on that in a minute.

*continued on next page...*

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(continued from previous page)

If you consider buying the AQ3 for disposables I can only say this, Try advancing the film with your heavy neoprene mitts before making your choice, it's not easy to say the least [I modified mine]. This is where the Bonica comes head to head with AquaShot.

Before I go any further, there is one other budgetcam on the market under \$100.00. I gave this one a test dive for a shop back when it first came out. It is the Sealife SkinDiver, a bag-type housing, which although it has automatic advance, is almost impossible to manipulate the shutter with mitts on. Save this one for warm water diving.

Now to compare apples to oranges: My modified AQ2 with manual advance vs. Bonica Snappa auto. Do you want the best pictures? Well, believe it or not the throw-away wins. AquaShot has a feature called a *watercorrecting lens*, (a \$20.00 add-on) which I managed to customize to fit my Bonica. A very noticeable difference in clarity. Another item, macro. While not really a **macro** lens, you are able to get within 2 feet of your subject offering some really good photos from these close-up lens attachments.

The Bonica offers a tray design with built-in macro lens that flips down (and usually back up when you don't expect it) or vice-versa. The strobe also mounts to the tray making it a rather nice professional looking package. The drawback I've found with their strobe is this: Slave flashes need the light from the camera to trigger them. The Bonica flash uses a sensor inside its housing which restricts it to a very small area around the front of the camera making some shots virtually impossible to maneuver, whereas the AQs has its sensor protruding outside its shell allowing a greater angle of flash. I'm able to remove my slave and get in most tight places with it.

Back to macro if I may, the AQ has a lens similar to the Bonica but it is either attached or removed by a small

thumbscrew. Not as convenient but much harder to screw up. The bottom line is picture quality. Even with simple snapshots you want the best to remember your trip by and don't get me wrong, when you shoot off half a dozen rolls of film you're bound to get one or two that will rival those of a professional.

If you can deal with manual advancing of the film and the extra cost of disposables my suggestion is the AquaShot3 w/AQs strobe. I wish I could compare the new AQ3e with the others, however this is a new type of film and I've yet to see photos from The Fuji Endeavor which is one of those new 3 format films. I've just fitted my old #2 with a low-cost Kodak Advantix of the same type (anybody out there with a similar housing is more than welcome to call me and find out how). The results were impressive. The modification needs a little adjusting but the photo quality is pretty good.

Unfortunately I did not have the watercorrecting lens on the AQ2 (remember, I chopped it for my Bonica) so I won't be able to give a true comparison until I get one.

I hope this will serve as some reference and by all means contact me with any questions.

As for what comes next? I wrote this article some time before it was due to be printed and in the interim I found myself faced with a deal too good to pass up. I hope nobody thinks of this as a sellout but I purchased a used Nikonos package. Smile!!



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## May the dive season begin !!

by Gary Thuillier

Ok, so it's a lousy play on words, but the summer, though not officially here yet, is starting off in great (or should I say *giant?*) stride. May 1st brought a small group of UDNH divers down to Gloucester, MA, for a trip out to the 'Chester Poling' and the 'Nina T'. Leaving the marina onboard the "Cape Ann Diver II", club president Mike Griffin, Lea Nichols, Steve Lindblom and myself headed to a point not far from the Gloucester breakwater to go down on the stern section of the well known 'Poling'. This coastal oil tanker was broken in half during a blizzard in 1977 and the stern section went to the bottom less than a half mile from the harbor. The great blizzard of '78' later pushed it even farther out (at 100ft deep it's sort of hard to imagine). After a sufficient surface interval we then moved a mile (give or take) to a newer site to dive the 'Nina T'.

This one, an old wooden hull trawler, was intentionally sunk along with another similar boat named the 'Gannet'. The two fishing vessels had been

lying half sunk at the dock for some time and eventually somebody got the idea to make artificial reefs out of them last year. Having visited the Chester Poling countless times over the years I have to say I was taken in more by the trawler on this trip. She is sitting almost upright in 100± feet with the mast and rigging approaching the surface to about 45 feet. A *photo opportunity* to put it lightly. To be fair, both dives were excellent photo op's on that day as we had visibility of nearly 35 feet and the 'Poling', itself being upright, always makes for a good picture ( Of course I didn't bring a camera ) when you can see it. Fortunately Mike brought the video so all is not lost. Speaking of *fortune*, this was Mike's lucky day. Somehow in all the excitement he forgot his drysuit. Who would imagine that the boat captain just happened to have a spare on board?

Moving ahead into the month found a large turnout of our members( 12, I believe ) at the Bay State Council of Divers' annual *Treasure Hunt* at Stage Fort Park again in Gloucester. Although none of us won the grand prize trip, we did get our share of the booty. A few days later even more met at the *Catholic Medical Center* for a tour of their hyperbaric medical facility. I think we were all surprised to learn that CMC had two

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mono chambers available for simple dive accidents (walk-in treatment for dcs symptoms). Many of us were led to believe that this facility, which is usually used to treat CO poisoning and various other ailments was not capable of handling a diver who might come home and develop symptoms such as numbness etc. Our guide, Brenda Hall gave us a very in depth (no pun intended) tour including the chance for everyone to climb inside for a first hand experience of these clear acrylic pressure cookers. Thank you Brenda, very cool indeed! Our next get together was lead (and driven) by Jean Stefanik. A small group of us spent the day in Boston doing the Aquarium and Quincy Market thing while waiting for an afternoon Whale Watch. As Jean's guests we all got a great deal on a tickets out to Stellwagon Bank for a terrific show of 25 or more whales. It was a very long ride out and back and I should take this moment to add a tip for people who suffer from motion sickness. Start the medication the night before! Believe me, it makes a huge difference. At this writing, it's Memorial Day and I just got back

from diving with Mike Griffin at the much talked about "River Wreck" in Dover. After filling our tanks at the new "Portsmouth Scuba" we met up with our club dive co-ordinator, Tom Tremblay and his wife Jeanne. The Wenzel family also showed up after learning the hard way that Nubble is off limits to divers on holidays as well as Sundays (*been there!*). This site, in the Piscataqua River is home to a mysterious wooden hull / copper clad shipwreck. At about 50 feet deep it's a nice pile of rubble to pick through but I do recommend doing it with extra air whether in doubles or dragged with you in an extra bottle. The swim out is long and by the time most people get there it's time to head back. This wreck is Tom's baby and I'll let him write more about it. In the meantime, have a safe dive season.

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## **SEARCH FOR THE GREAT BAY SHIPWRECK**

*by Tom Tremblay*

It all started with a visit to Portsmouth Scuba. On a cold March day I visited Jay Gingrich in his quaint dive shop. We talked about the new dive shop he was preparing to open in the Spring. The conversation led to his favorite activity; diving in the Piscataqua River. He told me about an old wreck he found upriver off Cedar point. Drift diving in the River's strong current with another die-hard winter diver, they came upon what looked like the remains of an old wreck. After several dives, they were able to determine that it was probably an old luxury yacht. It had lots of brass portholes and other fittings you would expect to find in a good boat. They determined

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the ship was about 80 to 100 ft in length. The bottom was copper sheathed, and there was still an old steam engine in the midst of the whole mess. He said there was still enough of the wreck to make it an exciting artifact dive. I was given some general coordinates to help find the old wreck. I was also warned about the very strong currents after the tidal change. This is strictly a slack water dive unless you want to go cruising down river at about 3+ knots on a cold winter day in 27 degree water, so careful planning and safety are a priority. So loaded with this new information I was off to find some other eager wreck hunters crazy enough to dive late Winter in cold water, strong currents if you have bad timing and generally poor vis. What more could you ask for? A perfect dive. I shared this information at the next Dive Club meeting. Surprisingly, I had a few takers. On the first dive, those foolish enough to commit were Jim and Barbara Wenzel, Bob Foley, Jim Mayo, two divers who were at the meeting (forgot their names) and myself. The dive plan was to run a float line about 185 ft to the spot Jay said should put us right on top of the wreck, using land bearings. I sent two divers with dry suits with the float line out to the spot.. They were to tie off the end on the bottom. The rest of us were to follow the line. Jim and Barbara were next. Myself and my two dive buddies were next. We all went down to 35 ft. Poor vis and no wreck. It was supposed to be in 45 to 50 ft of water. The following week, Jim & Barbara Wenzel made another attempt. They had no luck. Two weeks later, we tried again. Something doesn't seem right. We just can't get away from the old bridge timbers in deep enough water with the information we had, so it had to be further out. Next plan was to have 300 ft of line to go with. On the 3rd dive, Steve Lindblom joined us. He was all excited to find an old wreck. We still couldn't find it, but we did find old bridge timbers and pilings and old bottles. Next time we go with 400 ft of line. The float line was good for a safety precaution and to keep the group together, especially in poor vis, but it was not the best for the return trip. Best plan is to swim back on a compass course. On the 4th trip, we found the ship in 55 ft of cold dark water. Barbara Wenzel found a pile of old bottles & no catch bag. When she surfaced with her husband Jim she couldn't swim back to the line with her catch. Jim finally convinced her to drop the bottles and swim back to the line. This is an interesting and challenging dive. We are having a cool time diving this wreck in Arctic water temps. It also makes you work your dive skills and safety planning. More about the Cedar Point wreck in future newsletters.



### 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 1999 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 - 1999

President	Mike Griffin	603-673-9250
Vice President	Kerry Hurd	603-672-8325
Treasurer	Gary Thuillier	603-487-3001
Secretary	Karen Marion	603-880-0293
Dive Coordinator	Tom Tremblay	603-625-8459

**Meeting schedule:** 7:00-8:15pm - meeting & presentation ,  
8:30-9:20- pool time, 9:20-9:30 - Hot Tub!

## Meetings and Events

**June 7 Meeting** Paul Young & Charlot Richarson will present a multi-image slide show about diving in Borneo

**June 21 Meeting** Jim Stewart will tell us about the Great American Fish Count and his experiences with Manatees

**June 26 Boat Dive on the Pinthis** (Scituate, MA). Contact Lea Nichols @ 603-487-2726.

**June 26** Winnepesaukee River Clean Up Contact Jean @ 603 524-5467 for details

**July 5 Meeting** Lea & Elsbeth Nichols will show slides from their trip to Egypt and the Red Sea last Fall

**July 10 Great American Fish Count.** Nubble Light, York, ME.

**July 16-18 Hermit Island Camping/Diving/Kayaking/Canoeing/Biking/Windsurfing/Carousing Weekend.** Contact Tom Tremblay (603-625-8459) for details. (For carousing info, contact Alice Mann)

**July 19 Meeting.** Cliff Simoneau will discuss rebreather technology.

**July 31 New England Aquarium Dive Club Annual Picnic.** Fort Getty, Newport, RI

**July 31 New England Underwater Adventures' Annual SCUBA JAM, Danvers, MA.** All Day.

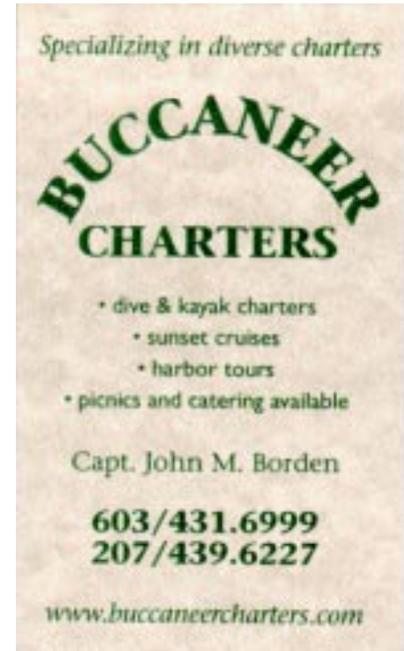
**August 21 Annual Jay Lewis Picnic.** Great Island Common, Newcastle, NH

August 21 Weirs Beach Clean Up. Contact Jean @ 603 524-5467 for details

**August 27-30 Les Escoumins,** Quebec trip with New England Aquarium Dive Club.

### Weather

Current marine weather for New England can be accessed on the world wide web at [NWS.FSU.EDU/BUOY/](http://NWS.FSU.EDU/BUOY/)



### ***Viking Sport Dry Suit Size 01***

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

### **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. My detailed information is available at [maineharbors.com](http://maineharbors.com).

Sat June 5 -	4:39 PM	Sat July 17	3:49 PM
Sun June 6 -	4:46 AM	Sun July 18	4:40 PM
Sat June 12 -	10:43 AM	Sat July 24	9:38 AM
Sun June 13 -	11:39 AM	Sun July 25	10:27 AM
Sat June 19 -	5:15 PM	Sat July 31	2:10PM
Sun June 20 -	6:12 PM	Sun Aug 1	2:59 PM
Sat June 26 -	11:00 AM	Sat Aug 7	8:09 AM
Sun June 27 -	11:41 AM	Sun Aug 8	9:16 AM
Sat July 3	3:27 PM	Sat Aug 14	2:30 PM
Sun July 4	4:11 PM	Sun Aug 15	3:15 PM
Sat July 10	9:27 AM	Sat Aug 21	8:02 PM
Sun July 11	10:28 AM	Sun Aug 22	8:58 PM



United Divers of New Hampshire  
P.O. Box 4176  
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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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- Budget Underwater Photography
- Mysterious Great Bay Shipwreck

