

Swim with the Mermaids

By *Lea Nichols*

On a voyage to the New World Columbus made note of many sightings of mermaids - the mythical half woman, half fish creature. Reading his journal we find they were much uglier than he expected. The current thought is that he mistook the West Indian manatee or sea cow for a mermaid.

During the winter months many of these animals hang out in the warm water springs near Crystal River, Florida. The manatee needs a water temperature in the range of 70° F to survive. The crystal clear springs here provide that warmth. The manatee, like the panda bear, is a vegetarian and spends most of its life eating water hyacinth to support its lethargic life style. Manatees are social animals and seem to think we humans make good substitutes for the dwindling numbers of their own kind. They seem most playful just after they awaken in the morning, but before they get hungry. During this time they will approach people in the water. Sometimes they only wiggle their nose as they pass, other times they rub along side and like to be scratched just behind their front flippers. The most congenial of the bunch may roll over on their back as an invitation for you to scratch their belly. About 9:30 am, they get hungry and retreat to protected areas for feeding and resting.

Once you've been in the company of these creatures, it is clear why they are so vulnerable to damage by outboard motor propellers. As with most endangered species man poses the greatest threat by encroaching on their habitat. The manatees had no natural enemies for thousands of years until man appeared on the scene. The manatee thus evolved to move very slowly. Couple this with a need to breath air and this puts the manatee right in harm's way of boat propellers.

It is quick and inexpensive to visit these gentle creatures after making your way to the town on Crystal River.



Photos by Lea Nichols

The first order of business is to watch a 5 minute instructional video at the Best Western Hotel dive shop and receive a map and directions. A rental boat with outboard motor takes about 20 minutes to reach your destination. (Canoe and kayaks are also available.) Once there it is a simple matter to slip into the water with mask, fins and snorkel only and wait for the manatees to approach. (The cacophony of SCUBA

continued ...

A group from United Divers of NH is planning a trip to play with the manatees leaving Wednesday, February 5, 1997. The date was chosen to provide the best visibility and avoid the weekend crowd while staying over a Saturday night to get the best air fare. Those desiring a quick inexpensive trip can return on Sunday. For those interested in a more elaborate vacation the Florida Keys



are a days drive South. The Gainesville area boasts spectacular cave diving. The ever popular Disney World and Busch Gardens are also within easy reach. Please feel free to contact Lea Nichols at (603) 487-2726 for details.

Congratulations to Newly Elected 1997 Board Members

President - Jean Stefanik 603-647-1063

Vice President - Mike Griffin 603-598-0151

Treasurer - June Bardsley 603-673-8539

Dive Coordinator - Ken Anderson 603-335-6370

Assist. Dive Coordinator - Ronnie Mann 603-883-9015

As you may have noticed the position of Secretary was not listed above. We were unable to coerce/shanghai a volunteer at our meeting on November 4th. Therefore the Secretary position will be filled in the new year.

Other changes and innovations

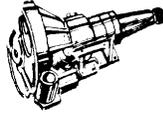
Lea Nichols, with the assistance of Gary Thuillier, will be taking over the time consuming task of producing the club newsletter. Please support them both by contributing articles, news items, and photos regularly.

Tom Trembley has proposed a new project to setup a club lending library containing books, videos, etc. for training, travel or just general interest information. He hopes to create a portable setup which can be brought to each meeting.

Of course, special thanks to all our 1996 board members - Rick Bardsley, Gary Thuillier, Jake Richter, Linda Richter, and Ken Anderson







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Message from the New President

by Jean Stefanik

I am honored to have been nominated and chosen as the next President of United Divers of New Hampshire. United Divers is a unique group with a long tradition of active involvement in diving and dive-related activities. For years I have been impressed with the energy of the group, with the amount of diving which happens each year, and with the friendliness and comradery which is present at meetings and events. People in the group do pitch in and contribute their ideas, time, resources, and energy, at a much higher average than most groups the size of United Divers.

Jake spoke of vision as being part of the President's role. I envision this group growing in membership — but not too much. We all value quality and trust, and it's important for us to know each other personally, and get to know new members personally also. I see us diving, both at club functions and on our own with each other and with neighboring clubs, from all geographic directions. I think community service is important, so activities such as cleanups and Jay Lewis play

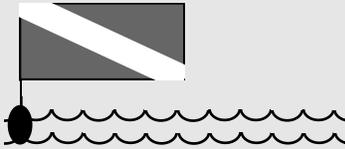
significantly in my ideas. In past years the dive flag education program was a huge accomplishment and we need to continue with that effort, in new and creative ways.

Our meetings need to be a mix of practical information, entertainment, appreciation — a blend of old and new, in-house expertise tapped and "outside experts". Strengthening our ties with the YMCA needs to be continual.

Tapping the resources of our local dive shops in terms of expertise and as a source of potential new members needs a more organized system. I view money as means to various ends, so fundraising will be important, but not in isolation from specific project goals.

It's good to see members traveling distances together, as well as locally for diving. This group amazes me with it's ability to get things done. I look forward to serving the group along with a wonderful team of officers and supporters. If you have ideas, please contact me by phone at 647-1063. We will be looking for speakers and ideas for meetings, and appreciate all of the ideas and help we can get.

continued ...



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NIGHT DIVING

COD FISHING

Continued from Previous Page

Have a great holiday season, and we'll meet beginning the first Monday in January at the Y - hopefully all of the Bahamas-bound folks will have their pictures and videos to share at that meeting, and the Manatee trip will be closer to finalization. See you then!

Which are you?

Are you an active member, the kind that would be missed, or are you just content that your name is on the list?

Do you attend the meetings and mingle with the flock, or do you stay at home and criticize and knock?

Do you take an active part to help your club along, or are you satisfied to simply say that you "belong"?

Do you ever volunteer to help the guiding stick? Or leave the work to just a few, then talk about the clique?

Come out to the meetings, and help with hand and heart, don't just be a member, but take an active part!

Just think this over, member — you know right from wrong. Are you an active member, or do you just belong?

(taken from October 1996 issue of Sno-Traveler)

continued ...

ISLES OF SHOALS CHALLENGE

by Gary Thuillier

At the October 7th meeting I proposed a navigational contest between our club and anyone else who feels they are up to the challenge of finding their way to the Isles of Shoals, from Rye Beach, NH, underwater!!! As offbeat as it may sound at first, the idea of swimming to a point some five or so miles away (in relays, of course) with only your compass to go by, seems rather exciting, don't you think? Well, at least most of those in attendance thought so.

Anyhow, here is a general overview of what I have in mind and what I hope some of you will help me with over the winter months ahead.

THE TEAMS:

Competing teams will consist of four to six divers in buddy pairs per boat with a boat operator who may also be part of a dive team (so long as an alternate diver/driver is on the same boat). Along with each boat there is to be an impartial passenger/monitor to make sure the all-so-simple rules are followed.

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Continued from Previous Page

THE CHALLENGE:

Each buddy team will plot a direct course, enter the water and swim at an average depth of 15-30 feet with dive boat following. This depth is only a guideline as any depth is acceptable so long as divers remain submerged for a minimum of 30 minutes (i.e. no coming up to check your course).

Once either diver breaks the surface their boat will pick them up and quickly disperse the next buddy team. Anyone violating the 30 minute minimum will cost their team 5 minutes of penalty on boat at drift. This is where the impartial passenger comes in as monitor.

The use of electronic navigational aids such as DIVE TRACKER or any other technological breakthroughs (i.e. underwater GPS) will not be permitted and the team boat shall remain behind the divers' flag. Each team will use a legal red and white "divers down" flag with a designated color float for identification purposes.

Only those divers with a physical handicap will be allowed the use of diver propulsion vehicle (DPV) and in such a case their buddy shall be under his or her own power. Buddy teams may follow any rotation they desire

so long as they follow a safe profile. Remember bottom time is restricted only by the minimum (i.e. if you can do an hour on a tank at 20 feet that's fine, just be sure you've been heading in the right direction all that time or the next team will have some distance to make up).

THE WINNER:

The first person to make landfall will make their team the winner of the first annual Isles of Shoals Challenge. With this being the inaugural, and first event ever of its kind, the prize should be some type of trophy which would be passed on each year to the winning team. Also there should be trophies for the individual winners. Another thing to consider is sponsorship possibly adding to the prize pool.

The whole idea of this came as a way to raise money for a good cause while promoting the sport of scuba diving. One thought was the Multiple Sclerosis Society or, as someone suggested at the club meeting, Seamark/Cotting School. Anyway I truly believe an event such as this would bring a good amount of media attention.

Who knows, maybe our friend Mr. Stanton of Divers Down will also take some interest in this. It's certainly

continued ...

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Walk on dates for 1996

JULY (Tuesdays) 2nd, 17th & 31

AUGUST (Tuesdays) 13 & 28

SEPTEMBER (Sundays) 8th & 29th

OCTOBER (Saturdays) 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th

NOVEMBER (Saturdays) Scallops every



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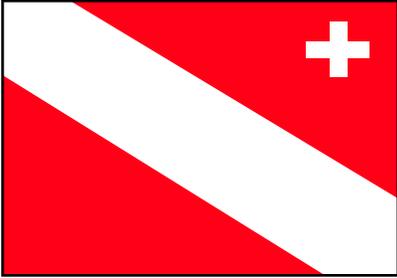
These are all ideas we have to work on and I'm asking you to help me out. When the UDNH clubs meetings resume in January I'll be forming a committee to iron out all the details which I hope to have accomplished by the time the Boston Sea Rovers Clinic comes around in early March, because that will be the place to introduce the challenge. In the meantime anyone who wants to discuss it can call me evenings at (603) 487-3001

Dive Equipment Mart

For Sale: 3mm Shorty, Black Performance size Large. Ex cond. only 8 warm water dives. \$30.00

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The Equipment Mart is a service offered by *Dive Log* to the members of the United Divers of New Hampshire dive club. If you have any equipment you are interested in selling, or are looking for any particular piece of dive related equipment, please drop the editors a note. Their contact information can be located on Page 2. Note that only personal articles will be offered, as commercial advertising and sales are handled separately via vendor advertisements. *Dive Log* makes no warranties or representations as to the suitability or state of any equipment offered via the Equipment Mart, as ascertaining those conditions is the responsibility of the purchaser of such goods.



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Boston Sea Rovers March 8 & 9, 1997

Exhibiting

Once again we must start planning for the new year. Our club usually exhibits at the Boston Sea Rover show in March. We have a lovely new exhibit booth which you can see at the banquet to house a video display as well as underwater finds. Anybody interested in donating their time or ideas to the project should contact the board during the first meeting of the new year.

Attending

As a reminder to those interested in attending, early bird ticket prices are \$15 each for Saturday day, Saturday Evening Program, and Sunday Day. Or all three for \$36, or any two for \$25 and get a free \$5 ticket to the "Meet the Speakers" Party on Saturday night. Order by January 15, 1997. Send check payable to Boston Sea Rovers, PO Box 293, Bedford, MA 01730-0293. Or call the hotline number (617) 424-9899. Or contact Jake or Linda Richter (603) 432-0234 to get your tickets.

Hotel discounts are available at the Copley Plaza Hotel for \$121 per night, single or double occupancy. Call direct and mention Boston Sea Rovers (800) 795-3906.

DEMA Show '97 in Orlando, Florida

Exhibit and Seminar show dates are January 9-12, 1997. The DEMA show is open to the SCUBA industry. For more information call (619) 294-2999. Or visit the DEMA Website at www.dema.com

Andrea Doria Diving

Donnie Stevens of Atlantic Aquasport will be hosting a dinner at Yoken's in Portsmouth, November 24th. The presentation will be about his dive trip to the Andrea Doria this summer. Call (603) 436-4443 for cost and time.



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1996 Meetings and Events

November 9 - Event

- The Annual UDNH Club Banquet, located at Angelos in Manchester. Cost and exact time TBD. Tickets are expected to be in the \$15-18 price range.

?? - Scallop Diving



- Anybody interested in scallop diving should contact Ken Anderson 603-335-6370. Ken is exploring the possibility of either a Maine or Cape Ann dive site.

1997 Meetings and Events

January 1, 1997 - New Year's Day Dive



- Annual event at Avery Point, Groton, CT. Over two hundred divers expected. Contact Ken Anderson 603-335-6370 for more information.

January 6, 20

February 3, 17

March 3, 17

April 7, 211

May 5, 19

June 2, 16

July 21

August 4, 18

September 15

October 6, 20

November 3



As usual planning will start in January for our regular club events, volunteers to help organize are always welcome.

Ice Dive/Lady of the Lake - February or March

Whitewater rubber rafting - March

First Spring Club Dive - May

Jay Lewis Picnic - July

Meet at the Mall - 1st Saturday of the month dive



Club Meetings

Meetings are held the first and third Mondays of each month, except for January, November, and December, and when a meeting might interfere with the Independence Day or Labor Day holidays. 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 7:30 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 1996 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 Jake Richter, 603-432-0234.

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 - 1996

President	Rick Bardsley	603-673-8539
Vice President	Gary Thuillier	603-487-3001
Treasurer	Linda Richter	603-432-0234
Secretary	Jake Richter	603-432-0234
Dive Coordinator	Ken Anderson	603-335-6370



United Divers of New Hampshire
P.O. Box 703
Manchester, NH 03105

Forward and Address Correction Requested



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.

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