

DIVE LOG

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the United Divers of New Hampshire



Liveaboard vacations

**The
ultimate
diving
adventures**

photos by Bob Gamache



The Presidents Corner

On The Cover

This issue we're focusing on liveboard diving with both the Aggressor Fleet and Peter Hughes Diving. Over the past year our roving dive reporters, Bob and Rose Gamache, have managed trips to the Bay Islands, Red Sea, and Turks and Caicos Islands. Having had the opportunity to join them on the latter, it is very easy to see the attraction or better stated, "get bitten by the bug"! You've read about some of their vacations in past issues and we'll continue here with some of my own input.

The photos on this month's cover, a pair of masked butterflyfish found exclusively in the Red Sea and a sea turtle from West Caicos, are actually clips Bob has taken from some of the fascinating video footage he has compiled and I have been lucky enough to preview. On that note I would also mention at this time that he is currently putting together a presentation for this year's club banquet in November-- something I, for one, am looking forward to.

Meanwhile, Summer isn't quite over yet and there is more good diving to be had. We have a cleanup to take place again at Prescott Park in Portsmouth on Saturday, September 16 at 9:00AM. They are counting on us. Also, for anyone interested in Lake diving, pontoon boat rentals are half price after Labor Day on Winnepesaukee. We got together the last two years and got in some good diving that way. It's also safer with the decrease in boat traffic out there this time of year.

We have a new advertiser in the newsletter this month, welcome aboard BENNETT DIVE TRAVEL SPECIALISTS. I hope we can steer some business your way. I have also heard rumors that BUCHANNEER CHARTERS may have a new boat up and running soon, be watching for their ad.

Seamark 2001

Spend a Saturday night partying with the penguins at the New England Aquarium...this year's Seamark fundraiser for Cotting School promises to be the most fun party yet! With a Key West Band playing music under the stars, Brian Skerry showing off his underwater photos, the Aquarium's new Nyanja exhibit, and the chance to win a trip to the Cayman Islands or a private villa in the Bahamas, you're sure to have lots of fun.

All of this takes place Saturday night, October 7, 2000 at the New England Aquarium. And all proceeds help fund the Seamark Vision Clinic at Cotting School in Lexington, MA. Tickets are only \$20 (\$25 at the door) and can be purchased from our club representative Tom Tremblay @603-625-8459(h) or 603-625-8558(w), or by emailing: dnewark@cotting.org, visiting their website at www.seamark.org, or by calling 781-862-7323x5. Donations to Seamark are also gratefully accepted.

Hope to see you there!



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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Website:

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

Paradise

by Rose Gamache

The Red Sea offers a fairytale seascape of intoxicating color and beauty beyond one's imagination. This sea occupies a large and growing rift valley between Africa and Asia. Its water is cooler than expected and choppy most of the time. Currents vary from zero to two or three knots making diving serene to heart throbbing. Having no atolls, the marine life is almost completely Indo-Pacific in origin. It is higher in salinity offering a multitude of fish species of which 10% are endemic.

As you descend the reef, your eyes are dazzled with an explosion of colors, coral formations and abundant marine life to create a lifetime of lasting images. The hard corals can be spiked, knobby, smooth, prickly, clustered, plated, etc. The branching soft corals greet the diver in brilliant reds, pinks, purples and oranges, and the short soft corals blanket the reef like animated garden patches glittering in the sunlight. Giant sea fans jutting out from the wall can reach diameters of 20 feet! Symbiotic large-ball anemones allow clownfish to take refuge in their forest of tentacles as divers approach their domain. Uncountable numbers of small fish aggregate to form varying size schools. The ubiquitous anthias, the Indo-Pacific "goldfish", are found in vast profusion flitting around coral heads and walls. Huge schools of silversweepers are so dense as they gather close to the surface they almost block out the sun! Schools of queenfish seem to strut along the reef superior in color and grace. Schools of common sweetlips cruise by outfitted in blue with black dots and painted yellow lips, fins and tails fashioned for the carnival. Countless small fish that collectively ascend and descend the wall mesmerize its diver audience as they simultaneously spiral to the rhythm of their choreographed routine. The masked puffer rounds the coral seemingly looking for a bank to rob, while the masked butterflyfish, endemic to the Red Sea, embraces a diver's wonderment with its luminous yellow color and blue-masked eyes. Numerous bannerfish cruise by oblivious to their nitrogen-enriched observers. The gregarious cornetfish, having found a new friend, will swim alongside a diver's head, just out of peripheral vision. The longnose hawkfish, a nervous tenant on a gorgonian, seeks concealment by blending its horizontal and vertical lines to the latticework of its coral home.

The Red Sea is no stranger to shipwrecks. Big Brother Island is home to the Aida, a troop transport that sunk in 1967 with no fatalities. This ship is intact and lush with coral and marine life. A more famous wreck is the Salem Express, a car ferry that collided with a small surfacing reef. On a stormy December in 1992, pilgrims were returning from Mecca when, it is rumored, the captain decided to take a shortcut. The ferry sank so quickly that there wasn't enough time to send an S.O.S. There were 180 survivors of the supposedly 690 people. Some captains are reluctant to go near this site, and divers are warned that penetration is strictly forbidden.

(continued on next page)

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- Doug Bennett, President

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INSTRUCTIONS **RENTALS**

Divers can clearly recognize the two lifeboats found sitting on the sand still sadly attached to this 300 ft. ship lying on its starboard side in 100 ft. of water. Personal effects, radios, luggage, shoes, a clothing iron and china eerily rest on the sea floor, a seriously poignant reminder of how rapidly this vehicle sank. Divers must use caution with buoyancy as hard coral begins to dot the ship's surface. Safety stops were performed in solemn reflection and there was a sigh of relief when leaving this profound dive site.

The Red Sea offers a multitude of intimidating species occasionally creating some ambiguity for its scuba visitors. Giant morays, dressed in chain-like markings reaching 10-foot lengths arrogantly undulate along the reef during the day and night uncaring of the camera. Huge threatening Titan triggerfish, disturbed by the camera, will angrily attack a diver's fin with vengeance! The flamboyant lionfish, one of the most venomous creatures when disturbed will point and release its spines on an enemy. As voracious nocturnal hunters, they'll take advantage of a diver's light to illuminate a meal becoming a continuous menacing presence.



One never tires of watching the blue-spotted stingray glide below to settle in the sand. Everyone gives way for the massive, emerald humphead wrasse that can weight up to 400



pounds! The master of disguise, the scorpionfish, expertly blends with the color and texture of the wall while the deadly notorious stonefish, hidden under coral, patiently waits to ambush potential prey. The beautiful red fire urchin, appearing as a royal crown, tempts a diver to touch its venomous spines. A few unthreatening jellyfish can amazingly turn into a squadron of pulsating assailants resembling an underwater New England nor'easter. But the epitome of apprehension is staring wide-eyed at an approaching silky shark while making a safety stop! Nothing can accurately describe the exhilaration of diving in the Red Sea with its plethora of marine life and ineffable beauty. It is veritably a divers' paradise!



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SEA DANCER / TURKS and CAICOS ISLANDS

by Gary Thuillier

Whenever I mentioned to anyone who isn't familiar with the T/C Islands that we were planning a trip out of Provo, the initial reaction was "why would you go to Utah in the summer?" While most people relate Provo to skiing, divers know it as the common name for the island of Providenciales, the heart of the British Crown Colony of Turks and Caicos Islands.

The trip we had planned back in the spring started off just as Hurricane Alberto began its long journey up the Atlantic. Of course that journey had to commence just days before we left home with a track going directly 'you know where', giving us all some very concerning moments. Luck being with us, the weather for the week turned out perfect.

My wife, Sue and I along with Bob and Rose Gamache caught a flight out of Miami to Provo, some 500 miles southeast of Florida. It is an island group at the very end of the Bahama chain and about 90 miles north of the Dominican Republic. On arriving we were greeted by one of our gracious hosts from the 'Sea Dancer', a live aboard vessel of the Peter Hughes fleet. The trip from the airport to the marina was a brief one and we were quickly brought onboard our home for the week where we met up with our old friends Jim and Barbara Wenzel, former UDNH members now residing in Florida.

After a delicious meal the Captain gave his welcome aboard briefing and we settled in for the night, anxiously waiting the events to come. This was our first live-aboard adventure!

Sunrise, and I can't sleep any longer. Captain Ian fired up the engines on Sea Dancer and took us out to a site on the North side of Provo for our first dive. The schedule on this boat was, as we learned from Bob and Rose, a bit different than they had been used to on the Aggressor boats. Rather than having an open dive deck, your time in the water was planned so that you got plenty of surface interval and still got in your five dives a day. We would wake up each morning to choices from the breakfast menu and while we were eating the boat would be moved to another location just minutes away.



Once moored the dive staff would give an orientation of the site and we were in the water shortly thereafter. Each diver was responsible for their own profile and you never felt as if you were being watched over though there was a divemaster present either in the water or on the platform. Afterward, a two hour interval and dive number 2. Lunch, and a good one at that, followed and time to move the boat again. We would go to another location off West Caicos where two more dives and a night dive in familiar water would take place. It all seemed to work smoothly to me though I really had nothing to compare, besides, I was having the time of my life.

When it came to dining, I found the meals to be delicious although some felt they were a little too spicy, and the drinks were plentiful, Alcohol after your diving day ended please!

Accommodations on board are excellent, and I was pleased with the cabin layout though somewhat disappointed with the A/C. Not that it wasn't cool enough, it was downright cold and the only way to control the temperature was with good old duct tape over the register.

The *Salon*, where meals were served and games of spoons or hearts kept us busy between dives, was air conditioned also but with canvas curtains and open doorways it wasn't the most efficient. Still it was a better place to hang out than in the hot sun or wind [which raised havoc with Sue's attempt to hook a rug during her surface interval].



The evening entertainment was left up to the guests for the most part with Bob's videos being the highlight and a small selection of movies also available. A stereo system is also at hand but bring your own CD's, they have awful taste in music!

Diving in the Turks & Caicos is mostly of the wall type with the boat moored over reefs averaging fifty feet deep. Once in the water we would swim over to the wall which depending on the

continued on next page...

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site ranged from 300 to 6000 feet of deep blue sea. Visibility was less than expected with about 75 ft horizontally (they boast 100 ft plus constant). Our last trip there was twice that distance so Sue and I were a little disappointed. We all concluded that it had something to do with corals spawning due to the full moon. Who knows?

T/C is also famous for its big stuff though all we saw were sharks and a couple of distant Eagle rays, not that I'm complaining. One good sized turtle made an appearance and hammed it up for Bob, I think he even tried to bite the camera lens (the turtle, that is).

As for the sharks, we had a few of the Caribbean reef family



photo by Bob Gamache

members livening things up for most of our dives. We were told when we were picked up at the airport that the previous trip had many sightings so everyone was pumped, hoping this wasn't just one of those "you should have been here yesterday" pitches, and day one had us thinking just that. When we moved to our second day's location named 'Shark Hotel' we all thought "yeah sure!". Much to our surprise, from then on we saw some every day and *even the night dives!* I'll never forget the sound of Rose's voice as she tread water in that dark ocean, waiting for the group and informed us "they're all around"...I was next!!



The dive deck onboard the vessel had a nice layout, with each diver allotted his/her own area to sit and gear up. After each dive simply remove your first stage and the tank is filled in place for the next time. One slight problem noticed was water dripping from above (be sure to cap your first stage because they don't) which could easily enter your

(continued on next page)

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regulator. I guess " what dive boat would be complete without a work table for those with camera gear?" And of course there was the very much appreciated hot shower on deck.

Sea Dancer has an interesting system for hanging out on your safety stop. It's a bar, rigid with the dive platform, that is lowered into the water so that you can maintain an even 15 foot depth. There is also a spare tank and regulators hanging there in case you overstay your visit.

The bar (and tank) doubled as an amusement ride when the boat swung its arc from one side to the other.

With 110 feet of vessel acting like a huge sail, she would take off on a 3 knot ride (with diver in tow as Bob in the photo to the right) which always seemed to happen just as you approached the bar. Not to worry though, just wait a couple of minutes and it would return. The week went by all too fast as vacations usually do but I'm taking home some great memories and eagerly anticipating the next trip in July if anyone is interested.

A liveaboard is without any doubt, the way to go and since I have no prior experience I'll refrain from rating and simply say we had a terrific time. Would I return to Turks & Caicos? Not likely, twice was enough for us and there is so much more to see elsewhere.



photos by Gary Thuillier



Plans are being made right now for Saba, July 7-14,2001 onboard the M/V Caribbean Explorer

We want to fill the boat with UDNH members and friends. Capacity is 16 divers (at this time there are 9 openings)and if we can accomplish this a discount comes our way. Even without an incentive, the price for the boat trip is only \$1195.00 plus air to St Maarten. Not a bad deal for a week of diving (5 per day) plus food, drinks & lodging. With an itinerary including optional shore excursions to Saba, St. Kitts and Statia, this liveaboard is also billed as one of the best for non-diving companions.

(see www.caribexplorer.com)

Contact Bob Gamache @ (603)669-0580 or

Gary Thuillier @ (603)487-3001 **NOW!!!!**

UDNH Camping Trip

Our July campout was almost a wash due to bad weather but those of us who braved the elements had a pretty good time. The Mann family was there in force and thanks to Ron and his boat we were able to get out to some prime dive sites offered up by Massachusetts' North Shore. This years trip was at Winter Island in Salem, Mass., an old fort which made for an unusual place to pitch a tent but nonetheless, was oceanside. We had some serious mopping up after one night of rain but, aside from that and some very tense moments when little David Mann got his foot lodged in between the floating dock sections, all went well. I can see us doing this trip again next summer.



Next trip Saba, let's get together!!!



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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

Sept. 16 Coastal Cleanup - Prescott Park, Portsmouth. 9am. Contact Gary Thuillier 603-487-3001 for more info.

Sept. 16 New England Aquarium Dive Club Coastal Cleanup. Misery Island, Manchester, MA. Contact Alicia Lenci, 617 566-2515

Sept. 18 Meeting

Sept. 23 Navigation Contest. Nubble Light, York ME

Sept., Oct. ?? -- Tropical Fish Hunting. Contact Jean Stefanik @ 603-647-1063 for times & places.

October 7

Seamark at the New England Aquarium. Contact Tom Tremblay @ 603-625-8459 for info.

November 18 Annual UDNH Banquet. The Yard Restaurant, Manchester, NH.



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. It features a stylized bellows, which is a tool used in carpentry, positioned to the right of the shop's name. The bellows is depicted with a handle and a series of rectangular sections representing the folds of the bellows.

Jay Lewis Memorial Picnic

Saturday August 26 saw us at our annual JLM picnic. As usual, it was held at *Great Island Commons* in Rye, NH. For anyone who is unaware, John 'Jay' Lewis was a member of UDNH who, while on a dive out at the Isle of Shoals, was struck and killed by a boater whom officials never apprehended. Last year we set a memorial bench at the common looking out to the Isles.

Attendance was between 20-30 with a few members getting in a dive or two. After suiting up for the first dive following a week long liveboard in warm water, we crawled down the slimy rocks into what felt like a tub of crushed ice. Within a few minutes though we were back to reality and acclimated to our nice, refreshing New England water. As we pushed our way past the usual wrack or rockweed (I'm not sure which it is) that tangles the GIC shoreline, I noticed an unusual abundance of *green hair weed* which according to my Marine Life manual is only supposed to grow to 4 inches. This stuff was two feet thick and covered the bottom all the way out to where the river converges making for an unpleasant dive, to say the least. Anyway, we lasted about 10 minutes and decided it would be more fun to fire up the grill. The club supplied the usual burgers and dogs but everybody who showed up brought along some goodies filling out the tabletops. Later a volleyball game helped burn up some of the added calories with the highlight being a runaway volleyball coming to within inches of a sleeping sunbather's cleanly shaved head. Whoa!!

All things considered the picnic was a success.

See you next year!



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Sweat Shirts with embroidered logo \$22

Golf Shirts \$24

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Gary @ 603 487-3001

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Dive computer: Orca Edge- Contact Lea Nichols @ 603-487-3001

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

Dacor Extreme First and second stage (first year model), spg, digital depth/timer \$225.00 and **Oceanic DataMax Pro** air integrated computer \$300.00 call Gary @ (603)487-3001

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Henderson men's Farmer John wet suit size M/L \$125.00 / wet suit hood - large, \$10.00 / wet suit boots, size 9-10, \$15.00 / Dacor BCD w/ power inflator size large askinf \$45.00 / TUSA Liberator women's fins, pink, size Small asking \$25.00
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	
September			
2	3:16 PM	3	4:06 PM
9	9:26 AM	10	10:13 AM
16	1:47 PM	17	2:26 PM
23	7:54 AM	24	9:00 AM
30	1:58 PM		
October			
		1	2:42 PM
7	7:51 AM	8	8:44 AM
14	12:37 PM	15	1:16 PM
21	6:38 AM	22	7:46 AM
28	12:49 PM	29	1:33 PM

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

**Sign up for Saba dive
trip next July
NOW!!**

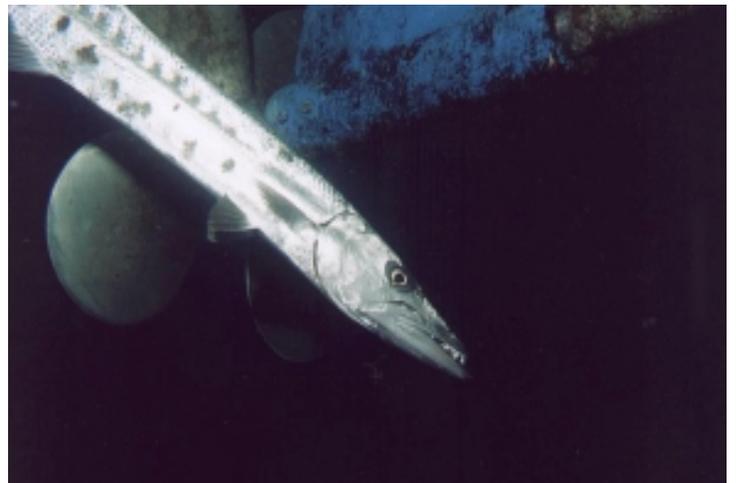


photo by Gary Thuillier

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