

September - 2007



DODGING DEAN

As you probably read through my e-mail messages in August, we spent the tail end of our Bonaire trip dodging Hurricane Dean. (The full Bonaire trip report and pictures are available on-line. Just go to our home page - www.reefseekers.com - and click on the links.)

But it brings up an interesting point of how isolated from information you'd like to be any time you're traveling, whether that's as part of a group or on your own individually. Personally (as you probably all well know), I'm a big fan of staying in touch with what's going on in the world.

Now there's nothing wrong with isolation and many times, people will say one of the things they really like about dive trips to remote locations is that they're forced to lose contact with what's happening in the rest of the world.

My first experience with that came in the Bahamas back in 1978. We

were staying on the island of Spanish Wells (1 mile long, 3 blocks wide, 1000 people on the island). There were no TVs, only rudimentary phone service, and this was long before the Internet. I just happened to stroll into a shop one day and heard a radio broadcast that mentioned the funeral of Pope Paul VI. I'm not Catholic, but I'd say the death of any Pope is big news.

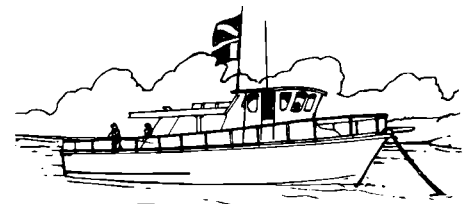
When I left Spanish Wells, a buddy of mine picked me up at the Atlanta airport. He asked me how the trip was. I told him it was great because the place was so isolated, "In fact," I said, "the Pope could have died and we wouldn't have heard about it." Lewis looked at me for a second and said, "Ken, the Pope DID die." I said, "Nah, you're just pulling my leg. The place was great . . ." and at that point I couldn't hold it any longer and fell down laughing.

But the point of this is that there's certain information you can be without and certain information you'll want to have. In our case, had we not followed the progress of Dean and simply stuck to our original plans out of lack-of-information (aka "ignorance") there's an excellent chance we would have not been able to get out of Jamaica and would have been stuck there for a couple of days.

So when you're traveling around

the world is search of great dive destinations, give some thought as to how isolated you want to be. Probably the most important thing to keep an eye on is the weather, not only for the place where you're diving, but also for the cities you'll have to fly through on your return home. As to Pope's dying and stuff like that, yeah, you can probably catch up on that when you get home.

But give some thought to what level of contact and communication you'll have. Ignorance is not always bliss.



SKED HAS CHANGED

We're still getting calls for trips that we dropped back in July. Please remember that our schedule changed and if you don't have the one that's updated as of July 16, you've got an outdated version. The current sked is on our website or we'd be happy to e-mail you one. (And we'll start working on the 2008 sked right after Labor Day.) You can also check the box at the top of page 3.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Sept. 6	Fish I.D.	Oct. 4	Fish I.D.
9	Beach Diving/Navig.	10	Night Diving
12	Night Diving	13	Beach Diving/Navig.
13	Photo Workshop	18	Tables & Computers
20	Rescue	20	CPR/Oxygen/1st Aid
27	NAUI Advanced	25	PADI Digital Diver

A SENSE OF HISTORY

I've spent the last ten days in Dover, Delaware (visiting my folks) and Norfolk & Richmond, Virginia (my buddy John Shomby from my radio days in Georgia and friends from when I used to run WLEE radio in Richmond) and the sense of history in both places is pretty amazing.

In Dover, we routinely drive by buildings that were originally constructed in the late-1600s or early-1700s. (As a kid I used to play touch football at Christ Church - built in 1703 - and Caesar Rodney's grave - he died in 1784 - was one of our out-of-bounds markers.) And Dover maintains very strong ties to its colonial past.

In Virginia, they're celebrating 400 years of history this year as the settlement at Jamestown was founded in 1607. (There was a really cute billboard I saw in Norfolk that said: "In 1607, the Jamestown settlers sailed right by Norfolk. Their mistake.") In Richmond, there are still very strong ties to the Civil War (since it was the Capital of the Confederacy) as well as the Revolutionary War. One night I had dinner just down the street from where Patrick Henry gave his famous "Give me liberty or give me death" speech. (Bonus points if you can e-mail me with

the name of that place - no fair Googling!!!)

The point of this is that the history of diving is very different. We don't have nearly as long a pedigree. On fact, the history of diving is barely 60 years old.

1943 - Cousteau & Gagan invent an open-circuit breathing system

1946 - Cousteau-type aqualungs go on sale in France

1948/49 - Rene's Sporting Goods imports Aqualungs from France

1951 - Skin Diver first published

1952 - Cousteau-type Aqualungs on sale in the U.S.

1954 - First scuba certification course offered in U.S. by L.A. County

1956 - U.S. Navy tables for repetitive diving made public

1960 - NAUI starts up

1966 - PADI starts up

1971 - Scubapro Stab Jacket introduced

1983 - Orca Edge (first mass-marketed dive computer) introduced
1988 - Reef Seekers opens for business

And the cool thing about all of this is that a lot of the people who "invented" the sport are not only still alive, but are still actively involved in what's going on in scuba diving as an industry and as a lifestyle.

It was very interesting a few years ago when I MC'd the 50th Anniversary dinner for the L.A. County Underwater Instructor's Association to see how many of these pioneers, let alone from their very first UICC, were still around.

So take advantage of this while you can. It's not possible to talk to Caesar Rodney or Patrick Henry anymore. But you can certainly track down people like Glenn Egstrom, Jim Stewart, and Roger Hess (as well as those of us who would consider ourselves in the "next" generation). Ask questions, pick brains, and allow diving history to come alive. It's a rare opportunity and you should avail yourself of it.



DIVING VACATIONS

**October 7-15 • Sea of Cortez
(20th Anniversary trip)**

January, 2008 - Australia

March, 2008 - Fiji ???

REEF SEEKERS GARAGE SALE

As we've told you all along, this year was going to be one of discovery for us and we weren't sure what the future would hold in terms of re-opening our retail store. But we've been hanging on to some things - specifically our rental gear - for that possibility.

The reality is that at this point, probably the soonest we could look to get going again would be late spring of next year. And rather than have everything continue to sit around with minimal use, we'd like to sell the since at this point, we'd just replace everything with new items.

So we're going to have a Scuba Garage Sale.

We haven't firmed up the date yet as we still have to get a permit from the city of Beverly Hills. It will either be Saturday, September 15 or Saturday, September 22. But it will definitely be held at Hal Greenberg's place (most of the stuff is stored in his garage) on Stanley Avenue, north of Wilshire. It's literally one block from our old 8612 Wilshire location. Sale hours will be 10AM-5PM and we'll take cash, checks, or credit cards.

What will we have? How about:

- Regs
- Computers & gauges
- BCs
- Wetsuits & hoods
- Tanks
- Weights
- Gear bags

All sales will be final, everything is sold in "As-Is" condition.

But if you're looking for some good deals on gear and you don't

UPCOMING BOAT DIVES

Sept. 8	<i>Magician</i>	<i>Olympic</i> wreck/Catalina front	\$120/130
23	<i>Magician</i>	••• Oil Rigs (limited load) •••	130/140
Oct. 6	<i>Cee Ray</i>	Catalina (Italian Gardens)	120/130
21	<i>Great Escape</i>	San Clemente (frontside)	145/155
Nov. 3	<i>Great Escape</i>	Santa Barbara Island	145/155
17	<i>Magician</i>	Catalina (West End)	120/130
Dec. 2	<i>Great Escape</i>	Santa Barbara Island	145/155
15	<i>Great Escape</i>	San Clemente (Pyramid)	145/155

Prices are listed as 14-day advanced purchase/regular. Food/air included all trips. All diving to be done on compressed air only - no nitrox. Fuel surcharge may apply.

need things that are brand-spanking new, then you've come to the right place. Obviously, we will be limited to merchandise-on-hand and yes, you're going to have to pay sales tax.

We'll send out another e-mail alert when we nail down the date but keep this one in mind because it's a great chance for you to get good gear at once-in-a-lifetime prices.



DIVE THE WRECK OF THE OLYMPIC

Make plans to join us September 8 (that's not this weekend, but the following Saturday) on the *Magician* as we make our only attempt for the year to dive the wreck of the *Olympic*, which lies about three miles outside the LA Harbor breakwater. This is a terrific dive (weather-permitting) as the wreck, which has been down over 50 years,

is covered with Club-Tipped Anemones, attracts schools of fish, and is simply interesting to explore. Max depth would be around 100 feet and the top of the wreck is around 60 feet. Generally, your dive is done 70-80 feet deep.

We'll do one dive there and the head over to Catalina to see if we can spot any Black Sea Bass at Italian Gardens. Then we'll break for lunch and get in at least one more dive. It's going to be a really great day of diving and you should make plans to join us. Give us a call at 310/652-4990. We've got some spots left but (hopefully, from our standpoint) they won't last forever.

SEA OF CORTEZ IN 2008

Our 2007 Sea of Cortez trip has been filled for quite some time and were already getting inquiries on 2008. (Dates will be October 12-19.) It's always one of our most popular trips and one that never disappoints. Give us a call at 310/652-4990 to guarantee your spot with us on the *Don Jose* for next year.

RESERVING STATEROOMS

We're getting a lot of people new to diving with Reef Seekers (a good thing) who don't fully understand how we do our stateroom policy (a bad thing). So let's clear that up.

On the *Great Escape*, we have available to us six staterooms. That's nice way of saying "bunks with a door" but the bottom line is that they do afford you some more privacy and some more space. Each stateroom has two bunks, an upper and a lower, with each (except for stateroom #4) being a double. So it's easy to put two people in a stateroom even if they don't want to share a bunk.

Staterooms can be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis.

When you call in to make your reservation for the boat, you can also make a reservation for a stateroom at that time. There's an extra \$10/person charge for the stateroom, and if you go into the stateroom as a single, we reserve the right to add another person (hopefully same sex but we can't guarantee it).

If the staterooms are taken when you can, you can certainly be asked to be out on the waiting list for a stateroom, should one open up. It's up to you at that point to decide whether or not you'd want to come on the boat sans stateroom. We've certainly had people in the past who've held out for a stateroom-or-bust only to find out they couldn't get on a trip they really wanted to go on. Best advice is to take

spots even without a stateroom, and hope that one pens up. But that's up to you.

But that's the way it work with us. We've always felt the first-come, first-served system is the fairest and it's seemed to work out pretty well for us these past 19 years. If you have any questions or thoughts on how we could improve the system, please feel free to let us know.

LABOR DAY

Please note that we'll be closed Monday for the Labor Day Holiday. But then again, since we don't have a retail store anymore, we're closed every day, so I'm not really sure what difference this will make, especially since we're always reachable on my cell phone.

PICTURE PAGE - DOVER & VIRGINIA

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2007)



My mom's official 80th b-day family pix



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WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM



John Shomby, my buddy from GA, now in Norfolk



Gy Spiller from WLEE and moi (yes, he's very tall)



The women behind the scenes at WLEE



Bev Eatsman (widow of my instructor Norris) and me