



Dive(r) of the Month

SCUBA DIVERS – 3 D: Different Diving Dimension

By Loogpla Cowden

In December of 2007 I've declared a "Different Diving Dimension" in Scuba of being trained to work with physically challenged divers, and to offer Discover Scuba Diving to wounded soldiers by Spring of 2008, with an ultimate goal of leading and hosting fun dives / dive trips to include physically challenged divers. .

To make all this possible, I needed to be a SCUBA Instructors. In June 2008 I've accomplished the goal and on to Master Scuba Diver Trainer (MSDT) I've certified 50 Divers, and trained 4 Dive Masters. I am now ready to go to the next step of being certified as Handicapped Scuba Association (HAS) Scuba Instructor. I am in contact with Jim Gatacre, founder of HAS and hired him to Seattle. I've partner up with Demetrio D'Ambrosi, my fellow instructor to bring this program to us in the

Pacific Northwest. The dates are set for Nov. 20, 21, 22, 2009 (Fri – Mon) .

The Handicapped Scuba Association Instructor Training Course (ITC) has been taught to over 2,000 leading Underwater Educator throughout the world since 1986. No other Scuba Training program exists anywhere in the world like this.



It is three education packed days. We will learn what disabilities are, what accessibility is, what HAS training procedures are, and more. During the ten hours of interactive

lectures we will be introduced to thirteen types of disabilities, HAS training procedures and multilevel certification, and special considerations for classroom and in-water training, equipment and accessibility considerations. And for the six hours of confined water training we will be "handicapped" with our legs tied together and with blacked out masks, then put into typically problematic training scenarios to experience what our students will experience. This is a small scope of what is coming our way.

Many of you have expressed interests, and ask me to keep you apprised of the Development. At this time I / we are inviting Instructors and Dive Masters of ESDC to join in the training. If you are interested and want to take advantage of this rare opportunity and at a very reasonable price please let me know.

I can be reached at 206-399-5682 or my e-mail loogplacowden@att.net I hope you will jump aboard.... Space are limited... please don't wait to long.....

Photo of the Month

Lion's mane jellyfish (Cyanea capillata) and plumose anemones (Metridium senile) in Proteau Cove

Photo by Frank Anderson



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Month Meeting

Wednesday June 3
Board Meeting 6:00 PM
(everyone is welcome)
General Meeting 7:00 PM

Shawn O'Donnell's
122 128th St. SE
Everett, Wa
(425)338-5700

Guest Speaker
Dr. Zografos

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President's Column



Things to take on a dive trip

1. DAN insurance
2. Anti-diarrhea meds
3. Pepto-Bismol tablets
4. Packages of gatorade mix
5. Pain killer
6. Last 4 digits of credit cards and the credit company customer service
7. Copy of passport
8. Extra passport photo

What prompts this list? When I first started taking dive vacations to remote locations, I made sure my vaccines were up to date. I made sure that I had a basic med kit, which included a sterile syringe. I exchanged credit card information with my traveling companion and carried a passport photo. But I never needed that stuff, so I got lazy. Then this last trip, I got food poisoning. I lost 10 pounds in three days. I do not recommend this as a weight loss regime. My med kit had sleeping pills, aspirin and band aids. If it wasn't for our pharmacist, Elena, I would have never made it off the boat.

So why is DAN on the top of the list if this was not a diving accident. After several days of extreme pain and other horrid symptoms, I called DAN. DAN put me in touch with a local doctor. The doctor spoke English fluently and had a great phone side personality. Over the phone he listened to my symptoms and asked me questions. Then he prescribed medication and gave me a list of over the counter items to speed my recovery. He told me in precise steps what I needed to do. There was no charge for this service and without the consultation and medication, I would have missed my flight. DAN called afterwards and checked up on me.

The anti-diarrhea meds work but actually delay healing. Your body needs to get rid of all the nasty bugs. But you can't ride a bus or a plane if you can't get out of the bathroom. The doctor informed me that Pepto-Bismol is the first line of defense. The liquid form is better, but since random airport security will confiscate any liquid, carry tablets. Gatorade or Pedialyte is needed to replace your electrolytes and keep you hydrated. Again carrying the powered stuff is easier. Luckily the resort where we stayed the last four days of the trip had paramedics. Every morning I would call them and they would give me two pain pills. Ahh, the wonders of modern medicine. But paramedics aren't doctors and can't prescribe medicine. It wasn't until contacting DAN and talking with the doctor that I knew that I wasn't going to have change my flight plans.

If you don't have DAN insurance get it.

Editor's Column



"Good divers are always learning". That quote from the masthead of Dive Training magazine should describe every diver in the Emerald Sea Dive Club. It is obvious that someone just out of open water training needs to continue learning but it should also be the goal of every "old salt" diver out there. In diving, as in life, there is progression or regression but no stasis.

When you learn something new about diving it can make you a better diver in many ways. Obviously it is good to learn new skills. Improved buoyancy, better navigation skills, better gas management, increased buddy awareness or new ability to operate in low visibility all make you a better diver. Additionally, when you take a class you typically review and refresh old skills which, again, makes you a better diver. When you learn new skills it opens up an opportunity to dive in new environ-

ments, which increases your range of experience and make you a better diver. When you increase the your comfort level in new environments diving becomes more interesting and you dive more often, making you a better diver.

As a diver there are many ways and opportunities to learn. In the old days we just expanded our range, going deeper or into more challenging situations. Another way was to buddy up with a more experienced diver try to learn from them. Those of us who survived learned and became better divers. A safer way to learn is to read. Books, magazine articles and web sites all offer information from which we can learn. The only problem is sorting the wheat from the chaff. Finally we can attend classes, seminars and other presentations. This is probably the most efficient way to learn because we can interact with the teacher and often get hands on experience.

The Emerald Sea Dive Club has a number of divers experienced in a broad range of dive skills. There are also several instructors who are members. Ask their advice and do not be surprised if they recommend taking a course. Remember that as an ESDC member the club will pay part of your tuition for you for some classes. If you have an interest in a particular course you can also approach any of them to put together a course for you.

So what interests you? Do you want to extend your diving range by going deeper, diving at night, diving in currents or in overhead environments. There are classes



that will jump start your knowledge and skill levels in all of these environments. In some cases, such as overhead environments or depths beyond about 80 feet having a knowledgeable person along with you who has been trained to take you there may literally be the difference between becoming a better diver and becoming an acci-

dent statistic. In other situations you may be able to forego the formal course and learn by reading and doing.

Some skills may be learned safely by reading combined with trial and error. Underwater photography is a skill that can be

fered by REEF. Make sure you take advantage of opportunities such as the upcoming pool session to hone your skills and maybe learn better techniques.

Finally, there are those skills that are relatively simple but in which the results of an error are so severe that you are required to show competency before you are allowed to participate. Diving nitrox is an example of such an activity. The knowledge necessary to dive the gas is easy to learn and the safety measures are simple but a mistake can kill. Therefore, you will not be able to fill or rent a Nitrox tank without having taken the appropriate course.

class as soon as Ann finishes her rescue class.

There are many ways to learn and all of them can make you a better diver.

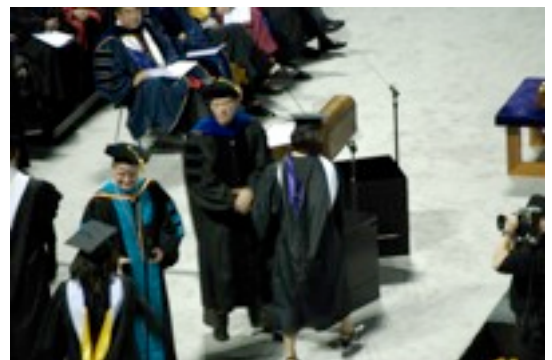
Late Calendar Additions

Loogpla requested that these events be added to the calendar after the calendar page was formatted.

- Sat. Aug. 22 for the HMCS Annapolis Work Party - Dive Host: Loogpla.
- Sun. Aug. 23 Peauto Cove Dive - 2 tanks - Dive Host: Loogpla.

Right now you can join your ESDC buddies in a rescue or divemaster courses. Ann Miller and Matt Knutsen are starting their rescue class on Monday. Also Ann and Jason Miller are starting their divemaster

self taught and, with digital cameras, the learning curve and expense of mistakes is greatly reduced. However, a knowledgeable mentor may speed the process immeasurably and you may have the great thrill of the student surpassing the teacher. Read Steve Berthenier's tips on underwater photography in this issue. Buoyancy skills, of which you learned the rudiments in open water, can be practiced safely on your own. However, buoyancy is one of those tricky skills that once learned seems very easy but some divers never seem to get the knack of on their own and a class such as the peak performance buoyancy can get them over the hump. Take advantage of the free classes on critter ID of-



Passport problems

by Tina Seawell

Continental in Houston refused to let Jerry board the plane to from Houston to Panama City because he has an old style passport and one corner was slightly frayed. The gate agent would not attempt to type the number into his computer. Needless to say, arguing, pleading, and bribery did not change the gate agent's decision. This happened as we were boarding the plane and 6 of 8 people were already seated. Luckily Anya was still with him when this happened or we may have never known what was happening. The decision was made for 7 of us to continue and Jerry would spend the 6 hours before the next flight trying to renew his passport at the Houston passport office. If he couldn't get a passport, he would return to Seattle.

The monetary damages started piling up. Taxi rides to and from the passport office \$45 each way. Time constraints prevented using bus and/or shuttle services. Bad passport photos \$20. A new passport, \$160.00. The passport bureaucrat asks Jerry how his passport had achieved it's less than pristine condition. His answer, it got wet. And then they made him sign a paper stating that when he received the passport, it wasn't in that condition! Arriving in Panama there was a \$25.00 taxi ride to the Panama City bus terminal and a \$7 bus ticket to rejoin the group in Santiago, and a \$3 dollar taxi to the motel. After \$305 plus a lot of mental aggravation, think bureaucrats and airline schedules, Jerry caught up with us at 2 am that night.

And if you think some Continental gate agent was playing at puffed up border guard with sand in his shorts, not so. While at the passport office, Jerry met another gentleman who had also been refused boarding for the same reason. The gentleman was a Continental manager. Another interesting fact, Jerry had been to Panama through Houston in January with no problems.

Moral of the story. Buy one of those geeky protector pockets, don't put your passport in your back pocket, and whatever you do, don't pee, I mean sweat, on the thing.

(It may have been a little more than slightly frayed - ed.)

Sea Change screened at SIFF

by Jill Keeler

The Seattle International Film Festival is screening Sea Change on June 1,2009 at the Egyptian Theatre at 7:00 PM and at the Kirkland Performance Center on June 2 at 4:00 PM.

Sea Change is a documentary film directed by Barbara Ettinger that explores the causes and threats of ocean acidification. We've heard great things about this movie -- that it is hopeful and engaging as it examines the problem of ocean acidification. Visit <http://www.seachange.net/> for more info on the film.

Check out the Seattle International Film Festival website for more information on how to purchase tickets:

<http://www.siff.net/festival/film/detail.aspx?id=28992&FID=123>

New Members and Guests

by Jill Keeler

New member Polly Peterson joins the Emerald Sea Dive Club after her open water training through Bubbles Below with instructor Jerry Dollar. Polly came to the meeting with her ESDC membership application filled out and before meeting most of us, she must really trust her dive instructor. She is looking to continue her diving experiences here in the Pacific NW and is interested in the big buddy program.

John and Tammy Crane tried to sneak in without being recognized but that's the problem with our group we can spot the unfamiliar face in the crowd. I believe they are new to the area. John has lots of cold water diving experience which includes an ice diving certification obtained in Wisconsin. Tammy on the other had sticks with warm water diving.

Richmond Beach Walk, Critter Collection

by Darlene Ripley



The following dates are available for collecting adorable little critters for families to enjoy topside.

If you would like to sponsor one of the below weekends please let Darlene dripley1@mindspring.com know.

There we will NOT be a truck available on any of the below dates so all gear will have to be schlepped by divers and their caddies. Thank you.

- Sat. June 6 10 am-1 pm
- Sun. June 7 10 am-1:30 pm
- Sat. June 20 - 9 am-12 pm
- Sun. June 21 10 am-1 pm
- Mon. June 22 10 am - 1 pm
- Tues. June 23 10 am-2 pm
- Sun. July 5 10 am-1 pm
- Sun. July 19 9 am-11 am
- Mon. July 20 9:30 am-12:30 pm
- Tues. July 21 10 am-1:30 pm



Underwater photo tips and BS

by Steve Berthenier

Hey All. My name is Steve and I am an underwater photo addict. It has been 2 dives without my camera.....Aarrgh. How many people tried taking pictures Memorial Day weekend? Yeah, tons of fun. With my housing in the shop and the viz so great I decided to not take the camera for Sat. and Sun. dives. Well, as many of you may notice, if you do not take the camera you usually see something really cool! Like a 5 mm sized Spiny Lumpsucker trying to swim in the current.

A good thing to do is you see something too small to figure out so you follow the Laurel school of thought..... If don't know what it is, take a picture and figure it out later. I have managed to get a couple of cool things working this way. Sometimes I get frustrated as well, because I only took one picture. When taking underwater pictures....take ALOT.....from different angles.....of the same thing. The film is free and you should have way more than 36 pictures. Memory cards are cheap. I know for me a 4 GB compact flash gives me over 300 raw shots and tons of high quality JPG. Ain't digital great.

When I was in Panama, warm water, I found myself falling into the bad habit of "I can still see my buddy so we are good" habit. On one dive I noticed pretty much all of the people using cameras were doing this. So, how do I get my head out of my nether region orifice? I started trying to remember to look up every 3 to 4 shots. Also, I found an added bonus. By pulling my head out of the photo and looking around then going back to the photo it allowed me to think/see the photo from another view, or refresh what I was trying to do. Oh yeah baby, 2 for 1 return.....Good buddy and Good photos!

Here is another idea. Before you take that first shot, as part of your positioning/setup, CHECK your AIR! aaaand during your multiple looks for your buddy while you are harras.....I mean composing your shots. Anybody notice how at the end of the dive, when you find THE critter find, you know you have enough air800psi.....for just one quick shot. 10 shots, 5 minutes and 400psi later. Oh crap, you are still at 30 feet with 400 psi left and you went into deco! Fun times Baby!

This is a good spot to quote something I read the other day. It was from Ty Sawyer, editor of Sport Diver Magazine, in an article in Digital Photo Pro (May/June). "When you shoot underwater, you have limited time, subject matter that rarely sits still, let alone cooperates, and exposure that changes from moment to moment. It's a place where you have to constantly wrangle light, composition, subject and depth, and then find a way to be creative. I have seen many a famous professional wildlife or travel photographer try to shoot underwater with disastrous results. It's perhaps the most difficult corner of our natural world in which to try to make great images, constantly challenging on equipment and skills." I quote this for all of us to keep in mind the next time we see someone else's great shot.

Another thing I read eons ago.....stop that giggling! I am not that old! A pro once said the big differences between pros and us are: They will take 100 pictures of one thing, JUST to get one GREAT shot. That used to be a problem for film shooters. Now we have

digital and more pictures with us every dive. You don't have to shoot just one subject every dive. But, if you want to try something different, go out into the eel grass, just the eel grass, and do an entire dive shooting nothing but Brooding Anemone. Who knows, since you are looking so hard at the eel grass AND your buddy is soooooo BORED that they are looking at anything in the grass. You may just notice the Skeleton Shrimp or maybe this critter..... We were coming back in through the eel grass and Alki and 64th and the grass moved and one of these critters took off. They like to hang out on the bottom side of the grass. You can go to one place and shoot nothing but hermits.....that's Crabs.....no, I mean Hermit Crabs. Try getting a good shot of the White Plumous anemone without it getting blown out.

Last thing for now. What you thought I wouldn't opionate on you again.....giggle.....snicker. Anyway, for point and shooters or beginning DSLR's. Get yourself an external strobe as soon as you can. If you want to try one get the slave package and we will see if we can get one of my strobes to work. You will need a bracket/tray to mount the camera and strobe to. Providing an external light source will make a big difference up here in the Northwest. How many of you have driven in a snow storm? What happens when you turn your high beams on? You know? Because all of the light, headlights, are pointing in the same direction and on the same plane as your eyes. So all that light is reflected directly back at you. Want to try something? Common it won't hurt. In this crappy viz, try lighting some thing with your light. Then turn off your dive light and have your buddy light the same thing from the side. See any difference? That is what an external strobe can do for you. Well gotta go.

TGIF 2009 Dive & Dine #5 Review

Mukilteo T-Dock

May 15th, 2009

By Andy Norton

Who could have known we would witness such delights?? Arriving right on time at 6:00 PM after driving in the lightest Friday rush-hour traffic I'd seen in years, Pam and I were greeted by sunshine, 80- degree air temperature and six of your fellow ESDC divers for what would prove to be the Puget Sound dive of a lifetime!

Gearing up, we knew we were in for a treat as other divers exited the water raving about 100-foot visibility and playful gray whales using their noses to push around the Geodome like some giant soccer ball.

The surface was like glass as we eagerly entered, only to be offered rides by said whales as they traversed back and forth along the shoreline. What a treat, and it was definitely better than any dive propulsion vehicle ever could be! Our amazement continued as we finally descended near the pilings and were surprised to see a school of six gills lounging on the bottom. They just accepted us as one of them until finally deciding to swim on. It was like Dances With Wolves! They gracefully swam over our heads in a formation I have only ever seen in photos of schooling hammerheads! Wow, how much better can it get?? Wouldn't you know it, then along came a mated pair of wolf eels! I was in awe as they gracefully swirled around Pam, making it look like that goofy Olympic event of Ribbon Dancing. Of course, this was way cooler! They finally swam out of view and we both gave them a perfect 10. Of course, the

Russian judge only gave them a 7. Just then, my eye was drawn to a broad piece of seaweed lying on the bottom nearby. Now I'd never seen one before, but I recognized in an instant that this thing was covered with 8 spiny lumpsuckers! We couldn't believe it when they started playing leapfrog with each other like some miniature version of a chorus line. This went on for at least a minute before a curious giant pacific octopus finally came along and put a stop to it. With a lumpsucker riding on each arm, the GPO then silently slipped downhill and back to the deep. I swear the GPO saluted us and waved as it left. We both were thrilled beyond words and in need of ending the dive before running out of air thanks to our excitement! I'm not sure what the others saw. And then, I woke up.

Truth be told, it was one of those nights where nature conspired against us. Despite the beautiful sunshine and warm air, a very strong wind was blowing in towards shore with whitecaps galore and waves about 5 feet high. It was obvious that the visibility was pretty bad, which was confirmed by Skip and Marty upon exiting from their first dive. Sadly, there would be no May TGIF dive. By unanimous decision, the group disbanded and relocated up the hill to the Tin Fish, where everyone enjoyed sunset on the patio along with some excellent food and drink. Enjoying everyone's company, I don't believe anyone was disappointed about thumbing the dive!

As is customary with this club, eating was a very acceptable alternative. Joining us for this fifth TGIF gathering were Skip Stacy, Marty Leonard, Glenn Bulat, Sabine Fischer, Jill Keeler, Adria Ali, our daughter Victoria and my dad, who was visiting from MN. Thanks for joining us, and we hope everyone had a great evening!

Okay, so what are you doing next month?? We really do love Pacific Northwest diving. Honest! Join us on Friday, June 12th, at the Bruce Higgins Underwater Trails - aka, Edmonds Underwater Park. As always, we'll meet at 6:00 PM and splash when ready. And you know we're gonna find somewhere good to eat afterwards, so bring your appetite! ☺
Andy & Pam

Annapolis Artificial Reef Project

by Frank Andersen



Recommendation - when you go through Canadian border control and the officer asks you why you're coming into Canada, don't tell

him you're going to help a group of divers scuttle a destroyer. Anyway, after twenty more questions he finally accepted the notion that I was just volunteering in a good project (at least I wasn't the only one - Jeff had a similar experience) - next time I'll just tell him I'm going diving. So began our weekend trip to Vancouver to work on the HMCS Annapolis with the



Artificial Reef Society of British Columbia (ARSBC). Loogpla has organized several club trips to help on the project, but this was my first chance to go. Loogpla, John, Jeff Dickman, Jerad Hollerbach, Ed McNichol, Lauri DeVore and Barb [?last name] and I joined a



group from Vancouver to continue the work of stripping the Annapolis so it can be sunk in the Howe Sound as an artificial reef and dive project.



Saturday morning Sea Dragon and Adventure II took us on a 45 minute boat ride from Horseshoe Bay up into Howe Sound to the Annapolis. It is a 371 foot destroyer that was decommissioned in 1998 and purchased by the ARSBC. Work has been progressing throughout the year to strip out all of the ducting, insulation and other materials to make

her environmentally safe to sink. Our job this weekend was largely to carry off bags of insulation and trash that had been accumulating. About 20 volunteers in all were there and set up a chain gang to hand off something like 600 garbage bags of trash. Lauri, Barb and Ed sweated it out in the semi-trailer stacking garbage bags. By lunch the bags were nearly all gone and the trailer nearly full and we broke for hamburgers and hot dogs.

The afternoon slowed down with most of us stripping insulation off ductwork (30 years of paint sure makes a tough coat to cut through) or pulling screws and bolts (the aluminum ductwork has higher sal-

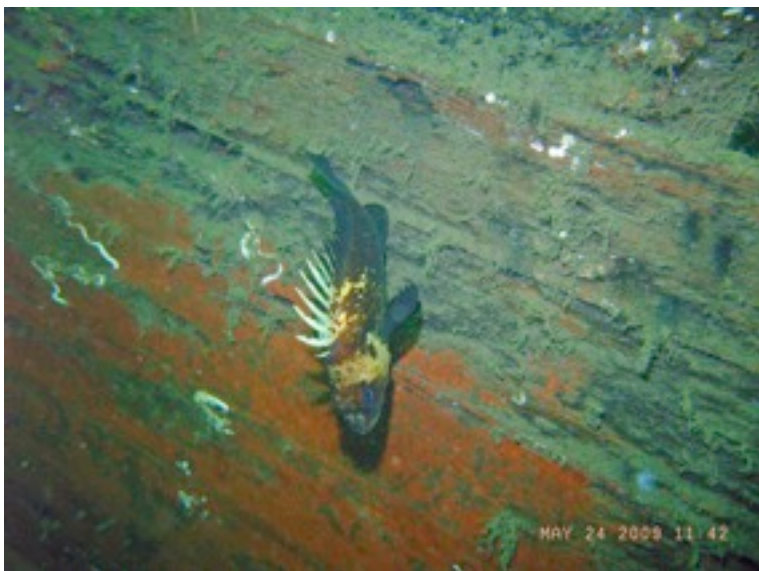
vage value if it's "clean"). The day finished off with a thank you and pin and brass bolt from the engine room. By 4:30 we were on the boats and headed back in (a little slower because Sea Dragon has engine trouble. Of course, Ed had moved to the Sea Dragon to get back on the road quicker – sorry, Ed!) Then it was back to the hotel and badly needed showers and a great dinner at Earl's. If you go, take Loogpla's advice and save plenty of room for dessert!

It was a great experience, fun to meet divers from Vancouver and hear some of the history of the Annapolis (one of the volunteers served on her for seven years). Of course, it will also be cool to have my name on the plaque that will go on the ship before she's sunk. Find out more about ARSBC and the Annapolis at their website (www.artificialreef.bc.ca). Definitely sign up if there's another weekend work party – just don't tell the border officer the real reason that you're going to Canada.

Porteau Cove Dive Report

Day two of my weekend in Vancouver was a trip up the Howe Sound to Porteau Cove. Loogpla, John and Ed dove Porteau Cove on Friday, before the Annapolis work party and gave us glowing reports (except for the long swim). Porteau Cove is a diver's park, not as extensive as Bruce Higgins, but still very nice. There are 4 wrecks, several artificial structures and reefs and lots of interesting life.

Loogpla, John, Laurie, Barb, Jeff, Jerad and I met up at the park (Ed left Saturday saying something about yardwork). Our first dive was to the Nakaya, the furthest structure. It's a 40 m. wood-hulled WWII era minesweeper that was scuttled in the late 80's. A long surface swim out (over 200 yards), although better Sunday than Fri-



day because we splashed at low tide. The buoy chain took us right down to the stern. Poor vis for the first 30 feet (fresh water and silt from the Squamish River) and then it opens up to about 25 feet of visibility. Jerad, Loogpla and I went down and around the bow at 92 fsw so Jerad could do his deep dive for Advanced Open Water (quick – what's 3 x 236? Jerad got it right at 90 fsw; Jeff and I missed it on dry land). The hull is deteriorating badly, but very interesting. Lots of rockfish, anemones, flounder, brittle stars. I'm still

too wow'd just to be diving to keep track of it all.

Back on shore a potluck lunch in the sunshine (not a cloud to be seen Saturday or Sunday). By the way, is this the Emerald Sea Dining Club or Dive Club – it seems we eat as much as we dive. Special thanks to Loogpla to see that we had plenty of energy for the second dive.

Second dive started out on the Granthall, a 28 m. steel-hulled tugboat that was sunk in 1992 after its superstructure was removed. Easier swim (but still a hundred yards or so) and slightly less visibility (15-20 ft). The Granthall is at about 45 fsw. Two large Lion's Mane Jellies stuck in the plumose anemones was the most interesting sight. Several Decorator Crabs (I saw my first last month and have been wondering what it was), hydroids and nudibranchs. A short way west of the Granthall is the "Jungle Gyn", a set of steel girders. Jeff and I turned back for shore (two heavy breathers) and the rest of the group went on around the tire reef.

There are plenty more things to see – Centennial III is a steel dredge tender and a ferrocement sailboat hull are nearby plus an extensive reef system.

The park is well marked with buoys and an excellent dive map online (just Google "Porteau Cove BC"). The park has lots of parking space (\$3 for all day parking), restrooms, picnic tables and diver shower. There are concrete steps down to the beach, which has a shallow slope. There was reportedly some chop on Friday, but very calm on Sunday with minimal current. From what we heard visibility is highly variable – we were lucky and got better than average. This is definitely a place to come back to several times again.

Porteau Cove Friday

by Ed McNichols

On Friday, May 22, John Hynd, Loogpla Cowden and I headed to British Columbia for a weekend of diving and volunteering on the Annapolis. The three of us took advantage of having a free day to get some diving in before the rest of the crew showed up.

We had lunch en route (of course) and went straight to Porteau Cove. Loogpla had a detailed map of the site, and had gotten some info from Bob Bailey. She briefed the dive and how we planned to swim to the furthest buoy to dive the wreck of the Nakaya. John and I examined the map, looked out at the furthest buoy. We then checked the map several more times to confirm that we really were going to have to swim that far!

We geared up and buddy checked, then slipped in to the water for "the swim". Twenty quick minutes later, we arrived at the buoy. We dropped and followed the line through some low viz conditions. At about 30 feet, we came out of the muck and into 25-30 feet of great visibility. We followed the line to the deck of the Nakaya at about 60fsw, accompanied by some rockfish. We examined the deck for a bit, getting the lay of the land, and then we dropped over the port side to the down slope side of the wreck.

The wreck is about 90 feet long and probably 30 feet tall. We hit 100' of depth as we followed the port side towards the bow. The side of the wreck was brimming with life and seemed to run forever. John, Loogpla and I came to the upslope side (starboard) of the wreck to discover the bottom covered with thousands of brittlestars. We then followed the starboard side towards the stern, peeking in holes along the side.

We then followed our exit heading back, hitting the concrete pillars on the way. We popped right at our exit point and headed in for a nice sunny surface interval. In true Emerald Sea style, we enjoyed a mini-feast as we off-gassed. After a lengthy surface interval (aka dinner!), we geared up to hit the artificial reefs.

We made our entry after a good buddy check and swam to the much closer drop buoy. We dropped to the bottom and explored the reef. I led and followed a heading towards the next buoy. John was getting lots of good pictures, as there was life aplenty here. The viz was not as good as the previous dive, due I'm sure to our much shallower depth.

We found some smaller wrecks, and a cool H structure made from I-beams. I then discovered a toilet, which Loogpla insisted I sit on for



a photo opportunity. Trust me – it's very tricky to do in full scuba gear. Loogpla then tried to do it herself, which was the single funniest thing I have ever seen underwater. She flailed and struggled mightily, but could not bring herself to sit on that darned toilet. I don't think John was able to get a picture of it, but if he did I have the perfect spot in my office for that shot!

After exploring for a while, we were at our turn pressure and headed back. Viz got worse as we went shallower, but we stuck to our heading and came up right where we wanted to be.

We were able to get our gear and get cleaned up just in time to head towards North Vancouver and connect with the other club members just arriving. It was fun getting these 2 dives in on a Friday in advance of the Annapolis work party on Saturday.

Lost Coast Excursions, Coiba Panama, April 2009

by Tina Seawell

Isla Coiba, Panama is in the Coiba National Park, a UNESCO world heritage site covering over 430,000 acres, and is managed by the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. This pristine island is surrounded by many small islands, islets, and underwater pinnacles. The waters support a great amount of biodiversity and when diving there is the potential to see large pelagics. It is not easy diving, there are sudden currents and unpredictable surges, thermoclines (71° – 85°) that mix vertically as well as horizontally, and viz that will be 50 feet on one side of a ridge and 10 feet on the other side. These conditions result from the mixing of deep water with the top layer and is the reason for the variety and the pelagics.

Getting to Coiba takes patience. After flying into Panama City, a two leg trip from Seattle via Houston, LA, or Miami, you have to get to the western side of Panama. This involves at least a five hour bus ride to Puerto Mutis. Puerto Mutis is a fishing village at the end of the road. It is a pleasant place along the river with several restaurants. While waiting for transfer from boat to shuttle, I purchased a cup of coffee for 25 cents. Guests and luggage are put in a pair of 8-10 person skiffs for the 15 minute ride on the river delta to the Lost Coast Explorer. Once on the boat, it is a 2 to 3 hour boat ride to Coiba. This ride was broken up by stopping along the way for a couple of obligatory check out dives.

Diving

There were 11 divers total and we were divided between two skiffs. You did a back roll off the skiff and either dropped to the bottom or hung on the anchor line waiting for your buddy. If the current was ripping, you usually went down the anchor line, then dove the lee side of the pinnacle. The configuration of the skiffs, the small size and depth of the pinnacles, and the visibility made it difficult for everyone to roll at once and go like hell to the bottom. Usually you could not see the top of the pinnacle from the surface, with no target it is too easy to get blown into the blue.

“You puts your money down and you takes your chances.” This is especially true of diving conditions. Unfortunately the rainy season had arrived early and visibility was affected by the storm surge and a top layer of leaves and debris created by the winds and rain. It was also affected by swells that had crossed the Pacific after a New Zealand storm. These caused mixing of the water layers, surges, and unusual currents. Most dives had 20 to 30 foot visibility, with some as low 10 feet and one or two at 50 feet.

My favorite dive of the trip was the Hannibal Bank, this is a plateau that rises 3000 feet from the ocean floor, topping out at 140 feet deep. It is covered with fish. This is blue water diving at it's best. A anchor line was dropped and left hanging just above the bottom. You were able to maintain reference by keeping the anchor line in your vision. It was like diving a thin white wall. Currents were not a problem, because you and the boat drift relative to the water. Before getting in we saw a marlin chasing a fish along the surface. We had high hopes, but only Anya saw a hammerhead. Though Steve was in heaven with all the pelagic jellyfish, and there were unusual free-floating tunicates.

Usually the pinnacle dives started between 40 and 90 feet. Hanging on the anchor line for a safety stop was fine unless the current was

trying to blow you to Asia. Luckily the ladders on the boats had staggered steps and were very easy to climb. One time it was the camera between my legs and both hands on the line. I wished then

algae. Moray eels were spotted on almost every dive, we quit pointing out the green ones and were only excited about the uncommon ones, like the zebra moray. We found several octopus, who weren't



I had packed a Jon line. Several times we regrouped at the end of a dive and did mid-water ascents as a group. In my opinion these were much easier and safer. The skiff followed and easily picked everyone up. No straining of arm muscles or kicking like crazy for the tag line, no bouncing up and down on the ladder. And I got to practice mid-water safety stops, which are my nemesis, I'm always drifting plus or minus two feet. But I discovered that if I tried taking pictures during the mid-waters, I could stay spot on. I think I'm trying too hard.

Every dive with a sandy spot had its resident group of white tipped reef sharks. These were nervous sharks, you could spend an entire dive lying on the bottom, elbow crawling toward them, but they never got comfortable, the nervous nelly's would take off, make a circle, see you, make another circle. Never did get a decent closeup. If you disturbed them at the beginning of the dive, at least one would circle you the entire dive, just out of camera range of course.

The best find were two huge green frog fish on a single dive. On that dive a turtle was keeping a eye on me, making sure I stayed out of camera distance. It didn't see the divers hanging on the anchor line. The turtle plowed right into Manny, the dive master for the skiff. One another dive John found a seahorse and there was a bright yellow frog fish setting on a brown rock. I found a nudibranch. Here I am with a wide angle lens and I'm looking for nudibranchs. These are not flamboyant nudibranchs, they are colorful, but they're very tiny and blend very well the encrusting coral and

very friendly or curious, not a bit like our lovely GPO. There were not a lot of sponges and gorgonian coral, and they were small compared to the Caribbean. The fish looked a lot like Caribbean fish, but the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean have been separated for 3 million years, long enough to see many similar but distinct species, for example, the Caribbean has the Queen Angel fish and the Pacific has the King angelfish.

The diving operation ran very smoothly and the diving was not dictated by the kitchen or resort as with many large, land based operations. The boat's new compressor had failed after just 250 fills, the week before we got there. The captain had rented a compressor, and made sure we had air, no small feat in a remote location. I really felt for the DM's, the rental compressor was slow, and they were often up until after midnight filling tanks. Everyday was a 3 tank day. A few people would take the afternoon dive off, and several people would do 2 afternoon dives or a night dive for 4 tank days. Nitrox was unavailable, due to the difficulty of procuring oxygen. My only concern with the diving operation were that the skiffs were often out of radio contact with the mother ship and with each other. If someone had problems or got blown off, the skiff operator would have to make the decision to attend to the one person or to the rest of the group, a potentially dangerous situation. The diving requires safety sausage, a dive alert, and lots of situational awareness. I would not recommend it to anyone who has not taken a rescue course.

Other activities

There are lots of other activities besides diving. You can visit Tito the fat crocodile who lives at the ranger station. The cook would give you scraps and the boat would run you over to the station and

clean and the shower heads tall enough for our big guys, the tallest was 6'3". The main deck cabins had upper and lower bunks and adequate room. The upper deck cabins left a bit to be desired, the lower bunk folded out into a double bed, which would have been



one of the rangers would call Tito like calling a dog and toss him the scraps. He was so fat, he could barely fight off the small black buzzards stealing his scraps. Someone took a photo of Tito eating watermelon that looks gruesome, like he had just finished off a small chicken. You can hike in the rain forest and look for monkey's and macaws. Coiba has one of the last populations of Scarlet Macaw's. It is a bird watchers paradise. You can go fishing, we saw lots of sport fishing boats. There is a lagoon that is about 5 feet deep during low tide that is a haven for turtles and eagle rays. I snorkeled the lagoon twice, both times I saw turtles and rays from the boat, but was unable to get a good photo, the water was too murky. The spotter on the boat would say, "there just 20 feet in front of you" and I couldn't see it underwater. But I saw a school of small pufferfish in the lagoon. I have never seen schooling behavior in pufferfish before.

The Boat

Now to the disappointing parts, I can deal with unexpected diving conditions and I got bored with Belize, where after three days you could list what you would see on a dive, and all the dive site maps look the same. The diving at Coiba has great possibilities, we were there the wrong week. The Lost Coast Explorer is an old fishing trawler and rides the seas very well, but slowly. The rooms were

nice, if I could have gotten the bathroom door open far enough. I got every good at doing a Houdini each time I wanted to sit on the throne or take a shower. If I could have figured out how to refold the thing to get in out of the way it would have been OK. When I had my bathing suit on, I opted for the fish's bathroom. Bathroom's were all shared between two cabins. There was no stowage under the bunks, and no cabinets for clothes, we ended up using the upper bunk as a closet. All excess luggage had to be stowed in the rec room one level below deck, two decks down.

Reports from our scout in January had bragged on the wonderful food. Well, they changed from a chef to a cook. Scrambled or fried eggs, toast, cereal, and fruit in the morning, spaghetti for lunch, grilled chicken or pork chops for dinner, with a side of starch and a bit of salad. No wonderful soups after a dive, only sliced watermelon, you can only eat so much watermelon. The cook was so unimaginative that because several guests said they would not eat fish, he didn't put any fish on the grill. No coconut, we were surrounded by coconut palms and we didn't get coconut milk, fresh coconut, or grilled coconut. I asked once and was told that the coconut man was not on board. I am still puzzling over that answer. And it's the first time that I have been to Central American and not had beans or plantains.

Transportation

But the most aggravating was the transportation problems. On the web site they claim it is a 3.5 hour ride from Panama City to Santiago, that's only true if everything goes right. On arrival, the plan was to pick us up at the airport and take us to Santiago and overnight in a hotel there. We were picked up at the airport at about 2:30, minus one of the group, who had passport problems and had to take the next flight. We were told that he would be taken care of. Around five we stopped at a great Panamanian restaurant for dinner. Around 6:30, back on the road, but still not in Santiago, we were told that the charge for shuttling our missing person would be \$250. We were fuming. We should have been told this at the airport, we would have gone out to eat and waited for him. Maybe even spent the night at the nice airport hotel. Anyway, we worked through this, only to discover after the bags were unloaded that we were at the wrong hotel. After reloading the bags, we were driven to the correct hotel. The only thing I can say about this hotel was that it did have warm water. The next morning the shuttle took us to a nice restaurant in a good hotel for breakfast. Why weren't we at

Coming back, one shuttle was planned to bring the next group of guests directly from the airport to the Puerto Mutis and then we would take that shuttle to the airport. This shuttle was delayed. Here we are with four people who have 2 o'clock flights waiting for a shuttle at 9 am. Lost Coast hired a commuter bus from it's normal route to take us to the airport. By the time we were loaded at 9:30, if anything went wrong at all, people would miss their flight. One bathroom stop, an accident, a delay at the Bridge of Americas, and a flood in Panama City (no freeway, you have to get right in the middle of it) and we arrived at the airport at 1:25. Continental closes their counter 1 hour before flights. Four people missed their flight and had to reschedule and get a hotel room. The big problem here is there is no slack time built into the schedule. No one should have been told that they could catch the 2pm flight.

Conclusion

I fell in love with the remote location, the biodiversity, and enjoyed the diving very much. I would very much like to return, but will not unless the radio's have a stronger signal, I am sure there is a good



this hotel? Then after reaching the end of the road, taking the skiff, and getting on the boat, we found out that we should be there two hours earlier and they had breakfast planned on the boat. There was a bit of miscommunication going on here.

chef, and the transportation problems are solved. This is a 2.5 star operation in a great location that has the potential to be a 4 star diving destination.

Laguna Beach Resort

by Jerry Dollar

I really became a diver in the cold waters of the Pacific Northwest. By 2007 I had been diving for over 20 years in Puget Sound and nearly all of my 1700 logged dives were cold water dives. Oh, I had visited Florida and North Carolina and even Hawaii but I was always anxious to get home to the cool water of our Emerald Sea.

Then, in March of 2007, I accompanied a group of divers to Laguna Beach resort on the island of Utila. We spent a week diving in the 80 plus degree waters of the Caribbean and I was hooked. In the next 6 days I made 18 dives on reefs like I had seen only in pictures. We saw turtles, sharks, eels, frog fish, sea horses, hard coral, soft coral, flamingo tongues and more colors of fish than I knew existed. When I returned to our typical March grey overcast and gloom I was already plotting a return.

I am leading a return trip to through Bubbles Below. We will be departing just before midnight on October 16 and returning on Saturday October 24. I would like to invite you to join me and put a little tropical color in your fall.



The island of Utila borders on the Mesoamerican barrier reef system, (the 2nd largest reef in the world after the Australian Great Barrier Reef), We will be staying at Laguna Beach Resort, an exclusive diving, fish-

ing, and beach get away, located on Utila, the smallest and most unspoiled of the Bay Islands of Honduras.

The resort is set on a palm fringed peninsula dividing a tranquil mangrove lagoon and the warm Caribbean Sea. The bungalow style accommodations are nestled on the lagoons edge, for a perfect view of Utila's tropical sunset.



The price includes 8 days and 6 nights at Laguna Beach resort, 3 boat dives per day for 6 days, unlimited shore diving, transportation from San Pedro Sula to the resort, airport transfers from Bubbles Below to Seatac, a bon voyage party and a twenty percent discount on selected PADI continuing education courses and more. For ESDC members, I will offer an additional ten percent discount on those continuing education classes as well as a free Nitrox class (sorry, you still have to buy the books).

For more information contact me at gmdollar@verizon.net or just see Bud at Bubbles Below and give him your \$300 deposit. Oh, and as if it matters, the cost of a week in paradise is only \$1699.

Instructors' Calendar

There are several instructors who are ESDC members. If they submit their class schedules to me I will publish them in the calendar.

Class	Start Date	Instructor
Open Water	June 1	Cowden
Rescue	June 1	Dollar
Advanced	June 2	Dollar
Open Water	June 22	Hotchkiss
Advanced	June 23	Cowden
Dive Master	June	Dollar
Deep	July 7	Dollar
Advanced	July 14	Hotchkiss
Wreck	August 3	Dollar
Open Water	Sept 21	Dollar
Marine ID	Sept. 29	LeFever
Open Water	October 5	Cowden
Advanced	October 6	Dollar
Open Water	Oct. 26	Hotchkiss
Advanced	Oct. 27	Cowden
Navigation	Nov. 7	Cowden
Advanced	Nov. 17	Hotchkiss

Instructor contact information:

Loogpla Cowden 206-399-5682 loogplacowden@att.net
 Gerald Dollar 425-337-9426 gmdollar@verizon.net
 Steve Hotchkiss 425-205-3342 skhotchkiss@hotmail.com
 Laurel LaFever 425-641-1575 llafever@comcast.net

Note: Laurel is not an ESDC member but he donates NW Marine ID classes to the club every year.

Dive and Event Calendar

Date	Event	Time	Location	Sponsor
6/2/09	BHUT after work dive		Edmonds UW Park	John Hynd 425-890-3952
6/3/09	Club Meeting	7:00 PM	Shawn O'Donnells	President@emeraldseadiveclub.org
6/7/09	Sund Rock Dive and BBQ (3 tank)		Hood Canal	Pam & Loogpla loogplacowden@att.net
6/7/09	Cove 3 dive	9:00 AM	Seacrest Cove 3	Ed McNichol ed@mcnichol.com
6/12/09	TGIF dive and Dinner	6:00 PM	Edmonds UW Park	Andy and Pam andy_norton@comcast.net
6/14/09	Pool Refresher	10 to noon	West Coast Aquatics	Pam Norton pam_norton@comcast.net
6/14/09	Annapolis Work Party		Vancouver, BC	Bob Bailey baileyrj@comcast.net
6/28/09	Keiystone jetty and Langley tire reef		Whidbey Island	Loogpla loogplacowden@att.net
7/16-7/19	Salt Creek Camp and Dive		Salt Creek State Pk	Pam and Andy andy_norton@comcast.net
7/17-7/18	Dive Around the Clock		Redondo	www.divearoundtheclock.com
7/19/09	Cove 3 dive	9:00 AM	Seacrest cove 3	Ed McNichol ed@mcnichol.com
8/23/09	Cove 3 dive	9:00 AM	Seacrest cove 3	Ed McNichol ed@mcnichol.com
9/29/09	Fishing Pier Clean-up		Edmonds Marina	Fran Murray scubaqram_590@hotmail.com
10/17/09	Laguna Beach Resort		Utila, Honduras	Jerry Dollar gmdollar@verizon.net
03/2010	Bonaire		Bonaire	Pam Norton pam_norton@comcast.net

Divers on the Loose

Greg Becvar	360-659-2853	tridoxia@yahoo.com
Skip Stacy	425-775-2410	skipstacy@comcast.net
Sean Barker	425-351-6850	SeanhBarker@comcast.net

If you would like to be a loose diver contact the editor at gmdollar@gmail.net.

Membership Information

Member Benefits

Win \$50—
You can be eligible to win \$50 up to four times a year. Just host a club dive, submit a story, article or information to the newsletter or sign up a new member and you will automatically be entered in our quarterly drawing for \$50.

Earn a \$15 reward—
Take a continuing education class that furthers your general dive experience (Advanced, Rescue or Divemaster) and Emerald Sea Dive Club will reward you with a check for \$15. You may receive a check for only one class per calendar year.

Communicate with your Friends—
Join the One List and you can communicate with other Emerald Sea Dive Club members. Plan dives, ask for advice, find dive buddies or plot the overthrow of the free world, the choice is yours.

To join go to :
www.groups.yahoo.com/group/ESDClist then click on "Join this Group" or contact Andy Norton at andy_norton@comcast.net

Membership Dues

Annual Dues are \$30 for a single membership or \$47 for a family membership,

Contact Us

Visit our web site:
www.emeraldseadiveclub.org
Write us: Emerald Sea Dive Club
PO Box 73
Edmonds, WA 98020
Visit our group page at:
www.groups.yahoo.com/group/ESDClist
Call or email our board members
Come to a meeting at:
Shawn O'Donnell's on the first Wednesday of the Month



Contact List

Who do I contact about:	
not receiving my newsletter	NewsletterEditor@emeraldseadiveclub.org
a guest speaker	VicePresident@emeraldseadiveclub.org
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an idea for the web site	Webmaster1@emeraldseadiveclub.org
a complaint about the club	President@emeraldseadiveclub.org
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getting a dive buddy	BigBuddyCoordinator@emeraldseadiveclub.org
becoming a board member	any board member listed
help planning or hosting a dive	BigBuddyCoordinator@emeraldseadiveclub.org
getting listed as a Diver on the Loose	NewsletterEditor@emeraldseadiveclub.org

Please contact the editor at gmdollar@gmail.com about additions, deletions or corrections to the Contact List.

2009 ESDC Board Members

President	Tina Seawell	President@emeraldseadiveclub.org
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Secretary	Adria Ali	Secretary@emeraldseadiveclub.org
Treasurer	Sabine Fischer	Treasurer@emeraldseadiveclub.org
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	Andy Norton	Webmaster2@emeraldseadiveclub.org
Greeter	Jill Keeler	Greeter@emeraldseadiveclub.org
Big Buddy Coordinator	Wendy Drucker	BigBuddyCoordinator@emeraldseadiveclub.org

Club Notices

Photo Contest Announced

The 2010 Emerald Sea Dive Club photo contest will begin on June 3. See the web site or talk to Glen at the meeting for details.

June Meeting

The Month Emerald Sea Dive Club Meeting will be Wednesday March 4th at Shawn O'Donnell's in Everett. The speaker this month is Greg Becvar's chiropractor, Dr. Zografos. The board meeting begins at 6:00 PM (all members are welcome). The general meeting begins at 7:00 PM.

Directions to Meeting

Shawn O'Donnell's is at 122 128th St. in Everett. From I-5 head east on 128th St (Exit 186). Shawn O'Donnell's is on the right less than a block from the freeway.

