



UNDERCURRENTS

Newsletter of the Bluegrass Dive Club / www.bluegrassdiveclub.com

February 2011

Volume 41, Number 2

February's Club Meeting

Date: Tuesday, February 8th
Time: 7:30-PM (business)
 Social at 7
Location: The Racquet Club
 3900 Crosby Rd.
Program: Cave Diving by Ed Gabe

President's Message

By Rebecca Singer



....and winter keeps on coming. For those of you who also enjoy winter sports such as skiing, this must be a great time of year for you. For the rest of us, we will continue to dream of palm trees, sand between our toes, and coral reefs. Luckily, about 18 members of our club will be enjoying just that in Fiji in early February. It's a perfect time to get away! If you aren't lucky enough to be going on the Fiji trip, take a look at our other 2011 trips and jump on one of those.

I hope to see everyone at our regular meeting on February 8th. We are lucky enough to have Ed Gabe from New Horizons coming to do our program. He'll be talking a little bit about cave diving but focusing on the cenotes in Mexico. Cenotes make for some pretty amazing diving – here is a picture of a sacred cenote at Chichen Itza. In the meantime, stay warm and safe. 🚩



The Editor's Notes

By John Geddes



The pics for this month are from the Christmas Party. 🚩

Mike, Autumn and Gordon

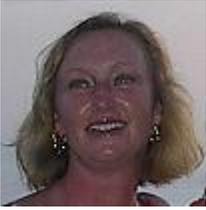


2011 BGDC Officer's

Rebecca Singer, President	552-0880
Tracey Combs, Vice President	621-4066
Kris Harn, Secretary	278-4246
George Fleischmann, Treasurer	873-9539
Doug Geddes, Trip Director	224-3197
Rick Stephan, Safety Info Dir.	223-3719
Mike McCann, Webmaster	255-3937
John Geddes, Newsletter Editor	223-7926

Vice President's Report

By Tracey Combs



Hello fellow divers. I hope you have all made it safely through the snow and ice and are getting geared up for diving. Remember that membership dues were due January 1st. If you have not paid, please send your dues to George.

I am pleased to welcome to the club our first new member of 2011, Lawrence Maguire of Lexington. Larry is an Open Water diver and we hope he will be joining us on one of our many trips this year.

Stella setting up the Grand Table



Please remember to pass along information about our wonderful club to any fellow divers that may be interested in joining. We have many great trips planned for the future so be sure to check the trip calendar on the Web Site. I will not be at the February meeting, but I look forward to seeing you all in March. 🚩

Sherry, Kris and Karen



From the Treasurer

By George Fleischmann



2011 Membership Dues

Student (High School or College ID) ..\$10.00
Single & Family (1 diver)30.00
Family (2 or more divers)40.00

Renewal: Please send payment to the address listed below, please make sure there is a correct indication of your mailing address, phone number and it is very important to indicate an email address.

Contact or Mail to: Bluegrass Dive Club
% George Fleischmann
9048 Clifton Road
Versailles, KY 40383

New Members: Visit the website to fill out an on-line form or to access a Microsoft Word printable form. [CLICK HERE](#). 🚩

Rick preparing the ham and rolls



Safety Corner

By Rick Stephan



Note: We typically talk about the skills required for the sunny, clear water diving we all save up for. There are lots of dive adventures that are in water less attractive. If you choose to do some of this low visibility diving, you should have some idea of both equipment and techniques for this type of underwater activity. The best idea is to get some specialty training at your local dive shop. Dive safety is generally 90% preparation and 10% execution, so get prepared

This month's article comes from scubadiving.com. Read it over to get a good idea of what you should be able to do for diving in turbid water. Since you can't always expect gin-clear water – even in the Caribbean – this might even help you if conditions change during a dive trip where the normal conditions are excellent. As always, use your common sense – based on the situation and conditions, you are responsible for your own safety.



Remember, safe diving is fun!

Far as the Eye can See

By Michael Ange

Every diver loves bathtub-warm water with 100 feet of visibility, but if you limit yourself to these tropical dream dives, you'll miss out on the treasure trove of lakes, rivers, quarries and coastal areas where awesome dives lie obscured by low vis. Not only will learning limited-visibility diving greatly expand your diving opportunities but it will also bring them closer to home. You'll gain access to a whole

new range of shipwrecks, some of them pristinely preserved in cold, fresh water; explore mountainous areas where dams have created manmade lakes and submerged entire cities; and scour rivers that hold archaeological finds ranging from Civil War armaments to Native American artifacts and prehistoric fossils. But while low-vis diving opens up a new world of diving adventures, it also presents unique challenges and dangers, and to do it properly, you need to come prepared with specialized knowledge and equipment. So, before you descend into low-vis diving, take a look at this guide to the gear, planning and techniques you'll need to do it right.

Gear Selection

Lights

Bigger is not always better when there's lots of sediment in the water. A broad light beam tends to light up the particulates so they stand out even more, which makes it harder to see what's in front of you. For dive sites with less than about 15 feet of visibility, the best lights are ones with bright, narrow beams. Some of the standard halogen lights made for night diving have interchangeable reflectors so you can switch the wide-angle reflector for one that focuses the beam. If you dive for artifacts or otherwise find yourself in really low vis--less than a few feet--even the brightest, narrowest light will merely make the water around you a lighter shade of brown. In these cases, you're better off making your way by feel rather than sight, but don't forget to bring a small mask-or head-mounted light to help you see your gauges or other objects that you can hold directly in front of your mask.

Mark, Richard and Fellow Eat Club Members



Safety Corner Cont.

Cutting Tools

Low-vis dive sites come with an increased risk of entanglement for two reasons: 1) Low-vis environments like rivers, lakes and kelp forests have a higher concentration of potential tangles--such as fishing line, netting or plant life--than an ocean reef. 2) Because you can't see much of what's around you, it's harder to spot and avoid these snags when you do come across them.

Jack, Maryann, Kris and Ralph



You should carry at least one solid cutting tool on these types of dives, and the best option isn't always a standard dive knife. Paramedic shears are heavy-duty scissors that can cut through the stainless steel wire used on some fishing leaders. They're available in special pouches that you can rig to your equipment, or you can simply tuck them away in your BC pocket. A Z-knife is a small S-shaped device with a very sharp razor blade housed inside a curved, protected hook. Both are safer to carry than a knife, and they're compact and effective at slashing through line. If you opt for a standard knife, use one that's low profile and that you can mount in an easily accessible position. Knives with blunt tips are more practical because you can use them to dig or pry if necessary, and you're less likely to stick yourself or your buddy with them. No matter which cutting tools you use, always rinse them well and keep them sharp so they'll work efficiently.

Navigation Equipment

Look for a compass with a large face, preferably with a long-lasting glow-in-the-dark compass card that you can recharge by holding your dive light on it for a few seconds. The best places to mount a compass are on your wrist or on a compass board (a dive slate with a compass mounted at the top). If you opt for a compass board, make sure to attach it securely to your equipment in a place that provides easy access and minimizes possible entanglement. One benefit of the compass board is that you can easily take notes while you navigate--write down your initial heading, any turns made, the reciprocal heading back to your exit point and notes about natural features you pass along the way. And again, a small headlamp can help illuminate the compass in low vis. If your dive involves a search of some sort, a line reel like those used by cave divers or a larger diameter rope can also make useful tools to have along. See the "Getting Around" section on page 77 for more on using these items.

Safety Equipment

No dive gear setup is complete without the requisite safety equipment. Because low-vis dives are potentially disorienting, and because they are often found in high current or high tidal flow areas, the likelihood of being separated from the dive boat, your dive buddy or a shore exit point is even higher than during a typical open-water dive. Always carry a quality safety sausage or surface marker bag, an audible signaling device like a whistle or an air-powered sonic alert device and a signal strobe, which you and your buddy can also use to keep track of each other underwater by attaching them to your tank valves and turning them on before you go in the water.

Gear Configuration

Because of the added entanglement risk in low-vis environments, streamlining your equipment and making sure your gauges and accessories are neatly tucked away are especially important. Use a secure octopus holder and place your gauges either in a BC

Safety Corner Cont.

pocket or clip them to a chest strap. Marine-supply stores are a great place to find a variety of sturdy brass clips for securing gear. One trick used by technical divers is pulling the high-pressure hose down the back of the BC so most of the hose is contained within the jacket. Once your gear is on, pull the gauge out from under your shoulder and clip it off to a chest D-ring. Or, with a small gauge, you can tuck it securely under the cummerbund of your BC. Do not do this with your octopus hose, however, or you won't be able to share air effectively in an emergency. And don't strap anything to your legs. Small knives can be moved to your BC inflator hose or your forearm. Mount larger knives on a BC chest strap or a waist harness where they pose less of an entanglement risk and are easier to reach.

Getting Started

When diving in low vis, you'll need to swim slowly, stay within a much smaller area than you would normally cover on a typical clear-water dive and keep an extra-close eye on your buddy, so a detailed dive plan is a necessity. Before going in the water, determine who will lead and who will follow on the dive, discuss hand signals and the procedures to follow if you get separated--use the standard rule of searching for one minute before ascending to meet on the surface. Then make sure you and your buddy both know the goals of the dive, the layout of the planned dive area and all relevant compass headings.

Ascending and descending can be disorienting in low vis, so it's best to use a physical reference. If you're starting your dive in deep water, use a descent line--either the anchor line of the boat or a small anchor attached to a dive float or flag. When starting your dive from the shore, drop down in shallow water and use the bottom contour as a physical reference. You should also have a contingency plan in case you can't find your way back to your starting point at the end of the dive. Technical divers prepare for this

contingency by carrying a surface marker bag (a large, easily inflated safety sausage) attached to a line reel. You can use this equipment to make a free ascent in open water by inflating the bag on the bottom with your octopus. Let the bag float to the surface as it pulls out line from the reel, creating a makeshift ascent line, then slowly reel the line back in as you make a controlled ascent.

Lynne, Leigh Ann and Gloria



Getting Around

When diving a low-vis site for the first time, it's critical that you get a detailed dive briefing from someone with local dive site knowledge. Find out the locations of any specific hazards, and plan to avoid these spots. Even better, see if you can join a group that has experience with the site for your first dive in the area.

In order to navigate these sites, you'll need a good compass orientation on the surface beforehand. Bring a small slate and write down the compass heading you'll swim from the entry point, calculate the headings for any turns or patterns you'll swim, and figure out the return heading to your exit point. Also plan how you'll measure distance--either counting fin kicks or timing each leg of your navigation will give a fairly accurate measure of distance.

The easiest form of compass navigation is a simple linear pattern. Just follow your planned heading away from your starting point until your turnaround time, and then follow the reciprocal heading back to the exit. Another simple pattern that will allow you to cover a wider area is a square. Before you get in the water, figure out the initial heading you'll take

Safety Corner Cont.

from the starting point. Then calculate the other three headings by adding or subtracting 90 degrees for each turn. Make sure the number of fin kicks or the timed distance you swim is equal for each side of the square; otherwise you won't end up back where you started. To learn more complex navigation patterns like the U-pattern or the expanding square, sign up for a search and recovery or navigation course.

A transverse line is another tool you can use to help keep your bearings in low vis. This is a rope weighted at each end, that's stretched across the middle of your planned dive area. You can explore a wide area by starting along the length of the rope and making short, linear navigations perpendicular to the rope using your compass. To make longer forays away from the transverse line, you can tie off a small reel and pay out a guideline as you swim away, then reel the line in as you make your way back. Another technique using a reel is to tie off the guideline, and swim along the transverse line while letting out a length of line from the reel.

Then you can swim a large arc by simply keeping the guideline tight as you swim both away from the primary line and back toward your tie-off point. To swim an expanding-arc pattern, simply pay out a few more feet of line and reverse your course every time you reach the transverse line. But be careful using this technique in debris-ridden areas. You don't want to get wrapped up in your own guideline or tangle the guideline on snags. In a debris field, a stationary transverse line can still be used in most cases, but carrying an individual guideline may cause more trouble than it's worth.

Communication

In low vis, physical contact is often the best way for you and your buddy to stay together. Either swim shoulder to shoulder or have the diver who is following maintain contact with the leader's tank valve or BC strap. If you can

Lynne going for the deserts



see each other, standard hand signals will work just fine, but for diving in very low visibility, you may need to learn touch communication procedures, and these should be as simple as possible. Here are the basics:

OK - Take your buddy's hand and move it in a circular motion.

Go Up/Down - Make the thumbs up signal and place your buddy's hand on your hand signal.

Out of Air - Grab your buddy's hand and pull it back and forth across your chest.

Trouble - Twist your buddy's hand back and forth. Guide his or her hand to the problem area if you need assistance.

In extremely low visibility, basic skills like air sharing can be extremely difficult if you aren't prepared. At the very least, discuss the procedures you'll use. If you can, also practice them on land with your eyes closed and without talking--do this a few times before your dive. 🚩

Gordon and Carol



Dale Hollow Lake

By Corrine Mulberry



Our fabulous Dale Hollow Lake trip is “on” for the weekend of July 30th – 31st. This is a great trip for divers and non-divers alike. We have pontoon boats reserved for Saturday and Sunday to transport us on the lake for fun, sun and diving.

We will enjoy a weekend of lake diving, swimming, relaxing and a pot-luck dinner on Saturday evening. Thanks to financial assistance from the Bluegrass Dive Club, the cost for participants is only \$20.00 per person per day for pontoon boat users. For members that bring their own boats, there is no fee; however, registration and waiver forms must be completed for each person.

Overnight accommodations are up to you---pitch a tent and camp, reserve a rustic cabin or stay at the State Park Lodge. Our pot-luck dinner will be held in the State Park Campground at the picnic tables at cabin site C006. Campers are encouraged to utilize campsites near cabin site C006 such as K008, K007, K006 and L001 and L003. (I’ve got campsite L002 reserved for me and my little tent).

First come, first served – get your reservations and payments in as soon as possible to secure your spot! Visit the BGDC Website and sign-up now for the Dale Hollow Lake Trip so you don’t miss out. 🚩

Gearing up for the lake at Dale Hollow 2007



Trip Director’s Report

By Doug Geddes



FIJI 2011 – Looks like we will be in Fiji by the time you get this newsletter. Please keep us all in your prayers. This will be one of the best trips that this club has taken. With 5 new underwater video camera’s shooting the action, we should have plenty of footage to share with you when we get back. Sorry you aren’t here with us. If you are feeling left out, don’t let the next one get away from you.

GRENADA 2011 – This trip turn took a turn for the best. We now have 14 persons going on this new location for us. Eight of the divers are doing an extended trip and diving in the Grenadines before the club trip. This trip is closed out, but if you still think you would like to add on, we can check and see if we have room. If you are thinking about it, you need to bring a roommate as it is too late to make the rooms work out.

Joey, Autumn, Jay, Barbara and Leigh Ann



ELEUTHERA 2011 – We are still looking for more people to jump onboard on this trip. I think a few of our divers are waiting to get back from the two trips above and get their rebates so they can make their deposit for this one. I know that is my case. This will be a fantastic trip with probably the best accommodations we have ever stayed at. Check out our website for more info.

Trip Director's Report Cont.

NOW PAY ATTENTION TO THIS ONE:

PHILIPPINES 2012 – Yes, we are finally going to the Philippines to do some of the world's best diving. This whole area is considered some of the best diving spots, anywhere. The dates of this trip are March 3 – 17, if you do both resorts. We are going to a resort called Kasai Village for the first week and then going to El Galleon resort for the second week. They are on different islands in different parts of the Philippines. They both offer two different types of diving. We would hope you would sign up for both weeks, since you have traveled that far, but if not, you could join us at whichever one fits your schedule. Both trips are all inclusive and include a minimum of 3 boat dives a day, plus unlimited shore diving.

Please check the website for links to check out both resorts. The dive committee did and we think this will be an awesome trip. The reviews of the resorts are very positive. This will not be as expensive as you think, but you need to start saving "now".



Gloria and Sherry

FUTURE TRIPS FOR 2012, AND BEYOND –

We are still looking into several great locations to compliment our Philippines trip for those that can't go until late spring or early summer. If you have any suggestions, please let one of us know. 🚩

From The Secretary

By Kris Harn



Regular Meeting

01/11/11

21 people were in attendance. Tracey Combs filled in for Rebecca, George gave Treasurer's report. Trip report by Doug on Fiji, Grenada, Bonaire, Dale Hollow and the Philippines.

Discover Scuba class being offered through Dive shop. Short reports by Mike the Webmaster, John the Newsletter Editor & Rick the Safety Director.

Noel showed a video on the latest BVI trip.

Board Meeting

01/25/11

Rebecca, Tracey, George, Mike, Kris, Rick, John and Doug were present. Corrine attended as a guest. Rebecca started meeting at 7:38pm.

George gave the Treasurer's report and report was filled Tracey talked about possible door prizes.

Kris talked about attendance records.

Doug talked about Fiji, Grenada, Bonaire, Dale Hollow, Eleuthera and Philippines. Corrine gave an update on Dale Hollow trip, Motion by John and seconded by Doug, to amended the fee from \$15.00 to \$20.00 per person per day for the pontoon. Motion passed. Mike to be updating the web page to update the Dale Hollow outing and to start the Philippines trip.

John needs newsletter articles sent in a folder with Date, Name, or Board position and due on the 27th. No old Business. Meeting adjourned at 9:02pm. 🚩

Bluegrass Dive Club 2011 Calendar

February

Fiji Dive Trip

8, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting
22, Tuesday Board Meeting

March

8, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting
29, Tuesday Board Meeting



Maryann, Ralph and Carol

April

Grenada Dive Trip

12, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting
26, Tuesday Board Meeting

May

7, Saturday Club's Derby Party*
10, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting
31, Tuesday Board Meeting



Leigh Ann and John

Sorry Charlie, someone had to fill in for you...

June

Bonaire Dive Trip

14, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting
28, Tuesday Board Meeting

July

12, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting
26, Tuesday Board Meeting
30, Saturday Dale Hollow Outing

August

9, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting
20, Saturday Club Pig Roast*
30, Tuesday Board Meeting

September

13, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting
27, Tuesday Board Meeting

October

Eleuthera Dive Trip

11, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting
25, Tuesday Board Meeting

November

8, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting
(Elections)
29, Tuesday Board Meeting



Jay, Barbara and Gordon hamming it up

December

10, Saturday Club Christmas Party *

Note * Pending Board Approval

(This is a calendar at a glance, for full details of dive trips, open the trip page on the Website under Upcoming Events.)