



# UNDERCURRENTS

Newsletter of the Bluegrass Dive Club / [www.bluegrassdiveclub.com](http://www.bluegrassdiveclub.com)

May 2011

Volume 41, Number 5

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## May's Club Meeting

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**Date:** Tuesday, May 10th  
**Time:** 7:30-PM (business)  
Social at 7  
**Location:** The Racquet Club  
3900 Crosby Rd.  
**Program:** DVD on Grenada by Noel

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## President's Message

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*By Tracey Combs*



Hello everyone! I am excited about being the club's new President and thank the Executive Committee for putting their faith in me. I also want to welcome Corrine Mulberry as our new Vice President. She will be an asset to our Board and I am looking forward to working with her the remainder of the year.

I hope everybody is looking forward to all of the diving we have lined up in the near future. We are currently working on a Diver Directory for all of our members. The directory will allow the members to be able to contact one another if a dive trip is being planned. This will be available to members only and we will be using your phone number and email on file. If you do not wish to have your information published, please advise me by email at [traceysdc@hotmail.com](mailto:traceysdc@hotmail.com). Thank you for your assistance. We had two new

members at the last club meeting in April, Catherine Fowler and Steve Williams. We look forward to seeing Steve's wife Tamara at future meetings. Please welcome them and remember to tell your diving friends about the club. We are on Facebook under groups. Remember, if you have ideas or suggestions for future trip locations; please contact one of the members of the dive trip committee.

Don't forget the Derby Party on May 7th. Please RSVP to Mike or Sherry McCann. I will see you at the next club meeting and as a reminder please do not bring outside alcoholic beverages or food into the Racquet Club. Both are available for purchase through the Racquet Club Bar 🍷

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## The Editor's Notes

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*By John Geddes*



Congratulation to Tracey as President and Corrine as Vice President and the rest of the Board for their leadership, the motions moved pretty smoothly. My heartfelt thanks to Rebecca for her service on the Board and to the Membership, I'm sure as her duties at work lighten up she will return to serve again on the Board.

The Pics for this month are from BVI December trip by Tracey Combs. 🍷

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## It's Derby Party Time

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For Club Members and invited guests only

Date: Saturday, May 7th  
Time: 3:30 until  
Location: Home of Mike & Sherry  
McCann  
3557 Gloucester Drive  
Westmoreland Estates  
Lexington  
255-3937

Club will furnish: Ham, rolls and soft drinks

What to bring to share:  
A snack, finger food, munchies, dessert.



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## 2011 BGDC Officer's

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Tracey Combs, President	621-4066
Corrine Mulberry, Vice President	913-0892
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

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## Vice President's Report

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By Corrine Mulberry



Hello BGDC members. What a soggy spring this has been! I hope that the weather will have turned around by the time we meet on May 10<sup>th</sup>. A little less rain and little more sunshine would be wonderful.

We have had several great dive trips already this year and are looking forward to several more exciting trips for 2011. As a representative on the BGDC Planning Committee, I (we!) Welcome your ideas and suggestions for trip destinations for 2012 and 2013. Please feel free to pass along your ideas at any time to [scubagirl07@insightbb.com](mailto:scubagirl07@insightbb.com).



As you know by reading this month's newsletter, we have several Board member changes being announced. I want to extend a heartfelt thanks to Rebecca for serving as President and extend grateful appreciation to Tracy for stepping into the new role as Club President. As the newly appointed Vice President, I want to thank the BGDC Board for their confidence in me and I look forward to serving the Club for the remainder of 2011. If you have any questions, issues, ideas, please don't hesitate to contact me at the email address above. Happy and Safe Diving to all. 🚩

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## Trip Director's Report

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By Doug Geddes



### BONAIRE 2011

This trip is almost here and it looks like we are ready to go. All persons have paid their monies and so has the club to the resort. Over 30 people are heading there in June. If you did not sign up for this, maybe you should sign up for the Eleuthera trip in October. Even if you are going, maybe you should think about the Eleuthera trip. If you haven't made your t-shirt desires known, now would be the time to do so. We will be having those made in the next week or two. If you signed up on your reservation then you are already signed up for a t-shirt.

### ELEUTHERA 2011

I think this trip is about to break loose. Don't get left behind. Where else can you stay in a million dollar condo right in a Marina, with lots of diving and get three meals a day for just over \$1300. Non-divers are just over \$900. Check this one out of our website before it becomes too late to sign up. We only have a certain amount of rooms. Since my email to the club, interest is beginning to finally take off.

### PHILIPPINES 2012

Speaking of taking off, this trip went to full burner after the last meeting. If you are considering this trip, you better get your name on the list. We are getting close to selling this one out. Dollar per dollar this is the best priced trip we have taken in a long time. Both resorts are all-inclusive and basically unlimited diving in some of the best waters in the world. The areas we

are diving are just above the area we dove in the Banda Sea when we went to Indonesia. The creatures you see here will some that you have never seen before, guaranteed. Fill out a reservation and reserve your spot. Don't miss this one.

### DIVE COMMITTEE

The dive committee will have met by the time you read this newsletter. Hopefully we will have new and exciting spots for you to consider soon for the next few years. I have seen some interest for Chuuk on the Odyssey along with a possible East side of Grand Cayman. If you have others, don't hesitate to pass them along to us. 🚩

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## From the Treasurer

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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 / 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](#). 🚩

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## From The Secretary

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*By Kris Harn*



April 12, 2011  
Regular meeting

28 people in attendance. Tracey opened the meeting at 7:36pm. George gave Treasurer's report. 2 new members were in attendance. Doug reviewed upcoming trips. Dive waivers for Bonaire are due. Dive committee needs ideas for new trips. John asks for your dive pictures for newsletter. No safety report from Rick. Reminder about Derby party on the first Saturday in May. Meeting ended at 8:19pm. Video by Noel from the Fiji Trip.

April 26, 2011  
Board meeting

Tracey, Doug, Rick, Kris, John, George & Mike were present. Tracey started meeting at 7:36pm. George gave Treasurer's report and it was filed. Financial exam reviewed approved. Tracey went over Facebook & the members only directory. Kris announced that membership attendance list is being updated and she has received name badge inserts. Doug review trips. Rick did not have a safety report. John stated that deadline for newsletter articles is April 29. New business: reduction of food at June meeting due to most of dive club being in Bonaire was approved. Resignation of Rebecca as President, Motion was made by John, second, approved. Tracey as President, Motion made by Doug, second, approved. Corrine as V.P., Motion made by Mike, second, approved if she accepts (Corrine accepted). Meeting ended at 9:30pm. 🚩

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## Dale Hollow Lake

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*By Corrine Mulberry*



You asked for it; you got it! Inexpensive local diving!! The fabulous Dale Hollow Lake trip is the weekend of July 30<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>. 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. 🚩

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## Safety Corner

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By Rick Stephan



**Note:** *This month's article – from scubadiving.com - is a cautionary tale of a diver who spent lots of money getting a cool toy, then ignored his own safety to use the toy. While most of the BGDC doesn't do the cave diving thing, we do dive a lot in places where a change of current or a failed piece of equipment can quickly endanger the diver and his buddies. New dive gear is cool – no doubt about it, but whether it is a Diver Propulsion Vehicle (DPV,) or a new computer, or even something as simple as new straps on your fins, make sure you understand how the new gear works and try it out before getting in deep water. Also, make sure your buddy knows about it too.*

*With Fiji and Grenada past, and Bonaire on the horizon, let's keep safe diving on our minds. Help out your buddies, new and old, don't be afraid to speak out to new divers – you might just make a new friend, or even save someone's life.*



*Remember, safe diving is fun!*

### Wrong Turn

By Eric Douglas

Cruising through the cave using a diver propulsion vehicle brought back the magic

of cave diving for James. He was having an incredible, effortless ride. He didn't have to fight the current caused by spring water flowing out of the cave. He relaxed and let his new DPV do all the work. He pretended to be a fighter pilot soaring around turns and through passages. After what seemed like only a few minutes, James released the trigger on the DPV and looked around to get his bearings. He didn't recognize the room he was in. Worse, he had no idea where the permanent cave line was. James realized he was lost.



### The Diver

*James loved diving, especially the gear. He liked tinkering with new gear and checking out catalogs and displays at the local dive shop. While he'd never admit it, most of his friends suspected he pursued cave diving so he could play with the tech gear that level of diving required. He loved carrying multiple tanks and having multiple regulators. His friends often heard him say, "There isn't a problem in a cave that a redundant regulator can't fix." He often carried more equipment than the cave environment required. His weakness, though, was in not spending time reviewing how to use new equipment.*

### The Dives

After seeing a group of cave divers using DPVs in his favorite cave system, James decided to buy one. He told his friends

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## Safety Corner Cont.

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how cool the other divers looked soaring through the water. As soon as the DPV was delivered and he charged its battery, James planned a cave dive. His dive buddies joined him, but neither had DPVs. The three divers agreed to enter the cave system together. James's two buddies planned a standard progression through the cave system — a dive the three of them had made many times before — while James would use his DPV.

The spring was a relatively shallow one, rarely dropping below 50 feet deep. What it lacked in depth it made up for in breadth: The cave system sprawled underground through the limestone for miles, branching off in every direction like veins in a leaf. Divers had explored the cave system for years, marking routes and laying in permanent guidelines, but many of the branches from the main tunnel remained unmarked.

James planned to cruise ahead of the other two divers with the DPV, following the permanent guideline installed through the main passageways of the system. He said he'd return to them after a few minutes, allowing them to use the scooter as well.



The divers entered the water, relaxed and joking. James played around in the open-

water area of the spring for a few minutes, getting a feel for the DPV and how it responded. After turning a few loops underwater, he was ready to make the dive.

The three divers entered the mouth of the spring. James cruised through the opening where the flow of water pushing out of the spring is the greatest, while his buddies struggled against the water's force. In his excitement to use his new toy, James didn't realize he left his friends behind almost immediately.

### The Accident

After sailing through a few passageways, James released the trigger on his DPV and hovered in the water for a minute. The scooter was slightly negatively buoyant, and it began to pull him toward the cave's silty bottom. James added air to his BC and clipped the scooter to an open D-ring. He made himself positively buoyant so that he floated up to the ceiling. He wanted to stay off the bottom to avoid silting up the tunnel and obscuring his exit.

Shining his light around the room for the first time, James marveled at the elegant rock formations around him. Only then did he realize he'd never penetrated this far into the cave before, and nothing looked even vaguely familiar. He checked his dive computer and realized he'd been inside the cave system for about 20 minutes, far longer than he planned. He checked his pressure gauge and was relieved to find he still had plenty of air in his tanks. Riding the scooter, he had been totally relaxed, barely swimming at all.

James scanned the room again. It was only about 10 feet high but seemed to go on forever, at least beyond the range of his dive light in either direction. He wasn't sure from which direction he'd entered. He

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## Safety Corner Cont.

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checked the cave's floor with his light to find the permanent line. Often cave divers place directional arrows on the line to indicate the way back to the main line and the surface. There was no line on the bottom. James realized he was lost in the cave system, not sure which way to head to find the way out and had a limited air supply. He was in trouble. He began to panic.

### Analysis

This column has covered the topic of panic many times. Only cardiac issues cause more divers' deaths than panic. Panicked divers make poor decisions and fail to choose life-saving options. Panic didn't cause James to get in trouble in the first place. He made a number of mistakes that put him in that situation. But panic is ultimately what led to his death.

When James's dive buddies realized James had been gone too long, they returned to the surface and waited. When they waited beyond when his air supply should have been exhausted and still saw no sign of their friend, they called the authorities, who immediately put a local dive team in the water to search for him. Experienced cave divers themselves, the team was well versed in the dangers and special procedures necessary to make a body recovery from a cave system.

When James's body was eventually recovered after an extensive search, the rescuers discovered he still had air left in his tank. He hadn't run out of air. We can only theorize that when James realized he had no hope of finding a way to the surface and panicked, he hyperventilated and passed out. Once unconscious, his regulator slipped from his mouth and he drowned.

The only way to avoid panic is to train so the skills required to make a dive safely are second nature. The more complex the skills, the more a diver should train so he or she doesn't have to think about them. In any situation, a diver's training should kick in so he or she can handle the situation. A diver should be able to stop, take a breath or two, and think through the situation and then act.



James made a number of other mistakes besides not training adequately. He took a new piece of equipment into a dangerous situation without considering how it changed his dive plan. He moved so quickly and effortlessly that he left his buddies behind without even realizing it. He violated all the lessons learned during his cave-diving course and the knowledge he'd gained from his own experience. He lost contact with his buddies and with the guideline. Leaving the permanent guideline in a cave system isn't a problem as long as a diver follows proper cave procedures. James should have tied off his own line to the permanent line, and then moved forward. When he reached the end of the line, he could have reeled in the line and arrived back at the main line. And then James could have found his way back to the entrance.

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## Safety Corner Cont.

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### Lessons for Life

- Be familiar with equipment you are using. If it's new gear, learn how to use it. Think about how it will change the way you dive.
- Plan the dive. James and his friends failed to make a dive plan, other than to agree that James would use the DPV and then return to his buddies. James failed to follow even this inadequate plan.
- Obey the rules. When entering a hazardous situation like a cave or a wreck penetration, it's imperative to follow the rules of this specialized training. James failed to take even the most basic of cave-diving precautions by following a guideline and putting out his own reel.
- Make sure your dive team is similarly equipped and has similar experience levels. When divers in a buddy team are not equipped the same or have drastically different skill levels, they can't function as a team. James was essentially diving alone since he could outpace his buddies so quickly. ❖

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## Editor's Correction

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Last month I had a pic and labeled that it was Noel's finger, this was actually Carol Call's finger showing the size of the pygmy seahorse. ❖



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## Past President's Message

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*By Rebecca Singer*



It's springtime! The winter weather is behind us but we sure have had some exciting storms this month. We're halfway through an exciting year of diving with the Bluegrass Dive Club. The Fiji trip was a success as was the Grenada trip. The Bonaire trip looks like the largest summer trip yet with 31 people signed up.



I have deliberated and made the decision to resign as President of the Bluegrass Dive Club. It was a difficult decision but it is the right decision. Tracey Combs has agreed to step in and fill the office for the rest of 2011.

I will still come to as many regular meetings as I am able to during the rest of the year and will enjoy diving with many of you in Bonaire. I will continue in my role as a member of the Trip Committee so as you have ideas for future trips, please feel free to pass them along. If the time comes when my work responsibilities relax a bit, I would love to serve on the Board again!

# Bluegrass Dive Club 2011 Calendar

## May

- 10, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting
- 31, Tuesday Board Meeting

## June

- 11, Bonaire Dive Trip
- 14, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting
- 28, Tuesday Board Meeting

## July

- 12, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting
- 26, Tuesday Board Meeting
- 30-31, Dale Hollow Diving

## 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

- Eleuthra Dive Trip
- 11, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting
- 25, Tuesday Board Meeting

## November

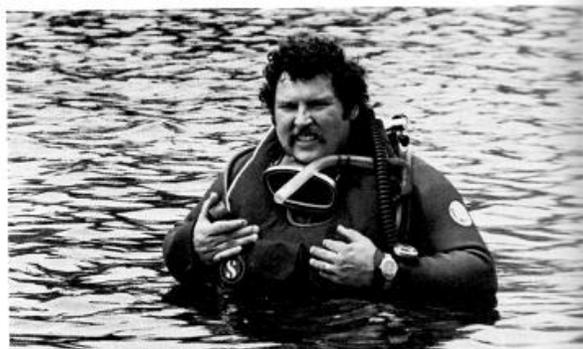
- 8, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting (Elections)
- 29, Tuesday Board Meeting

## December

- 10, Saturday Club Christmas Party

## A Blast from the Past

### The Underwater World of Ralph Covington



*Ralph Covington, inspection specialist, checks his equipment before leaving on a Canadian diving trip.*

"It's a totally different world," says Ralph Covington, inspection specialist in typewriter manufacturing. "There's always something new and unexpected underwater." Covington began scuba diving about 20 years ago. He's now Dive Master for the Bluegrass YMCA Dive Club, a certified diver and a member of the Professional Association of Dive Instructors.

"Scuba diving was a new adventure and something I always wanted to try," continues Covington. "I made my first dive in Cedarville, Ohio in 1961 and since have dived in numerous lakes around Kentucky and in the Gulf of Mexico. I prefer ocean diving because everything is alive and colorful. In fresh water lakes there's not as much aquatic life."

"I dive for sport and fun," says Covington, who as Dive Master arranges trips for his club. "I often look for items lost by friends such as fishing equipment, boat parts and motors. Fishing lures are plentiful on the bottoms of our lakes."

There are moments Covington doesn't enjoy diving — that's for

rescue-recovery diving. "I don't particularly like searching for drowning victims, but when I'm needed I'll help out," he states.

Some of Covington's experiences include a close encounter with a barracuda in the Gulf and having an "O"-ring on his air tank blow off. "I was only 25 feet down and able to surface right away, but the thought of losing my air was frightening," adds Covington.

"I think safety is the most important aspect of diving. I never dive without a buddy and make sure my equipment is in good working order before going out," he observes. Covington uses depth and air supply gauges for his dives. "When you move underwater, you have to be aware of every movement. It's easy for a diver or his equipment to become entangled in underwater growth or caught in a rock formation."

Covington admits the underwater mysteries of the depths sometimes make him feel uneasy, but once down there the excitement makes it all worthwhile.

