



# UNDERCURRENTS

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

April 2021

Volume 51, Number 2

## May's Club Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, May 25  
**Time:** 7:30-PM (business)  
 Social at 7:00

**Location:** Zoom Meeting

**Program:** Stoney Coral Tissue Loss Disease

## President's Message

*By John Geddes*



For those who were unable to join our March ZOOM meeting, we had a lively virtual meeting with Ken Scarbrough from Ultimate Dive Travel as our guest speaker. Ken was telling us about the industry as a whole and Ultimate Dive travel's situation due to COVID restrictions.

I was expecting a short Program and the presentation lasted a little bit longer than planned, but I think everyone was glued to the screen and followed up with some great Q and A. I sure would like to Thank Ken for coming on board with us.

Kathryn our VP is working on the next Speaker, so join us for next month's meeting May 25<sup>th</sup>. I am sure Alex will be sending those reminders out. Also invite your family and/or your guest to our meeting. 🚩

## The Editor's Notes



*By Terri Anderson*

I guess you have noticed, it is no longer April 2021, and I do apologize for getting the Newsletter out a little late. Unfortunately, I had a death in the family two weeks ago, and I am running behind. As always, if you have any interesting facts or articles you would like to share with your fellow divers, please email me. Click on the dive flag under my picture to email me.

It is hard to believe that one third of 2021 is gone. I enjoyed Ken's program last month, it made me hopeful that soon we will be diving again soon. In fact, 6 of our members will be traveling to Belize in August for a wonderful week on the Aggressor IV. There is talk that a few of us may tag along for an "unofficial" land based dive opportunity. Our last trip to Belize was great fun! 🚩

## 2021 BGDC Officer's

John Geddes, President	608-0682
Kathryn Bowers, Vice President	619-0166
Kris Harn, Secretary	333-6911
Dan Miller, Treasurer	948-5133
Trip Director - L. A. Bowe-Geddes	553-6251
Bart Bertetto, Safety Info Dir.	502-299-3656
Alex Fassas, Webmaster	582-1600
Terri Anderson, Newsletter	502-791-4088

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## Vice President Report

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By Kathryn Bowers



I hope everyone is enjoying the newsletters and feeling positive about travel and renewing your passion for diving and love of the undersea world. With that in mind I'd like to ask that you continue to support your club by keeping your membership active (Dues Paid), attending our meetings, currently on zoom, and acting as an ambassador for the club by sharing information about the club and any upcoming programs and trips on your Facebook page as well as with any friends you think might find them interesting or informative. Remember meetings are open to the public and we welcome any and all new faces.

We are anxious to resume in person meetings and looking into the possibility of doing such. I'm currently working with the staff at Bronte's Bistro to work out how best to follow their and the state's COVID protocols. I don't believe we will drop the Zoom aspect of our meetings any time soon as it is a great option for some of our out of town members as well as allowing us the opportunity to bring in some speakers we couldn't get locally. I have contacted and hope to have Tammi Warrender of the Cayman Coral Project join our next meeting to give us a short presentation on Stony coral tissue loss disease (SCTLD) and the steps the Cayman Islands are taking to fight it.

If you aren't familiar with Stony coral tissue loss disease (SCTLD) you aren't alone. I was familiar with and have seen the devastating results of Coral Bleaching but Stony coral tissue loss disease was a new one on me. Introduction to Stony coral tissue loss disease (SCTLD) is apparently a relatively new, rather quick moving and destructive disease. SCTLD was first observed in the United

States Virgin Islands in January 2019 on a reef at Flat Cay off the island of St. Thomas. spread to several reefs around St. Thomas causing significant declines in overall coral cover. Rates of tissue loss are an important metric in the study of coral disease ecology, as they can inform many aspects of etiology such as disease susceptibility and resistance among species, and provide critical parameters for modeling the effects of disease among heterogenous reef communities.

Affected coral are identified by patches of exposed white skeleton indicating lesions that are quickly progressing SCTLD is identified by rapid tissue loss that results in exposure of stark white skeleton ([Figure 1](#)). The case definition of stony coral tissue loss disease describes it as "focal, multifocal, locally extensive to diffuse areas of acute to subacute tissue loss distributed basally, peripherally, or both. In some cases, tissues bordering areas of chronic tissue loss have indistinct bands (1–5 cm) of pallor progressing to normal pigmentation away from denuded skeleton." ([NOAA Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease Case Definition, 2018](#)).

Once a colony is affected, total mortality can occur within weeks to months ([Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, 2019](#)).

SCTLD poses a significant threat to reefs across the Caribbean due to its persistence through time, wide range of susceptible coral species, and unprecedented tissue loss rates. Intervention and management efforts should be increased during and immediately following thermal stress events in order maximize resource distribution when disease prevalence is decreased.

In January 2019, SCTLD was identified affecting reefs off the southwest coast of St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands (USVI) ([Brandt, 2019; Kramer et al., 2019](#)). Preliminary observations suggested that tissue loss on corals from SCTLD was more rapid in St. Thomas than Florida. For example, at a long-term coral reef monitoring location south of St. Thomas called Flat Cay there was a 34% decrease in coral cover attributable to SCTLD between observations made 4 months apart from December 2018 and March 2019 ([Ennis](#)

[et al., 2019](#)). This is just slightly less than the impact of the disease observed in Southeast Florida over 4 years ([Walton et al., 2018](#)). The difference is that the loss of coral cover observed at Flat Cay occurred in a manner of months rather than years.

To learn more about SCTL D follow the links in this article. To learn about and the steps that can and are being taken to counteract it tune into our next meeting May 25<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 where we will be joined by Tammi Warrender of the Cayman Coral program. 🚩

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## Secretary's Report

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*By Kris Harn*



The Bluegrass Dive Club had a board meeting on March 10, 2021. Board meeting minutes for January were approved. Minutes are available upon request.

On March 23 2021, we had a regular meeting on zoom with 16 people in attendance. So nice to get to see and talk to everyone. March Minutes are awaiting to be approved at the next board meeting in May, and will be available for the regular May meeting if requested. 🚩

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## Trip Director Report

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*By Leigh Ann Bowe-Geddes*



### Bluegrass Dive Club is Going Places...

I sense the excitement and hope at that statement. The Dive Committee is beginning to make plans, and we anticipate potentially

booking a major trip for the spring of 2022. In the meanwhile, I need to hear from you. We could possibly plan an outing for this summer, Dale Hollow has been popular in the past, and if there are enough people interested and comfortable with a weekend at the lake in tents and cabins, we could schedule a weekend.

The Dive Committee needs to know what the interests of the membership are. What are your favorite dive destinations? Do you have any bucket list destinations or dive activities? Please go to [bluegrassdiveclub.com](http://bluegrassdiveclub.com) and click on the "Contact us" link. There you will find a form to communicate requests and comments. Be sure to direct the form properly by clicking on "Trip Director" as the recipient. I look forward to diving with my BGDC friends again! 🚩

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## From the Treasurer

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*By Dan Miller*



### 2021 Membership Dues

Student (High School or College ID) ..	\$10.00
Single & Family (1 diver) .....	30.00
Family (non divers).....	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 c/o  
Dan Miller  
824 Gunpower Drive  
Lexington, KY 40509

**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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## Webmaster

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By Alex Fassas



### **Webmaster's Bits & Bytes**

#### **Looking forward to the Belize Aggressor IV Club trip in August**

My son, Demetrius and I are registered and paid up for the upcoming Club trip aboard the Belize Aggressor IV from August 7-14<sup>th</sup>, 2021. I just received my newly reissued US Passport and this will be my 1<sup>st</sup> stamp in it. This will also be my 1<sup>st</sup> travel and return from out of the country since getting my Global Entry on March 8, 2020. I am fully vaccinated and satisfied that the COVID related safety and sanitation protocols in place for travel and aboard the Aggressor IV will make for a safe and fun diving adventure. Having a dive trip to look forward to sure makes my world brighter. I hope you find your something to look forward to also.

#### **Subscribe for email communications list**

Are you receiving our Club communications via email? If not, then your email information did not make it into our new email communications list. Please visit this link [Subscribe | Bluegrass Dive Club](#) to subscribe to our email list or to just update your personal information and subscription settings. Your Club does not want you to miss out on any of the good things going on at the Bluegrass Dive Club. If you know someone else that might be interested in our Club's communications, share the email subscription link with them too.

#### **Active & current Membership supports your Club**

Your Club is not very good at passing the hat or offering plate (choose your favorite metaphor), when it comes to seeking renewal membership dues each year. I for one, appreciate that our Club finds interesting dive trip opportunities and shares the savings earned from commissions and comps back to the trip participants. Our last trip rebate was \$576; we can afford to pay the family dues of \$40 per year for 14 years, without taking

another trip before I could complain about the value of paying yearly dues.

The number of sustaining memberships, that are dues paid in a given year is dwindling. Your Club needs YOU! In addition to the lavish salaries afforded to the Club Officers, all of the other expenses of the club are sustained from a combination of membership dues (\$30-40 a year per person/family) and the \$10 per person on a trip administration fee. Your Club's revenues for 2020 were \$1,040 in dues and \$140 in trip administration fees. In 2018 the Club dues totaled \$2,700 and the trip administration fees were \$240. Visit your Club's membership page for details on membership dues at [Membership \(bluegrassdiveclub.com\)](#).

#### **Like and Follow our Facebook Page**

The power of Social and other digital media to spread the good news of what your Bluegrass Dive Club is doing and the educational and diving opportunities that are available can be powerful. Your Club is looking to add more people to count among our diving friends. You can help your Club to reach more people. Your Club maintains two social media presences on Facebook. One is a private Facebook Group, on which posts and comments are only visible to members of the group. Membership to this group is on an approval only basis, so someone asking to join the Group must be admitted to access it. The other is a public Facebook Page, which can be seen by anyone visiting Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/BluegrassDiveClub>

If you are a Facebook user, please take a few minutes and visit our Public Facebook Page so you can Like and Follow our page. It is also helpful for you to share posts from this Page that you think would be of interest to your other diving friends. Shares from the Private Group will not be visible to people that are not members of the Group.

Please, also share Club emails with your diving friends who might benefit from the good things we have going on. Thank you for your investment and help in keeping our Club a growing and vibrant community. 🚩

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## Safety Information Director

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By Bart Bertetto



### **I Learned About Diving Safety From That**

*My mission is to provide you relevant safety information for your use. Each article will focus on a specific safety risk. I will draw from my experience, hopefully yours, and the dive community to highlight real risks that we must be aware of. So, if you see or hear of something that we could all learn from, please pass it to me. There is nothing like first-hand experience to drive a point home. This month's lesson is:*

#### **Experience & Risk**

*Note from Bart: Diving has barely restarted in the Caribbean and there has already been a fatality. The victim was a 72-year-old woman doctor visiting from the states and she was 10 minutes into her dive. I don't have any information about what might have happened, but I can tell you that this lady was adored by her patients. But something did happen. And that something is a life-threatening risk when you are underwater. Below is an excellent article from DAN that is all about mitigating risk with experience. My biggest takeaway is the simple lesson: Practice an emergency skill on every dive, so that if you must do it, you can easily.*

By Karl Shreeves DAN

Although it is clear that diving experience reduces divers' risk of injury, experience is an imprecise term that conjures different ideas in different people at different times. In contemplating how experience reduces risk, we need to consider the following:

Training provides experience.

Practice provides experience.

Diving provides experience.

Not all experience is helpful.

If some factors are present, experience can increase risk.

#### **Training Provides Experience**

As much as we like to say, "There's no substitute for experience," there actually is a substitute: training. And this is a good thing — you wouldn't want to learn through experience that you shouldn't hold your breath while scuba diving. Training lets us benefit from the (sometimes painful or deadly) experience of others, which is why it's the first step in becoming and growing as a diver. But we must be willing to learn from others' experience. As Douglas Adams (author of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*) observed, "Human beings, who are almost unique in having the ability to learn from the experience of others, are also remarkable for their apparent disinclination to do so."

#### **Practice Provides Experience**

During training and (one hopes) outside of training, divers practice skills including emergency procedures. This practice gives us experience in controlled circumstances in which we can mess up, learn from our mistakes, and try again until we succeed, without actually getting hurt. Fortunately, the brain does not really differentiate between simulated circumstances and reality. When faced with the real thing, people do as they trained and practiced, and the more realistic and varied the practice, the better the responses.

This outcome assumes that you actually train and practice. Explorer, instructor, and rebreather designer Kevin Gurr once said, "Practice a skill on every dive." By that he meant an emergency skill. Following his advice is easy and takes little time. Divers can also gain experience by simulating (within the scope of their training) and managing realistic emergencies in confined water. Another instructor and explorer, Phil Short, said, "I do it when I don't have to, so I can when I do."

#### **Diving Provides Experience**

Diving provides experience that's hard to get though instruction (this is what we really mean when we say there's no substitute for experience). By going diving we subconsciously learn normal patterns — how things are supposed to be and what we are supposed to do in different circumstances and underwater environments. When something violates our subconscious expectations, we go

on alert, sometimes reacting intuitively even before a problem occurs.

There are numerous examples of this intuition in different endeavors. One example documented by cognitive psychologist Gary Klein, who is one of the primary researchers in this area, involved an experienced firefighter who led a crew into a house to fight what seemed to be a routine kitchen fire. They sprayed the fire, but it almost immediately roared back to life. Uneasy, the commander ordered his crew out. Moments later the floor collapsed as a huge undetected fire in the basement engulfed the structure; everyone would have died if they had stayed in the house.

Right after a close call, those involved often say they didn't know how they knew something was wrong, they just did. Deeper analysis commonly finds multiple subtle pattern deviations that even trained people may not have noticed consciously, but their subconscious apparently did. The lead firefighter said he saw no threat, but he somehow knew something was terribly wrong. Later examination found that besides the fire roaring back to life, the room was much hotter than it should have been, and the men reported it was unusually quiet (the hidden fire was muffled in the basement). Unconsciously, these pattern mismatches warned the commander.

Experience will keep us out of trouble — if we allow it to. In other words, if something doesn't feel right when diving, don't wait to find out why. Trust your intuition, and act accordingly.

### **Not All Experience Is Helpful**

It's not just the quantity but also the quality of experience that counts. We need enough repetitive experience to learn patterns, but beyond a certain point, more doesn't benefit us.

Consider two divers, one with 1,000 dives and one with 200 dives. The first is an open-water diver who has made all 1,000 dives on about a dozen shallow tropical coral reefs, all from a boat in a wetsuit and wearing an aluminum 80 cubic foot cylinder. The second diver has about 50 dives on similar reefs, plus 40 dives in kelp, 20 dives in a cold-water reservoir, 15

dives in a river, 20 dives on Atlantic wrecks, 25 in Florida's springs and the rest in inland quarries and off Florida's gulf coast. The second diver is certified as an advanced open-water diver, cavern diver, rebreather diver and drysuit diver and has dived from boats and shore, including through surf. Which diver has the most useful experience that will help reduce risk, especially when visiting a new environment for the first time?

There's nothing wrong with making a dive you like for the umpteenth-billionth time, but be realistic about how much it is or is not contributing to your experience.

### **Experience Can Increase Risk**

Be cautious of normalization of deviance, which can be summed up as getting used to not following your training because nothing bad happens. If someone violates safe diving practices (e.g., exceeds training limits, omits standard gear, skips checklists, etc.) and nothing goes wrong, there's greater likelihood the person will violate these practices again. Experience makes this worse, because repetition without negative consequences makes the safe practices that were omitted seem unnecessary, until the deviation becomes the new normal practice. Researchers cite normalization of deviance as primary factors in the loss of the Challenger and the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

Culture can magnify normalization by failing to correct the deviation or even encouraging it ("Oh, you had to do that in training, but no one really does it."). Normalization of deviance is particularly common in endeavors such as scuba diving that tend to have redundant safety practices to account for unintended and random human error. Nothing goes wrong because a redundancy accounts for the deviation — until one day the redundant factor is accidentally omitted, too.

If you find yourself skipping things you learned to do in training (such as pre-dive safety checks), exceeding limits (diving deeper than you were trained to or entering overhead environments without training) or omitting gear you were trained to always have (such as snorkels or surface signaling devices), you're exhibiting normalization of deviance. If you and your buddies reinforce these

behaviors, you're in a microculture that is normalizing deviation.

Because experience can reinforce normalization of deviance, experience is only a cure if something bad happens due to the deviation (and even then some divers go right back to the unsafe practices). The cure and prevention are the self-discipline to follow your training, honesty about the safety of your diving behaviors and refusal to listen to other (sometimes more experienced) divers who encourage deviations. 🚫

## **Bluegrass Dive Club 2021 Calendar**

### **May**

11, Tuesday Board Meeting  
25, Tuesday Club Meeting

### **June**

22, Newsletter

### **July**

13, Tuesday Board Meeting  
27, Tuesday Club Meeting

### **August**

7 – 14, Belize Aggressor IV Liveaboard Trip  
24, Newsletter

### **September to December TBA**