



# UNDERCURRENTS

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

January 2008

Volume 38, Number 1

## January's Club Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, January 8th  
**Time:** 7:30-PM (business)  
 Social at 7  
**Location:** The Racquet Club  
 3900 Crosby Rd.  
**Program:** Dominica diving &  
 DiveAssure Insurance

## President's Message

By Dan Miller




### Message from the Deep

With the sudden passing December 12<sup>th</sup> of our dear friend Dan O'Canna, a huge void was left in the BGDC. Please offer Dan's wife Maryanne your prayers and extend her support in these trying times. Those who knew Dan are inspired to live life as he did: to the fullest while serving others. What a legacy he left for us all to emulate. We are reminded how truly fragile life is and to cherish each and every moment we have with family and friends.

Big thanks go out to the Kidd's for hosting another top drawer club Christmas Party. Once again Stella & Mark outdid themselves with festive decorations and making everyone feel so very welcome. If you see them, tell them thanks for allowing us to impose on them as they put forth a lot of effort into hosting these parties.

The January 8<sup>th</sup> program features video of Dominica diving & DiveAssure insurance. We have several trips departing in the coming months

so this meeting will be important to make payments and turn in trip waivers to the treasurer. Don't forget those Passports!

There is a special presentation at Hanover College on January 15<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. Jean-Michel Cousteau (son of Jacques Yves Cousteau) will present "The Great Ocean Adventure". Admission is free but tickets must be reserved in advance by calling 812-866-6848 or via email at [cfi@hanover.edu](mailto:cfi@hanover.edu). The address to Hanover College is 484 Ball Drive, Hanover, IN, 47243. It is 100 miles from Lexington, a 2 hours drive. Call Ed Gabe at *New Horizons Diving Center* for more details. I'll be going so if anyone needs a ride perhaps we can carpool so just call or email me.  **Dan**



## 2008 BGDC Officer's & Staff

Dan Miller, President	948-5133
Rebecca Singer, Vice President	552-0880
Maryanna O'Canna, Secretary	277-2634
George Fleischmann, Treasurer	873-9539
Doug Geddes, Trip Director	224-3197
Rick Stephan, Safety Information Dir.	223-3719
Mike McCann, Webmaster	255-3937
John Geddes, Newsletter Editor	223-7926

## The Editor's Notes

By John Geddes



This month pics are from the Dive Club Christmas Party.

The next group of photos on this page are of Dan O'Canina, on dives, events or at one of our meetings. I enjoyed hearing Dan report at the meetings, either on his dive trips or just reporting on the dive shop happenings, or just on a one to one with him.

My daughter, Autumn just took her dive lessons with Dan, and I must add, he was a patient person too. We will surely miss him. 🚩



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## Vice President's Report

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By Rebecca Singer



I hope everyone has enjoyed a few, if not more, days off during the holiday season. We need to be well rested for all our upcoming diving in 2008! No new members to report this month. Please encourage your friends and fellow divers to join if they have not.

I'll keep this short and sweet this month. See you all at the meeting! 🚩



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## Safety Corner

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By Rick Stephan



**Note:** Happy New Year! As I'm putting this month's article together, I'm looking at the BGDC calendar for 2008. We are going to be very busy this year diving! The BGDC has been a very safety conscious organization from the beginning, and we want to keep it that way.

This article comes from [scubadiving.com](http://scubadiving.com) and is one of their 'Lessons for Life' – learning from the dissection of diving accidents. Often, you can see yourself (or a fellow diver) reflected in these lessons. This particular article provides some general recommendations on how to stay safe, based on the hundreds of diving accidents they've seen. It turns out that most accidents fall into

one or more of just a few categories, and by just following a few simple, sensible steps, you can avoid joining the list of accidents.

So, if diving accidents are predictable, then you should be able to predict your safety as well.

*Remember, safe diving is fun!*



### The Ultimate Lessons for Life

Diving accidents are predictable, and therefore, avoidable. Here's how to stop them in their tracks.

By Michael Ange

*(Insert diver's name) struggles to reach the surface as he verges on panic. With his air supply exhausted, he pulls hard on the regulator, but gets no air at all. At the surface, he throws off his mask as he struggles to stay afloat, forgetting to release his weight belt or inflate his BC. With a feeble yell for help, (Insert diver's name) slips beneath the surface ...*

While each case we bring you in "Lessons for Life" is real, unique and thoroughly researched, the sad fact is that, in many cases, we could probably use a template similar to this one and still cover the basics. Month after month, season after season, and in case after case, the diving accidents we review and analyze often share similar causes and patterns.

Diving accidents are often predictable-and therefore avoidable-if divers and dive professionals use their common sense and basic dive training. When I interview dive accident

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## Safety Corner Cont.

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survivors, someone usually makes reference to something that went wrong early in the dive or prior to the dive, yet no one dealt with the problem effectively. In hindsight, there is almost always an obvious window of opportunity to save a diver's life or prevent serious injury. Our mission in analyzing dives gone wrong is to help you develop the foresight to spot these and take the appropriate action to avoid becoming the next victim profiled in this column.

Rather than dissect a specific case this month, it seemed appropriate to step back and examine some of the broader lessons we've seen over the years in order to develop some common-sense guidelines to help you be a safer, more confident diver. Here then, are my ultimate lessons for life.

### Don't Panic

People often ask me, "What one thing kills divers?" The answer is simple: Panic. Looking back on case after case, the difference between an accident that results in a fatality or serious injury, and one where the victim lives to dive again another day, is usually how well the diver controls panic. A healthy, well-trained diver can recover from even the most serious mishaps provided he remains calm and in control.



There is no one cause of panic. Panic usually stems from many small problems that grow and cascade to overwhelm the diver. Think of it this way: Divers operate like most people in everyday life—within a little bubble, typically referred to as a comfort zone. The closer to the edge of the bubble you get, the more likely you are to bump into its side and cause it to burst. On a perfect dive, when everything goes right, you remain in the center of your comfort zone. Add a little leak in your mask, and you move away from center. Add a current that is stronger than you expected, and you move a

little further. If you're out of shape, you might move right to the edge.

The closer to the edge you get, the greater the odds that the next small problem will cause a diver to lose all control. When full-scale panic erupts, rational thought is replaced by reflexive reactions that frequently have no positive impact on the situation. Without outside intervention, a panicked diver will usually seriously injure himself or die from simply failing to take basic steps that could have fixed the problem. Common mistakes panicked divers make include discarding their regulator, removing their mask, not inflating their BC at the surface, and not ditching their weights.



### Watch out for Murphy

Murphy, of Murphy's Law fame ("Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong"), is alive and well, and he lives in your gear bag where he patiently waits for opportunities to kill you. Poor dive planning, inadequate training and poorly maintained gear are invitations for Murphy to come out and wreak havoc. Deny him the opportunity to ruin your dive through careful advance preparation, by keeping your skills up to date and by keeping your gear properly maintained. Failure to do one or all of these things is usually a contributing factor in most of the dive accidents covered in this column.

### Practice survival

Most victims in "Lessons for Life" enter the water completely oblivious to the potential for a dive accident, and therefore have no plan for dealing with the situation when things start to go wrong.

The strategy for smarter, safer diving is to routinely practice the basic safety skills learned in your open-water class, so if you have to respond to an emergency, they are second nature. It also helps to play the "what if" game with yourself and your dive buddies. Think about the things that could

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## Safety Corner Cont.

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potentially happen on a specific dive and, more important, think about and practice ways to counteract or to respond to them. If you're diving in current, how will you adjust your dive? What will you do if you become separated from your buddy? What will you do if you surface down current from the boat? Are you carrying signaling devices? Do they work? How will you deploy them?

### Fix the little things

If you enter the water with a problem, no matter how small, that problem is not going to go away or get better on its own. In fact, it's just the opposite. Minor annoyances can pile up to become critical problems as the dive progresses.

If your dive does not start out well, you need to identify the problem and solve it immediately, or abort the dive. Your leaking mask may simply be due to a misplaced seal, but it could also be a tear in the skirt. It is best to find out at 10 feet on the anchor line than it is to discover it at 100 feet down and 200 yards from the boat.



### Listen to the briefings

I have logged well in excess of 5,000 safe dives and I still take time to listen to the details of every dive briefing, and I pay especially close attention on any site I do not know well. You pay diving professionals for their skill, expertise and local knowledge of diving conditions. They know the hazards, the site specifics, and the points of interest that make your dives both safer and more enjoyable. Even on sites where I have logged dozens of dives over the years, I take the time to listen carefully. Conditions change, current patterns shift and there can be changes in the marine life. The local diving professional who

dives these sites daily is the expert, so use him to avoid getting yourself into unexpected situations that can lead to diving accidents.



This rule also applies to the boat briefing, a source of invaluable information on the procedures the crew will use in both normal circumstances and in cases of emergency. Pay close attention and should things go wrong, you'll be able to work in harmony with the crew to set them right as quickly as possible. You may recall a recent column where a very experienced diver chose to ignore the boat crew's advice on the safest procedure for donning equipment and entering the water. He ended up unconscious and bleeding from the head when he slipped and fell as a result of his arrogance.

### Get the Right Safety Gear

As a dive store owner, I love the diver who buys every single trinket that I sell. However, it is preferable that he not try to dive with all of them at once. Too much equipment—even if its safety gear—can throw off your buoyancy and trim and create danglies that invite entanglement.

It's relatively easy for every diver to carry redundant safety gear without a lot of hassle or bulk. I always carry a large, brightly colored inflatable surface marker, a dive light and a sonic alert device on every dive in open water. As a rule of thumb, it's also a good idea for every diver to carry a dive knife with a small backup pair of shears tucked neatly into a pocket and an old-fashioned whistle as a backup to an air-powered sonic alert device.

Make sure that every piece of gear you're carrying is in good working order and properly stowed before the dive. Think carefully about placement of each item. You want to stay streamlined and eliminate entanglement hazards, but you also need to be able to locate and deploy each item quickly and easily.

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## Safety Corner Cont.

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Take responsibility for your own safety

You are responsible for you. No one can swim for you, think for you, plan for you, and nobody can save your life when you fail to prepare-only you can do all this. Never trust anyone else to keep you safe. Take responsibility for your own actions and be prepared to deal with your own problems, including assisting your buddy in an emergency.

I hope that the applications of these rules and the other safety tips in this magazine will keep you on the proper side of "Lessons for Life"-as a reader, not a subject. Safe diving! 🚩

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## From the Treasurer

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*By George Fleischmann*



### 2008 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. And 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 -9077

**New Members:** Fill out & mail a membership form from the web site. . 🚩

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## Trip Director's Report

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By Doug Geddes



UTILA 2008

Air tickets bought, resort payment due, we are on the final leg of this great trip. Get your gear checked out at the pool, we are getting ready to head to Utila. I am sure the dive shop is still having classes going on at UK, so give them a call and make a visit. It is too late, once you are in Utila to find out it doesn't fit or work. If you go new gear for Christmas, it also would be a great time to try it out before we go. George should have sent out the final bill for this trip, so make sure you get your last payment back to him ASAP. We do not have monies to float on your account. Once all the monies are paid, I will probably send out an email with all the details about the trip. Most of it you already know, but I might have additional information. We are working on the T-shirts for the trip. I will try and get a sample or at least a design before the order and see if anyone else that didn't sign up might want one. We also will have the polo shirts available. This is shaping up to be one of our best trips. If you didn't get on this one, check out the next two trips we will be doing.

ROATAN 2008

Hard to believe, but we have around 16 persons going to Roatan. Some of those are carrying over from Utila, but we still have added another 10 persons or so. WOW...This trip is not sold out yet, but we had to give up the club air. The price for 8 days and 7 nights, with 6 days of diving and all meals is \$750.00 plus air. You can't beat the price anywhere. Check out the website and make arrangements to join us on this one.



## Trip Director's Report Cont.

### BELIZE 2008

WOW, once again. We have over 10 persons signed up for this very popular dive destination. This is a great time for you winter lovers to leave home and get some sun. This should be a great time for students and teachers to be able to travel with us. This space on this trip is dependent upon space at the resort. We can only book rooms with non-refundable deposits, so you can't wait too late to get in on this one. Check out the website and see if this one is for you.

### GALAPAGOS 2008

We should be getting the final details to all involved on this trip. Sorry for the length of time it has taken, but we couldn't get air until 11 months out. We will need everyone from close by to use the club air. We have to have 10 persons to get a group rate. There is still no one of the waiting list, so you might want to sign up just in case someone should dropout. More monies will be due real soon to pay for our deposit at Sacha Lodge and our second payment on the boat. When you receive your bill, please pay ASAP. We already had to send in the second boat payment. Make sure and check your passport expiration date. You don't want to get caught within the 6 month period.

### INDONESIA 2009

We still have space available for this great trip. Check it out on the website. More details as they become available. Send in your reservation and \$250 to lock in a spot. Still plenty of time, but I believe it will fill up pretty soon. 🚩



## **Bluegrass Dive Club 2008 Calendar**

\* Board approval pending

### January

8, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
22, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

### February

12, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
26, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

### March

11, Tuesday Dinner Meeting  
25, Tuesday E.C. Meeting  
29, Saturday Utila thru 4/5

### April

5, Saturday Roatan thru 4/12  
8, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
29, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

### May

3, Saturday Club's Derby Party\*  
13, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
27, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

### June

10, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
15, Sunday Belize thru 6/22  
24, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

### July

8, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
29, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

### August

12, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
16, Saturday Club Pig Roast\*  
26, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

### September

9, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
9, Tuesday Galapagos thru 22  
30, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

### October

14, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
28, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

### November

11, Tuesday Dinner Meeting (Elections)\*  
25, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

### December

13, Saturday Club Christmas Party \*