



UNDERCURRENTS

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

October 2007

Volume 37, Number 10

October's Club Meeting

Date: Tuesday, October 9th
Time: 7:30-PM (business)
 Social at 7
Location: The Racquet Club
 3900 Crosby Rd.
Program: Some Trip Reviews and Pics

President's Message

By Dan Miller



Message from the Deep

We had a healthy, open discussion and voted on the new Bylaws at last month's meeting. The new Bylaws passed by a 25-3 margin. The October 9th program will feature video of recent club trips. **Don't forget to RSVP** for the dinner meeting on November 13. You don't have to eat in order to attend the meeting but you do have to RSVP in order to eat. You may RSVP either via the website or in person by signing up on the sheet passed around at the 10/9 meeting. The November meeting will feature **officer elections** so if you're interested in running for an office please let me know.

September was a busy month for diving. Seven folks went to Western KY over Labor Day weekend, four of us participated in the KUES clean up dive at Lake Cumberland and six members went to Ft. Lauderdale. October will feature the DUI drysuit Rally at Mermet Springs to kick off the month and DEMA in Orlando to close out the month. There has been interest discussed in going back to Bonne Terre lead mine in MO this fall. I'm up for it if we get a few more folks to go so just let me know and we'll make it happen. 🚩

The Editor's Notes

By John Geddes



Well, here you go... Some pics from the Fort Lauderdale trip, these were sent from Dan O'Canna while on the trip. Sounds like everyone had a great time, I'm sure we will hear more on that at the meeting. 🚩

Dan Miller on his 3rd weekend of diving



2007 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, Divemaster | 224-3197 |
| Rick Stephan, Safety Office | 223-3719 |
| Mike McCann, Webmaster | 255-3937 |
| John Geddes, Undercurrents Editor | 223-7926 |

Divemaster's Report

By Doug Geddes



UTILA 2008

No new changes on the Utila trip. We are still overbooked. We are considering adding a week to Fantasy Island on Roatan, either the week before or the week after Utila. If anyone is interested in doing this I would like for you to email me and let me know. The persons on the waiting list might want to just sign up for Fantasy Island and forget about Utila, or some Utlia persons, might opt out of that trip and switch. We cannot lose any persons off the Utila trip without replacing them, so you will need to check that someone will take your spot before switching. This is still in the planning stages, so don't do anything yet, just email me if you would consider this or if you want to go to Fantasy Island.

GALAPAGOS 2008

As mentioned several times, it isn't over till it's over. We have had several persons drop off this trip and had one on the waiting list decline. At this moment we are still sold out, but you never know. If you thought there was no way you might be able to get to go on this trip, think again. You need to put your name on the waiting list and be ready to sign up when you get the call. Check out our web site and see if this interest you, then fill out a reservation form and get signed up. No money is required to sign up on the waiting list.

DIVE COMMITTEE

Your dive committee will be meeting next week on Thursday to work on trips for 2008 and 2009. If you are interested in a place, you need to email one of them and let them know where you would like to go. We have several great trips that we are considering. We should have some of them listed in the next newsletter or separate email to the membership. 🚩

Vice President's Report

By Rebecca Singer



This month was another big month for new members! I am delighted to introduce 5 new memberships. Wow. Jim Leemhuis was introduced last month as a visitor and is now an official member of the Bluegrass Dive Club. Kris Harn was also introduced as a visitor at last month's meeting and is now a member. We all hope she enjoyed her trip to Florida with the club last week. Gail Perry attended our meeting last month at the recommendation of Dan O'Canina. Thanks to Dan for talking us up so much that she joined the club! We are looking forward to having Gail join us for fellowship and diving (whether it is local or exotic). Gail brought her friend Sally Nolan with her to the last meeting. Sally just received her open water certification and we are hoping she will be introduced as a new member in next month's newsletter. Robert Naumowicz also joined the club at the last meeting. We have A.J. Hall to thank for introducing him to the club. Thanks A.J.! Last, but definitely not least, we also welcome Alex Fassas and his wife Marva and son Demetrius to the club. We hope Alex and his family join us at the coming club meeting, as we are anxious to meet them all.

Please continue to welcome new members at club meetings and encourage them to dive with us. My personal experience has been that nothing beats those club trips (I think we can all thank Doug for his tireless work at making these trips fantastic).

Folks, just under the wire: I have one more new member to report. I just learned that Bradley Guthrie has joined the club. If you see him at the meeting next Tuesday, please offer a warm welcome to our newest member! 🚩

Gordon Green taking a break



From the Treasurer

By George Fleischmann



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. . 🚩

From The Secretary

By Maryanna O'Canna



General Meeting Minutes 9/11/07

The 7:30 meeting was attended by 30 members. New members joined this evening were: Gail Perry, Sally Nolan, Robert Naumowicz and Jim Leemhuis.

The November dinner meeting has 24 people reserving places. The new Club Bylaws were voted on the members: 25 voted yea and 3 voted nay. The Club adopted the new revised bylaws. New dive flags were purchased for club members to use on trips. Final arrangements were made for the Lake Cumberland Ecology Dive and the Ft. Lauderdale/Key Largo Dive Trip. 🚩

Safety Corner

By Rick Stephan



Note: This month's article is a slight paraphrase of one I found in Rodale's online magazine. We are a diving dive club (well, and eating, and photographing, etc.). My point is, we do quite a bit of travel and we enjoy the benefits of a Liveaboard dive trip. We wake up in the morning and our 'hotel room' has moved to the next wonderful dive site. We get to dive 5 or more times per day, and see sites that most land based divers can't reach.

Preparation for the Liveaboard dive vacation is a little different from a land based trip, and, while we often book the entire boat, we sometimes must share our experience with other travelers, who may have other desires in what they want to experience in their trip, so we need to be considerate.

Review these suggestions, and adjust for the trip you are on. Hopefully, they will help you have a more enjoyable and safe vacation.



Remember, safe diving is fun!

ADVENTURES IN LIVE-ABOARD DIVING

Make your next dive cruise your best vacation ever.

Imagine four or five dives a day, every day, for a week, every site different and most of them remote and pristine. See the cheerful crew fill your tanks, hoist your BC and practically carry you into and out of the water. Savor hot showers, hot towels, hot cookies and hot toddies or a cool rum punch, then an ample dinner, a glass of wine, maybe even a mint on the pillow.

Ah, the live-aboard experience. For one week you live like a millionaire aboard a custom dive yacht. Your world narrows to the company of 19 fellows

Safety Corner Cont.

adventurers. For seven blissful days, life is reduced to the essentials--dive, eat, sleep, in that order of importance. Your daily routine: snack, dive, breakfast, dive, snack, dive, lunch, dive, snack, dive, dinner (optional night dive in some cases).

There's simply no way to get as much incredible and varied diving packed into one week, and when you figure it might take two weeks at a land-based resort to absorb as much first-class nitrogen, it's no wonder that so many experienced divers we surveyed said, "Give me the choice and I'll go live-aboard every time. It's the way scuba--make that life--was meant to be." Here are 19 dos and don'ts that will help your cruise go even more swimmingly.

Who is that mask bandit, Karl



Do: Pack light. Don't: Pack a wardrobe worthy of Anna Nicole Smith.

If, in addition to your dive gear, you're packing more than one carry-on bag and a medium-sized piece of soft luggage, go back and repack with this rule in mind: half the clothes. Still too large? Go back and follow the rule again. If you're packing for the Captain's Banquet, the First Night Ball and Monte Carlo Night, forget it. Informality rules on the live-aboard--think swimsuits, shorts and T-shirts.

If you want to impress with your wardrobe, the fashion gotta-have is simply the correct T-shirt. The first day or two, everybody will be wearing a T-shirt from the most exotic location possible. After that, most people won't care.

To save additional luggage space, wear a sweater, one pair of shoes, one pair of long pants and one

light jacket to the boat. With the room you save, pack these essentials:

- More exposure protection than you think you need. (The more you dive, the colder you get.) Take an extra layer, a hood or beanie.
- A save-a-dive kit.
- Surface signaling devices (sausage, horn, whistle, mirror, etc.)
- A spare mask.
- Adequate film and batteries for cameras, dive lights, Game Boy, etc.
- Sunscreen.

Pack critical and essential items like mask, regulator, dive computer and exposure suit in a carry-on. If the airline misdirects your luggage, the boat can't wait a day for your stuff to arrive.

Finally, use soft luggage. Even the largest boat cabins are a lot smaller than Motel 8 rooms, and there's no cargo space for hard suitcases. Soft luggage is a lot easier to stuff into a corner.

Do: Pick your room in advance. Don't: Plan on switching at the last minute.

Live-aboards have a limited number of cabins and they are usually booked solid. If you don't like your room, your only hope is to sweet-talk someone into swapping with you. Good luck.

Here's Bob Shepard



The smart solution: Pick your cabin when you book. Think about boat motion (there's less near the center), proximity to noisy generators and compressors (usually in the stern), convenience to rest rooms and dining areas, stairs to climb and even traffic patterns.

Safety Corner Cont.

Whatever you do, don't sweat a less-than-ideal cabin or cabin mate. You really only sleep there. Most of the time you're diving, eating, preparing to dive, eating again or talking about diving.

Do: Make special menu requests in advance. Don't: Let a soda preference ruin your vacation.

Most divers describe live-aboard food and drink as ample, tasty and sometimes even elegant, but not haute cuisine. Expect meat and potatoes, chicken and rice and veggies and salad, often served family or buffet style. There's no menu to order from, no room service, and few chances to make substitutions.

If you want something special--if you're a vegan, for example, or you'll only drink Heineken or Diet Coke from a can or can only tolerate a certain brand of organic soy milk--request it well in advance. The boat will try to accommodate you.

The best option if you can't live without some taste treat: Bring it with you. Actually, most live-aboard divers find those refined tastes and familiar brands don't seem so important after a day or so of amazing dives.

The other Dan (O' Canna)



Do: Prep your gear. Don't: Rely on the boat's gear locker to fix problems.

There are no dive shops at sea and most boats have limited repair and rental capacity. Have your gear serviced and prepped, then test it before you pack. Replace the battery in your dive computer. Inspect straps, buckles, etc. Also pack backup O-rings, spare parts and batteries for critical gear.

Do: Be nice to the crew. Don't: Think you're a king, just because they treat you like one.

Many divers are surprised at how hard live-aboard crews work under difficult conditions, yet are so cheerful about it.

Most crewmembers pull double and triple duty--your Divemaster may take a turn serving dinner, entertaining guests or helping man the boat, so cut the crew some slack if things aren't always perfect. Remember, if you're might be sitting there yelling at a guy for not giving you a clean coffee cup, and that's the guy who's going to be finding your life jacket if the boat's sinking.

As with most occasions in life, the more kindness and respect you give, the more you'll get. Small gestures can mean a lot to the crew. Bring a new movie on DVD to share with the whole group. The crew, which is away from civilization for long periods, will especially love it and maybe treat you extra well. And it helps break the ice with the whole group.

On the other hand, crewmembers do sometimes screw up. If there's a genuine problem, inform the captain. He wants to know sooner rather than later. Then be patient. Remember, some other passenger may be demanding attention at the same time.

Do: Arrive early for dive briefings and meals. Don't: Hold up the schedule.

If everybody is going to get in all five dives, plus eat all the meals and snacks promised, there's going to have to be a schedule and everybody is going to have to stick to it--especially true when you're diving in groups from tenders. A good live-aboard rule is this: whether the line is for lunch or lifeboats, never be last.

This is particularly important when boarding the tender. Don't leave your fellow divers stewing in their wetsuits under the tropical sun while you get your act together. If your tender is late to dive, you and your fellow divers will be late to the showers, late to the lunch line...

Being late has costs besides cold shoulders. You may miss dives, skimp on your surface interval and make mistakes because you're rushing to catch up.

Do: Tip generously. Don't: Stiff the crew.

The price of a live-aboard cruise includes your diving, food and lodging. However, it usually doesn't cover tips for the hard working,

Safety Corner Cont.

multitasking crew that spends the week catering to your every whim 24/7 (see above). Tips are always an important part of the crew's income and they will earn every penny of it.

Bring cash--a typical amount is 10 to 15 percent of the package price--to tip the crew with at the end of the week. Budget for the tip money and set it aside before the cruise starts.

Want something special, like a personal dive guide all week? Ask for it and tip big, in advance.

Do: Be flexible about dive sites. Don't: Throw a fit if you don't get your way.

The fact that the group of divers on a live-aboard is smaller than at most land-based resorts cuts two ways. Good news: The captain will select dive sites to suit the interests and abilities of the majority of the group. Bad news: You might be in the minority.

Before you book your trip, ask about the make-up of the rest of the group. A large number of novices may dictate easy dives. A dive club may leave you feeling isolated. (Or you may join them and make a dozen new friends.) In any event, a skillful captain will give the minority at least some of what it wants, so speak up early. *(Note: remember how to act if you, as the BGDC, are in the majority!)*

How much was that parking?



Do: Buy trip insurance. Don't: Rely on the benevolence of the travel gods.

Political unrest, major weather or the wide-ranging "acts of God" could prevent a trip. If the boat can't sail, the live-aboard company will probably offer a refund or put you on another cruise, but you might be out airfare and other expenses.

If the boat sails and you're not on it, however, don't count on getting a refund. Most live-aboard companies have restrictive cancellation policies,

because each slot represents such a large percentage of the week's revenue. Some will refund part or all of your fare if they are able to fill your room from a waiting list. Ask about the policy before you book.

The beauty of trip insurance is that it reimburses you for all covered losses regardless of the reason. It's highly recommended by all the live-aboard companies, and it costs just a small fraction (between four and seven percent of the package price) of the cruise. Some policies include additional benefits such as emergency medical care and evacuation.

Do: Carry dive insurance. Don't: Think DCS can't happen.

Most live-aboards visit remote locations and provide the freedom to dive as aggressively as you dare. Should you come up bent, you'll need air evacuation to the nearest recompression chamber. The bill for the chopper ride alone will dwarf the tab for the cruise--many times over. Dive insurance is cheap. For annual premiums ranging from \$45 to \$99, you can get ample coverage for dive accidents and emergency evacuation costs. Sure, DCS is rare, but it can happen to any diver. *(Note: some dive insurance carriers, such as DiveAssure, offer trip insurance as well.)*



Do: Mind your gear station. Don't: Jump someone else's.

Even a spacious dive deck can get crowded with 20 divers and a handful of crew milling about before the dive. You'll be assigned a station to store gear and suit up. Keeping your station orderly and organized will go a long way to smooth operation.

When you surface from a dive, don't be tempted to drop your empty tank off in the first spot near the dive deck. Clear the platform and walk your tank back to your station so the crew can swap or refill

Safety Corner Cont.

everyone's tanks in time for the next dive.

If you can, choose a dive station at the end of a row. You'll get more elbowroom on one side. Avoid the dive stations near the entry or exit point, as other divers will be constantly squeezing past.

Do: Take a specialty course. Don't: Miss the opportunity to improve your skills.

A good use of a live-aboard is to take a specialty course. Everything is right there, so you'll get through it quickly. Added bonus: You'll have the chance to practice your new skills on five dives a day.

Do: Take motion sickness medication, just in case. Don't: Think it can't happen to you.

A lot of day-boat divers can boast that they "never get seasick," but a live-aboard provides a whole different motion environment. You'll be at sea for a week and even the biggest, most stable boats will experience some motion. Motion sickness meds are a good precaution until you're sure you've got your "sea legs." Start taking Dramamine (or whatever) the night before the boat departs. You'll sleep better and get a head start against any seasickness.



Do: Heed the warnings on the marine head. Don't: Flush anything you haven't digested first.

Marine toilets clog easily. Don't try to flush tampons or great wads of toilet paper. Enough said.

Do: Laundry in the sink. Don't: Expect laundry service on board.

A travel-size bottle of Woolite or other cold-water detergent allows you to wash swimsuits in the sink. Ask the crew where you can hang your stuff to dry.

Do: Ask about ship-to-shore communications in advance. Don't: Assume your cell phone will work.

Some might ask if you really need to check e-mail in the middle of an away-from-it-all vacation, but emergencies do arise. Some boats are better equipped than others, but that e-mail or phone call might cost you a lot. Don't count on cell phones to work far out to sea.

Do: Be candid about your diving skills. Don't: Believe your buddy's boasting about how rugged the diving is.

Some live-aboards do visit remote and challenging dive sites, but almost all trips are designed for average divers. If you're concerned about sites being more than you can handle, ask before you book or seek appropriate training before the cruise.

Do: Your scuba homework. Don't: Ignore the briefing.

Research the area before you go, and not only the diving conditions but also the endemic marine life. Make a list of fish and coral you want to see and challenge yourself to find it. If you're in a hunt for rarities, follow the advice of the dive guides about where to go on a particular site.

Do: Make the most of your vacation. Don't: Feel pressured to make every dive if you don't want to.

Don't feel obligated to make every dive, just because you paid for it. You paid for a vacation, so read that novel instead if you feel like it. Listen to what your body wants to do.

It doesn't hurt to take a day off from diving, or at least an afternoon, at mid-week. You've been absorbing a lot of nitrogen and losing body heat and energy. A break will improve your enjoyment of the rest of the week.

And there's Maryanne



Safety Corner Cont.

Blue Blood or Blue Collar?

Q: What's the difference between the high-end (read: more expensive) live-aboards and the budget cruises?

A: Typically, the high-end live-aboards are larger boats with double cabins compared to the multiple berths on smaller, budget-oriented vessels.

On larger boats, bathrooms are typically en suite. There will be closets and drawers, but small ones. All cabins will have reading lights, most will have air conditioning and some will have individual TVs and VCRs.

"Blue collar" is one diver's term for the smaller, less luxurious live-aboards. The number of dives and the quality of food is not radically different from the high-end boats, but sleeping accommodations are usually bunkhouse style. Sometimes a couple dozen bunks--uppers and lowers--are arranged along a passageway. Sometimes they are grouped in three or four cabins. You sleep on one side of your bunk, next to your bags, and have a shelf or net for small stuff, and maybe a reading light. A curtain gives a hint of privacy. If you've seen Pullman sleepers in an old movie, you've got the picture. A few of these bunks may be smaller than others and odd-shaped--more reason to reserve ahead.

10 More Dos and Don'ts

Do:

- Research departure taxes, park fees, etc. before you go, so you're not surprised.
- Learn something about the local culture.
- Bring enough film and batteries. They may be available on-board, but they will be expensive.
- Bring ear plugs if you're a light sleeper. Some machinery noise is inevitable and your cabin mate might snore.
- Bring your snorkel. Keep it on hand for those once-in-a-lifetime encounters with whale sharks and mantas. Bubble noise will scare them off.

- Bring anything you might need from a pharmacy. There's no drugstore at sea.
- Process your first few rolls of film onboard to ensure camera settings and strobes are working. But ...

Don't:

- ... process all your film onboard. It's expensive and the chemicals may not be changed as often as they should be.
- Worry about sand flies, mosquitoes and no-see-ums. You'll be anchored offshore and out of their flying range.
- Worry about theft or crime. This is one resort surrounded by a moat! You won't need to lock doors or lockers. 🚩

Bluegrass Dive Club 2007-08 Calendar

October

9, Tuesday Club Dinner / Meeting
30, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

November

13, Tuesday Club Meeting (Elections)
27, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

December

15, Saturday Club Christmas Party

January 08

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

February

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

March

11, Tuesday Dinner Meeting
18, Tuesday E.C. Meeting
29, Saturday Utila Dive