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WINTER HOURS

**10:30 to 6:30 M to F
9:30 to 5 on Saturday**



New Mexico Scuba Center Newsletter



January 2012

As a full service dive center we measure our success through your continued safe and enjoyable diving. We provide professional instruction , quality equipment, and world wide dive adventures

Stacey and Si

Happy New Year!

We are looking forward to another year of fun ranging from bubbles and brats at the Blue Hole to some really great dive trips.

Our staff is changing again and we have new Dive Cons in training, Bobby, Jim, Robert and Bill.

Look for some interesting reading from them in the near future.

In the next several months we are rolling out special prices on dive packages accommodating all different diving levels and interests.

As a reminder, the annual Davey Jones Locker Challenge will be February 18th. As most know, the proceeds go to Dive Pirates

organizations. Michael Malersie, one of our newest Dive Pirates, is undergoing his certification training. We invite your attention to the article on page 2. He is one of our heroes.

As usual, we urge all to take advantage of our SSI continuing education programs. Have the Advanced Open Water, NITROX, and Stress and Rescue course made it on to your New Year's resolution. Of course, there are others from those to improve underwater photography skills to the more adventurous for those who wish to enter the world of Extended Range.

We look forward to seeing you soon. Stop by, chat, and share your adventures with us!



February 18 at the West Mesa Aquatic Center

Michael Malersie

We are training one of our local wounded soldiers' (Air Force) this year for Dive Pirates. Michael was born and raised in New Mexico and was serving our country at the time of his injury . The proceeds from the Davey Jones Locker Challenge will go to train and equip Michael and his brother –in –law Camren, to be his seeing eye fish. We are looking for sponsors, donations and participants to help make this a successful event. Please read more about Michael below.



While on foot patrol, the IED detonated killing three (two soldiers from the Army and one Airman from the US Air Force. Others were injured, including Michael who was injured critically. As he was wearing body armor and a helmet, the bulk of injury was to his head and face. He was unconscious and was immediately flown to Kandahar to remove shrapnel from his head. He regained consciousness and, according to his commander in Kansas, seemed to be in "good spirits" (joking with the medical staff) before the surgery. He was then sedated and they went to work on him. Post surgery he was unable to speak due to bandaging but was responsive to the doctors .They deter-

Michael was deployed from Fort Riley, KS to Afghanistan the first week of December 2009. He was stationed at FOB Wilson, near Kandahar. On January 3, 2010, while on a routine foot patrol, he was seriously injured by an IED. The same event claimed the lives of his Air Force companion and three soldiers from Fort Carson, CO. While most of Michael's physical injuries have healed, he has suffered the permanent loss of his eyesight.

mined he had a broken jaw and a number of shrapnel wounds but did not have any significant head injury. The worst news is that he has lost one eye and the prognosis for the other was not good. after stabilizing him from the first surgery he was flown to Bagram Air Base for another surgery. He was then sent to Germany for further observation, and surgery if necessary, and ultimately to the Walter Reed Army Hospital as soon as possible.

"Yes indeed everyone. I am taking up scuba diving. There is an organization out there called the Dive Pirates which is helping make it happen. They are a non profit foundation that take people like me, get them scuba certified, supply all the gear, and take us to the Cayman Islands for a week. Pretty amazing stuff."

Michael's water training started last week and he is a natural. He will be at the Davey Jones Locker Challenge and we may give him a shot at the puzzle.

"For those of you who maybe curious, Dive Pirates foundation works off of donations. That is how they can pay for all the gear and trips for the people they help. This organization has really helped me so I am helping them a little in return by posting their website here. Anyone can go and donate. There is also an option to donate specifically to one person, or in my case, my brother in law and I who are doing this together." www.divepirates.org

Michael has been stationed in San Antonio to start to work with other wounded service members. "The more help and support for our wounded the better off they will all be. I know first hand how much it can help and I want to help these other people coming home now. "



Michael 2 years after his injury

Christmas Poem

#

Twas the night before Christmas at the young father's house.

*His daughters were sleeping and so was his spouse.
He struggled to wrap the gifts he'd brought home.
He was late 'cause he couldn't go shopping alone.*

*A friend had helped with his trip to the store.
It really was hard to get out any more.
When finished, he slid the gifts under the tree.
The wrapping was flawed but he couldn't see.*

*He imagined the ornaments, shiny and bright,
With twinkling bulbs, multi-colored and light.
He knew what they looked like, he'd seen them before.
But that had been prior to going to war.*

*The last Christmas he'd seen was in 2009.
At a base in Afghanistan where he'd been assigned.
There weren't any presents, there wasn't a tree.
He was out on patrol with the Army you see.*

*What he didn't know then was in just a few days
He'd be hurt and lose friends as a fierce battle raged.
He'd wake up in a hospital back in the States.
Sightless and wondering what future awaits.*

*His body would heal, he'd learn how to live.
But he knew he had so much more he could give.
Committing himself and despite all his fear,
He's continued his planned military career.*

*In the midst of his journey he met a nice girl.
Decided to give being married a whirl.
And now he's a daddy with girls of his own.
Providing support and a comfortable home.*

*He works now with others, wounded like he.
Helping them cope with the wounds you can't see.
Encouraging, mentoring, lending a hand.
Sharing his message wherever he can.*

*And back now to Christmas where this tale did start.
See the young father with love in his heart.
Although he was blinded, his vision's still clear.
He'll make a good Christmas and Happy New Year*

SURFACE INTERVAL: GEAR

In the next several months NMSC will begin offering packages for dive equipment. Of course, this begs the question "what is a good deal?" An easy answer is price. But a more thoughtful answer is value for the price. Value is what gear does for your diving.

"The value proposition is what one ultimately derives from their gear in both function and safety."

When buying equipment, one should consider experience and dive objectives. For many of us recreational divers who will be traveling to the far away and exotic, we really want gear that is transportable, reliable, and serviceable as needs may dictate. By contrast, for technical or extended range diving our needs will be maximized to the dive environment and gear matched to our greater experience.

When going to new sites, it would be good to know if our gear is consistent with the location. In this newsletter and subsequent, we will keep a *Nav Log* of sites many of our readers have visited. Comments are subjective, of course, and we invite your comments and additions.

In general terms, let us consider the range of diving and how that might match gear.

Balanced to fun divers (see the Nav Log table) as well as new divers will probably want good gear but not the highly technical equipment characteristic of extended range divers. While the mask and snorkel usually cover a range of diving, the fins should be optimized for comfort and efficiency.

A dive computer may not be necessary for the infrequent diver, but realize one will be diving either the tables or a rented computer. A better answer, would be to get a moderately priced dive computer (wrist or console). Doing so opens the number of dives (quantity and quality) one can make using equipment they are familiar with.

The buoyancy compensator (BC) should match the dive conditions. If one will consistently dive in warm waters, a travel BC with 20 pounds of lift may be just the ticket. For colder conditions, a heavier 35 or 50 pound lift capacity should be considered.

Regulators, piston or diaphragm, offer features such as ports, functionality (e.g. balanced), and weight. Again, for new divers a modest regulator can provide more than enough capability.

Exposure suits, wet or dry, clearly must match the environment. Prices are consistent across many brands, so fit and function should be the drivers.

As divers mature their experience and interests grow leading to gear more suited to the avid and serious diver. The dive computers become more capable in terms of features such as wireless and air integration (replaces the submersible pressure gauge). For those diving in currents or wrecks a stiffer fin may be part of the new suite. Even the mask can be different from the more common styles to ones designed for photographers as an example. In fact, we have a mask provides a heads

up display of the dive computer, no looking down for your instruments.

Even as one's equipment needs expand and change, hang on to the older gear. The first dive computer can still serve as a back up computer, which is a really good idea on those faraway trips.

In conclusion, when shopping for the gear consider where one is their in experience and what their diving ambitions may be. A good dive center will help you get matched up. Online shopping can offer reduced prices from stores, but consider the history of purchased equipped, if it is gray market (perhaps no warranty), and dive center support. The value proposition is what one ultimately derives from their gear in both function and safety.



Bubbles and Brats
Every 3rd Sunday, weather permitting

Reflections



Grand Turk

David Olson

So my wife said, its my birthday let's go somewhere fun. After some re-research, we settled up on Grand Turk. A quiet island in the Turk and Caicos, it has the reputation for clear water and some really neat wall dives. The sandy bottom with some coral heads drops precipitously from around 40 to over 5000 feet just 150 yards offshore Just what we needed for an early November dive.

Getting to Grand Turk from Albuquerque requires commitment. We ended up over nighting in Caicos and flew into Grand Turk the next morning. Bohio Resort is a short taxi ride. Our air fare from Caicos and taxi were part of of the resort package.

Arriving around 9:30 AM, we were ready to dive. Or so we thought. Bohio is located on the southern shore, which is *normally* the leeward shore. As luck would have it, a tropical depression way to the north resulted in a normally pond like sea being churned by southern wind. Diving was not in the cards. The next day was a little better, and we dove twice in the morning. Needless to say, the shallow water visibility wasn't too



hot. Nonetheless, as we swam to the wall through swim thru's our efforts were rewarded with some really nice walls.

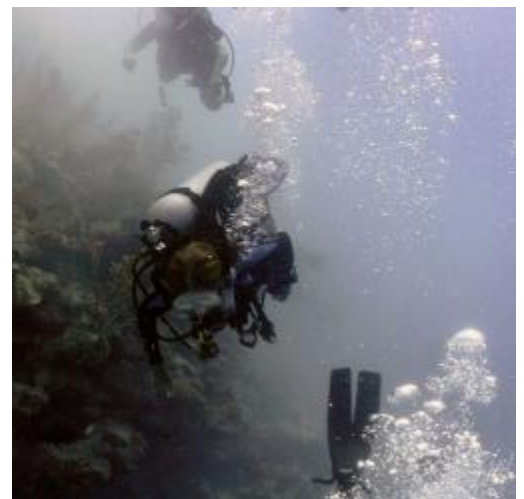
The wind conditions were very unusual for Grand Turk, but persisted through our stay. We lost two days when conditions were just too much for our small dive boat. But our dives were fun, and the potential for some really great dives was obvious.

Making the best of it, we walked into the small town of Cockburn and were rewarded with its authenticity and the quaint charm of a British protectorate. The resort accommodations were excellent, and the included breakfast and lunch were outstanding as well as very filling. Dinner, not included, was also very good but a tad pricey. There are a couple of alternatives in Cockburn.

On balance, it was a beautiful trip and one we may do again—



Turk head cactus and island namesake



without the wind! Highly recommended for couples who want to kick back, dive, and enjoy the charm of a small island.

New Certified

Open Water: Arron Orsak,

Stress & Rescue: Bobby Jones

Master Diver: Bobby Jones, James Wilson

**Congratulations and
Happy Diving!**

“SSI offers a very broad selection of continuing education courses such as NITROX, Advanced Open Water, Stress & Rescue, and Dive Leader

Continuing Education this month

Stress & Rescue

Enriched Air Nitrox

First Aid / CPR / O2 Provider



Adaptive Events & Classes

January 6—8, 2012: Dive Leader & Buddy class—Atlanta GA

January 20-22, 2012 : Dive Leader & Buddy class—Albuquerque, NM

February 18, 2012: Davey Jones Locker Challenge

March 30– April 1, 2012: Dive Leader & Buddy Class—Albuquerque, NM

Equipment

**STAY TUNED FOR MORE
DETAILS**

Nav Log



- Avid: heck five dives, let's go for six and darn the currents; I love the challenge and have the experience to match.
- Serious: I like sucking air off a tank, but the fresh stuff is nice too. A little challenging is ok, but within reason.
- Balanced: Diving is cool, but I would like to get the whole island experience. A good dive is not too deep, not too fast (current), and not the focus of my existence.
- Fun: Diving is only a small part of the larger adventure. I am new to the sport and would like to take it one step at a time.

Location	Attribute	Comment
Dominica	Balanced	Great coral, wall dives, and interesting marine life. Dive Dominica dock is at the Castle Comfort dock. Good dive masters and unlimited tanks for shore diving. Island adventures are incredible and going into Roseau is worth it (rustic and authentic). Trip to Boiling Lake: do it <i>once</i> , then brag about it.
Costa Rica	Balanced to Serious	Dives were ok but coral was nearly non-existent and visibility was mediocre. Dives at Bat Island and Black Rock were serious, and there were Bull Sharks. The resort hotel was really nice, and despite the taxi it was worth going to town for dinner. Trip to adventure park was a plus. Rich Coast diving is professionally run, but comprised of some new dive leads.
Grand Cayman	Serious	Some really sweet dives, and some deep to over 100 feet at the abyss. Good coral and sea life. Dock diving with unlimited air was pretty good. Dive leaders were very professional. The resort is superb, but away from town, hence daily topside restricted to pool side (very pleasant experience).
Palau	Avid to Serious	One of world's great dive sites. While Koror the capitol is a modern, fair sized city the good diving is out ways and a live aboard is the key. Currents and deep dives are the norm. It is worth it, but diver's should recognize there are challenges. Dive masters knew the sites, but situational awareness and buddies were essential.
Truk Lagoon [Chuuk]	Avid to Serious	The Japanese ghost fleet from WW II is the attraction. Over sixty vessels and aircraft lay in the lagoon. Most dives tended to be deep by rec standards (around 70 to 100 feet), and deeper wrecks are only for extended range divers. Chuuk dive masters were superb and uncanny in their ability to get us to the wrecks and lead us (some hull penetration). Resort is well run, clean, but showing some age.
Cozumel	Serious to Fun	Cozumel is the low hanging fruit. Excellent access from the US. Hotels are modern and comfortable. Dock diving isn't too hot, but there are some excellent dive sites, Drift diving is fun! Dive shops are professionally managed.
Bonaire	Fun to balanced	Great place to get away too, and good spot for most divers. Topside is ok, but it is a small island. Buddy Dive is a nice place to stay.

Location	Attribute	Comment
Florida	Serious to Fun	The dives tend to be deeper (90 foot range). Some coral, lots of fish, and wrecks. Currents are common and may run around 1 knot. Water temperature is around 82 above 40 feet, but below 50 feet there are thermoclines and temperatures will drop to mid to high seventies. Goliath groupers, morays, reef fish, turtles, and so on. As for topside, welcome to Ft. Lauderdale!
Guadalupe Island	Avid	Best described as exciting, and about as close as you can get without drawing hazardous duty pay. The live aboard was managed well and ship shape. Divers enter cage on surface. One located at surface, and another suspended approximately 30 feet below. Air provided by Snuba. Recommended for those who want to see Great White Sharks.
Grand Turk	Balanced	The smaller island in the Turks and Caicos, it is at the top of the abyss. Only 150 yards from shore, the sandy bottom drops from 40 feet to over 5000 feet. Nice coral, great wall dives and swim thru's, and fish (including sharks). Dives start at the beachfront in a skiff and short ride out to sites. Roll off entry. The island is quiet and walks to small town enjoyable. Staff and food at resort are outstanding. Go for the included breakfast and lunch. Air connections from ABQ require two days travel to and from (overnight in Caicos).



Spider shrimp taken near Lynn's reef in Florida



The Great White Shark, near Guadalupe Island Mexico.
Mike Vergino

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Remember Scuba Diving is not just an adventure of a lifetime, but a

nmscuba.com

We are looking for contributors and encourage you to share stories, travel notes, and/or photos.

Photos courtesy of Stacey Minton and various others

Upcoming Dives

Barbados: February 4—11, 2012
\$1975.00 + air

Curacao: April 28—May 5th 2012
\$2,725.00

Florida Wreck Trek: July 14—22, 2012
\$1,725.00 + air

Hawaii—Kona: September 21—28, 2012
\$2,295.00

BVI: November 3, 2012
\$ TBA



Bonaire

Call us for details!