

BRANDON SCUBA CLUB

Volume 11, Number 1

March, 2007

Well here it is March already, time for another newsletter. First I would like to thank Ryan for the pictures on this page from the Roatan dive trip as well as all the other information he supplied for this newsletter.

I would also like to congratulate the people who were elected to this years executive. I have listed them below.

President

- Ryan Bartlette

Vice President

- Jamie Lobert

Secretary

- Al Patterson

Events

Jason Lussier &

Kris Bowman

Safety

- Brian Kooistra

Newsletter

- Ed Burridge

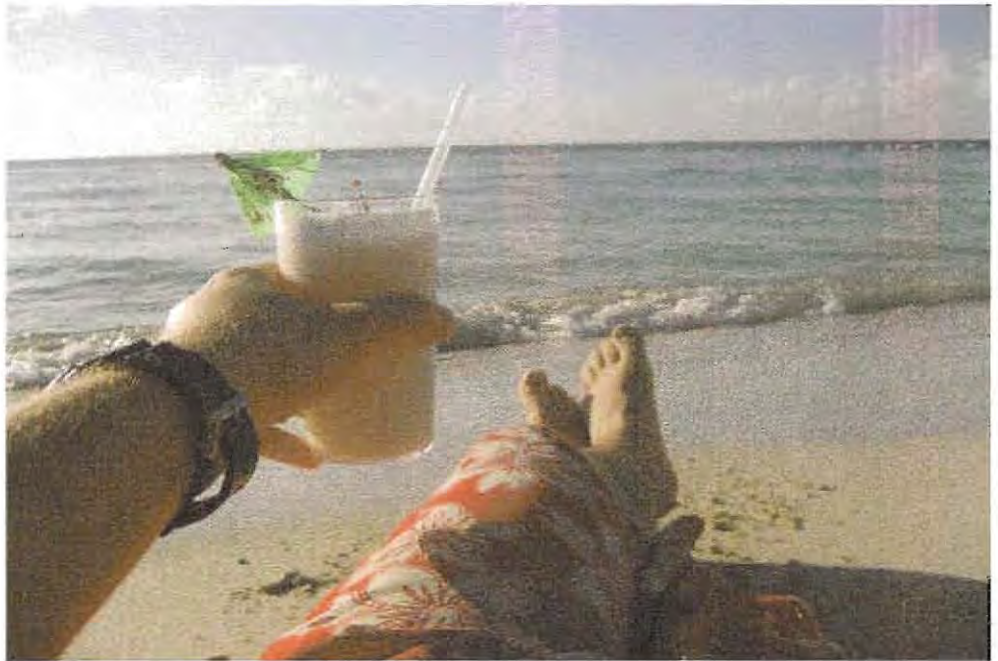
Treasurer

- Up for grabs

Take a look at the upcoming events and try to make time to come out to some. Our next event is the club meeting being held at Al Patterson's place at 7:30 next Wednesday.

If anyone else has been away diving this winter and have a few pictures for our next newsletter I would appreciate it if you would email me a few.

Dive safe,
Ed Burridge
burridge@mts.net



Brandon Scuba Club Meeting

7:30 PM March 21, 2007

At the Patterson's Home

21 Canada Crescent Brandon, MB



A Message From The President...

Hello All! Hope you had a good winter. I was fortunate to be able to get wet over the winter, but just like the rest of you, am looking forward to that ice breaking! In the past few months, we had a great Christmas party in Shilo, voted in some new positions during the general elections and are now looking towards the future. I hope to build on the successes of last years events, try and raise awareness of the club all while having a little fun! For my first act as president, you'll find enclosed Brandon Scuba Club Stickers, featuring the logo we selected. Whether you personalize your own items, or post it on a trip, the choice is yours. Hope to see you all in the water!

Ryan Bartlette

BSC President

Hey Folks:

Kris Here, I'm the new events coordinator for the Brandon Scuba Club, and I look forward to seeing you all out at the different club functions this summer. Anyways I just wanted to bring any of you unlucky people that weren't able to come out to the club Christmas party up to speed on the good times that were had. First of all I would like to thank all the people that put so much time and effort into this event, and who ever brought the perogies. Once the event actually started, there were cocktails and socializing which was nice because it gave people the chance to exchange stories about there latest dive, and make connections for this coming season. The meal itself was amazing, it fell together just perfectly, as if everyone new just what to bring, it was great. After the dance started there were different games and activities for prizes, that were quite humourous, but I must admit I didn't exactly like the idea of being tied to Brian Kooistra (still having nightmares), but we did win. As usual the yearly gift exchange got quite heated. By the way, how are you enjoying Mr. and Miss Santa Clause in the bathtub Troy? The DJ for the evening was Roy Abbott, who did a really good job, and put up with wacky requests. Ryan Bartlette stood in as the MC, but everything seemed to run fairly smoothly all night with out much interference. Once again thanks to all the people that worked so hard on this event, and I hope that next years will go off just as good. But on the note of getting everyone together I would just like you to know that we are looking at having a get together right before the season starts to renew old dive friendships and possibly make some new dive partners. Details haven't been decided yet, so keep your ears open, and we'll let you know.

Kris Bowman

Events Co-coordinator

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Note from the President

I was going to send in an article on the importance of the no-touch policy, but given recent events this article caught my eye for a second time. Enjoy.

Dr. Michael Rosenberg, an *Undercurrent* subscriber from Providence, RI, recently toured the Galapagos hyperbaric chamber on Puerto Ayora. He told us he was "upset when I showed them my DAN Card and asked if it would cover a series of chamber treatments. They said the reimbursement didn't come close to covering their expense."

Rosenberg e-mailed Divers Alert Network (DAN) for an explanation and when he got no response, he contacted *Undercurrent*. National Baromedical Services manages claims for DAN. We spoke with NBS president Dick Clark, who says they process about 200 claims a month stemming from about 70 in water cases, which include multiple claims such as evacuation to a major medical center for additional therapies and diagnosis. A typical patient undergoes 2.25 hyperbaric treatments before being released. DAN America says its insurers have paid out more than \$20 million in claims to members and treatment facilities.

Based on the average costs of chamber treatments in remote non hospital facilities like the one in the Galapagos, NBS has created a reimbursement schedule for "reasonable and customary" charges. This is the amount they offer the facility. Laurie Painter of Vicencia & Buckley, PADI's agent for dive accident insurance, says that usual and customary rate schedules are common among health and travel insurance policies. She said she has never seen an insurance company deny a decompression bill because it was more than the reasonable and customary amount.

In response, Dr. Rosenberg told us that "as a medical provider, it doesn't much matter what I charge. The insurer pays what they want!" One concern is that if usual and customary reimbursements don't cover a particular chamber operator's costs, the operator may be unable to remain open. Chambers must always have personnel available for an emergency, and they have fixed monthly expenses, whether they are treating injured divers or not. Some even treat local divers who collect fish or lobsters, most of whom are poor and uninsured, for no cost.

The Dallas-based (Sub-aquatic Safety Services), which has chambers in Nassau, Thailand, Cozumel, and – you guessed it – the Galapagos, has stopped accepting DAN insurance. In a press release dated January 9, they said that "certain facilities will no longer accept the DAN America insurance as a payment method for hyperbaric chamber and medical services. . . . It is hard enough to maintain the facilities available 24/7 . . . but with the underpayment and nonpayment of bills, some over a year old by DAN America, the chambers feel obligated to the diving public to remain open.

To that end, chambers can no longer tolerate unpaid services, and since the only insurer in the world who has refused to settle our bills is DAN America, . . . some SSS chambers have no other choice but to ask DAN America patients to pay for services when rendered and file the claims themselves with DAN America for any possible reimbursement." In fact, Mauricio Moreno, owner of SSS, told *Undercurrent* that they have sued DAN over alleged pay issues.

However, he pointed out that the network is still "duty bound to render services despite a patient's ability to pay." NBS's Clark told *Undercurrent* that SSS may charge three to five times DAN's reasonable and customary rates. But, two competitors, Painter and Peter Meyer, broker for DiveSafe (which insures industry professionals and divers certified by some agencies), told *Undercurrent* that they, in fact, find charges from the SSS network to be in line with other chambers.

Many chambers that charge more than DAN's reimbursement have an "affiliation fee," which they offer local operators. They may give preferred treatment to paid-up divers from an affiliated operation by waiving their dive policy's deductible (if they have one) no questions asked. Dive operators

assess the chamber affiliation fee on traveling divers. For example, this month's Galapagos travel reviewer on the *Star Dancer* was assessed \$35 for chamber fees. Many resorts tack on a dollar or two per tank.

DAN CEO Dan Orr confirmed they have been in court with SSS for months, but are still trying to work out a solution that's right for DAN members as well as the industry. DAN has issued a statement saying "that reasonable and customary means the usual charges of similar chambers" and argues that Moreno's fees are significantly higher than similar chambers. As to the allegations of slow pay, Orr told *Undercurrent*, "Questions are asked in any billing, and this does slow down the process.

We think we're doing the best job we can." DAN says that they "will continue to take care of divers in need. . . . No DAN member who purchases dive accident insurance through DAN should be at risk of not being covered."

It's against medical ethics for a medical facility such as a hyperbaric chamber to refuse emergency treatment before they can ascertain the ability of a diver to pay. Clark advises that if a DAN-insured diver is presented with a bill after treatment, he or she should submit it to DAN for reimbursement.

NBS then adjudicates the shortfall with the facility. Rarely, a patient may have to advance payment out of his own pocket. Clark told us of one diver who was not allowed to leave a chamber facility without paying the \$15,000 shortfall. The diver put it on his credit card and contacted DAN as

soon as he got home. They wired full reimbursement to him the next day.

And then there's the case reported in the January *Undercurrent*, when Lloyds TSB turned down a claim from a bent English diver because he had exceeded the 30-meter limit stipulated in the policy's small print. Egyptian authorities wouldn't let him leave the country until they secured payment. So, before traveling to a remote location, make sure your credit card limit is high enough to cover emergency medical expenses, regardless of what insurance you carry.

Larry Clinton

Fin Myths

Jim Grier, a researcher in the Department of Biological Sciences at North Dakota State University and a tester for ScubaLab, a team of independent testers who produce objective evaluations of scuba equipment for *Scuba Diving Magazine*, debunks several myths or "old dive's tales" regarding fins:

Some types (paddle, split or others) are better in current than others.

From theory, tests and experience, this is not true. I have dived with and compared many different fins in strong ocean and river currents. Fins that do better or worse in calm water will do the same in current. It is all relative to the diver moving through the water, whether the water itself is moving or not.

Split fins require a different, narrower kick style.

A narrower kick does better for all fins, because it reduces drag due to less leg surface area against the water movement.

Split fins are not as good in alternative kicks or maneuverability as paddle fins.

The same principle applies to all performance characteristics that have been tested: it depends on which specific fins. High performance by any given set of fins for one characteristic, such as flutter kick speed, probably does not necessarily mean that the same fins are good for other characteristics.

Some fin types stir up silt more than others.

This is partially true. Assuming that one is not stirring up silt through direct contact, silt is stirred up by water movement from the fins. Most water movement comes off the ends of the fins; thus, it depends mostly on which way any fins are pointing. If the fins and the water coming off are angled toward the bottom, then they will stir up silt. However, water turbulence also rolls off the sides of fins and can stir up silt. Split fins, by directing more water backward through the split, with less spilling off the sides, create less silting from side turbulence. On the other hand, because split fins direct more water off the end of the fins (as fins are supposed to do), if they happen to be directed downward toward the silt, well . . . the first problem (directing thrust water toward the substrate) is accentuated, and as a result, greater silting can occur. So, it depends on which type of fin (split or paddle) is involved and the angle of the kick relative to the substrate. (and obviously, how close one is to the substrate).

Reverse Dive Profiles: Fact or Fiction?

In a 1999 a workshop organized by The Smithsonian Institution and sponsored by DAN, DEMA (Dive Training Magazine) and several other organizations, the participants challenged the traditional view that both multilevel and repetitive dives should be undertaken from deep to shallow. The standard "forward dive profile" entails making the deepest dive or the deepest part of the dive first of repetitive dives, so the dive or dives become shallower. However, the participants promoted the concept of a "reverse dive profile," diving from shallow to deep, either in multi-level diving or repetitive dives. While sport divers rarely, if ever, have a reason to conduct a reverse profile — which is not to say they don't do them — scientific divers often find them useful.

While there was no consensus at the workshop, a compromise led to the reverse profiles being approved, though with specific limitations: a depth limit of 40 meters sea water (msw), a differential between dive depths of no more than 12 msw, and no decompression dives.

The belief that forward and reverse profiles are analogous and require comparable decompression is based mainly on the assumption that, given the same depths and durations, both produce the same load of inert gas dissolved in the tissues — despite the order of the exposures. This concept is inherent in many decompression computer algorithms, especially those that deal with dissolved inert gas loads, as opposed to induced-bubble models. However, there appears to be no experimental confirmation that reverse and forward profiles can safely have the same decompression requirements.

Research Called For

Three Australian researchers, S. McIntnes, C. Edmonds, and M. Bennett, designed a study to test the hypothesis that there is no difference for decompression sickness risk between the forward and reverse profiles, as they apply to multi-level and/or repetitive dives. They selected two groups of actual guinea pigs and subjected them to dives within the recommended workshop limits, confirming the profiles with an Aladin Pro dive computer in the chamber. For multi-level dives, the initial forward profiles were 36m for 30min, 24m for 30min and 12m for 30min. Ascents and descents were at nine meters/min. The reverse profile began at 12m, then dropped to 24m and 36m. For repetitive dives, the initial forward profile was 30 msw (meters of seawater) for 30 minutes, 20m for 30 minutes and 10msw for 30 min, with surface intervals of 15 minutes. The series was reversed for reverse profile dives. In a second set of forward dive profiles, depth and time were increased, with the subsequent series just depth profile was reversed.

Results

During the standard forward dive profile, no animal showed signs of DCS. However, in the reverse multilevel profile, six animals showed DCS symptoms, a statistically significant difference. All six were immediately placed on oxygen and recompressed. Two were dead before treatment could be instituted. At 42 minutes into the treatment table all six were dead. The experimenters ran two forward dive profile experiments, and no animal showed signs of DCS. However, in the first reverse repetitive dive profile, one animal died. In the second, this time at greater depths and longer, six animals suffered severe DCS and three died. The difference between the two groups was statistically significant.

Discussion

The researchers chose the dive profiles to comply with the workshop recommendations, but they shortened the time for guinea pigs so that their exposure would approach the no-decompression limits. As there is a direct relationship between DCS susceptibility of a species and its body mass, guinea pigs have a much lower DCS susceptibility than humans. So, "human" depth limitations should

carry much lower risks of DCS for guinea pigs. Despite the modifications in the profiles, six guinea pigs in the reverse multilevel profile died rapidly with severe DCS, unresponsive to either surface oxygen or to oxygen recompression. The catastrophic results show a substantial difference in the physiological processes involved in inert gas handling between forward and reverse profiles in multi-level dives. That none of the pigs in the forward profile were affected during the repetitive dive, indicated that the dives approximated a no-decompression sequence. Nevertheless, the mirror image reverse profile produced one death, and extended profiles resulted in another catastrophic increase in reverse profile casualties. The researchers were clearly disappointed in the deaths of the animals, noting that the planned oxygen was inadequate treatment. "We had not anticipated the enormous difference that was demonstrated by the no-decompression exposure of the FDP and the same exposure in reverse."

Conclusion

Because there are so many potential combinations of repetitive dives, no experimental model can predict the overall risk of DCS from reverse profiles. But, the incidence and severity of DCS in the experiments showed a substantial difference in the physiological processes involved in inert gas handling between forward and reverse profiles in both multi-level and repetitive dives.

Reverse profiles applied to multi-level and repetitive diving are not the mirror image of forward profiles and do not carry equal decompression obligations.

"We advise against advocating reverse profiles, until the limitations of this format are determined more factually and the decompression requirements are redefined."

McInnes, C. Edmonds, M. Bennett, Department of Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine, Prince of Wales Hospital, Sydney, Consultant Diving Physician, University of NSW, Sydney, Australia. Reverse Dive Profiles, The making of a myth; dive profiles. The making of a myth: South Pacific Underwater Medical Society Journal, 2005; 35(3):139-143.

What Happens When Divers Feed Fish

Although the feeding of fishes and other marine wildlife by recreational divers and snorkelers presents problems for marine wildlife and ecosystems, the practice has become increasingly common. Dive operators, for example, often use feeding to concentrate naturally dispersed wildlife in an effort to facilitate client viewing or to promote interaction between divers and marine life, while divers and snorkelers operating from private vessels often engage in feeding in misguided attempts to "help" or befriend wild animals. In either case, the practice negatively affects both natural resources and diver safety. Wildlife management officials have long recognized the negative impact that feeding wild vertebrates has on both the fed animals and their ecosystems. Through classic conditioning, animals who are fed regularly learn to associate the presence of people with readily available food. This typically leads to a host of problems that have been observed across the spectrum of feeding-habituated species, including bears, deer, coyotes, alligators, and marine mammals. Sharks and bony fishes have been shown to be as adept as mammals in acquiring and retaining conditioned responses, and, as the popularity of fish feeding soars, the same problems that plague other fed vertebrates increasingly affect marine fishes as well. The resulting problems are diverse. Often, the foods provided are not foods the fishes eat naturally or even foods they have the ability to process. A 2004 report on the Maldives states that usually "the food fed to these fish is radically different from their normal diet. As a result,

some very large humphead wrasses died after being fed dozens of eggs, while many soldierfish choked to death after wolfing down chicken bones. Large basses have been seen to tear little sacks of food right out of the scuba diver's hand, devouring both sack and contents." Even a more "typical" diet, such as frozen fish, may prove lethal; for example, the deaths of feeding-habituated wild dolphins have been linked to bacteria associated with spoiled fish. Feeding also disrupts or alters normal distribution, undance, and behavior of marine fishes. The state of Hawaii concluded that fish feeding "changes the species composition in areas where the practice is done regularly, and fish become much more aggressive." Some species form disorganized swarms that surround and aggressively approach, follow, and even nip at divers. Normally reclusive species like sharks, moray eels, and groupers may approach and follow divers, continuing their pursuit even as divers surface, a behavior which makes them easy targets for underwater hunters and poachers. Environments are equally impacted. Benthic habitat damage (including loss of gorgonian corals) has been attributed to divers feeding fishes in Mediterranean marine parks, while in Australia, marine park managers say that "the unnatural addition of organic matter and nutrients to reef waters may have adverse environmental impacts, e.g., damage to coral caused by excessive growth of algae." Hawaiian MPA managers reported that fish feeding both changed a fish community and degraded water quality. "The feedings caused a naturally balanced ecosystem to turn into something of a petting zoo . . . so much [so] that it is no longer considered a 'normal' reef ecosystem." The feeding of wildlife is expressly prohibited in all US and Canadian parks and wildlife refuges as well as in many local jurisdictions, yet the practice continues at many popular dive sites that are not under the umbrella of such legal safeguards. In the water, millions of divers and snorkelers worldwide interact with marine wildlife each year, and we cannot ignore their cumulative impact. Whether it's a baited shark rodeo or handing dinner rolls to a sergeant major, more than 100 years of lessons learned the hard way tell us that feeding wildlife is a losing proposition -- for fed animals, for people who seek to observe wildlife, and for our natural ecosystems. Conscientious divers who care about marine ecosystems should not be party to feeding fish. If they are, the result will only be further destruction of natural marine habitats everywhere.

—The author, Dr. William Alevizon, is a marine biologist with the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Roatan

I have to admit it. Leaving a Winnipeg International Airport at -48 degrees Celsius was rather nice. After a bit of a sleepover at Pearson, it was a five hour direct flight to Roatan, where the surface temperature was +27, or "hotter than the hubs of hell" as Ed so elegantly put it.

We were picked up by Michelle, and settled in at the Cabanas Sol Del Caribe. We were immediately embraced by the island easy going way of life. We rented a truck where remarkably having open liquor isn't much of an issue, but smoking while driving or driving without a shirt on is a fineable offense. Welcome to the island!!

We managed to get quite a bit of diving in, through Reef Gliders in West End. Alex, who some of you may know, was our DM for the duration of the trip. The vis was anywhere from about 50-80 feet, which is not bad for that time of year, but definitely beats the heck out of clear lake. SST was around 81 F, so enough to make a few of us a little chilly by the end of the dive (my apologies to those who did ice dives during this period).

What impressed me about Roatan was the diversity and health, particularly in coral formations. I've never seen so many sea fans or barrel sponges so big you could sit in them (we didn't, of course). It's a great place for macro life. I especially enjoyed finding the flamingo toes, neck crabs and various smaller shrimps. Although not known for its large pelagics, we did manage to see quite a few large Nassau groupers, as well as some barracudas, and a sea turtle on one dive. We did a night dive where plenty of enormous channel crabs were about, as well as Caribbean spiny lobster. A few were lucky enough to spot some octopuses, as well. I think by far the most memorable dive has to be the shark dive we did at Las Palmas. At best count, there were about 22 Caribbean grey reef sharks there that day, notwithstanding all the other fish come to check things out, and one very inquisitive green moray. There is something humbling about gliding around, and looking beside you to find a 9 foot shark in your slipstream.

Like any trip, there is always an element of unexpected happenings, but I think this one caught most of us off guard. On the shark dive, Steph came down with a mild case of DCS. The dive fulfilled all safety regulations, a 70 foot dive for around 35 minutes. The ascent was exceptionally slow up a mooring line, to the 15 foot mark where we had at least a five minute deco stop, satisfying all computers around. The doctors believe it was largely a factor of dehydration. So let it be known, any factor is magnified at depth. Steph is fine now, but we definitely learned a couple lessons about DAN and insurance. Firstly, most of their lines aren't open on the weekends. We spent about two hours getting the right number. Secondly, some chambers do not accept DAN America, or fully. In this case, we were required to put up 20% up front, to be re-imbursed by DAN later, to the tune of about \$1200 USD. Luckily Ron was there to rescue a starving student.

Now, being the gracious gentlemen I am, I decided to leave Steph to her chamber fun and venture over to the island of Utila to meet my friend Kyle. After a week of trying to contact him, I still had no idea where he was, or even positive identification he was on the island but I thought I'd try anyways. Turns out I found him in under an hour, welcome to the island again! Utila is a much smaller, flatter island but boasts a more backpacker feel to

it. I went there and was lucky enough to see a whale shark (around 35 footer at best estimate) and dolphins on the north side in their natural habitat. I'm glad I went! Other activities included making the trek to the infamous hole in the wall, which had the ingenious idea of "to go" drinks. As well, shopping in Coxen hole, enjoying the beach in west bay, seeing macaws and monkeys at gumbalimba park, and going off the beaten trail to experience a few things as well. And what would a trip to Roatan be without having some bojangles chicken. All in all it was a very successful trip and plenty of good diving to be had. If you're looking for something different in the Caribbean, definitely put the bay islands on your to do list!

Ryan Bartlette

Upcoming Events

March 21st, 2007 – Next Brandon scuba club meeting. It will be held at the Pattersons, 21 Canada Crescent here in Brandon. The meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. We are electing the treasurer at this meeting. Be sure to bring your receipt for your Brandon Scuba Club apparel to get reimbursed!

March 24th, 2007 – Ice diver for certified at West Hawk lake. This event is being put on by MUC. Winnipeg dive shops are conducting an Ice Dive Certification. For those interested, contact Brent Shabbits at diverbrent@gmail.com

May 21st, 2007 – Putting in the buoys at Glenn Beag. The official start to the dive season around these parts. A few of us will be going up that weekend, If you are interested email bartletter@westman.wave.ca

July 21st, 2007 – Parks day dive. We are looking to build on the success of last years crack the safe dive. More on that to follow.

August 11th/12th, 2007 – Annual Spearfishing competition put on by the Dauphin Dolphins at Childs Lake. This one is always a great one. Registrations will be sent out to those interested in the coming months.