

Sea Swells LOG



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SCUBA SPORTS CLUB ♦ JULY 2005

THE ANCHOR LINE

By Gregg Macaulay

There has been a great deal of discussion going on between club members this past month concerning the different training agencies and I thought that I would use this month's Anchor Line to put in my two cents.

As a PADI Course Director I am obviously "PRO PADI". Having had the opportunity to work with instructors and Divemasters from all the different certifying agencies, it is the individual that makes a good divemaster or instructor not the agency. Every agency has its great Instructors but it will also have its so-so Instructors. Like every profession, there are minimum training requirements to reach any level in diving. Not everyone can be the top in their class. This does not mean that a so-so instructor can not develop into that Great Instructor.

All Basic Open Water courses are based on minimum training standards that are put out by the Recreational scuba diving training council. The individual training agencies then decide what other skills or training they want to include in that course. It is up to the individual instructor to add what is required to dive in the local environment along with their diving experiences to help motivate and excite their students about diving.

When it comes to training it will most likely come down to convenience. What dive store is close by and what training agency do they represent? Most towns can only sustain one dive store so unless you are willing to travel, that is the store you will frequent. In picking a training agency, it also depends on what you have planned. If you plan to do all your training with the dive shop you picked, no problem. If you plan to do your pool and classroom locally then travel to complete your certification, you need to make sure that there will be someone that represents that agency. This is why many

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TSSC SUMMER PICNIC AND BARBEQUE

Don't forget to purchase your tickets for the TSSC picnic!

Date: Saturday, July 23

Time: Noon to 6 pm

Place: Todd's Point,
Greenwich, CT

Cost: \$10 / person (children 5
and under free)

Included: Barbeque stands,
soda, swimming, croquet, lots
of fun, good time

Not Included: Charcoal,
lighter fluid, sunscreen,
beach chairs, frisbees,
hamburgers, hotdogs, etc

Deadline to Purchase Tickets:

By mail, Friday July 8, or at
the TSSC meeting, Wednes-
day July 13

**See page 3 for
info on how to
purchase tickets**

ANCHOR LINE, CONTINUED

instructors represent different agencies so that they can accommodate their customers.

I saw a comment in the discussion that claims some open water students exit their courses with no rescue skills. Hello, what do you think all the skills in an open water course are all about? The answer is: **SELF RESCUE and ASSISTED RESCUE**. Learning to put together your gear, check everything over and then doing a buddy check before entering the water is self rescue. There have been cases of Technical divers dying in 4 feet of water just because they forgot to turn on their air. Learning to monitor your air, breathe from a free flowing regulator, breathe off an alternate air source, practicing a controlled emergency ascent, establishing positive buoyancy at the surface with and without air are all self rescue skills.

Every agency has their own philosophy on when students should be taught certain skills. I buy into the philosophy that new divers learn best when they are “ready” to learn. As an open water student, they are already being given so much information that it is unreasonable to think they will also be ready to assist other divers. It has never been any agency’s intention to have divers completing their open water course to leave thinking they know everything and are ready for any dive situation. They are certified to dive in conditions exactly like those they just completed their training dives in.

I have made a point of making sure every student and instructor taking a course from me understands that their diving education is an ongoing progression that continues through their whole dive career. An open water diver that just completed their dives in a quarry with 30 foot visibility is not ready to make an 80’ wreck dive in the ocean off New York or in the Sound. How is the student going to get the knowledge and skills to make this dive safely? There is of course trial and error. It makes more sense for that student to gain these skills under supervision of a professional. That is the whole purpose of the Mis-named Advanced Open Water course, it should be called Open Water 2. The course allows these new divers a chance to gain knowledge and skills to perform deep, navigation, night and two other types of dives in a controlled situation. Any other profession charges for its services, I don’t understand why the dive in-

dustry should be any different. For those of you that feel that this is just a way to get more money from your students, then I would encourage you to become an instructor and charge or not charge your students, what ever you want. But to let these same students go off without providing them this additional training and allowing them to possibly become injured due to lack of skills and knowledge on that deep wreck dive is criminal.

Now your new divers have a minimum of nine dives under their belts and are starting to feel more comfortable in the underwater world. This is the time to teach them some additional skills that can be used to lend assistance to other divers in trouble. The rescue course is intended to teach recreational divers skills to be able to lend assistance to someone in trouble without endangering themselves. At the very least, it allows the diver to discover their limitations and where they would be of most use during a rescue situation. The most important rescue skill learned is that almost all the rescues covered in the course could have been avoided. By using observation, pre-planning, and your most important piece of dive equipment, your brain, most accidents would not occur. Even though you have a dive buddy on the dive, you need to be responsible for yourself. Never put yourself in any situation in which you are not comfortable. Feel free to abort the dive at any point and never blindly follow another diver into a wreck, swim through, cavern or any situation without evaluating it yourself first. Many Open Water divers including instructors have not returned from dives that were performed without proper training. Once you enter an overhead environment, all the rules change.

This is the point in a diver’s career that I consider them a competent diver. They have been exposed to a variety of diving situations and know how to avoid most common problems. It time to start diving with others that have been around for a while. Watch them move in the water, check out gear configurations, ask questions, and never stop learning.

The question was asked, which is the best training agency? Again, I defer back to my previous answer, it is the instructor, not the agency that makes the program the best. If you ask

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ANCHOR LINE, CONTINUED

which agency is it most difficult to become an instructor, then I would say PADI. Wait, before you start e-mailing me, let me explain my answer. All agencies have requirements that must be met to become an instructor, but let's talk about the instructor that also wants to cross over to be a PADI Instructor. To cross over and become a PADI Instructor as an instructor for any other agency, you have to complete a minimum of 4 days of training (32 hours) with a Course Director that includes classroom, pool, and open water portions. Then you must be successful at a 2 day Instructor Examination conducted by Examiners from PADI headquarters. No other organization out there, that I know of, requires such an extensive process. I had an Instructor that came to me to cross over to PADI as he wanted to be able to certify students for many different agencies. He was already an instructor for one, he went through the above process and became a PADI Instructor. He then went on to become an instructor for three additional agencies. For one he had to send a video tape of him teaching in a classroom, another he spent 3 hours reviewing their instructor manual. The third was simply send in a copy of his instructor card and sign their forms and pay the required fees. NONE REQUIRED HIM TO ENTER THE WATER. Was that because they were stupid or was it that they knew what he had gone through to become a PADI instructor and felt comfortable with his skills?

My last comment is on profit verses non-profit agencies. Which is best? That is for you to decide. All I care about is that the materials I use are the best in the industry, are updated often, and adjust for the changes in demographics, equipment, and environment that we deal with as Instructors.

(Editor's Note: This article should not be construed to imply that TSSC endorses any one SCUBA training agency. As Gregg mentioned in the onset of the article, there is divergent [NO PUN INTENDED] opinion regarding the merits of different certifying agencies.)

How to Purchase Tickets for the Picnic/Barbecue:

Method 1

Send Check, payable to TSSC, to Gwyn Grant, 17 Hartford Avenue, Greenwich, CT 06830 with Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope by July 9th. The tickets will be mailed to you.

Method 2

Come to a TSSC meeting on Wednesday, July 13 at Tino's. Tickets will be for sale at the meeting.

You MUST purchase a ticket to attend the picnic. Do not loose your tickets. You will not be admitted to the park without a ticket!

Lost tickets must be re-purchased. No refunds.

If you have questions, please call or email (Gwyngrant@aol.com) Gwyn Grant daytime (914) 637-1105, or **BEFORE** 9:30pm at (203) 531-6930.

UPCOMING SOCIAL EVENTS

July – TSSC Picnic @ Todd's Point 7/23 (a repeat of a terrific party!)

August – Canoe trip on the Delaware River, Saturday 8/6. Beach Cleanup w/Wyland (date and location to be announced)

September – Regatta/B-B-Q Saturday 9/3. Beach Cleanup 9/24. White Water Rafting. (Dates to be announced)

October – Social before the meeting 10/12. Bike trip Saturday 10/8

November – Brunch location to be announced Sunday 11/13.

December – Wine Tour (dates to be announced). Dec Social/Holiday Party Saturday 12/10

Area Dive Shops

This list is provided as a convenience. TSSC does not endorse any dive shop.

Aqua Visions Scuba Ltd.
126 Mamaroneck Ave, Mamaroneck NY
(914) 381-1884
AquaVisions.biz
info@aquavisions.biz

Captain Mike's Dive Center
530 City Island Ave, Bronx NY
(718) 885-1588
CaptainMikesDiving.com

Captain Saam's Scuba School
863 East Main Street, Stamford, CT
(203) 327-2822
capt-saam.com
captsaam@optonline.net

The Dive Shop
265 Federal Rd, Brookfield CT
(203) 740-9166
TheDiveShopOnline.com
Sherri@TheDiveShopOnline.com

Cougar Sports
917 Saw Mill River Rd, Ardsley NY
(914) 693-8877

Marsh Scuba Supply
91 Lauer Rd, Poughkeepsie NY
(845) 452-8994
MarshScuba.com
Marsh_Scuba@worldnet.att.net

Orbit Marine Sports Center
3273 Fairfield Ave, Bridgeport CT
(800) 395-3483
OrbitMarine.com
OrbitDive@aol.com

Pan Aqua Diving
460 West 43rd St, New York NY
(800) 434-0884
PanAqua.com
NYstore@PanAqua.com

Pan Aqua Diving
461 Federal Rd, Brookfield CT
(888) 388-3483
PanAqua.com
CTstore@PanAqua.com

Rex Dive Center
144 Water St, Norwalk CT
(888) 260-DIVE (3483)
RexDiveCenter.com
DiveShop@RexDiveCenter.com

Scuba New York
2037 Central Park Ave, Yonkers NY
(914) 779-2966
ScubaNewYork.com
Info@ScubaNewYork.com

Westchester Dive Center
500 North Main St, Portchester NY
(914) 937-2685
WestchesterDiveCenter.com

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

July Meeting
8:00 pm, Wednesday, July 13, 2005

Jason Heller on the **Asian Tsunami** and **Wakatobi, Indonesia**

We have a very special presentation by **Jason Heller**, founder of **DivePhotoGuide.com**. Jason and his fiancé were diving in Thailand during the December tsunami and will give a short slide show of his firsthand account of the devastation in and around Phuket and Kaoh Lak, Thailand. Jason will also present images and information from one of the world's most remote and beautiful dive destinations, Wakatobi, in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia.

A veteran in the interactive marketing industry, Jason Heller has been invited to produce and present educational seminars to the dive industry for the last four years both in the US and in Asia. Jason, who is an avid diver and underwater photographer, recently launched DivePhotoGuide.com, an online resource that matches the needs of underwater photographers and videographers of all levels with the facilities of dive operators worldwide.

August: Matt Sasso, brings over 20 years of spear fishing experience off Long Island coasts, will present ins and outs of this wonderful sport as well as dispel myths associated with it. Matt is

Long Island's leading spearfishing instructor and a founder of spearfishingextreme.com

September: Glenn Butler and Vreni Roduner
Topic: Behind The Numbers: How Decompression Tables Are Developed

Glenn Butler, Director of the NUMC Hyperbaric Chamber Facility will be one of the featured speakers. With the benefit of more than 30 years personal and professional experience in the treatment of Decompression Sickness, no one is more expert or entertaining in educating and informing in the physics and physiology of diving, compressed gas effects and the treatment of pressure related pathology. Those who have seen Glenn at various seminars, including those offered at Westchester County Medical Center and Beneath The Sea, are familiar with his expertise and the quality of his presentations. Those who have not, are in for a real treat.

UPCOMING DIVES

Sat-Sat July 9-16--Dominica

**Sat, Sun August 27 & 28--Seal
Dive Rye, NH**

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UPCOMING DIVES, CONTINUED

Sat September 3--Dutch Springs,
PA

Fri-Sun September 9-11--St
Lawrence, Canada

Sat September 24-Ft.
Wetherill,RI

Sat,Sun October 15 & 16-Seal Dive
Rye, NH

Sat,Sun November 5 & 6-Cape
Anne, MA

OTHER STUFF

August 6 Canoe the Delaware River

This is a repeat of the 2003 trip, ten miles from Pond Eddy to Matamoras. This portion of the river is somewhat brisk, the water very clean. Snorkelers will have 10 foot vis and the rapids will be moderately challenging. We plan to leave at 9:30 and should arrive by 4 PM. The last time, 44 of us had a blast and lots of laughs. Cost is about \$33 See: www.kittatinny.com

August 20 Small craft regatta

This is for those who own or can get their hands on a small boat- canoe, kayak, rowboat or inflatable. We will leave the Croton on Hudson RR station parking lot and proceed up the Croton River, about one mile. The scenery is wonderful and we may have a picnic on the beach. You can swim, snorkel or even dive. Due to tide requirements we must leave at 10:30 AM.

**THE SCUBA
SPORTS CLUB**

**P.O. Box 644
Rye, NY 10580**

<http://TheScubaSportsClub.org>
TSSC@TheScubaSportsClub.org

OFFICERS

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Submissions to Sea Swells Log may be made in electronic or paper form by the 20th of the month. Electronic submissions (email) are preferred and should be sent to

SeaSwells@TheScubaSportsClub.org

Submission of paper copy should be sent to

Rick D'Amico

P.O. Box 401
East Setauket, NY 11733

Rick D'Amico, Editor
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Our Next Meeting Will be on
Wednesday, July 13th at:
Tino's Italian Steak House
101 Saw Mill River Rd.
(Rt 9A)
Hawthorne, NY