

SUB AQUA JOURNAL

March, 1992 Vol. 2, No. 3

The Forum for North Atlantic Diving

\$1.95

Safety

is a

non-competitive

issue



ALSO:
Bronx Queen
The Drumelzier
Who and What is ASDA?

Sub Aqua Journal

750 West Broadway
Long Beach, NY 11561
5-16/889-1208

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

Single copy \$1.95 Annual subscription \$21.95. Subscription outside of U.S. add \$10.00 postage. Paid orders U.S. funds only. Send requests to the circulation department.

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“SAFETY IS A NON-COMPETITIVE ISSUE”

While attending the Scuba Diving Resource Group workshop Dick Long, President of DUI made that statement. It was a couple of days before it really started to sink in. His context was in relation to dive equipment manufacturers but in thinking about it, there are times when divers risk their safety for “competitive issues.”

Evelyn Dudas explained about buddy diving in an interview with Robert Von Maier, author of *SOLO Diving*. “We hunt lobsters, flounder, and artifacts during the same dive — not necessarily with one diver being the bag person. We don’t enact the fairness act of share and share alike either. Possession is the divers delight. Who in this industry [sport] doesn’t have an ego?”

How often have you gone out diving and pushed it with inadequate gear, insufficient instruction, a dive partner you weren’t quite so comfortable with, or just because you were already there? Recently, a dear friend came back from a multi-week dive adventure with the news that he had suffered a skin hit (DCS) while away. When I asked how it happened he said, “I got greedy.”

As a dive instructor my opening statement to students begins with my goal. “My goal is to make you comfortable — not only while diving but in being able to say NO to a dive that you are not ready or prepared for.” Once this level of comfort is reached the rest is easy.

The hazards of North Atlantic diving can vary, this issue covers three categories — being too cold, not having enough air and blowing off your safety stops. With the diving season about to open many divers are itching to be the first to the boats and on the wrecks. I can understand that — I’m one of them. For many it has been almost six months since you have been in the water, for others maybe six days. Whichever group you fall into it is your responsibility this dive season to be safe — to be a responsible diver — to be comfortable saying NO.

Scuba diving is a non-competitive sport; there are no awards for running out of air first or swimming to the surface fastest or even for being the coldest diver on the boat. However, there are rewards in sharing your experiences with those that have never been below, watching their faces glow with excitement. There are rewards in sharing your knowledge and experience with the new kid, watching him grow to become self sufficient. There are rewards in coming home safely. Diving is fun when done in partnership with your friends and your environment.

New to the **Journal** is Barb Lander. This spunky woman hails from southern Pennsylvania where the nearest dive boat is two hours away, bringing her to the Mud Hole where she is happy diving. Barb shares her love of cold water diving with some tips on keeping warm. Bernie Chowdhury helps us look at tank configurations and the best ways to carry the air that we rely on, comfortably.

This brings us to Hank Garvin. When I first started diving I would pass him on the “hanchorline” on my way down and then find him in the same spot on my way up. Had he already done a second dive? What was he waiting for? Why was he there? Turn to page ten and find out. Captain Howard Klein takes time out of his busy legislative battles to tell us what the American Sport Divers Association is doing to keep freedom in diving. Danny and Kirby continue to dive on wrecks that have interesting histories yet make us aware that every dive, whether deep or shallow, has its challenges. Safety is the focus of this issue.



Joel D. Silverstein, Editor

EARLY SEASON DIVING: KEEPING WARM & SAFE



by Barb Lander

Despite short days, long nights, and bone-chilling temperatures many divers are anxious to return to the water before "the full season" begins. Too short a get-away to a tropical dive spot doesn't assuage the longing for the mud, rust, and bugs of a New York or New Jersey, wreck.

A few boats sail through winter, weather permitting, or resume a schedule in March, and many start in April, so you don't have to wait. Don't think about the cold water – don't think about the chilly boat ride, sign up for a dive and get the jump on the lobster and the artifacts uncovered by winter storms. Seriously, diving doesn't have to have a short season for a prepared diver.

Regulators remain a primary element of diver preparation. Cold water tends to make regulators susceptible to free-flow. In the first stage air moves through the high pressure chamber into the intermediate pressure chamber via a minuscule port. Prolonged and rapid movement of air through this port, such as filling a BC, dry suit, or lift bag can freeze the regulator's high pressure seat in an open position. The resulting free-flow can be exciting to say the least.

Using air in short bursts can help prevent such a free flow, further, environmentally protected regulators are less prone to this type of freeze-up.

A good exposure suit becomes vitally important. Dry suits, of course, are best. Users of shell-type dry suits (vulcanized rubber, coated nylon, or crushed neoprene) need to appreciate that their suits are only as good as what is worn underneath. There are many high-tech materials that provide ample insulation for the frigid mid-winter water. Those who try to economize by wearing sweats or long-johns under a shell dry suit will not enjoy early season diving since these garments provide little thermal protection.

Even with adequate exposure protection cold water divers should take some added precautions:

- Eat. (This is my favorite.) Your metabolic rate increases to keep warm. You need calories to fuel this metabolic fire.
- Bring a thermos of warm water to put in your gloves for the second dive. (Starting warm is half of the battle, and it feels great.)

■ Choose a boat with an enclosed and heated cabin. Stay warm inside the boat when you're not in the water.

■ Plan your bottom time according to the surface temperature. During the early season you cannot ascend above a thermocline and do your decompression stops in warmer water. Plan to be back on the boat before you have reached the limit of your thermal stamina.

■ Cold water is a risk factor for DCS. Allow extra time to hang. Remember that the hang is the coldest part of the dive. You won't be generating heat by swimming around. Don't get so cold that you succumb to the temptation of eliminating safety factors. You may even want to consider an argon gas inflation system. Argon has better thermal capacities than air.

■ Drink hot beverages after you get out of the water. They will help warm you up too.

■ Eat more. (Did I say this was my favorite?)

Keeping warm is the key to preventing hypothermia and preventing hypothermia is the key to safe diving. Hypothermia can be deadly, it impairs judgement, and that alone can be lethal on an East Coast wreck. Numbness of the extremities is the first sign of impending hypothermia, followed by uncontrollable shivering. If heat loss continues unconsciousness occurs, and it can possibly result in death.

Early season diving has its own rewards. There are no crowds, the lobsters have recovered from the onslaught of summer divers and new treasures have been uncovered by winter storms. So drag your dive gear out of whatever corner you stowed it in and go diving!



Steve Barsky, Marine Marketing

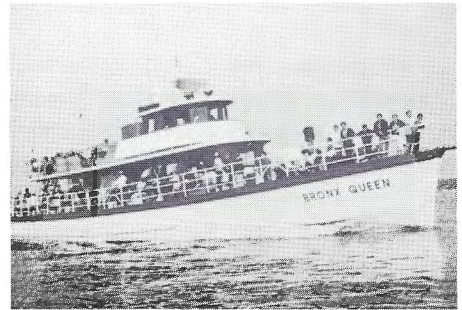
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BRONX QUEEN

By Daniel Berg

On December 20, 1989, a wood-hulled fishing boat was cruising off Breezy Point when suddenly, the Captain heard a loud thump. Within 15 minutes the boat had sunk, leaving nineteen people floundering in bitter cold water. The Coast Guard responded quickly to their distress call and was able to rescue all passengers and crew from the water within two hours. Unfortunately, two of the victims died in the hospital, one from exposure, the other from a heart attack.

During the winter months, diving off Long Island slows down drastically. I get to enjoy an occasional beach dive but sea conditions and bitter cold temperatures make getting offshore quite difficult. Returning from a dull beach dive my wife, Denise, showed me a small newspaper report about a fishing boat that had sunk in bad weather off New Jersey. The boat was the *Bronx Queen*. I made a few phone calls and soon found this was no common fishing boat as the paper led me to believe.



The *Bronx Queen* turned out to be the converted submarine chaser SC-635. She was 110 feet long, had a 15-foot beam and was built by Mantis Yacht Building Co. in Camden, NJ. The SC-635 was launched on October 12, 1942, and commissioned on October 23. She displaced 116 tons and had a top speed of eighteen knots.

Sub chasers were not in service when America first entered World War II. Once operational as vital attack deterrents, these sleek, fast vessels would patrol the east coast forcing U-Boats to spend much more time beneath the surface, thus exhausting their batteries and reducing their effectiveness. Although, as a group, the United States' fleet of over 400 sub chasers was credited with only one verified U-Boat sinking, it is accepted that they were effective in helping to curb the U-Boats' menacing threat to our vessels. On October 19, 1945, SC-635 was transferred to the Coast Guard. She was later sold, converted into a fishing charter vessel and renamed the *Bronx Queen*.

Now my curiosity was aroused. Within a few weeks I had obtained the sunken wreck's location. With a little luck, Loran numbers would be all we needed to locate the *Bronx Queen*. On January 6, 1990, Rick Schwarz, Steve Jonassen, Billy Campbell, Hank Garvin, Art Kirchner, Jozef Koppelman, Charlie Guttilla, a hand full of other wreck divers and I boarded a dive boat and headed out to the wreck site. It was a beautiful winter day, sea conditions were only one to two feet and the sun was

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shinning. We had no idea what type of conditions to expect or what we would find on the site. The *Bronx Queen* had gone down in only thirty five feet of water very close to New York's main shipping channel.

One of our main concerns was getting to the wreck before she was wire dragged by the Army Corps of Engineers. Surely she would be declared a hazard to navigation due to her high relief, shallow depth, and proximity to the shipping channel. The next major consideration was the two to four-knot current usually present in the area as well as notoriously poor visibility. Our only course was to dive at slack tide.

As one of the first divers to descend through the icy waters and reach the *Bronx Queen*, I found what every wreck diver dreams of; a virgin shipwreck. Portholes, fishing poles, and brass cage lamps were everywhere. She was laying on a sand bottom leaning about forty degrees to her port side. The pilot house had been torn away during her sinking and was scattered in the sand next to the wreck. On her stern the name *Bronx Queen* could easily be read. This was a dive to remember. Being first to explore a virgin shipwreck is a thrilling experience but hopefully not a once in a lifetime thrill.

Since that first dive The *Bronx Queen* has changed drastically. When I returned in April with Captain Steve Bielenda, I thought we had anchored on the wrong wreck. Her wreckage looked as if it had been down for thirty years.

continued on page 6



Dr. Steve Lombardo

J. Silverstein

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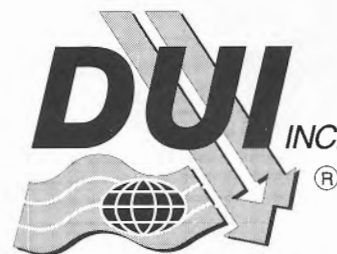
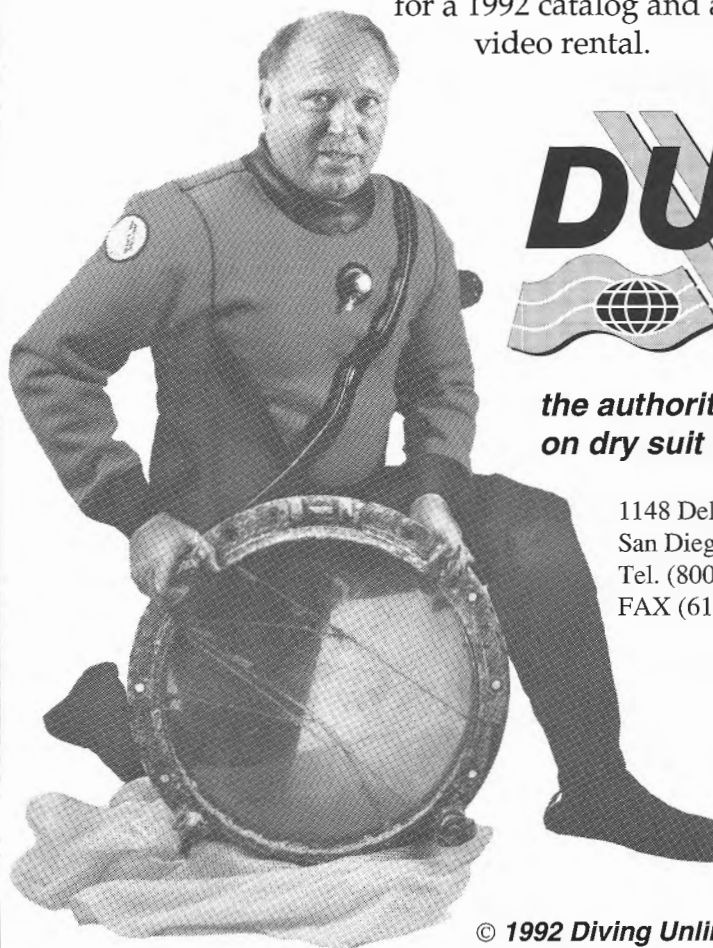
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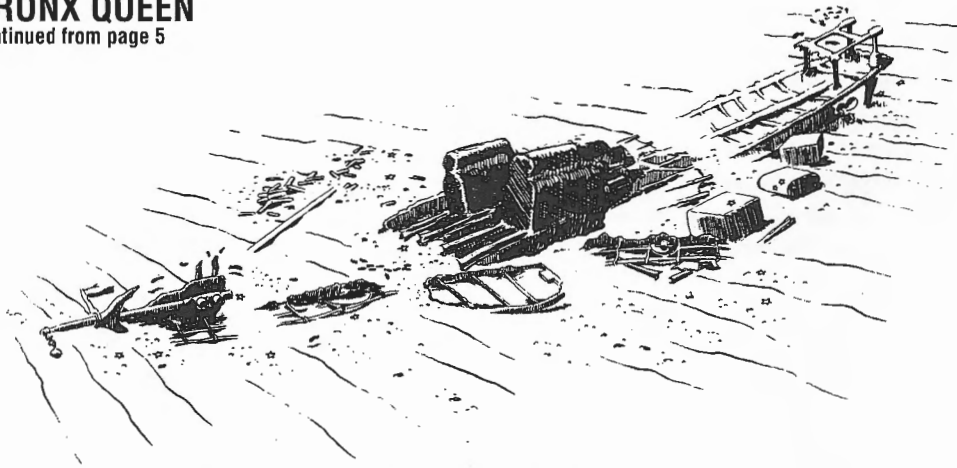
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BRONX QUEEN

continued from page 5



Underwater sketch of the *Bronx Queen* today by Dan Lieb and Dan Berg.

Marine growth covered everything—blackfish, starfish, lobsters and sea bass inhabited her site, she had also broken down dramatically. We speculated that she must have been wire dragged because most of the wreckage had been pulled off and lie in a debris field off her port side.

Divers will now find the scattered, low-lying remains of the *Bronx Queen* sitting in thirty-seven feet of water only a half-mile from the Ambrose Channel 2-A buoy. Her bow section is separate from the rest of the wreck and sits on its port side. Her huge diesel engines remain upright providing the highest relief on the wreck where divers will find the greatest concentration of fish. All that remains of her stern are some ribs and planking.

Divers have recovered all types of interesting and unique artifacts including; rectangular brass portholes, cage lamps, anchors, brass valves, the brass letters off her stern, and her starboard

running lantern. Artifacts can still be found by carefully searching through the stern section or by digging in the debris field off her port side.

This is not the wreck to go wandering on. Each diver should know exactly where their dive boat's anchor is located, and be able to return and ascend up that anchor at the end of the dive. If you were to come up away from the dive boat, it would be impossible to swim back against the current.

Because of the currents and limited visibility, advanced training and experience are highly recommended. Plan to dive at high slack which will give you the best opportunity for good visibility and calm water. With an interesting history and never ending challenges the *Bronx Queen* has become one of my favorite shallow water wrecks to explore in an area called **Wreck Valley**.

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"To say diving is safe is a misnomer. Look up the word *SAFE* in a dictionary. Saying that something is safe means there is no risk involved. Diving has risks. The key is to manage those risks so they are acceptable."

Butch Hendricks, Life Guard Systems Inc.

When discussing wreck, deep (60 fsw plus) and high-tech diving — all of which are alive and well in the Northeast — we must always ask; how do we manage the risks? One way is to evaluate our tank configurations and alternative breathing sources.

Let us approach this with a few assumptions:

1. The diver regularly practices using all gear configurations in a controlled setting.
2. The diver has the training to carry out the desired dive plan.
3. All double tank set-ups will have built in redundancy. The tanks will be configured as either two singles, or will have a dual valve manifold with dual first and second stages.

At this point you're probably asking yourself why would anyone want to change their gear configuration? There are many reasons. Let's look at two scenarios.

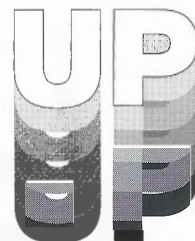
1. You and your buddy are planning a penetration dive of the *U-853* (German WW II sub off Montauk in 130 fsw). You decide that the pony bottle behind your doubles will hinder your planned exit from the forward torpedo loading hatch, you opt to wear it in "stage" fashion, i.e., under your arm. Your buddy rejects this idea and wears his behind his doubles. During the dive, you and your buddy dig for artifacts in the forward torpedo room, as planned. When the visibility drops, you quickly and smoothly exit the loading hatch but your buddy can't get out because his pony keeps getting jammed on the hatch. He must retrace his path through the tight, silted-out U-boat to exit at the large damage hole fore of the conning tower.

2. You have successfully been digging for artifacts in a small supply closet on the *San Diego* (armored cruiser off Fire Island 65-125 FSW). Two burly divers ask where the goodies were found—you tell them. After a preliminary visit to the area, one of the divers remarks, "How do you expect me to crawl into that closet with my pony bottle on?" They reject your suggestion of carrying the pony stage fashion because they don't have experience with it. Well no goodies from the closet for those guys! Their decision to leave their gear in its current configuration was a very responsible one because they didn't have experience with other set-ups.

Other reasons for changing gear configuration include planning deep dives, wreck penetrations and decompression or long exposure dives.

TANKING UP

By Bernie Chowdhury



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A leader in the dive industry, Arnie was one of the oldest established U.S. Divers dealers in the nation. His store, Richard's Aqua Lung in New York City served divers from all around the world for over forty years. In 1990 Arnie was elected to the DEMA "Diver's Hall of Fame" for outstanding industry contribution. A gentle giant, he will be missed.

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There are several possible gear set-ups, with various pros and cons, whichever set-up(s) you choose, remember: diving isn't a question of safety, but of risk management. What's acceptable to you?

TANK CONFIGURATION OPTIONS

SINGLE TANK

PRO: Most familiar set-up / basis for all instruction. Requires least amount of scuba gear and instruction

CON: Provides no redundancy in event of air/gear failure, making self-rescue difficult, especially when deep. Planning and conducting deep and penetration dives with only one tank is irresponsible and dangerous.

SINGLES W/PONY ATTACHED

PRO: Redundant tanks allow for self rescue in air/gear failure of primary system. Requires little instruction to understand proper set-up and use. This configuration is *bare minimum* for responsible divers.

CON: Pony provides extra weight on one side, which may cause a diver to roll to that side. Tank may swing and snag if not properly secured. Requires some instruction and practice before use in open water.

DOUBLE TANKS ("DOUBLES")

PRO: Plenty of air, good for self-rescue and helping another diver who is out of air, especially on deep dives. Weight is balanced on diver's back.

CON: Diver must select redundant singles or dual valve manifold to have back-ups 1st and 2nd stages. Can you reach back and shut off either valve in an emergency? Do you wear a pressure gauge with each tank? Are you going to breathe from just one tank, or switch back-and-forth? More complexity (see above) More weight: can you climb up dive boat ladder with full gear when you are tired? Longer bottom times may require decompression stops.

DOUBLE W/PONY ON BACK

PRO: All tanks on back and out-of-the-way Pony may be used to carry oxygen enriched air for increased off-gassing during safety/deco stop(s).

CON: High profile; diver may not be able to enter/exit low areas. Lots of gear. How are you going to manage it all? If oxygen enriched air is in the pony the appropriate bail-out gas should be mixed for deepest part of dive.

DOUBLES W/PONY CARRIED "STAGE" FASHION (UNDER ARM)

PRO: Low profile, with pony easily accessible. Allows access to low areas.

CON: Any stage bottle worn by diver must be secured so that it does not hit diver in face during entry. Stage hoses must be secured to prevent snags.

MICRA.

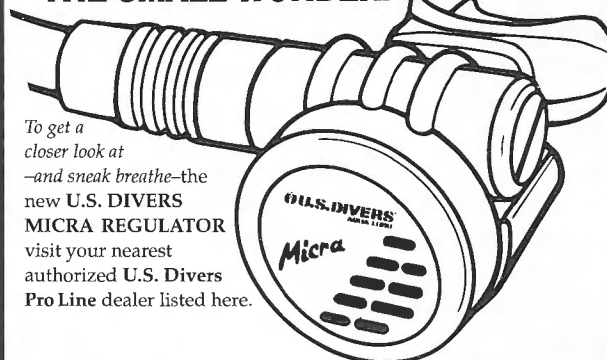
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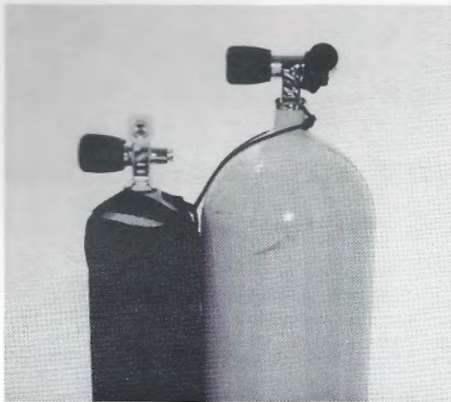
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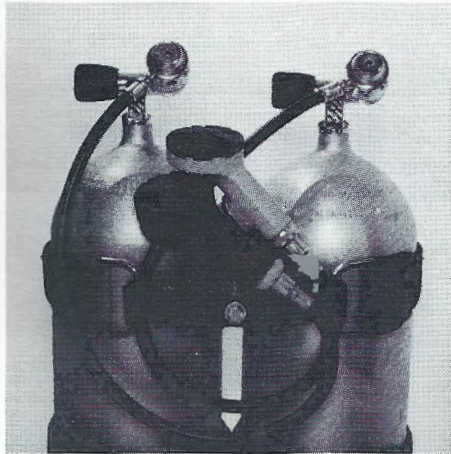
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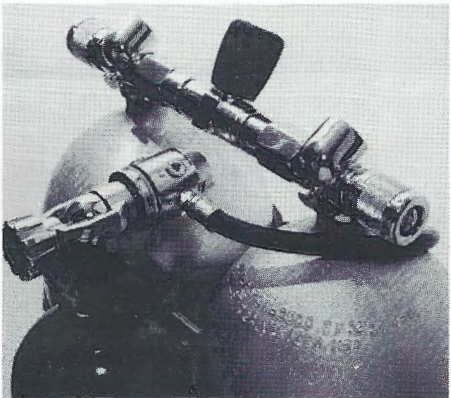
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Single tank with pony bottle



Double tanks with separate regulators



Double tanks with manifold and pony bottle

Planning your tank configuration is just as important as planning your dive tables. This discussion is not intended to endorse a particular setup but to give you a basis for designing your gear configuration. Pick what you feel most comfortable with, stick with it. When the dive comes along that requires you to change your set up do it cautiously and then practice in a familiar setting before going of to do that "big" dive.



Double tanks with pony bottle in "Stage fashion."

Sherwood Tanks, valves, Poseidon and Oceanic Regulators courtesy Island Scuba Centers Freeport, NY. Photos by J. Silverstein.



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CORRECTION

In the December 1991 Issue we reported on the Eastern Dive Boat Association, its history and accomplishments. In error we failed to recognize that in addition to Capt. George Hoffman being elected as the first president in 1975, Capt. John Lachenmeyer was elected the EDBA's first treasurer and has held that position ever since.

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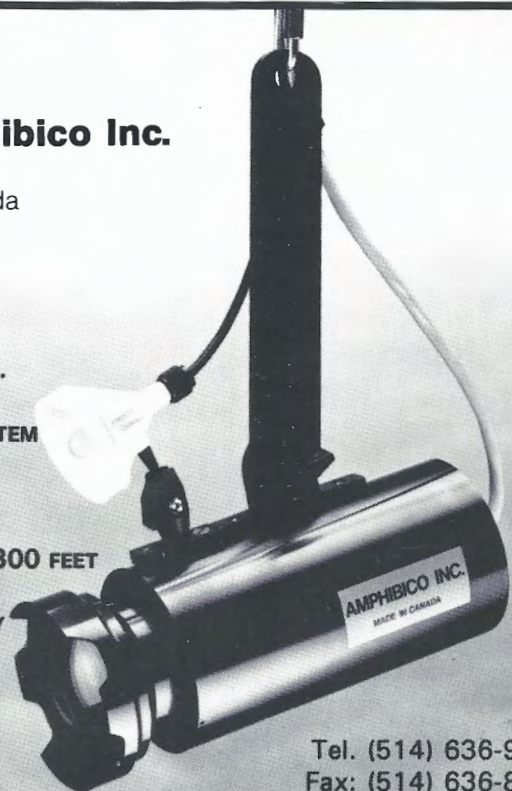
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SAFETY STOPS

by Hank Garvin

Hey dad, "Why's water wet?" "Why do birds fly?" Remember those questions we all asked our all-knowing fathers. Well, I've got another one for you. Hey dad, "What's a safety stop?" "I don't know son, ask the training agencies, it's their concept."

The "safety stop" came about because recreational divers were supposed to do decompression diving (oops, I said the "D" word). Ever since dive tables were created, divers have always tried to find the edge (to use a worn out phrase), push the envelope. Once they started getting bent, the training agencies felt the need to protect divers and themselves — and rightly so. To stem the tide, no-decompression diving became the, rock solid, unchangeable, fixed, permanent rule of law.

Well, maybe! It seems some scientific types found this test called "Doppler," that revolutionized the entire idea of no-decompression diving. Everyone realized that the U.S. Navy dive tables had imperfections. People doing no-decompression diving were still getting bent.

The tests showed that people diving Navy table standards were coming up with bubbles (called silent bubbles) in their blood. The theory is that under some con-



Joel Silverstein

ditions (they still aren't sure what conditions) silent bubbles get "noisy" and cause decompression sickness or the bends. However, tests also showed that people making ten or twenty foot decompression stops had no bubbles.

This revelation caused quite a stir in all of the training agencies. They have said for years that decompression diving was too dangerous to be done by us, the aver-

TIME-MIN	US NAVY	PADI	DCIEM/SPORT
15	no-stop	3 min/15 ft	no-stop
18	no-stop	3 min/15ft	5 min/10ft
20	no-stop	3 min/15ft	5 min/10ft
26	3 min / 10ft	15 min/15ft emergency only	5 min/20ft 10 min/10ft
30	3 min /10ft	15 min/15ft emergency only	10 min/20ft 10 min/10ft

PADI Recreational Dive Planner does not provide times past 20 min for 100 fsw dives. Stop times were extrapolated from PADI emergency decompression procedures and should not be used for actual dive planning.

age lunthead diver. They felt the recreational divers were incapable of performing the decompression procedures well enough to dive safely.

Now the agencies were faced with two problems:

First; how does a diver, doing a no-decompression dive wind up with decompression sickness? The conclusion is obvious, all dives are Decompression Dives. The initial response to this was to attack the tables. This approach was not totally incorrect, albeit too simplistic, and did not solve the problem.

In fact, it led them to a second problem; that of making a decompression stop on every dive, regardless of which table or computer is in use. The agencies either had to back up and say that they were wrong about divers doing decompression dives safely, or close their doors and sell needle-point lessons. After much thought and scientific studies, they opted to do the only thing possible... they sidestepped the entire issue.

Recreational divers will still do no-decompression diving; they will just do a "safety stop" on all dives! The safety stop is a recommended combination 5 - 8 minute stop at 20, 15, or 10 feet, depending on which agency tables you use. I may be just a cynic, but that looks an awful lot like a decompression profile to me. (The "safety stops" on the *Andrea Doria* are just a little longer.)

I've always felt that the agencies need to take the bull by the horns and face reality. In an attempt to make diving safer, they became a little overzealous. They tried to kill the horse before the barn door opened and found out they were shooting blanks. Well now the door is open and it's time to get on the horse and ride it.

Planned decompression diving is not without hazards. However, if a conservative approach is taken, and proper equipment is employed, it can be (and is) done with great success and enjoyment.

Perhaps in the future, the training agencies will begin to look into more comprehensive training for decompression diving. With the use of computers, Nitrox, Tri-Mix gas diving, and the new developments in rebreathers, training agencies are going to have to ride or be trampled over by progress.

Hey dad, "Is the glass half empty, or half full . . . ?"

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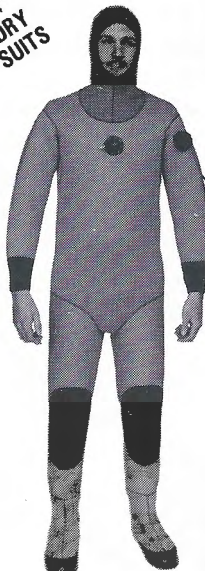
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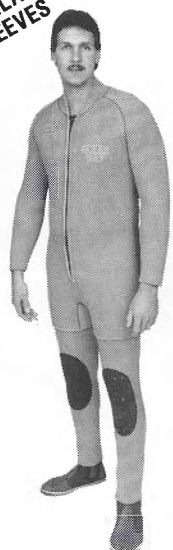
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Who and What is the American Sport Divers Association? by Capt. Howard Klein

In 1979 some members of Congress perceived that government should own, control, and manage shipwrecks. This perception was due, in part, to Mel Fisher's success in finding the wreck of the *Nuestra Señora de Atocha*. More significant than the actual find was the recovery of over 400 million dollars in gold, silver, precious stones and artifacts. There was money in controlling shipwrecks and the government wanted more than its fair share.

In its attempt to confiscate abandoned shipwrecks Congress enlisted the aid of archaeologists, historic preservationists, bureaucrats, and States' righters to make their argument for them. The shipwreck management issue came to a head in 1987 when New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley introduced Senate Bill S858: The Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1987.

After a feeble battle within the diving community including sellouts by both the Underwater Society of America and the Diving Equipment Manufacturers Association (which included false testimony before the Committee on Parks and Public Lands by US of A's legislative director, and false claims to congress by DEMA) the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1987 was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on April 28, 1988.

The idea of the *American Sport Divers Association* was conceived in 1988 during the turmoil of the shipwreck legislation battle. It was unconscionable that the Underwater Society of America, with less than 2500 members, was claim-

ing to speak for the entire diving population. It is estimated that there are over three million sport divers in the United States. Virtually every sport diver that I had spoken with was vehemently opposed to government ownership of shipwrecks yet the Underwater Society of America testified that the divers favored such legislation. There seemed to be no voice for the individual diver and no organization willing to take the Underwater Society of America to task for its false representation of the diving community.

After speaking and corresponding with Mr. Armand Zighan, then Executive Vice President of US of A, I requested that legislative director Anne Giesecke be replaced due to her false testimony in regard to sport diver representation and that US of A reverse its position on the Abandoned Shipwreck Act. No response was received. It became apparent that another organization had to be formed to accurately represent the position of sport divers. The unwillingness of an organization to voice the truth was the catalyst to the creation of the *American Sport Divers Association* in 1989.

Since the passage of the law, ASDA has been the only diving organization to challenge the Abandoned Shipwreck Act in court. ASDA has taken on the government over the issue of private ownership of artifacts with its participation in the recovery of the bell from the *CSS Alabama* (United States of America vs. Richard Steinmetz). It squashed a proposed New York law that would have required a VIP inspection with every air fill [that would have made diving real fun] The ASDA is in a pitched battle with NOAA over free access to the *USS Monitor* Marine Sanctuary and is on the verge of winning that battle. ASDA keeps you informed of what organizations are actually working for the diving community and which ones are only talking about it.

These brief examples contain thousands of man hours of research, documentation, testimony and dollars. [Have

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you ever tried to fight city hall?] The *American Sport Divers Association* does not play the game of politics; we are results oriented. Our methods are hard hitting and direct; we feel that every American is at war with the government bureaucracy that drains our resources and takes away our freedom. We stay focused on what affects you the sport diver. ASDA members are who we represent and who we work for.

ASDA communicates to you through its own quarterly newsletter as well as this and other publications. Our newsletter is, however, our main source for feedback. From time to time our newsletter will include a questionnaire about issues, policies, and programs related to sport diving. The response to those questionnaires decides the actions of the ASDA on those issues, policies, and programs. Our members directly decide how they are to be represented. If you are tired of others making decisions on your behalf then the *American Sport Divers Association* may hold the answer to the way you want to be represented. When it comes to your personal freedom there are no free rides. It takes money to go to court and those we represent are our only source of income. How well you are legally represented depends on continued memberships and support. You can only get out of an organization what you put into it. If you are dedicated to your sport then come aboard.

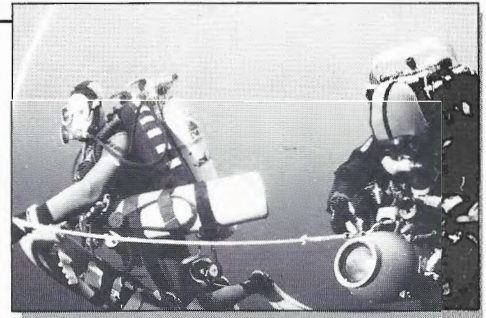
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DIVER RIGHTS Do you know your rights as an American sport diver? Did you even know you had to? The *American Sport Diver's Association* is a non-profit organization of over 4500 individual members dedicated to keeping divers informed of all licenses, permits, fees regulations, and restrictions that affect divers. ASDA was founded in 1988 after the passage of the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1987 and exists to preserve the rights of all divers to enjoy our sport without restrictions.

To become a member and receive their quarterly newsletter send \$10 to:

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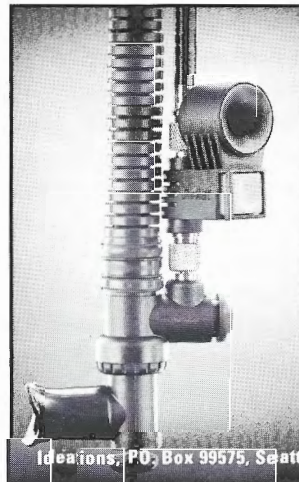
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THE SS DRUMELZIER

The storm will pass by morning...

by Kirby Kurkomelis

Returning from an early day of off-shore diving we decided to spend the afternoon on a shallow wreck. Within miles of any inlet lie many shipwrecks scattered along New York's shores, giving divers a chance to go back in time when seafaring ships ruled the high seas. Adventurous divers searching for lost treasures can weigh anchor almost anywhere in Long Island waters.

The *SS Drumelzier* (alias Fire Island or Quadrant Wreck) was a British freight steamship that left New York Harbor on December 25, 1904. Sailing into a raging storm she ran aground on a Fire Island sand bar. The storm was to be the year's worst and claimed the body of the *Drumelzier*. Today her twisted and scattered remains can be found a few hundred yards south of Robert Moses State Park in 15 to 20 feet of water.

In the distance there was a divers down flag. Approaching the area, we slowed down and drifted towards the wreck. We discussed our dive plan concerning the other divers on the site, looking for their bubbles and any part of the *Drumelzier* at the surface.

Thinking about my shipwreck research I knew how Master helmsman Martin Ekaberg must have felt that winter night. Holding tight to the wheel while the waves broke over the bow, he had to use all his strength to stay on

course in the rough seas, as he had many times before. The cabin was cold and damp with a sweet smell of tobacco. Lighting a pipe behind him was Captain Nicholson. With over 30 years of storms and treacherous tides journeying from the Indian ocean to Scandinavia, Captain Nicholson cleared New York harbor on a northeast course along the shore of Long Island during the worst storm of the year.

Wave by wave in everlasting darkness the *Drumelzier* steamed forward, her crew wary of the superstition, "We shouldn't have sailed on Christmas." The engine's powerful vibrations felt as though it would explode. Blinding snow made steering the ship almost impossible. Waves began flooding the deck and iced formed on the rails, sky and sea merged into one. Cool sweat ran down Ekaberg's face distorting his vision. With a sickening thud and sudden lurch his greatest fear came true. Grounded!

Freezing snow and water were everywhere throwing cargo about, iron and copper ore spilled into the sea. The masthead spilt in two on the deck and later, even the smokestack was torn asunder as the keel flattened out. Amidst bellows of the crew in the periphery as smoke flooded the lower decks Captain Nicholson stood fast urging, "Courage men, the storm will pass by

morning." Vainly the engines screamed in reverse tearing the hull apart. It would take four days for Captain and crew to all be rescued as only a small life boat could navigate close enough through the storm and powerful surf.

The cold water felt good against my face. We checked the anchor against a fast current. (Remember, always swim into the current at the beginning of your dive so you can drift back with it at the end when you're tired.) A lone bass seemed to fly by us swimming east, heading for cover. Working our way west, I encountered the shell of a wreck that was the *Drumelzier*.

Her rudder quadrant can be found easily and is visible at the surface at dead low tide. With its strong currents, surges, and plentiful ribs careless divers can be injured at this site. I did have hopes of finding some artifacts today buried beneath the few remaining hull plates and around the sand bottom but I could hear boats running overhead. Looking up I wondered if they were going to hit us. We made sure to stay close to the ribs instead while cutting miles of fishing line that run rampant through the wreck.

A little later into our dive still fighting a fierce current, I signaled my partner that I was tired. This dive was not as easy as usual.

It was time to head back, this time with the current.

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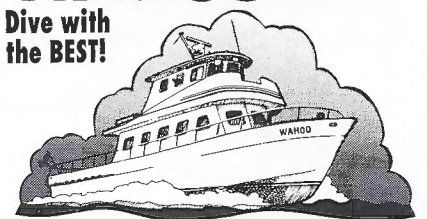


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6 Ayuruoca
8 Texas Tower
14 Montauk/Block Island
15 USS Bass / Grecian
16 U-853 / John Patrick Fitzgerald
28 NJ Overnight - Arundo
29 SS Mohawk - Gulftrade - Tolten
Aug. 6 Varanger overnight
7 Varanger overnight
11 Virginia
25 Coimbra

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5 Iberia
11 Mystery Wreck
12 R.C. Mohawk
18 British Corvette
19 Ambrose Lightship
25 Pipe Barge
26 Cindy

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June 20 Moonlight Cruise of Spectacular NY Harbor
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Capt. Bill's Mystery Wreck

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3 USS San Diego
9 Hylton Castle
10 USS San Diego
13 Dry Dock # 4
16 Kenosha
17 USS San Diego
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23 USS San Diego
24 Oregon
25 Lizzy D
27 Hylton Castle
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31 USS San Diego

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April 5 USS San Diego
12 USS San Diego
26 USS San Diego

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May 22 Lillian 150'
23 Texas Tower 80' - 180'
June 12 Coimbra 180'
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President, Captain Howard Klein, Treasurer, Captain John
Lachenmeyer, President, Captain Steve Bielenda and
Secretary, Captain Tony Donetz.



Captain Howard Klein has been spending the winter getting the Eagle's Nest ready for the busy season.

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