

Currents

Quarterly Journal of
Scuba Educators International
JULY 2010 VOL. II, No. 3

Thanks for
joining me!



Photo by Carol Reed



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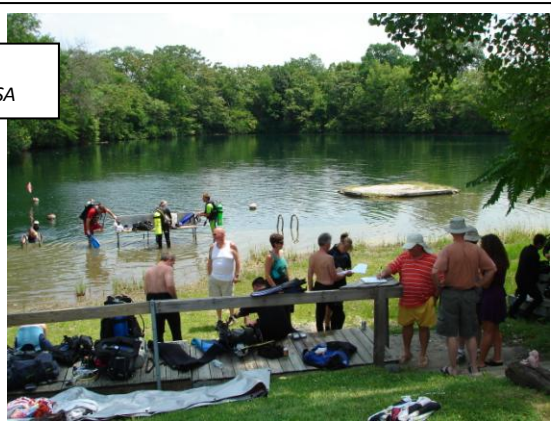
Diveheart Institute

Welcome to our summer electronic issue of Currents.

North of the Equator we are in the peak of the summer diving season. With your help, Scuba Educators International is having a super year. Diving certifications and material orders are increasing – a sure sign that the economy is beginning to improve. Now is the time to advertise your classes as potential students begin to return to recreational activities. Let's be sure scuba is on their list of things to do. For past students, advanced and specialty dive classes are at the peak of the year. Don't miss an opportunity to involve these past students. Diving can become a life-long activity only if you the instructor make available additional diving opportunities. These might include classes or just going out diving. Dive clubs are an important outlet for divers and their families. If you need help, call our office for information on how to organize and sponsor a diving club in your area.

In this issue we will discuss the Gulf of Mexico and the oil spill that is having a huge effect on several southern USA states. Also included is an article on fresh water quarry diving and the diverse life found there. We encourage each of our instructors to write similar articles about the waters in their own area for the coming editions. Remember, this is your journal and you receive continuing education credit for your contributions.

Philips Quarry
Muncie Indiana USA



Announcements



&



DIVE HEART

Presents:

Instructor Training &
Buddy Certification Courses



August 27-29, 2010

Muncie, IN

Learn to instruct or serve
as a certified dive buddy
to divers with disabilities

For more info contact:
info@seidiving.org

In just three action-packed days,
you will:

- Learn about a variety of disabilities,
- Be taught what accessibility means and modified diving training procedures, plus
- Experience empathy training enabling you to know what it is like to dive with a disability.

CMAS Update

Scuba Educators International, Inc has completed an agreement with Underwater Society of America regarding CMAS certifications. Effectively immediately, we will begin issuing CMAS diver and leader certifications. The cards are purchased by USOA from CMAS and the front side will show the international CMAS logo, the diver or leader level and a hologram. The back side of the cards will be printed at the SEI Diving office and will show both SEI Diving and USOA logos in addition to the diver or leader information similar to our current cards.

Underwater Society of America holds a seat on the Technical Committee of CMAS international and therefore SEI Diving will become the training arm for USOA. To be sure both our instructors, SEI Diving, and USOA is covered by liability insurance, each instructor MUST list "Underwater Society of America" as an additional insured on their insurance. We must have that certificate in our file before we can issue cards. Diver levels do not expire but instructor levels will expire in five years from date of issue as long as the instructor maintains insurance and is current with SEI Diving.

Here are the equivalent levels:

DIVER

CMAS

- 1 Star Diver
- 2 Star Diver
- 3 Star Diver
- 4 Star Diver

SEI Diving

- Open Water Diver (age 15+)
- Advanced OW (age 15+ w/ 20 logged dives)
- Advanced Plus Diver (age 16+ w/ 50 logged dives)
- Master Diver + DRAM Rescue Diver + 100 logged dives



INSTRUCTOR

CMAS

- 1 Star Instructor
- 2 Star Instructor
- 3 Star Instructor

SEI Diving

- Divemaster (age 18+ w/40 logged dives)
- Instructor (age 19+ w/ 100 logged dives)
- Instructor Trainer (age 21+ w/ 200 logged dives)



Be aware that in the CMAS system, a One-Star Diver is a diver that is accompanied on dives by a higher level diver. The SEI Diving Open Water Diver does not fit the criteria of a Two-Star Diver because 20 logged dives are required.

Cost for these cards will be:

Diver	\$25.00 US each
Instructor	\$40.00 US each

Please contact our office for further assistance at
765 281 0600 or info@seidiving.org

Update on the Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill Disaster

Official Reports

The Deep Water Horizons disaster has already had a devastating effect on the waters of the Gulf of Mexico, the Southern USA states, and all the industries that derive a living from the sea in that area. The effects of the oil spill will be felt for generations. In many cases, media reports have caused a ripple effect turning many people away from the area and thus causing loss of income, especially for the dive industry.



Please note that not everywhere in the Gulf of Mexico has been contaminated and there are clean safe places to dive.

Please check first.

Resources for news and updates:

www.restorethegulf.gov An official website of the US government – file a claim, volunteer, read regular updates.

www.geoplatform.gov/gulfresponse according to the website this is “a new online tool that provides you with near-real time information about the response effort. Developed by NOAA with the EPA, U.S. Coast Guard, and the Department of Interior, the site offers you a “one-stop shop” for spill response information.”

www.GulfStateDiving.com The DEMA website established for operators and consumers to report on current diving conditions in the Gulf States of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas.

www.noaa.gov National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Federal Government) website

www.bp.com British Petroleum website

www.dan.org Diver's Alert Network website

www.dema.org Diving Equipment and Marketing Association website

Clean Up Efforts in the Gulf of Mexico

By Capt Timothy Thorsen, SEI Diving Instructor Trainer

Photos by Tim Thorsen

Task Force 5: 6-23-2010 log

Tasking: Preventing oil from entry into Pensacola Pass, Big Lagoon, Pensacola Bay and off the surrounding beaches near the Pensacola Pass.



Tar Ball – compare size to shovel

Tar balls from 6 square feet in diameter to in excess of 20 feet in diameter continued to roll into the Pensacola Pass against the current and traveling North with the South wind.

Every available boat in Task Force 5 was dispatched to the area to collect oil/tar balls.

Each vessel had on board from 6 to 10 bags of tar balls... with no pom-poms, boom, or other debris other than thick oil/tar. Bags weighed from 40 to 50 lbs each.

The effectiveness of the pom-poms ability to collect oil is demonstrated in the pictures below... These two large tar balls collected every drop of oil prior to it reaching the boom. If there is any question about how effective the pom-poms are at collection, these photos should resolve these questions now. We can collect 10 times the amount of oil with 1/2 the effort using pom-poms if they were available.



Tar Ball collecting near boom

We express our heart-felt appreciation to all those working diligently to clean up the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Aquatic Environments

Reaping the *Treasure* of Your Open Water Dive Site

By Carol Reed, SEI Diving Instructor Trainer

As SEI Diving Leadership, we spend hours with each class, teaching our students to become safe divers. When class and pool are complete, we journey to the local dive site to introduce them to the great underwater world.

It would be interesting to survey SEI Diving Leadership throughout the world, and ask: “What are the ***Treasures*** of your Open Water Site?”

What can you show your students on their open dives that will help to “hook” them on diving for a lifetime? Yes, of course, the Standards say there are a few required skills to complete, but the tour portion of the dive is important. The tour is our chance to get that new diver hooked.

For some SEI Diving Leadership, the open dive site is a tropical reef somewhere in beautiful salt water. For others, maybe the site is salt water, but not so tropical in temperature. We all know the oceans, warm or cold, do hold a variety of life for our enjoyment as divers. However, what about SEI Diving Leadership who are far from the salt water sites? Many divers experience the underwater world for the first time in freshwater quarries or lakes. The Midwest of the United States is well-known for its many quarries which provided limestone for roads, buildings and other uses. Once the quarry was no longer worked and ground water was allowed to accumulate, a dive site was born.

Since becoming an instructor in 1986, I have worked for Leaird’s Underwater Service. Our local dive site, Philips Quarry, just a mere 1.8 miles from the dive store, is the open water site for the many students that go through our programs. Many people wonder what there is to see in a quarry. As of this writing, I have logged 2358 dives just in Philips. Yep, I suppose now you are thinking, “wow, she’s crazy!” Well, yes, I suppose I am. I am just simply hooked on diving, and always ready for the next dive, wondering what ***Treasures*** I will encounter. I dive the quarry at least once a week, more when we are leading students, and even more this time of year when warm waters prevail and I am out of school for the summer. The quarry and its creatures have become my “underwater backyard!”

One must remember that each dive site is unique. Location, climate, age, and other factors play a part in the ecosystem and what can be found on any given dive. The following are some of the ***Treasures*** of Philips Quarry. Perhaps your site has similar features and aquatic life that you can capitalize on for your student tour dives. Use these ***Treasures*** to educate new divers. During student tours, explore and enjoy.

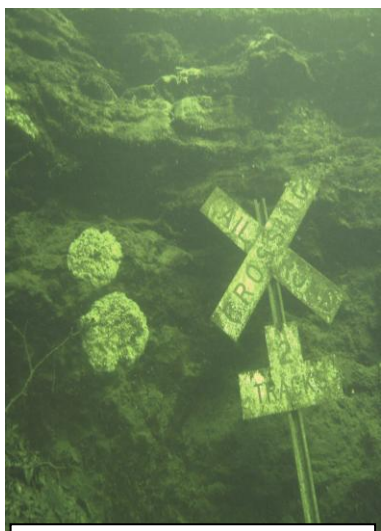


*Philips Quarry
Muncie, Indiana USA*



*Treasure hunt at Philips Quarry
Muncie Indiana*

Treasure (cont)...



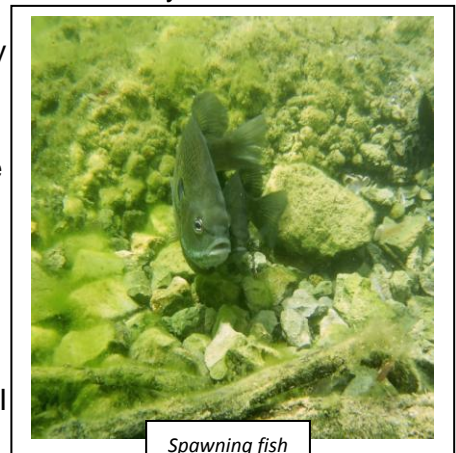
Sponges and railroad crossing sign

Muncie, and Philips Quarry, is located in eastern Indiana, which contains some of the oldest bedrock in the Midwest. Silurian bedrock, deposited when Indiana was under a shallow marine sea, is the prevalent limestone close to the surface. Silurian limestone will contain marine fossils that are roughly 400 million years old. Crinoids, brachiopods, and the occasional trilobite may be found as one explores the cuts in the limestone walls. Philips has 3 locations in a particular layer where good examples of crinoids are found. Two of those places are easily accessible on the routes we normally take our student tour dives. One of our instructors, Les Hiatt, found the most perfect specimen of trilobite I have ever seen in the shallow waters of our quarry. The **Treasure** is Geological History. Do a little research on your local geology. Even the reefs of the Florida Keys are rich in geological history.

What about human history? Philips was purchased by a private individual and made into a local swimming pool in the 1930's. We have pictures from a local educator, Dr. John Lewellen. These pictures show him enjoying swimming and diving from the many wooden platforms that were constructed and floated on the quarry. Each platform, much like a patio deck, had a "pool" constructed into it. Some were 6 feet deep, others perhaps 9 feet or deeper. Each had something of interest, such as a slide or diving board. Now, those platforms, made of sturdy, long, wide boards are on the bottom at 50 feet. Also found are many barrels, some steel, but many are oak barrels that were used to float the platforms. The **Treasure** of Human History. What about your dive site? Maybe some of the mining tools left from the working quarry, or maybe a favorite shipwreck. Shipwrecks always have a story.

Aquatic life. Perhaps what we think of most when we think "diving". Summer brings warm water to our quarry. Some of my favorite dives are only 8-12 feet deep around the quarry wall. A leisurely dive can last up to an hour. I have found several vertical crevices in the limestone in which usually a rock bass can be found passing away the daylight hours. Just a few years ago, if one saw a rock bass on a night dive, it was unusual. The population has flourished in the last few years.

June in Indiana is bluegill nesting time. Students have the opportunity to get a close look at a fairly large bluegill. It is important to brief the student pre-dive on the importance of not disturbing the nest. One of my favorite aspects about the whole process is that Daddy guards the nest, and Mom is off somewhere having a good time! Last Saturday, I spied a new nest that was excavated by quite the engineer. Daddy bluegill had dug a bowl-shaped nest into the soft bottom until he hit gravel. One side is at least 6 inches deep, showing the layers of silt perfectly. Bluegill nests will sometimes reveal a hidden treasure such as an antique bottle or "vintage" beer can. On one dive last summer, I was lucky to observe a pair of bluegill spawning.

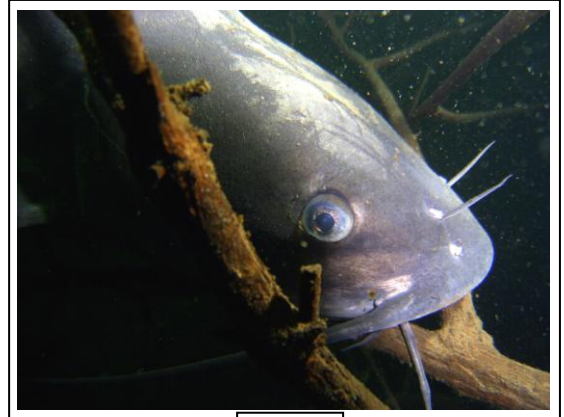


Spawning fish

Treasure (cont)...

Philips is home to many largemouth bass. This time of year, one can see thousands of young fry in schools. Each week, divers can watch the little ones grow. When you see small fry, look for the adult. It usually is somewhere close, keeping an eye on the kids.

Maybe your dive site boasts a few unusual or large fish. We have one blue catfish that we found “wintering over” in the same pile of sunken trees at 45 feet for at least 5 winters. Each weekend, we would make the swim to the back of the quarry to visit our friend. Most weeks we were not disappointed. There he was, in the trees, but usually in a different position each week. Very territorial! Last fall, things changed and I suppose our old friend decided it was time to move up. We found him in the southeast corner in a bigger pile of sunken trees.



Catfish

Three summers ago, a fisherman caught a 20 pound flathead catfish in a local river and brought it to Philips. We see this fish in all areas of the quarry. He is a world traveler. Last week I found him under a log on the east wall. Three days before that, we found him in a little “cave”, a horizontal crevice, on the west wall. He spent the winter in another cave on the west wall. Only 2 or 3 weekends he was not there. He has been sighted in a cave on the south wall also.

I was certified to dive in 1979. At that time, Philips had 5 large carp. Today, 3 are still living, but never seem to reproduce. Wikipedia says some carp can live to be 65 years old! Our carp are very wary of divers, but are also very territorial. There are only two places that they are generally sighted in our quarry. Not world travelers like the big catfish.

In mid-June, 4 of us did a night dive around the wall to fulfill the requirement for SEI Diving Advanced Diver.

If there is a dive I like better than wall dive. I’m rarely disappointed dive, we were finding turtles so accurate count on how many. fallen tree branches were in the found at least one, if not two The light-colored plastron of the often hang in the submerged underwater, so it is easy to That particular night we found, I dozen map turtles, about half



Tom Leaird with a turtle

All were very healthy-looking and with turtles were found that night, but I often see them during the day. Rare sightings of soft shells, snappers, and red-ear sliders have occurred.

an afternoon wall dive, it is a night on a night dive. This particular fast that none of the 4 of us got an Any place that overhanging or water close to the surface, we turtles. Shine your light upwards. turtle will be very visible. They branches, just a few inches extend the head up to breathe. am guessing, at more than a of them at least 6 to 7 inches long.

beautifully marked shells. No painted

Treasure (cont)...

On two night dives I have sighted muskrats. Of course, Tom Leaird's favorite objective for a night dive is to give each diver a gallon-sized zip lock bag. Catch a sleeping fish! Biggest ever caught was a bass too long to fit completely in the bag. Its tail was sticking out 3 to 4 inches! Of course, everyone gets to show off their catch, take some pictures and then the fish are released.

Perhaps the most unusual sighting over the years was a beaver. Imagine just cruising along on your typical lazy summer afternoon wall dive when suddenly a big brown face with big round eyes is right in front of you. The White River adjoins the quarry, and for about a week or so we had a visiting adult beaver. That was a bit unsettling for most of us.



Fresh water sponge

So this is summer and the greatest amount of aquatic life is active, but what about those dives in late fall or very early spring? In Muncie, since I teach my courses at Ball State University, we are doing our open water dives in late October and early April. It is rare to see a turtle at that time. Fish may or may not be out and active, especially in early April. Not a problem. Our tours will include learning to spot one of the many freshwater sponges growing on the walls and other areas. These sponges appeared almost 10 years ago. They are encrusting, tan to pale yellow in color, will start as a very small circle, and grow to bigger than a dinner plate. Some have lived for many years. They are filter feeders, therefore helping to clear the visibility. Interesting thing is they only like cold water, and don't seem to like direct sunlight. The sponges in Philips are found at depths between 22 and 29 feet. If one grows in shallow water in the winter, it will die as the water warms up in the spring.

Philips has zebra mussels. Most Midwesterners are familiar with these invasive mussels from Russian waters. One recent report stated zebra mussels appeared in the Great Lakes in 1988, and in 2010 are now reported in California waters. We had mixed feelings about the mussels. They are sharp. That's a problem if students are not wearing gloves, but if we did our job in class and pool and taught good buoyancy, risk of cuts are reduced. We have found that our water clarity has improved greatly. Last winter my buddy and I were on the ice line 100 feet out and I looked around to see the triangular ice hole clearly. An adult zebra mussel filters up to a quart of water a day. Its hunger is our gain in visibility. I have seen piles of empty shells along the banks up shallow. Wikipedia reports that muskrats and crawdads eat them. On one shallow wall dive, I spied a pile of shells in about 2 feet of water. Suddenly, another empty shell came fluttering down from the surface. I slowly popped my head up, and there on a floating log sat a painted turtle! Well, for anyone who likes zebra mussels, we have an unlimited supply! My husband likes to break them open to feed the bluegill. Much better than feeding hotdogs, as we used to do in the 80's.

Treasure (cont)...

Philips has contained water for probably well over 100 years. Its ecosystem is older and more established. We have several kinds of algae and some aquatic plants. I am not too well versed on aquatic plants, but just a few years ago, Tom Leaird had two biology students in his open water group. I overheard them talking about our plants, so in this case the student taught the teacher. Eurasian Water Milfoil is an invasive plant from Europe, Russia and Northern Africa. We get quite large stands of it in our small shallow area during the warm months. It is great habitat for the small fry. We also have huge “clouds” of filamentous algae in the shallows. In one report I saw it described as “green cotton candy”. Excellent description! Sometimes under the ice in the shallows, long bright green strands of algae hang from submerged branches or the under the ice itself. Until recently, the huge algae clouds would bother me: “this stuff is taking over!” However, after diving another Midwest quarry this past Sunday, I have decided I prefer our own little quarry. The other quarry boasts lots of divers, a big plane, which of course is awesome to explore, but I was disappointed in the lack of fish life. My buddy and I swam for quite some distance along the shoreline and through sunken trees, and only saw 4 rock bass, no fish nests, and no sheltering algae. I did find small sponges growing on the inside of the plane, but I would be hard pressed to show my students a good time on tours if I had to dive that quarry. Of course, it is a “newer” quarry. Maybe someday it will be home to more species. In Philips, the “green” of the plant kingdom is always there, 12 months of the year, it just changes from season to season. At times I find beautiful light purple patches on the bottom. My curiosity is spiked. I don’t know what it is, algae, fungus? Someday I will find out.

So there you have it, the **Treasures** of Philips Quarry. What does your open water site hold for diver education, exploration, and enjoyment? During that next surface interval time, think about it. Capitalize on the fish and other aquatic life found in your divesite. Do a little research on the life common to your dive site, and build it into your student tours.

Carol M. Reed

SEI Diving Instructor Trainer
Ball State University
School of Physical Education, Sport & Exercise Science,
Aquatics Program
Muncie, Indiana, USA

Fresh Water Photos by Carol Reed

Pictures & Stories

If you have any interesting pictures or stories from your dives – send them to us and we may be able to include them for others to enjoy.

Dive Site Info

We have received requests from numerous SEI Diving Leadership for other SEI Diving Leadership all over the world to write a little about the dive sites they use and some of the features (wrecks, planes etc), fish and other aquatic life found at that dive site.

Part 2: Building the Relationship

By James Lapenta, SEI Diving Instructor

Last issue we discussed working with dive shops as an independent instructor. Next we will discuss developing, building and improving the relationship with those dive shops. We can do this by making sure we respect other instructors working there and the agencies they certify through, without compromising our own standards. As we do this, we will not alienate anyone, especially students, potential students and the dive shop owner and staff.

There may be times when the dive shop may not be able to accommodate all interested students and they will call on you. In some areas where there is a larger customer base to draw from, such as a college town, the shop staff may not be sufficient to meet student demand. We can help here. If they choose to use us in this manner we can certainly accept those students. But we need to be perfectly clear as to what the actual relationship is. We must be able to certify the students under SEI Diving standards, they will get a full SEI Diving education, and we will not cut corners or push anyone through who does not meet our standards. As long as this is understood and accepted, it is a win for all parties involved.

The more we work with shops the better the relationship can be. Now just how much work do we do with the shop will vary. In my own case, working with the shop includes doing whatever I can do to make classes easier. For me that has involved things like filling all the pool tanks when I only need two or three, picking up gear that other classes may have used and not stowed properly, and offering to rinse and hang up rental gear. The response of the owner was worth ten times that when he sold me a new BC at cost with no shipping charges. Each time I use the pool, I try to do one little thing extra. It may be only taking 5 or 10 minutes to clean something or put something away. These little things are noticed and result in benefits such as discounts for my students and me. Trust also comes to those who earn it. This shop normally closes at 6PM but my pool sessions can run until 8 or 8:30. That would be a problem under some circumstances but not here – the owner goes home and I lock up when I'm done.

Am I a shop employee when I do these little things? Maybe, but I look at it as securing my own business and maintaining my resources. If we treat the dive shop and any equipment the way we would want our own things treated, then we are in fact preserving and maintaining our own livelihood. When we establish a good relationship, it can develop into a long lasting one which in turn will benefit the shop, the instructor, and the student. The key to any joint venture is cooperation between the parties involved. As professional members of one of the finest scuba training agencies in the world we owe it to ourselves and our students to develop and make wise use of all resources available so that our students receive the best education possible. Securing the use of equipment, classroom space, and pool facilities as well as having a place we trust to send our students to for their equipment will only ensure the growth and longevity of our personal businesses and training agency.

Only by maintaining the highest standards can we guarantee that SEI Diving with our 50 year tradition of excellence will celebrate another 50 years as a premiere training agency. Technology changes and new developments are made every day. What does not change – humans cannot breathe under water. They need equipment and training to do that. So go out and make new friends with a shop, work with them, demonstrate how SEI Diving is good for their business. I firmly believe that what goes around comes around. We provide that value. Let's get that out to as many people as we can. SEI Diving, with a long history of traditional skills and education based training, is the future of diving!

Final Note

Birthday Party in Des Moines, Iowa

Tom Leaird and his wife Bobbi traveled to a July birthday party for Jay Hytone – long time supporter of YScuba. Twenty friends came to surprise Jay. The dinner conversation covered many years of history. Jay was on the first YMCA Scuba Advisory Committee and served for many years writing the original Star Program and much more.



*Matt Leydens, Jay Hytone, Tom Leaird,
Jon Fussell, David Miller*

Incentives – SEI Diving Bucks

We are announcing a new program to give each of our instructors, credit for certifying students and to create interest in using our materials, effective immediately. There are two areas where you can earn credit. Certify more than 50 students during our fiscal year or purchase more than \$1,000 worth of supplies and materials for your students.

Instructors certifying 50 students earn a \$50 credit for use in the SEI Diving store and each certification over 50 earns you another dollar. Purchasing \$1000 in supplies and materials earns you a \$50 credit and an additional 5¢ credit for every dollar over \$1000.

Publications and Continuing Education

As a reminder, Currents is your publication, and submission to Currents counts towards continuing education, so we encourage participation in this newsletter. Articles or information can be sent to currents@seidiving.org. We prefer Word for articles so that we can format it into In Design, but we can also accept pdf and In Design files. Pictures and figures should be referred to in the text and attached separately with proper labeling. All pictures should be resized to a resolution of no more than 300 dpi using IrfanView or another photo sizing tool (available for free on the Internet). Please scan all files and pictures for viruses before sending.

Contact Us

General questions, scuba certifications, replacement cards, and leadership renewals:



1623 W Jackson St
Muncie, IN 47302
(765) 281 0600
info@seidiving.org

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