We are approaching spring time in the northern waters and taking new Open Water divers out for training dives is possible and usually begins about this time of the year. Yep, the ice is off up here in Indiana. If you reside near cooler waters, use caution taking those students out too early. With S.E.I. standards, we have given our students a full class and pool course and therefore the amount of skill testing in open water is minimal. We require a minimum of one skin dive and four scuba dives to complete the open water class. These dives should be enjoyable and include a learning experience.

We feel that as the dives progress, even though an Instructor or certified staff must be in constant “direct supervision” of the new students, the responsibility for planning and carrying out these dives should switch over to the students themselves. Especially on the last of the series of dives, students should make the dive tours while the leader merely follows along. The planning, that includes direction, time, depth, turnaround point, and special interest points, should be gradually turned over to the students.

When certified, these new divers should have had an initial dive experience that sets them up to be committed divers who will actually participate in our recreational activity. Remember, once the training dives are complete, these newly certified divers will be on their own. How many of them will actually go with their buddy and make dives? If you haven’t prepared them, they will be hesitant to forge out and dive on their own. Do all you can to create confident new divers that will enjoy our fabulous sport.

World Earth Day 2011

Over the past couple of months there have been a number of devastating earthquakes, cyclones, tornados, tsunamis, and floods all over the world – most of which we as human beings cannot change, predict nor prevent. The resulting loss of life, the disruption to everyday life, the impact on the economy and environment are significant.

This April 22nd, 2011 is World Earth Day. We challenge each and every one of our leadership team to take a moment and do what you can – do something to make the world a better place.

Take time to enjoy the beauty of our planet whether through diving or other activities.
Feature Story

Cave Diving for Bugs
A first-hand diving experience by Roger Dunton, S.E.I. Instructor

Gary, John III and I went to Santa Barbara to dive for lobsters (bugs) with Gary’s friend, Bill, on his great, little but fast, speedboat. Gary had been there a few months earlier and found a cave with bugs all over the place! We were going to try to find the same cave where Gary said big bugs were on the walls, the ceiling and floor all the way into the shallow recesses and actually onto a sandy bottom that had them crawling around out of the water back into the dark recesses of the cave.

Bill’s boat was a jewel as we sped out to the east end of Santa Cruz Island. It flew over the water and got us to our destination in no time flat! Gary took us to the calm space between a large rock and the shoreline of the island itself. He pointed out the entrance to the cave where we hoped to find the big bugs. As we watched, the swell rose and fell, rose and fell. I realized there was no way we were going to go into that opening with the surge shoving us forward and pulling us backward over those exposed rocks. The water was really moving and we would be better off forming another plan.

We turned around and headed in the opposite direction. There was this giant rock sticking out of the water, about the size of a large apartment building. Maybe we could explore around it and there might even be some bugs. Who knows? So off we went to the base of this huge rock. I swam to the bottom and towards the rock. There was a flat, sandy bottom for awhile then all of a sudden there was a very large dark area ahead. It was the entrance to the cave that we later found out ran through the rock from front to back.

As I swam into the entrance to this cave I noticed a heavy, deep pull into the center of the cave. I positioned myself to be off the bottom as I was sucked into the hole. I went a good 100 feet into the darkness, then another 100 feet back in the other direction. This was big time surge! John III and Gary swam in, too. This was an exciting place and there was lots of action here! We positioned ourselves around the tunnel searching for lobsters that most certainly were hiding out in this action spot.

The surge became so strong at one point I had to hang onto the bottom with my hands as my legs swung back and forth overhead with the surge. Suddenly, I heard an air sound as if air from my regulator was flowing somewhere. I realized that I was wedged against a rock and my AIR II was jammed on and my BC was filling with air. Once I dumped my air and unjammed my AIR II, I crawled on in the pursuit of the elusive LOBSTER!
AHA! There’s a tunnel heading off the main section up into the upper recesses of the rock and I’ll bet there’s some bugs in there! So off I go, crawling up into the tunnel and... what’s this? It’s Gary checking out the same hole. He’s heading out as I head in. We wave to each other and kind of chuckle to ourselves as we realize how ridiculous this is. I head on into this small tunnel looking for the bugs that must be here. I’ve got my eyes on the bottom as I crawl along the tunnel. This hole opens up into a larger room and I keep on hunting. There’s got to be some bugs here somewhere – this is perfect lobster territory!

I look up and realize I can’t see anything. The surge is very strong. It’s totally dark except for my dive light. I try turning off my light to see what kind of natural light is available. There’s NOTHING! It’s totally dark! I’m lost back in an offshoot of the main cave and I have no idea where I am!

Oh boy! This is exciting!!! It’s way beyond exciting... It’s life or death! What am I going to do? OK, calm down... take it easy... slow down your breathing... breathe... breathe... breathe! You’re OK... just take it slow! I look at my gauges and realize I’m close to the surface in shallow water, but lost. I head upwards and my head breaks through the surface into a small, enclosed room. As I shine my light around, I realize there’s a pocket of air in this cave and my head is above water. The changing air pressure in this pocket of the cave pulses my ears in and out, in and out. But I can’t stay in here. I have to get out.

So I turn off my light and drop back below the surface. I look in every direction for outside light until finally I see a faint glow of light off in the distance. I head that way and find it’s an exit to the outside. I follow it, squeezing through the narrow sections until I make it to the outside. I’m Free! ... I’m Free! ... I’m Free!!!

**Take Away Lessons:**

- Cave Diving takes special training
- Do not enter confined spaces and be aware of potential overhead entanglements
- When in a stressful situation – DO NOT PANIC! Stop – breathe – think – breathe – act
- Always carry spare air
- Always monitor gauges for time, depth and remaining air
- Always end your dive with extra air in your cylinder
Recent Events

Our Fragile World

Japan’s devastating earthquake and resulting tsunami have caused untold heartache and loss for many. Our heartfelt thoughts and prayers go out to those affected by this tragedy.

With attention focused on the damaged nuclear plant and concerning situation, the media has dedicated little time to focus on the consequences and impact to the marine and aquatic environments.

What happens in one part of the world, truly does affect us and our local environment.

John F. Bruno, a marine ecologist and Associate Professor at UNC Chapel Hill has noted:

“...most of the seawater that destroyed coastal communities returned to the ocean, bringing untold tons of stuff with it; all the remnants of humanity including pieces of buildings, cars, trees, garbage, huge amounts of plastics, eroded soils and likely a wide variety of pollutants from those soils, homes, factories, stores, etc.

The sediment input alone could devastate coastal habitats such as seagrass beds and oyster reefs that were not directly destroyed by the force of the tsunami waves. Filter feeding bivalves like oysters are not tolerant of highly sediment loads in the water. And seagrasses are especially sensitive to sediment since they need light for photosynthesis (suspended sediments make the water less clear, reducing light penetrance).

Ecologists refer to organisms like seagrasses and oysters as “foundation species” since they create the habitat that countless other creatures inhabit. Thus losing them means losing the habitats, the fish that inhabit them, etc.”

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-f-bruno/post_1911_b_845919.html

We are not able to prevent natural disasters, but we can and must do what is within our power and ability to help the environment – even if it is something that may seem insignificant such as maintaining neutral buoyancy to prevent silting and damage to temperamental reef ecosystems to recycling or disposing of our trash properly so it doesn’t end up in our waterways.

Take the Pick 5 Challenge and make a difference in your part of the world.
Be a Wise Steward of the Environment

April 22 Earth Day
For local events in the USA click on http://www.epa.gov/earthday/events.htm

Pick 5 for the Environment (ongoing)
Pick 5 for YOUR environment! http://www.epa.gov/pick5/

“Environmental action can mean doing different things in different places, but it begins by taking the simple steps where you live. Doing your part means doing what you can do. By choosing five or more activities you are joining thousands of others who are doing the same. Together we can make the biggest difference, so make your actions count today!”

Choose 5 things to do such as:
• Protect your local water source from pollutants and garbage
• Learn about the native species and the negative effects of non native plants and animals in the environment
• Participate in or plan a local event to bring about awareness or help your environment. Go to http://blog.epa.gov/pick5/hp_maps/map to see where Pick 5 activities are being achieved around the world
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 info@seidiving.org. We prefer Word documents for articles so that we can format the text to fit layout. Pictures and figures should be referred to in the text and attached separately with proper labeling. Pictures should be sent as jpeg or pdf files at least 200 dpi. If you have any questions, please contact our office at 765.281.0600. Please scan all files and pictures for viruses before sending.

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 calendar 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 $1,000 in supplies and materials earns you a $50 credit and an additional 5¢ credit for every dollar over $1,000.

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