

The Wet Gazette

The Newsletter for Scuba4Less

Issue 27

JUNE 2004



Welcome!

CJ and I attended SeaSpace (www.seaspace.org) in Houston earlier this month. SeaSpace is consistently one of the best scuba shows I attend. I look forward to going each year. We did notice that there did not seem to be quite as many companies represented as has been in the past. But since it was in Reliant Center, the building itself may have dwarfed the show. We did meet a lot of new people and have high hopes that we will soon be seeing new advertisers as well.

In our attempts to continually improve The Wet Gazette, we have considered a few additions and want your comments. We are considering adding a "Letters to the Editor" section, Dive Club section, Scuba Link of the Month, Featured Travel Destination (would require readers to write and submit articles about their own trips) and a section at the end of the e-zine for classified ads. These spaces would be sold month to month and *could* be limited to individual subscribers only. But with close to 2800 subscribers, who knows? Suggestions are welcome to! Drop us an email at thewetgazette@aol.com and let us know what you think.

A while back Della and I bought a "discount" travel package from a telemarketing group. At the time, we did not know they were a telemarketing group and thought we were being offered a business-to-business discount. Oh the things we have discovered We are still working on it and have a tentative trip planned for this summer. We are documenting as much as we can and plan on writing about the "discount" travel packages that are being marketed. If you have personal information concerning one of these discount groups, email us a letter about your experiences. We are not ready to pass judgment yet but I can tell you this: If it sounds too good to be true, it IS. Even IF this trip turns out OK, the aggravation will NOT be worth the savings!

We are still considering a Wet Gazette Group Trip to Cozumel sometime this summer. If you have any desire to participate in this with us, email us at thewetgazette@aol.com with the subject line COZUMEL. No dates have been set but we will start looking for some better than average rates and will post options to those who respond. The more that go – the better the rates get!

Dive Safe!
Mark and Della Phillips

W E L C O M E A small graphic of a pink fish with a white belly, swimming towards the right.

SPECIAL TO THE WET GAZETTE

"Carbon Monoxide – Is Your Next Dive Your *Last Dive*" By Karl Denninger

Are you really breathing pure Air, Nitrox or Trimix when you go diving? Or are there unwanted – and dangerous – contaminants in your breathing gas supply?

In a recent article published in DAN's "Alert Diver", representatives from breathing air testing organizations made the statement that 3-5% of the samples they test for dive shops fail due to Carbon Monoxide levels – and when they do, they fail spectacularly. "Grade E" breathing air standards, those that must be met for ordinary compressed air, specify no more than 10 ppm (parts per million) of Carbon Monoxide (CO). Yet it is common for these failed samples to show levels of 40, 50 or even more ppm of this deadly gas – four or five times the limit! For "oxygen compatible" air used for blending Nitrox or Trimix, the limit is specified as 2 ppm.

So exactly what is CO, and how does it get in your scuba tank?

Carbon Monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that is produced as a byproduct of combustion. Specifically, incomplete or "imperfect" combustion of any product that contains carbon (such as oil, gasoline, paper, or any other material that has carbon in it) produces CO. Carbon Monoxide is dangerous on two accounts when inhaled. First, it binds very tightly with the hemoglobin in your blood, displacing the ability of the hemoglobin to transport oxygen. Effectively, you can suffocate even though there is plenty of oxygen in what you are breathing! Second, CO is a cellular poison, interfering with chemical processes necessary for life. Both of these effects begin to show up at extremely low levels – there is now evidence that carbon monoxide levels as low as 9 ppm can cause cardiac dysfunction.

Risk is to some degree individualized at lower levels of exposure. For example, you are more "at risk" from lower levels of CO if you are unfit, suffer from heart disease or other health problems. However, nobody is immune from CO poisoning – no matter how fit or healthy you are.

CO gets in your scuba tank in one of two ways. First, it can be sucked into the compressor intake along with the rest of the ambient air. A car's exhaust that wafts near the compressor's input can easily deliver a lethal amount of CO. Even more dangerous, engine-driven compressors (as opposed to electric-motor driven ones), or those located in the engine room of boats where exhaust leaks can be present, can ingest their own exhaust – literally – and compress that into your breathing air. Second, compressors by their nature heat the air being compressed as a consequence of what is called "adiabatic heating"; this heat can ignite trace amounts of carbon in the ingested air, or traces of the oil used to lubricate the compressor. This "silent combustion" produces no outward signs (e.g. an explosion) that it has occurred.

Compressor manufacturers attempt to deal with this by the inclusion of a material called "hopcalite" in the filter systems used in most breathing air compressors. Hopcalite, when dry and not "used up", converts CO to CO₂. CO₂ is not dangerous in the small quantities produced by this conversion. However, hopcalite is disabled in the presence of humidity

much over 4%, and a limited amount of it is available in the filters. Once exhausted, or if the moisture level is too high, it stops working.

So how much CO is "too much"? A critical person would say "any!" There is debate over whether CO responds to partial pressure increases much as oxygen and nitrogen does, but it is probably safest to assume that it does. In this case, the maximum allowed under "Grade E" standards – 10 ppm – is probably reasonably safe for recreational diving exposures (limited to 5 ATA, or 130 feet), given that the exposures will be of short duration (time at depth at 100' is usually 20 minutes or less) for no-decompression diving. For technical divers, who may undergo exposures of up to 10 ATA, and longer dive times breathing the gas, possibly extending to several hours including decompression time, the modified Grade "E" standard is probably more appropriate.

The problem here is that if 3-5% of all dive shops that sample air are sending in failing samples, how does one determine for how long that shop has been pumping poison into their customer's cylinders? *At present there is no way to know.*

The plight of two recent cave diver deaths in Mexico bears this out. The allegation has been raised that these deaths were caused by bad air – specifically, carbon monoxide contamination. While there is no current official released report on the matter, that two individuals who both were filled by the same fill station and who both died the same day, while others filled from the same system reported headaches and other problems that caused them to abort their dives, tends to support the hypothesis.

How common is this problem among actual fatalities?

Once again, there is no way to get an accurate answer. Over the last many years, only about 15% of the diving fatalities have had a COHb% (the test in the body for the presence of CO) taken. Of those, 51% were positive, however, all but two were levels that were not fatal (10% and under.) Two divers had definitely fatal levels (> 30%). Of those, only one's tank was analyzed, and it showed elevated CO levels.

What is not reliably known is whether those divers with lower levels received pure Oxygen on the surface before expiring. If they had, that would dramatically lower their measured COHb%. Second, and perhaps more damning, smokers commonly have a single-digit COHb% in their blood, although after a hyperbaric oxygen exposure (as you experience while diving) you'd expect that to have dropped some.

Further, CO poisoning, unless specifically looked for, often appears a lot like a heart attack. The "common indicators" of surface CO poisoning (flushed skin, etc) would not necessarily be present in someone who had a diving accident, and coroners who do not suspect CO poisoning do not routinely run this test. And "heart attacks" seem to be a rather common form of diving death – how many of them are really a case of CO poisoning?

As of today, there is no answer to that question. But if your tank is the one full of CO, all the statistics in the world are irrelevant, and since you cannot taste or see CO in your gas, the only defense is to **know** the CO content of what you're breathing.

How do you protect yourself?

There **are** devices available that will provide you a low-level CO detection capability. Unfortunately, your common home "CO detector" will NOT suffice. In a demonstration of

the usual insanity of our government in the US, to get the "UL" rating for a CO detector it must be "de-tuned" so that it does not alarm at CO levels under 70ppm and may not display levels under 35ppm – rendering them useless for this purpose. (The reason for this restriction is that fire departments were being called on too many "false alarms" from low-level alerts!)

However, at least one company, "CO Experts", makes a **low-level** detector that will display levels of either 5 or 10 ppm unprompted (depending on the model year – 2004 models light up at 10ppm) and will, upon being prompted, show levels down to **one** ppm.

That's exactly what the doctor ordered! Even better, the device is inexpensive (approximately \$100) from <http://www.aeromedix.com>.

There are two ways for a diver to use this device to check their air supply.

First, you can take a plastic bag (e.g. a gallon zip lock) with you. Place the unit inside, and squeeze out all the air. Then vent some of the gas from your tank into the bag, so that the bag contains only air from your tank, and seal the zip. Wait a couple of minutes (the unit's response time is specified as 2 minutes) and, if the display is blank, press the "Test" button to display the level under 5 (or 10) ppm. Of course what you would like to see is level of zero ppm.

The second method is handy if you have an O2 analyzer that is connected to a "BC" connector, say, as a personal Nitrox O2 analyzer. In this case a simple drill-and-dremel operation on the case will allow you to place the sensor cap used for the O2 analyzer sensor directly over the sensor in the CO Experts detector. This will allow you to sample your breathing gas the same way you do for O2 analysis, without the hassle of using a Ziplock bag.

If the display lights up (either 5 or 10 ppm), it can be argued that the gas does not meet the certificate displayed on the dive shop's wall – and you should not use that gas.

For the shop, such a system is easily amenable to continual monitoring. Installing a medical O2 regulator with flow metering into the compressor's output, after the filters, would allow simple and inexpensive **continuous** monitoring of CO production. Since the CO Experts detector will ALARM when the low-level limits are exceeded, albeit intermittently, it would be **impossible** for a shop to unknowingly fill their customer's tanks with poison with a system such as this installed.

Karl has a web site set up and operating for the purpose of documenting those dive shops that have **continuous monitoring** systems installed to protect their customers at <http://diversunion.org/co-known.htm>. In addition, you can find instructions on modifying the CO Experts "low level" CO detector to accept the O2 "sensor cap", creating an easily-portable device of approximately the same size as an O2 analyzer that can be stuffed in a Pelican box and taken with you.

Until the list at the above web page is populated with the literally hundreds of dive shops across the United States, and thousands, including live-aboard boats and charter operations with compressors on board, your only defense against this potentially deadly inclusion in your tank is to build **and use** your own detection system.



SCUBA NEWS

Technion engineer clears up underwater photos

May. 3, 2004 By [JUDY SIEGEL](#)

A carefully constructed algorithm and a commonplace camera filter can not only dramatically improve the quality of underwater photography, but may someday save lives as well. The technique developed over the past 18 months by scientists from the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology have started as a means of improving underwater photography. But it has wide applications in engineering, science, and even lifesaving, and has aroused much interest around the world – even before Dr. Yoav Schechner is due to present the work before the prestigious IEEE Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition in Washington, DC, in July.

Schechner, of the Technion's electrical engineering faculty, first intended to tackle a problem he encountered as an amateur diver. "My professional field is optics and using computer vision to solve optical effects that cause visibility degradation. I have dived from time to time in the Gulf of Eilat and off Australia, and was curious about dealing with the problem of taking photos underwater," he told The Jerusalem Post. "Even in the cleanest water, you have poor visibility. There are many reasons for it. We analyzed the physical factors. "The main problem," said Schechner, "is the ambient light from the surroundings; it undergoes scattering into the line of sight which is called backscatter. We and others understood that if the backscatter can be neutralized, the photo image would be much better."

Schechner and master's degree student Nir Karpel read "about 100 articles and books in the field" after developing their hypothesis about using an algorithm and attaching a simple polarizing filter – which costs less than \$100 and is widely used for conventional (overland) photography. Marine animals also use polarization for improved vision underwater. "Our hunch was that if you take underwater photos with this filter and use a mathematical analysis of physical things that occur in water, you can undo these distortions and compensate for them. At first we had no equipment and had no real experience in this, so we took some scientific risk when we developed our hypothesis. No one in the world had previously used this mathematical approach," Schechner added. When they did get equipment and dived with it, they "saw the algorithms didn't work so well, so we fine-tuned them until they did."

Their method, to be outlined in an article that will be published in the IEEE conference's official proceedings, not only makes it possible to see objects that previously appeared blurry and out of focus, but also makes it possible to estimate distances underwater and give the photos three-dimensional depth. It would be a boon for marine biologists, Schechner said, because photographers wouldn't have to disturb animals with close-ups. The technique could also help lifeguards better see into swimming pools to prevent drowning and might even be applied to improve photography in living tissue.

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It technique can be used for checking and monitoring underwater pipes and cables, bridge pylons, drilling rigs, the infrastructure of artificial islands, archeological sites, robots working in water, sailing vessels, and atomic reactors. It also could be of great assistance in scientific research (biology, underwater archeology, and underwater mapping) – and, of course, for amateur underwater photographers

18 Invasive Marine Species Found in Bay

<http://www.tallahassee.com/mld/tallahassee/news/8603155.htm>

May. 06, 2004 Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine - An international team of scientists found 18 invasive marine species in Casco Bay waters as part of a survey from Maine to New York last summer. The scientists last August scoured docks and piers in search of nonnative species of marine life that have made their way here from Japan, Europe, the Pacific and other parts of the world.

In Maine, they found the invaders in the waters at Portland Yacht Services in Portland, Brewers South Freeport Marine, and Port Harbor Marine in South Portland. The species included sea squirts, small crabs, algae, worms and varieties of bryozoan, but none were brand new to Maine.

Judy Pederson, a researcher at the MIT SeaGrant program in Massachusetts presented the results of the survey

Wednesday at Maine's Marine Invasion, a forum attended by almost 100 scientists, state and federal officials, environmentalists, and others. "It doesn't mean there are only 18 species here, it means that's all we found on those three sites," she said.

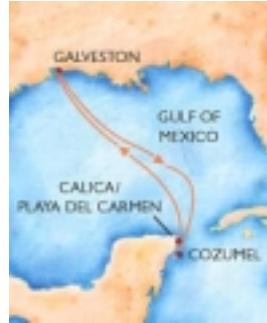
Marine invasive species arrive in the ballast water of ships and in shipments of seafood. They are spread through marine aquaculture, and can be found on fishing boats and in the contents of a home aquarium. Once here, the invaders can multiply rapidly and crowd out native species, threatening commercially valuable fisheries and the +health+ of marine ecosystems. Nationally, \$130 billion is spent each year trying to control invasive species.

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"There's a critical need to do more to try to prevent these introductions," said Karen Young, director of the Casco Bay Estuary Project, one of the sponsors of the project. "Invasive species are especially important in Maine where we're blessed to have relatively pristine ecosystems but where our economy relies so heavily on these natural resources that we need to monitor them carefully."

The number of marine invaders found in New England ranges from 28 to 32 different species, compared with 76 in San Francisco Bay and 35 or so in Washington state's Puget Sound. Besides showing which species are already in Maine, researchers also predicted which new species they think may be headed this way. One is a predatory whelk from the Chesapeake Bay that feeds on shellfish. Another is a sea slug, native to Europe, that was found just last November off Woods Hole, Mass. The pencilate shore crab exploded in Europe over just a year's time. "If it's in Europe and it's that abundant, it's very likely that we'll be seeing it here as well," Pederson said.

Researchers emphasized the urgency of the situation, saying states need to be prepared to respond rapidly when a new species is discovered. Pederson has been training divers and groups of "citizen scientists" so they can help identify species found in favorite diving spots and in tide pools. She is also working with U.S. and Canadian scientists, the shipping industry and marine resource officials on a regional ballast water management plan to try to prevent unwanted species from getting here in the first place. The group is working to identify low-risk areas for dumping ballast water off the coast, and wants to find ways to encourage the use of those areas. "We would love to have some support from Maine to work on that issue," she said.

94-pound snapper nabbed by diver

<http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/sports/8678553.htm>

May. 16, 2004 scocking@herald.com

A 24-year-old Coral Gables freediver speared a potential world-record 94-pound Cubera snapper May 8 off Miami Beach.

Manuel Menendez Jr. said he was diving near a 40-foot ledge with partner Manny Chica when he spotted the huge, toothy fish.

'I had told my partner, 'I have a fishy feeling here,' " Menendez said. ``We go down, and on my first breath, I aim at a sheepshead. Then I look to the right and the snapper is staring at me. I turned and fired automatically." Menendez said the snapper went down, pulling line off a reel attached to the speargun. Menendez surfaced and called for his father, Manuel Menendez Sr., to bring the boat closer. Then he dived to reel in the snapper. "[The fish] came, actually, pretty quickly," Menendez said. ``I put my hands in his gill rakers and swam him up and herded him into the boat. I was in shock."

The divers took the snapper to Crook & Crook to be weighed and measured, drawing a crowd of onlookers. It was 51 inches long, with a 43-inch girth.



SPECIAL TO THE HERALD
WEIGHTY: Manuel Menendez Jr. of Coral Gables hefts the Cubera snapper he speared off Miami Beach.

Menendez took it home to fillet it, and was surprised at what he found in its stomach. "It had three puffer fish and a bonito head," he said. No lobster, which is believed by many to be the Cubera's preferred food item. He tested the fish for ciguatera -- a toxin that can make a person sick if consumed -- and decided not to eat it. The flesh was potentially positive.

Menendez is submitting his catch to the International Underwater Spearfishing Association for certification as a world record

Divers descend on mystery wreck

<http://www.eastbayri.com/story/287423067372397.php>

May 17, 2004 By Ted Hayes

NARRAGANSETT BAY - The water is still cool — 51 degrees — but cold and the threat of thunderstorms over the weekend didn't keep scuba divers from rushing out to explore Rhode Island's newest shipwreck. Well, new might not be the best word. The vessel, an unidentified 118-foot steel hulled freighter, was discovered late last month by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) research vessel Rude in about 58 feet of water a quarter mile southeast of the Prudence Island T-Wharf.

By all accounts, the wreck has been there a while. Sitting upright and intact on a barren, gravelly bottom, it is completely covered with hydroids and anemones, and serves as home to a few whopper tautog that have taken up residence in the engine room. "It's a sweet wreck," said Jamestown resident John Stanford, who arrived just after the crack of dawn Sunday with two other divers aboard his 25-foot Endeavour, which he moors at Jamestown's Dutch Harbor. "It's probably been there since the early 1940s," said Mr. Stanford, a local authority on obscure Rhode Island shipwrecks who has dived on 117 wrecks in Rhode Island waters and beyond.



John Stanford prepares to dive the "new" wreck off Prudence Island.

Now, the discovery of the wreck during a routine bottom survey by NOAA is raising questions about how it got there in the first place, and what, if anything, should be done about it. The wreck's relatively shallow depth — at low tide, the top deck rises just 36 feet from the surface — concerns United States Coast Guard officials, as it lies in a major shipping channel. With some of the larger freighters that regularly sail the bay drawing as much as 34 feet, that is too close for comfort, said one Coast Guard official.

The Coast Guard, Army Corps of Engineers and bay pilots association will soon meet to decide what to do about the discovery, said Edward G. LeBlanc, waterways management specialist for the Coast Guard's Marine Safety Office in Providence. "There are a few options," Mr.

LeBlanc said. "We could leave it alone, which is highly unlikely given its location in the shipping channel," or part or all of the wreck could be removed. The Coast Guard has already marked the wreck with a large buoy.

For his part, Mr. Stanford thinks the wreck should be left as is. It is obvious it's been there at least 50 years, and it has caused no trouble so far. What's more, he said, the wreck will undoubtedly become a destination for divers, as it lies in relatively shallow water and could be a backup site to visit when conditions outside of the mouth of Narragansett Bay prevent divers from reaching offshore wrecks. "It's a beautiful, beautiful wreck," said Mr. Stanford, who first dove it two weeks ago.

The wreck

Mr. Stanford and his partners, Connecticut resident Al Langner and a former Rhode Island diver now living in New Hampshire, were the first group at the site Sunday morning, arriving in time to meet slack tide around 7:30 a.m. But before long they were joined by two other boats, a small inflatable carrying two from the Weaver Cove boat launch in Portsmouth, and a small runabout with three divers. Strapping on their gear, they jumped in and followed a mooring line tied by previous visitors to the wreck's raised fo'c'sle. Once on the bottom they made their way aft, swimming over remnants of teak decking before making their way to the aft deck. Much of the ship's superstructure is gone, with little remaining above the main deck apart from rusted, encrusted beams and machinery. Visibility underwater varied from 10 to 15 feet.

Continuing aft, they swam to a large hatch over the engine room and went inside, two at a time, with the two divers from the inflatable meeting them near the bottom. "It was a little tight getting in there, but once we were in we just went down on either side of the engine," said Mr. Langner. "It was unbelievable in there."

The ship's massive diesel is mostly intact, Mr. Langner said, but what is missing might give some clue as to why the wreck is where it is. Several cylinder heads are missing from the engine, and Langner and Stanford both suspect they were removed for reuse prior to the vessel being scuttled. They both believe the ship is a Navy light freighter, which would have shipped supplies back and forth between the former Navy base on Prudence and the mainland during the base's heyday in the 1940s. The scuttling theory is also supported by the lack of a main bridge on the ship, the apparent absence of brass portholes and the fact that there seems to be no damage anywhere on the hull. In fact, divers said, the vessel is remarkably clean.

Apart from a large amount of silt and debris in the forward cargo hold, the rest of the wreck is pristine, they said. There is no tell-tale debris field around the deck, a common thing to find on wrecks that have gone down accidentally. However, Mr. Stanford said, the most impressive feature could be the ship's massive bronze propeller, which is intact and mostly exposed at the stern.

Was it scuttled?

But if the ship was scuttled, why would the Navy sink it in such a shallow location? Mr. Stanford said one need only look at charts from the 1940s to guess. On charts contemporary to the date Stanford thinks the wreck went down, the area is listed as being 90 feet deep, plenty to allow a safe scuttling. That the charts were wrong only bolsters his opinion that the Navy scuttled the ship. "If it was that deep, that would be enough to sink it without having to worry about" the wreck posing a hazard to navigation, he said. "They didn't know it was only 60 feet." But even though the actual depth is less than 60 feet, Mr. Stanford believes the wreck poses no harm. "It hasn't been a problem so far," he said.

The fact that such a large wreck close to land has gone unnoticed for half a century makes Mr. Stanford and Mr. Langner wonder what other secrets Narragansett Bay holds. Telling those secrets, and identifying unknown wrecks, is what drives them, the two said. "The challenge is to find new (wrecks) every year," said Mr. Langner. "It's exciting." Mr. Stanford and his partners motored out of the site after about an hour, but Mr. Stanford said they will be back. His main goal for future dives will be to try to find some identifying trait — a serial number on a part, for instance — that can identify the wreck. "There's got to be some kind of a record of the ship," said Mr. Stanford. "I'd love to be able to identify it."

Locals discover 'Japanese Atlantis'

<http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2004/s1110986.htm>

Tuesday, 18 May , 2004

Reporter: Mark Simkin

MARK COLVIN: It was Plato who first referred to Atlantis more than 2,000 years ago. And because he was a Greek, most speculation about the legendary lost city has focused on and around the Mediterranean. But maybe they should have been looking further east? Japan's most western point is Yonaguni, part of the Okinawa archipelago. Its locals are convinced that a massive and ancient underwater city lies on the seabed near their island. Our Tokyo Correspondent, Mark Simkin was dispatched to investigate for *Foreign Correspondent*, and he filed this report for *PM*.

MARK SIMKIN: The tiny island of Yonaguni is a four-hour flight from Tokyo, and it may as well be a world away. There's no neon, and little of the concrete crush you find in the capital. Wild horses roam the roads and in the jungle you can find giant moths apparently the inspiration for Mothra, Godzilla's legendary foe. But Yonaguni's most remarkable attraction is not on land, it's underwater, not far from the coast. "I saw the most incredible thing," says the man who made the discovery, Kihachiro Aratake. "It was like my hair was standing on end and I got goose bumps. It was such a shock I didn't believe

my eyes. What is such a thing doing under the water?"



to learn how to scuba dive – a considerable challenge when the weather was rough, the currents very strong, the oceans infested with hammerhead sharks, and the instructor only able to speak Japanese. Nevertheless, Aratake san was finally convinced that I would live to dive another day, and in we went. It certainly is spectacular. Huge slabs of rock stand at extraordinary angles. Massive stone steps, all perfectly perpendicular, rise up. I saw what my guide thinks is a drainage ditch, a road and the image of a turtle, carved out of the rock. "It has the special feature of facing south, and the various sections are at right angles and the whole set of ruins is leaning about two degrees to the south," Aratake san says. "You never see angles like this and everything facing south." The key question it poses is whether it was made by humans, as Aratake san believes, or perhaps carved by the currents. To an untrained eye, it certainly looks like a massive temple, not unlike

MARK SIMKIN: Aratake san is a professional diver. He was looking for new dive sites when he found what he thought was a giant pyramid sitting on the ocean floor. He wanted me to see it – an offer too good to refuse, but one that presented a few difficulties. I had

something you'd see in South America. Some international experts think the monument, as it's called, is a natural, albeit remarkable, formation. But quite a few scientists are convinced it is the ruins of an ancient city – a Japanese Atlantis.

"First, if you ask me if it is natural or an artifact, I can say almost 100 per cent, or close to 100 per cent, that it cannot be made naturally," says Masaaki Kimura, a Professor of Marine Geology at an Okinawa University. "We have been able to collect relics, stone tools, relief carvings of animal figures, lithography with characters carved, and direct evidence that humans existed. Therefore, as a result, we consider it an artifact."

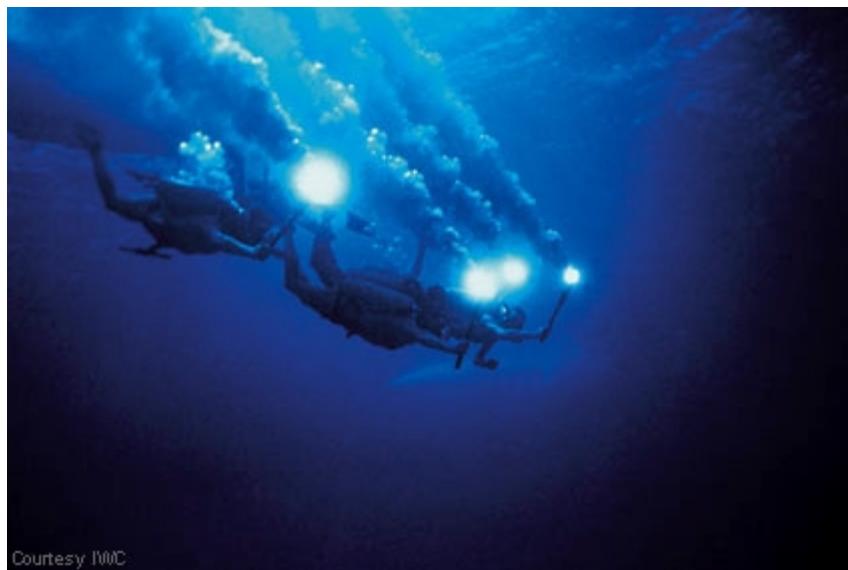
MARK SIMKIN: Scientific tests suggest the monument is 10,000 years old. If the professor is right, that means it's the world's oldest building – twice as old as the pyramids. Startling evidence of a civilization swallowed by the sea

Cousteau Comeback

http://www.forbes.com/lifestyle/sports/2004/05/18/cx_mk_0518feat.html

Melik Kaylan 5/18/04

By his death in 1997, **Jacques Cousteau** was arguably one of the most revered environmentalists on the planet. For years the French oceanographer's books and television documentaries illuminated to millions of people the beauties of, and threats to, the undersea world. Today, however, his name evokes little more than nostalgia from those who grew up watching him, and blank stares from most people too young to have enjoyed his regular TV specials.



Courtesy IWC

Now the Cousteau name is poised for a comeback led by his widow, **Francine Cousteau**. She and the Virginia-based **Cousteau Society** have lined up a multistage media blitz that begins May 20 with a photo show at the Time Warner Center, an upcoming book and documentary and even a commemorative watch launched this month by the new corporate sponsor, Swiss watchmaker **IWC**.

It's all based on a yearlong, back-and-forth through the Red Sea off the Egyptian, Israeli, Jordanian and Sudanese coasts with the high-tech Cousteau dive ship *Alcyone*.

"On the 50th anniversary of Captain Cousteau's first famous adventure, we are retracing his footsteps," says Francine, still a very alluring Frenchwoman in her 50s. That adventure, she says, "launched his first film, where he explored the coral reefs of the Red Sea."

The new documentary, which is almost complete and awaits a distribution deal in the U.S., deploys plenty of old footage from the first film, *The Silent World* (1954), which he made with acclaimed director **Louis Malle**. Like all traditional Cousteau projects, the current trip also has a scientific goal: to determine how well the region's marine life has fared. (So far so good, due to the Red Sea's isolation, according to onboard coral expert **Dr. Jean Jaubert**.)

For decades, as the pioneer of systematic underwater exploration, inventor of the Aqua-Lung and the leading exponent of preserving the sea's ecology, Jacques Cousteau was a global media hero. His documentaries of his trips under the oceans were seen wherever TV existed. In the Muslim world, the rumor still endures that he converted to Islam before he died, although his family has respectfully denied it often. His popularity extended through the Soviet and Chinese communist bloc where it endures through TV reruns. On a recent trip through the Caspian Sea, "crowds of people ran out to wave at the Alcyone wherever it went," says Francine.

There were several reasons why the Cousteau name faded with the captain's death. Other non-Cousteau organizations, like Greenpeace, took up his cause--a sign of his success, in a way. The family split into several factions, each trying to make use of the Cousteau name in different, and confusing, ways.

"It became a battle to save the Cousteau brand, so to speak," says Francine. Meantime, eco-awareness itself became mired in left-right political issues. Only lefty busybodies, it seemed, wanted to save the world. Everyone else wanted to make money. The Cousteau era seemed passé.

At his death, Cousteau tapped his second wife as the person to officially carry on the mission--that is, to head up the Cousteau Society. She had been a stewardess, then an executive at Air France, and a devoted diver throughout her career before marrying Cousteau in 1991. They had two children, and she had worked on 22 Cousteau films by the time he died. Five years of interfamily legal battles later, she has finally emerged in charge.

"Jacques was the explorer and visionary," says Francine. "He was the theorist. I am much more practical. My mission is to put the theories into practice. It's the next stage. My focus is to get things done, but to do that we must revive the Cousteau excitement and remind people of his legacy, especially Americans."

Central to her practical mind-set is Francine's awareness that the U.S. must be won over in any fresh ecological revolution. In other words, she is anxious to avoid being pegged and dismissed as an outdated anti-commerce, anti-profit ideologue. "According to dependable stats," she says, "in less than 30 years 75% of the world will be living part or full time on the coasts. No one can stop the trend in human habitation or use of natural resources. So the challenge is to manage it so nature survives and everyone benefits."



Courtesy INM

To that end, alongside a media revival and scientific observation, she wants to focus on actively helping to forge conservation plans for coastal areas. "I became a logistics expert at Air France. It's something I can do well."

She cites an invitation by the government of Sudan to help it develop its Red Sea coast responsibly. "What does that involve? Everything. You start by asking international experts to draw up a plan. Then you invite them to sit down with ministers, financiers and local people to work together. It can be done. And nature can survive."

Egypt already offers one working example in the rules imposed on where and how vessels can dock near its coast's fabled vertical Red Sea corals.

The Red Sea is fast becoming a well-trod tourist playground comparable to, say, the Caribbean, which is a strange phenomenon considering that above water there's nothing but scorching desert. Below water, though, nature unfolds dense riches comparable to the rain forest. In a manner unique to the area, the coral reefs have grown as narrow vertical formations over the millennia, as the sea bottom has retracted due to continental shifts. The sea and coral life can go very deep indeed, several hundred meters in places.

This is what Cousteau originally observed, and what the current exploration is reviewing. Unlike its effect on ocean reefs, El Niño left Red Sea marine life relatively intact because the sea is almost enclosed by land masses. That could eventually become a liability, however, because pollution from overdevelopment--if allowed to accrue--would have nowhere to go, Jaubert says. Like Francine Cousteau, Jaubert is aware that the solution lies as much with encouraging correct commercial development as with regulation. He

holds one of the main global patents on natural self-filtration techniques in aquariums and understands that making coral reefs work for a living enhances their chances of survival. He virtually discovered the method for re-creating defunct reefs. Recently, a Red Sea resort in Jordan asked him to grow reefs off its beaches where none existed. Jaubert believes it can be done within five years; indeed, that it can be done anywhere.



From left, Roger Passeron, Monaco's delegate to UNESCO; Serge Tell, consul of France in Monaco; Francine Cousteau; Peter Dogse, UNESCO's head of the science department; Jean Jaubert, Cousteau Society's head of science; Georges Kern, CEO of IWC; and Patrice Quesnel, captain of the Alcyone.

Talking to Francine, one is quickly convinced that her heart is in the right place and, even more important, that she has learned to be politically savvy. At a time when many Americans think there's no worse busybody than a French busybody, and are deeply suspicious of the U.N., she senses that the old multistate, globally subsidized projects won't

fly anymore. Her realism, the Cousteau mystique and a positive attitude about market forces can make her a real player. The spirit of Jacques Cousteau, it would seem, is about to be reborn.

Police: Poachers caught with 468 abalone

Pair arrested with record haul near Albion; limit is 3 a day

http://www.pressdemocrat.com/local/news/22abalone_b1b01_b1_emppempireb.html

May 22, 2004 By Guy Kovner THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

Two Southern California fisherman were in Mendocino County Jail on Friday, facing allegations of illegally harvesting more than \$20,000 worth of red abalone from the coast near Albion.

Kurt Allen Ward, 43, and Joshua Holt, 34, both of San Ysidro, were caught Thursday with 468 abalone in the hold of their urchin boat named "Blind Strike," said Troy Swauger, the state Department of Fish and Game spokesman. It was the largest single illicit abalone haul nabbed by the agency, Swauger said. The abalone, most more than eight inches long, could sell for \$50 to \$100 each on the black market, he said. Two game wardens, acting on citizen tips, made the arrest when the men landed their boat at the Albion River Campground, a popular diving spot at the mouth of the Albion River.

The men told investigators it was their sixth trip to the area from Southern California. Those visits aroused the suspicion of local anglers. Investigators believe the men used a "hookah" rig with an air compressor on the boat to pump air into their dive masks. The men allegedly collected abalone for about three hours in an area as deep as 50 feet and thick with large abalone, too far underwater and too far from shore for snorkeling sport divers to reach, Swauger said.

State law allows fishermen to take only three abalone a day and a total of 24 in one year. No air tanks or compressors are allowed. The abalone population is declining statewide, prompting reduced sport fishing limits on the North Coast and a moratorium on all abalone harvesting, sport and commercial, south of San Francisco Bay, Swauger said. Mendocino County Sheriff Tony Craver, whose agency was not involved in the case, said greed is the motivation for abalone poachers. "They're only in it for the money and they essentially ruin it for everybody," he said. Game wardens Gary Combs and Dennis McKiver had been on the lookout for the boat, which was owned by Ward, after local anglers became suspicious of his previous visits to the area, Swauger said. Following a tip that the boat had returned on Thursday, Combs spotted it on the water and McKiver intercepted it at the campground, he said. The abalone were "clearly visible" in the boat's hold beneath a small number of urchins, Swauger said.

Fish and Game has made larger abalone busts, involving as much as \$1 million worth of the prized mollusks, following a prolonged investigation, Swauger said. This was the largest single haul, he said. The two men were arrested on felony conspiracy to harvest abalone, which could result in a state prison sentence, Swauger said. Poaching abalone is a misdemeanor.

Scuba divers fight law that prohibits taking artifacts

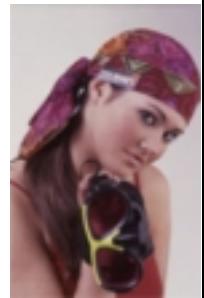
<http://www.al.com/news/birminghamnews/index.ssf?base/news/1085750207317750.xml>

Friday, May 28, 2004 RUSSELL HUBBARD News staff writer



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The scuba divers arrested last year for disturbing cultural artifacts are still fighting the 1999 Alabama law that ensnared them, and other divers are joining to combat what one calls the meanest law on the books.

Steve Phillips, a Birmingham scuba teacher, and Perry Massie, a California television producer, were indicted last month in Selma on felony counts for removing a Civil War-era rifle from the Alabama River last year, a violation of the cultural waterways law. Both men said they pleaded not guilty and that they did nothing wrong.

Now other divers are speaking out, saying the government went too far when it made it illegal to remove a 50-year-old soda bottle from a stream. One diver has sued to challenge the constitutionality of the law. The challenge sets up a rivalry between state regulators and archaeologists, who want centralized control of artifacts, and divers and outdoorsmen, who see themselves as the hands-on, day-to-day caretakers of the state's

cultural heritage. "You find an arrowhead in a river these days and tell the government you found it, you are apt to find yourself guilty of a crime," said Erskine Mathis, the Birmingham lawyer who is representing Phillips, owner of Birmingham's Southern Skin Divers Supply.

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The controversy stems from the 1999 law that makes anything of historical value found in a river bed of a public waterway property of the state. The law makes it a felony to remove, alter, disturb or destroy cultural artifacts from public waterways without permission. The law was used in October when Phillips served a diving guide for Massie, chief executive of the Outdoor Channel. The California-based production company is behind television shows such as Hunter's Journal and Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World. Massie has said he was scouting the area for an upcoming program, and the men made

several dives into the Alabama River near Selma. One of the dives yielded a Civil War-era rifle. Someone reported the diving, the police showed up, and Massie and Phillips were arrested on felony charges.

Government power:

"This case is about the ability of government to preserve artifacts of historical significance, as opposed to letting looters sell them for a profit," said Ed Green, the Dallas County district attorney, whose office plans to put Massie and Phillips on trial in August. Phillips disagrees. "It's a joke. It's about getting and preserving jobs for archaeologists, people with a degree and no practical experience whatsoever," he said. Phillips, who owns a sizable collection of Civil War artifacts he frequently lends to state parks and museums, says few divers and treasure hunters sell their finds. Doing so would yield little profit, he said. "That rifle isn't worth more than about \$100," he said. "Of what use is it to leave this stuff stuck in the mud, anyway?"

Such finds require the care of professionals, said Tom Maher, the Alabama state archaeologist. "I don't agree with the position that artifacts are better off up off their

resting places than left alone," he said. "Something is lost when you rip things out of their context."

Challenge:

The arrest and indictment have mobilized the diving world. The arrest made news in dozens of scuba diving newsletters and publications. It motivated Bessemer diver Dennis King to ask a Jefferson County circuit judge to declare the law unconstitutional. He filed his action this month. "We have a good case," said Mathis, the Birmingham lawyer representing Phillips. Mathis is a diver himself and is handling the constitutional challenge.

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"This law is going to be found lacking."

One of the main weaknesses of the law, Mathis said, is that it's vague and so broad that an average person is unable to determine if it's being broken. The U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly found that such laws are unconstitutional, he said. "You can't know from reading the law what is protected and what is not," he said.

Many divers and treasure hunters read it to mean that every scrap in a public waterway is covered. That would include old soda containers, Mathis said.

The law also calls for the confiscation of boats and other equipment used during violation of the law. That happened to Phillips' boat in October, and Mathis says it violates due process by depriving

people of their property without a hearing. Diving in public waterways has reached a low ebb, Phillips said, as people wait for clarification. Phillips has limited his Alabama dives to privately owned rock quarries that have flooded, and to South Carolina and Florida. "It's a shame," he said. "When you look throughout history, it has been hunters, fisherman and outdoorsman who have been the leading voice for conservation in this country."

Coach



Coach lived under the philosophy that injuries were minor inconveniences and shouldn't get in the way of the important things in life, such as diving. When a student complained of an ear infection or a minor injury, Coach wouldn't excuse them from a water session. Instead he'd take a long drag from his cigarette, cup his hand around their ear and blow the smoke inside. "There, that feel better now?", he'd ask, fully expecting his second-hand smoke to transmit some sort of instantaneous miracle cure. Coach wasn't hypocritical in this regard. He never took a sick day or complained about any injuries. He merely expected the same dedication to the sport from his students that he always gave himself.

Coach loved to ride his motorcycle. One evening while riding home with his girlfriend seated behind him on his beloved Goldwing, and the traffic going only 10 mph, he got distracted and took a spill. The bike seemed to just fall over on its' side. While the second love of his life slowly rolled onto the asphalt and then, though a little confused, got to her feet, his first love, with wheels still turning, had landed on top of Coach's knee. His first response was to check on his girlfriend, and when he saw she was standing, he began to try and pull himself free, that's when he discovered that the weight of his Goldwing had broken his kneecap.

Concerned passers-by stopped and stared and asked if he was OK. This only served to embarrass Coach, a man who would take a bullet for a friend; a man who feared no pain.

Coach is a featured column for The Wet Gazette and will be hosted and/or written by [Dominique Evans-Bye](#).

Submissions for this column may be submitted to Dominique directly.

Still trying to wiggle free, coach looked to his girlfriend and, in a raspy voice like the Drill Instructor in Full Metal Jacket, ordered her " don't just stand there, help me lift the !#*&#! bike. He is not a person who takes assistance easily. Although still somewhat dazed and a little confused, she immediately responded to the sound as though lightening had just cracked beside her. She, without further hesitation, leaned over and grabbed the handlebars and began to lift. Coach was now free and, although in pain, pulled himself up and got to his feet. Another passer-by asked if things were OK, and coach reflexively barked an order to his girl to "get on the !&**#! bike". That done, coach dragged himself around the side of his steed and attempted to mount the bike. It was then that he realized that he could not bend his leg and was unable to swing it over with another rider in place. Another good Samaritan asked if he was OK. Coach looks at his girlfriend as though she is deliberately getting in the way, and shouts "just get off and stand back". Still dazed, she immediately responds and, with coach still holding the handlebars, she steps off and away from the motorcycle. In her confused state, when time seems to stand still and sounds seem muted, she hears what could be whales calling, like, "fa,uh,ah,uh, ah,uh, agggghhhkkk". It could be that coach is singing. She lifts her head to see coach, still holding onto the handlebars, riding the motorcycle back to the ground like Slim Pickins riding that nuclear bomb in Dr. Strangelove. Apparently, she was more responsible for the bike standing upright and balanced than coach gave her credit for.

Once again, coach and his bike were entwined like high school seniors in the back seat of a Mini Cooper! It is at that moment that she snaps out of her daze, realized Coach's predicament and drops to her knees in laughter.

Once detangled and back on his feet, coach stood behind the bike with his feet spread wide and his hands on both handle grips. At this point, he tells his girl to reach between his legs and pull the motorcycle backwards until he is in position to drive. She then gets back on the bike right behind coach. Thanks to the electric starter, they are able to leave the scene. Being a gentleman and, of course, not wanting to show weakness, he drives her home and tells her he is fine.

Coach knows all is not well, and he drives himself to the hospital. The ER docs immobilized the injury in a cast from his ankle to his hip. Coach signed himself out and rode his bike home. He didn't have foot pegs up front, so he had to hold his leg up and forward without a rest. He believed that his strong legs, developed from so many years of extreme diving and exercise, would get him home.

The pain returned and fatigue set in while Coach was still several blocks from home. As Coach slowly made the right turn onto his street, the rubber-walking heel on his cast connected with the ground. The force of the pivot pushed Coach up and off the seat like a pole-vaulter, while his beloved Goldwing carried on several yards without him. The scream that escaped from him at that moment caused birds to leave their nests, mothers to run and hug their babies, and 911 to become over-burdened. His recollection of that moment is that Baryshnikov could not have done a better pirouette...and Yoko Ono looking for him to sign him to a contract! The neighbors said they could hear his screams three blocks away.

Still, Coach was undaunted and that weekend he was out on the boat for the class certification dive. Coach always met his obligations. Since his cast was all but destroyed, he concluded that, if he wrapped his leg and the remaining cast in Saran Wrap, it would stay dry. Of course, it didn't. It was a little like watching a man sew his own arm back on, or perhaps like watching him chew it off. The students were so in shock and awe at what they were seeing that they never complained about the cold or being seasick. They all performed their skills at near perfection levels. On the boat-ride home, everyone was playing cards and laughing and telling jokes. Coach was unusually quiet, but filled with pride at the success of his students.

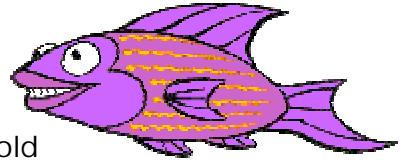
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Details were not available by the release time of this issue ~ Mark

Kids

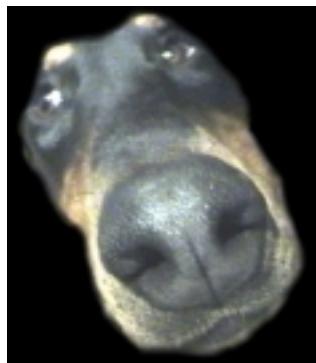
"Late again," the third-grade teacher said to little Sammy. "It ain't my fault," Miss Crabtree. "You can blame this on my dad. The reason I'm three hours late? Dad sleeps nights in the raw!"

Now Miss Crabtree had taught grammar school for thirty-some-odd years. So she asked little Sammy what he meant by that, despite her mounting fears. Full of grins and mischief, and in the flower of his youth, little Sammy and Trouble were old friends, but he always told the truth.



"You see, Miss Crabtree, at the ranch we got this here lowdown coyote. The last few nights he done et six hens and killed Ma's best milk goat. And last night, when Dad heard a noise out in the chicken pen, he grabbed his gun and said to Ma, That coyote's back again, I'm a gonna git him!"

'Stay back, he yelled to all us kids, I wouldn't want ya hurt!' There he went no boots, no pants, no shirt , no nuttin' ! To the henhouse he crawled, just like an Injun on the snoop. Then he stuck that double barrel through the window of the coop.



As he stared into the darkness, with coyotes on his mind, our old hound dog Zeke had done woke up and come asneakin' up behind Dad. Then we all looked on plumb helpless as Dad was cold-nosed without warnin'."

"Miss Crabtree, we been cleanin' chickens since three o'clock this mornin'!"

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