

AQUANEWS

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A Diver's Old Wet Dream *Les Parker & Melissa Bogen*

A 20-year-old dream came to fruition when I left on February 12, 2004, for a 3-week trip to Yap and Micronesia with some of my favorite dive buddies: Melissa, Steve and Linda McLuckie, and Richard Kukle.

We dived for 5 days with Yap Divers, and then left for Palau for 12 days of diving with Sam's Tours.

The diving was incredible. However, it should be noted that a trip to a place this far from home and for an extended period of time takes a lot of preparation, and the actual traveling takes its toll on the traveler. Palau is 14 hours ahead of New York, the jet lag causing the traveler to make a major cyclic adjustment.

For me, the rewards outweighed the negatives. The diving in Yap was spectacular. From above, the water was the seductive color of violet, and below, we had at least 200 feet of vis. We saw so many new fish and critters it made identification an enjoyable challenge.

It wasn't hard to identify the sharks. We saw them on most dives. White tip, black tip, and gray reef sharks were ever present, and it was often possible to catch them snoozing on the bottom. If we approached them stealthfully we could get quite close for pictures. On Melissa's second day utilizing our video camera and housing, she encountered a 6-foot leopard shark that swam up to her, possibly attracted by the video light, and it just about bumped into her before turning and swimming slowly away. She bravely held her ground and got some impressive video of the beautiful, spotted animal. On that same dive she photographed two different moray eels, an octopus, which suckered me when I tried to coax him out of his hole, and a map puffer fish.

Lionfish were not hard to identify, either. I had always wondered if I would ever see one in real life. We started seeing them on our second day of diving in Yap, but they stayed in little holes in the reef and were not very cooperative for picture taking. On our first night dive we saw more than 2 dozen free-swimming lionfish of several varieties.

We thought Yap would be the place to observe manta rays, but due to murky water in the channels where they often congregate to get cleaned, only Richie got a brief look at a manta from a distance. Two days into our diving in Palau, three mantas buzzed over us, one of them passing within a few feet of me while I had the video camera running. I was pleased with the results. The following week Melissa and I took a break from lugging the video camera around, and of course on that day a school of more than 20 devil rays passed over us in formation. It was a sight that caused a lot of screaming into regulators. Fortunately, Richie got a decent shot of them with his still camera. You never know what is going to happen on a dive in Palau.

The following day at the north end of the island in the Devil Ray City area, we happened upon feeding mantas during our surface interval. We donned masks, snorkels, and fins, and our boat captain dropped us right in the middle of them. I got some decent video of them doing flips and maneuvers, but that was topped by our second dive of the day. We snuck up to a manta cleaning station at a depth of about 40 feet, and I peered around a coral head that offered me a little cover. I found myself looking down at a large manta, probably 10 to 12 feet across, being cleaned by little blue

(Continued on page 3)

AQUANEWS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ROCKLAND AQUANAUTS. WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS & PHOTOGRAPHS ARE ALWAYS WELCOMED & ENCOURAGED. SUBMIT MATERIALS FOR PUBLICATION BY THE 19TH OF THE MONTH.

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS

TO CHANGE MAILING ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER OR E-MAIL, PLEASE NOTIFY:
JERRY GHERARDI

Next Meeting: Tuesday April 13, 2004

7:00-9:00 pm at the West Nyack Free Library
65 Strawtown Road
West Nyack, NY 10994
Phone: 845-358-6081; www.westnyacklib.org

Directions:

Thruway from Tappan Zee Bridge

Get off at West Nyack Route 303 (Exit 12). Make a left hand turn; get into the far right land and turn onto Snake Hill Road. Follow Snake Hill Road until you come to the reservoir at the end of the road. Make a left hand turn onto Old Mill Road and follow it until you come to a 4- corner stop sign intersection. Make a left hand turn onto Strawtown Road. The library is located 3/10s of a mile on the right at the intersection of Strawtown and Demarest Avenue.

Thruway from Harriman

From the New York State Thruway, take Exit 13S (Palisades Parkway South) to Exit 8W (Rte 59W). Take Rte 59W to Rte 304N. Take 304N to West Nyack Road which is the first light. Make a right onto West Nyack Road. Proceed to the fork and bear left onto Demarest Avenue. the library is located at the intersection of Strawtown Road and Demarest Avenue. The entrance to the parking lot is on Demarest Avenue.

April Meeting

Robert Cowin from Conserve Our Ocean Legacy

Will be giving a PowerPoint Slide Presentation about Marine Conservation and the destruction of our marine environment at our April 13th General Meeting at 7:00pm at the West Nyack Free Library

Thank you, Noel
of

Orbit Marine

www.orbitdive@aol.com

As usual Noel has come to us with a great presentation. But this time the presentation was on Bikini Atoll ! The enthusiasm and the excitement in his words made us want to leave on the next flight. The video and photo's showed such clear water and what a wreck diver dreams of. The great thing was when we lowered the lights he wasn't GLOWING.

Rockland Aquanauts Organization Inc.

Mission Statement:

To provide, promote, and advance environmental protection, care, and voluntary clean-up of waterways by any and all lawful means; to promote the importance and care in every manner possible by environmental awareness and otherwise; to purchase, print, publish, and circulate literature to promote the importance and care of the waterways and the work of the Corporation. To perform all acts the Corporation may deem appropriate or advisable in such operation; to establish, provide, and voluntary clean-up waterways, to encourage, support and subsidize the cleaning and protection from pollution.

A Diver's Old Wet Dream

Les Parker & Melissa Bogen

(Continued from page 1)

and yellow gobies. He was often close enough to touch, and I shot about 5 minutes of video of him bobbing and turning right in front of me. Before I ran out of disk, he was joined by another manta. They did some acrobatics before the disk was done. A quick check of my gauges told me I had to beat feet (fins) for the surface. As I ascended, a devil ray, a dark cousin to the manta, glided past, and while I was doing my 3-minute non-mandatory safety stop, another manta swooped over Steve, so close to him that he could have reached up and touched it. Not a bad ending to a great dive.

Out of all the extraordinary diving we did, one of my favorites was the wreck at the bottom of the Light House Channel in Palau. I talked Maggie, our dive master, a petite blonde Californian, into taking us to the fairly intact 100-ft fishing boat that went down 60 years ago. We did it as a night dive after having visited the wreck site during the day. At about 80 feet, it was the deepest night dive I have ever done. The wreck is a lush, soft coral garden of amazing colors. I found a large Napoleon wrasse, which probably weighed 200 pounds, sleeping in the hold. He was not happy about being discovered, but at least he had some company. We saw several other smaller wrasses in the hold that were closer in size to the ones we saw on the reefs. I found a moray eel near the bow, and someone discovered an octopus.

During our daytime visit to the wreck, Melissa had videoed a large map puffer with a distended stomach. It looked like it had a belly full of rocks and seemed to be having trouble swimming around. We hypothesized it was pregnant and about to give birth. During our night dive we saw the mom-to-be on the wreck, sitting on a protruding beam, looking like it was going to burst. I would have liked to have hung around to see if she gave birth.

The numbers of fish we saw were amazing: schools of pyramid angels, red tooth triggerfish, bar jacks, glass eye snapper, among others. I was astounded by the variety of fish swimming by us while we were hooked into a reef, riding the current.

Our surface intervals were never monotonous. We would often stop for lunch at small island beaches that were pristine and quiet, with great scenery, snorkeling, and sometimes historic significance. I would have to remind myself that we were leaving the island to dive again so that I wouldn't leave reluctantly.

This trip was better than I had dreamed, and worth the effort and expense of getting there. Although my dive buddies and I want to visit some other places, we think it's very possible we'll go back to Micronesia for another dream trip. Maybe you can join us.

Upcoming Meeting Highlights:

Gary Gentile

Has agreed to speak at our May 11th 2004 General Meeting at 7:00p.m.
in the Besso Room at the Palisades Mall!

Les Parker & Melissa Bogen

Have agreed to speak at our June 2004 General Meeting
about their trip to Micronesia.

Members of the Rockland Aquanauts Organization Inc.

Have something to **sell** or **trade**?

Contact our webmaster

webmaster@rocklandaquanauts.org

Bikini Atoll as Only Noel Voroba Can A Tell It. By Stephen Improte



Noel Voroba has always made his presentations very interesting. At our March meeting Noel continued to not let us down. Do to a scheduling conflict Noel was to send one of his instructors to do the presentation on Bikini Atoll. Unfortunately for Noel, but fortunate for us, his trip had to be cancelled and he came to our meeting himself.

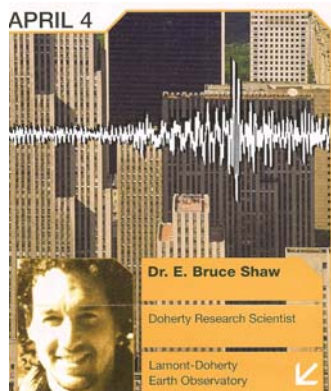
It was good to see some Aquanaut faces that we hadn't seen for a while. Compared to our past meetings of this year and last, we packed the house.

Noel arrived armed with a produced video from the dive operators and a CD with digital pictures of his own. Noel did an outstanding presentation about the island of Bikini Atoll and the wrecks that lie only a mile from her shore. Noel talked about the history of Bikini Atoll, and how the United States used the waters off the island to test the effects of a nuclear attack on military ships in 1946. All toll there was 23 atmospheric tests were done from 1946 to 1958.

Noel showed some very impressive pictures of the USS Aircraft carrier Saratoga and the submarine USS Apogon. Also on the bottom was the flagship of the Japanese navy, the Battleship Nagato, surrendered at the end of WWII. The battleship rests upside down on the ocean floor with its big guns still attached. There are so many more ships to see and I didn't even mention the sea life or the radiation.

If time and money allows, it is definitely a must dive destination. Micronesia look out because the Marshall Islands are going to be the next great destination.

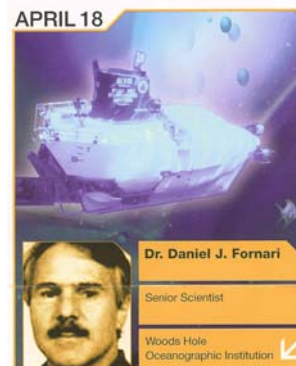
Thanks again Noel, for not letting us down!



Earthquake Prediction in the Shadow of Chaos

Did you know New York State is ranked number four in terms of earthquake risk for U.S. states? Learn why this is so, and more generally about how earthquakes work. Learn also about new understandings of chaos theory in earthquakes, and how this suggests limits to some aspects of earthquake predictions.

Lamont-Doherty
Earth Observatory
www.ldeo.columbia.edu
Presents:



Reveling the Deep: Science and Engineering in Deep Ocean Exploration

Dr. Fornari, a Lamont-Doherty alumnus and Chief Scientist for Deep Submergence at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, will describe a broad spectrum of innovative engineering/science developments that are reshaping how we conduct research at the seafloor, and which have far reaching implications for the future seafloor observatories and the science they will be involved in.

YOU'RE TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION DOCUMENTS ARE IN THE MAIL

All paid Members for 2003, should have received a tax deductible donation of \$25.00 of the \$42.00 that they paid to The Rockland Aquanauts Organization Inc. If you didn't receive them, please contact:

Rockland Aquanauts
c/o: Paul Galeazzi Jr., Treasurer
PO Box 387
New City New York 10956

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE DUE

How good are you about achieving your goals? Are you ready for a new set for New Year's resolutions, because you abandoned the old ones? Did you lose those last five pounds in time for the holidays the way you planned? Have you kept up with your fitness regime? Have you paid your Rockland Aquanaut Annual Membership fees?

Collecting fees is one of the unpleasant necessities of organizational life. Until we find a rich member to support the Aquanauts exclusively, we depend on your annual fees to keep the organization going. A full year will only run you \$42.

Kindly remit your check to Paul Galeazzi Jr. at

**RAO Clubwear
Clearance Sale
CONTACT Les Parker
— T-Shirts (Medium) \$8 —
When they're gone, the sales over!**

April Factoid of the month!

**If you keep a gold fish in a dark
room, it will eventually turn white.**

© 2003 Snapple Beverage Corporation. Made from the Best Stuff on Earth!

North-East Scuba Flea Market and Equipment Manufacturers Demo. May 23

From 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Boys & Girls Club in Garfield, N.J. Will include scuba gear to buy and sell, manufacturers' demonstrations, dive clubs with information on how to join, exhibits and raffles to benefit DAN. For more information, call +1-201-440-4450, email info@1877scubausa.com or visit <http://www.1877scubausa.com/fleamarket>.

BTS 2004: The Outcome

Well another year is over. As usual BTS was brimming with people. It seemed like there were many more vendors this year than in the past few years. The main icon, the PADI pool was missing. This year many of the BIG guys in the industry downsized their exhibits tremendously, but the friendly faces were still there.

Congratulations

The Rockland Aquanauts now have another reason to be proud, a member has recently joined an exclusive club. Joseph Radomski, has been involved with all levels of technical and rebreather training, and has earned the highest instructor ratings with several training agencies. ANDI, one of the oldest and most selective agencies, honored Joseph last year by awarding him the rating of Instructor trainer. This rating is not awarded easily and has only been earned by approximately 100 individuals worldwide. Recently ANDI awarded an even greater honor on him by awarding him the rating of Instructor Trainer Director, a rating that has only been bestowed on 9 other individuals. Joseph's responsibilities not only encompass training divers, but creating other instructors, instructor trainers and course development.



Rockland Aquanauts
Post Office Box 387
New City, NY
10956

April 2004

Beneath the Sea Robert Cowin A Diver's Wet Dream Thanks Noel!

****Next Meeting April 13th 2004****

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65 Strawtown Road

West Nyack, NY 10994

(845) 358-6081

Directions inside

Special Speaker

Robert Cowin from Conserve Our Ocean Legacy