



# DOWN UNDER DIVE CLUB

FEBRUARY

2008

SINCE 1984

**December's DUDC Monthly Meeting  
is Wednesday, February 13th @ 7:00 pm.**

## **Divers Alert Network (D.A.N.) visits DUDC:**



Please welcome D.A.N.'s new Florida Representative, Wendy Berry. Wendy will share information on the services D.A.N. provides, highlight member benefits and educate our group on why carrying D.A.N. insurance is a key element in diving preparation.

As part of the presentation, Wendy is putting together a FUN DAN Trivia game. There will be 4 categories in which the questions come from. The categories are on the DAN homepage at [www.diversalertnetwork.org](http://www.diversalertnetwork.org) (About DAN, Membership, Insurance and Training & Education). Prizes will be given to the top 3 winners. You can go to the DAN website and review the above mentioned topics to better prepare themselves for the game.

Wendy is a native Floridian residing in Melbourne. Living near the coast has always provided Wendy the opportunity to take part in activities that nurture her passion for the ocean. She enjoys fishing, boating, wakeboarding and most importantly scuba diving. She became certified as an open water diver back in September of 1992 and shortly after landed her first job in a dive shop. After leaving the dive industry for a short stint in the corporate world, she returned to scuba diving to turn her passion into a career. In 2005, Wendy became a PADI Open Water dive instructor and EFR instructor, and then landed a job as the Florida State Sales rep for a scuba diving accessory company. In January 2008 she was hired as the Florida Sales and Marketing Rep for Divers Alert Network.

**Rochelle Hood**

## **BREVARD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE DIVE TEAM - THANK YOU:**

Thank you to Lt. Alex Fischback, Assistant Team Leader and Commander Stephen Salvo who shared information on the training, types of rescues and skills needed to be a member of the Dive Team. The team is a group of men and women who are trained to rescue people from some of the worst underwater situations, recover submerged bodies and find evidence tossed into any of the lakes and rivers of Brevard.

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**Safety.** Cold Water. If you dive this time of year you know that the water can get a little cool. You need to add thermal protection. If you dive a light suit then add a hooded vest, or at the very least add a hood. Your head is your point of greatest heat loss. Limit your time in the water, and warm up between dives. When you finish your last dive get out of your wet suit, dry off and put on dry warm clothes. Winter can produce great visibility and good diving with less crowded boats, but remember to stay warm in and out of the water. **Dale Purchase**

# President's Message – February 2008

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As we come to the end of another successful year for the club, I want to take a minute to recognize the people who make this happen! But before I do that, I would like to ask something of the members. Next time you see one of these individuals, give them a pat on the back. They work VERY hard for the club and we all owe them a thank you. Our club would not be nearly as fun and successful if it were not for these individuals.

**Rochelle Hood** (Vice President) has done an OUTSTANDING job and has brought in a diverse group of speakers. We started off the year with **Jeri Curly** giving a presentation on underwater photography. So do we all owe her a little credit for our improved pictures this year??? I think so! Over the year we also had topics ranging from Shuttle Solid Rocket Booster recovery, Shark Research, exploring the new Hyperbaric chamber, to Dolphin research!!!! And best of all... A frozen Christmas dinner :-)

For the second year, **Bill Allen** has served as your Membership Chair. Bill is responsible for managing the membership roster and the annual renewal process. Bill has continued to refine our membership registration/renewal process to make it simpler and more efficient. Bill also takes care of the 50/50 game at the meetings. One of the things I really like about this year's board is how they think outside of the box. For example, instead of always just keeping the paper copies of everyone's registration documentation. Bill had the brain storm to digitize them! Bill will never admit it... But he is QUICKLY becoming a computer guru!!! If you have computer problems... he is the man to ask! If for no other reason than he has probably had the same problem and solved it :-)

After serving as Vice President last year, **Bob Carmichael** agreed to take his extensive experience with QuickBooks and help the club shore up our book keeping this year. Last year, we spent a great deal of effort on cleaning up the books and getting everyone's account correct. So we do not end up in the same place in the future, the club REALLY needed someone who knew what they were doing (i.e., NOT ME!) to take over. One of the more time consuming jobs on the board is the Treasure position. Basically all of the other positions have to interface with him. Whether that be paying bills, membership dues, or dive trips. On top of that, Bob has to keep all of the member's accounts up to date.

Serving his first year on the board was **Tom Croonquist** (Dive Coordinator)... Or as we call him, Mr. Personality :-) Tom has been a GREAT addition to the board. He brings a lot of enthusiasm and a desire to get people diving. I have seen Tom have a profound impact on a lot of members in the club. I see more and more people digging out their fins and diving more often now. Tom tries to make sure we are not just jumping off the back of a dive boat and going home. He tries to make the adventures fun before and after the dive also. Whether that means packing up the grill and cooking out after a dive, or putting graffiti on the walls at the Brass Ring. It is always going to be an adventure with Tom. Just ask Ken :-)

Our Safety Officer this year has been **Dale Purchase**. One of the first things you have to understand about Dale is that he is simply one of the better and more experienced divers in Florida and Michigan. I would give

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more credit for Michigan, but there are what... 5 people there crazy enough to cut a hole in the ice and jump in the water :-). The fish don't even want to be there! Dale has presented several times this year on a broad array of subjects at our monthly meetings. Earlier in the year, he gave an overview of Technical diving and the equipment required. Then after the loss of a diver in Jupiter in late 2007, Dale put together a presentation on underwater safety and what to do if you are lost at sea. Along with also contributing a monthly safety article to the newsletter, he serves as a person that our members can get advice from. Trust me.... I ask him a TON of questions. On a personal note, I just want to say thank you to Dale for being my mentor. **It is truly a pleasure and an honor to dive with you.** I have learned and grown so much as a diver over the last two years because of your tutelage!

Also new to the board this year was **John Dockendorf** who served as Secretary. John was responsible for capturing the minutes at our monthly board meetings. And trust me, as much as this group likes to talk.. That is a JOB! :-). John was also responsible for helping Debi Buck with the newsletter. He was responsible for the schedule and general oversight of the process.

I have felt VERY lucky this year to have such a strong and devoted board of directors. Not only have they been dedicated to their jobs and worked hard, they have been a blast to hang out and work with. I have always viewed serving as the board as a privilege and would encourage anyone that wants to get more involved in the club and/or diving, that they give serious consideration to running.

I have served four years on the board, and the last two as President. I want to thank everyone for allowing me to serve you. I hope that I had a positive impact on the club during that time. For me, it has been a VERY rewarding opportunity and one that I will treasure. But I no longer feel like I am the right person to lead the group. Although, I leave you in GREAT hands. I have bribed... threatened... and obtained incriminating evidence to ensure that Rochelle will run for President.

During our February meeting, we will open the floor for nominations for next year's Board of Directors. I sincerely encourage you to consider running. You will get SO MUCH MORE out of the club by getting more involved.

*See you down under!*

*Michael Wheat*

*[michael@downunderdiveclub.com](mailto:michael@downunderdiveclub.com)*



# DUDC Event & Activity Calendar

Event		Time	Member's Cost	Coordinator Phone # / E-mail	
DUDC Club Meeting Indian River Lagoon House		Wednesday, 2/13/2008 @ 7:00 p.m	Free	Bill Allen	<a href="mailto:ballen@downunderdiveclub.com">ballen@downunderdiveclub.com</a>
DUDC Board Meeting ** we meet at El Chico		Tuesday, 2/25/2008 @ 7 p.m.	Free		Contact any Board Member to Attend

**Cancellation Policy for Club Sponsored Dives:** Deposits will be refunded with **2 weeks notice** of the scheduled event or with a paid replacement divers. Refunds of money paid after the 2 week cancellation period is subject to **board approval**. All requests for refunds after this period **MUST** be made in writing. Money and deposits are refunded when dives are cancelled by the Charter or DUDC.

**ALL DIVES MUST BE PAID PRIOR TO THE DAY OF THE DIVE.**

*(This calendar is tentative and subject to change.)*

## Note from the Membership Chair:

Another year has gone by and it is time for the annual collection of club dues. Several have already been received and thanks to those who have already paid. There has been no change in the annual dues to be paid. It is still a bargain at only \$25.00 for a single membership and \$35.00 for a family membership. If you want a printed club newsletter mailed to you just check the box on the application form and include the additional \$5.00 to cover the costs of the printed newsletter.

Current members need to provide a new Membership application with only their name and any changes in information since last year. A Liability Release is not needed for those of you who already have the current release on file. If you are uncertain about any of this check with me and I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Persons who will be joining the club for the first time need to complete the application and release and either mail them to the club address, **DUDC, PO Box 306105, Melbourne, FL 32936**. Include your check for the correct amount and we are all set to go diving.

Article 2, Section 2 of our club by-laws require that dues are "payable on or before the first day of March of each year." After that you membership is considered to "lapsed".

We had a terrific year last year keeping the vast majority of our members and bringing in quite a few new members. Hurricanes didn't prevent the trip to Bonaire or the Keys and I can only recall one dive that was called because of weather. It was a good year with lots of diving and with any luck at all this year will be a repeat. I have told you all before how much I enjoy this club and the interaction that I have had with each and every one of you. And I really am looking forward to another year of diving with my friends in the club. The only thing I ask that you not fall down laughing and pointing as I waddle by in my yellow Force Fins.

See you down under.

Bill Allen

Membership Chair

## First Dive of the Year

It is Sunday, January 13, 2008, late morning and we are preparing for the first dive of the year. We have congregated at Phil Foster Park, getting ready to dive the always handy and great site of Blue Heron Bridge.

The weather was perfect for diving in January with the exception of a semi-brisk wind and small white caps. It was sunny with an air temp of about 78 degrees and a water temp of 76 degrees with a viz of about 30 feet. High Tide was at 11:30am, a perfect scenario for a mid-winters dive. And remember we are diving Blue Heron, almost every type of sea life has been seen here and today was no exception. Some divers saw mating Seahorses and Debi saw a small group of Devil Rays.

I said we are preparing for the first dive of the year. It would be a lot more to accurate to say "some of us" as the group I am diving with today has a hard core base. Not only consisting of Dive Instructors, Dive Masters, a Professional Photographer, Advanced Divers and three Dive Goddesses it has several divers whose first dive on the year was to welcome in 2008 underwater on a midnight dive, being submerged as the clock rang 12 times. Wish I could have joined them. Not only did we have a group from Downunder but we made a new friend, a Commercial Diver from Alabama. He's down on vacation and hopefully we'll see him at a club meeting.

As we headed for the water the Lifeguard was a guarded with his strip of sand in front of the tower. He reminded us we are not allowed to enter the water in "The Guarded Zone". Remember, the point to where we are allowed to enter the water is past the signs posting the swimming zone. If the whistle blows or if you are approached by one of the Life Guards, always remember they are just doing their job and they are there to help us. Please just smile and follow their directions. Most of the Lifeguards will allow diver to enter near their tower and wade East or West, depending on which bridge you are diving but true protocol only allows us to enter outside of the signs.

The majority of us entered the water earlier than the normal 30 minutes before actual high tide. This gave the challenge of negotiating a stronger current but gave more down time. The water was crisp and clean and hardly any Moon Jellies were seen on the banks of the lagoon, always a great sign.

For me this was the inaugural dive my New – Old Zeagle BCD. I have been waiting to try this out since the close to 15 year old BCD was given to me as a gift a few months ago. Read more on this BCD in my other article "Redundancy". It was a great dive, great friends and followed by great food at the Brass Ring. A special shout out to one of the new members Frank. I do believe this is the first dive he has been on with members from the club. We hope to see a lot more of him.

Photos courtesy of Debi

Remember, as always...

Work sucks, I'm going diving.

See ya,

Tom C.



## Redundancy, Redundancy, Redundancy and Redundancy.



Sorry if the title of this article is a little redundant.

As divers, especially the more technically advanced we become in our sport with additional training and certifications what do we hear. Safety and redundancy in our equipment. As we enter overhead environments and greater depths some disciplines teach to carry everything from extra tanks to extra mask, lights, knives, gauges, computers and the list goes on. The more complicated and dangerous the dive the more important it is to carry backup equipment. This is a fact not a theory.

At our October meeting we had the opportunity to talk about precautions from the "Lessons for Life Forum" hosted by Rochelle. This let us share tips and techniques about diving more safely. Our Safety Officer, Dale, specifically mentioned redundancy in our flotation at depth. Dale being a very experienced diver with well over 4000 dives (for those of you who may be reading this and don't know Dale, that is right I said over four thousand) and being an accomplished Cave Diver he spoke about buoyancy backup. A key point mentioned was to always ensure that at depth, there's a mechanism in place to give you positive buoyancy especially in the case of becoming unconscious. As we advance in our dive training "Peak Buoyancy" is taught. One definition is being able to be neutrally buoyant at a depth of 20 feet with 500 psi in your tank. The thought here is that when you are doing your safety stop it is a lot easier not having to trim out. This is a technique that I have started working with myself and I do find it a lot easier to do the safety stop.

It has been my experience that new divers often seem to overweight themselves, trimming out by adding air to their BCD. This is a practice used by more than the new divers but can pose a risk in the event of a flotation malfunction. Flotation Malfunction? Aren't BCDs pretty much bullet proof? Well they are not. Starting to practice more and more advanced diving I am learning redundancy is a must. This past month I had my inaugural dive my New – Old Zeagle BCD. This is a 15 year old plus BCD that was given to me by a good friend and ex-diver. My friend, now an accomplished Motorcyclist making an "Iron Butt" motorcycle tour in the summer of 2007 from Key West to the Arctic Circle in a little more than 20 days is notorious for taking care of his equipment. Even though he hadn't used the Zeagle in over 15 years it was stored with all the proper techniques including keeping air in the bladder while hanging in his hall closet. When offered, I gladly took the Zeagle along with a crate of other Scuba Equipment. My first step was to inspect the BCD in great detail, the second was to have it checked out by an Authorized Zeagle Dealer in Orlando. It passed both inspections with flying colors. My inaugural dive at Blue Heron was flawless; I was amazed how comfortable and easily adaptable the BCD was. I was at Peak Buoyancy on my dive. After the dive I practiced with the BCD in about 7 feet of water, working on my surface flotation with my first experience with a "winged" BCD. Listening to tips from old pros and floating in the water with knees slightly bent it was not only great buoyancy but comfortable and easy to right if I rolled. The small white caps were a perfect setting for this inaugural dive.

Here is where it gets sticky... That evening, in my driveway while cleaning my gear I went to rinse the inside of the BCD with fresh water. While inflating the BCD with air, after putting a fair amount of water into it for a rinse, I had a complete bladder failure (talking about the BCD, get your mind out of the gutter...). The inflator hose came completely delaminated from the bladder, completely. The Dive Gods (and my Lord) were with me, this happened in my driveway.

Think about the scenarios.

What if this happened at depth? I could have dropped my weights but with the "Ripcord" style of quick release of the weight pockets I would have more than likely dropped all my weight and would have rocketed to the surface, risking Decompression Sickness.

What if this would have happened at the surface while waiting for a pickup by a boat? I would have started to descend, more than likely panicked and then what? Drop my weights, throw my center of gravity off, then what? What if it was a rough day with 4 or even 6 foot seas and the boat hadn't seen me on the surface?

The scenarios go on.

Solution: Redundancy, Redundancy and then Redundancy. As mentioned earlier in this article Dale has recently talked to the club about always being positively buoyant. A lift bag and / or surface marker (safety sausage) provides the re-

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dundancy here that is needed with a complete BCD bladder failure. At depth this give me opportunity to slowly ascend on the surface it gives the needed floatation.

Remember, while we are suiting up and you are wondering “do I really need my surface marker? The Dive Master has a flag and I am going to stay with the group”. The answer is yes, you always need the Redundancy.

Listen to the lesson learned from our more advanced and experienced divers. Don't glaze over and think about something else, listen intently and learn.

Photo courtesy of Debi.

Remember, as always...

Work sucks, I'm going diving.

See ya,

Tom C.

# About the Down Under Dive Club

The Down Under Dive Club is located in Melbourne on the sunny east central coast of Florida. Formed in 1984 by a group of enthusiastic divers, DUDC currently has about 100 members. Our mission is to promote safe, organized dive events, provide a social setting comfortable to everyone, and encourage environmental responsibility among the diving community. Our past dives have covered the Atlantic ocean, from Georgia to Bonaire. We organize all types of dives: drift dives, wreck dives, shore dives, live-boards, spring dives, and even shark dives! Our members include a diverse group of divers. There are men, women and kids, ages from 11 to 65+ with all certification levels from new Open Water divers to Instructors.

Meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 7:00 PM at the Indian River Lagoon House, Located just south of University Blvd. on US1 in Melbourne. Door prizes are awarded each month and we book a fascinating assortment of guest speakers. We invite everyone interested in SCUBA diving to stop by for some stimulating conversation, meet our group, and

## Board of Directors

<b>President :</b>	<b>Michael Wheat</b>	<b>Michael@downunderdiveclub.com</b>	<b>727-1028</b>
<b>Vice President:</b>	Rochelle Hood	rhod@downunderdiveclub.com	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Bob Carmichael	bcarmichael@downunderdiveclub.com	
<b>Secretary:</b>	John Dockendorf	jdockendorf@downunderdiveclub.com	
<b>Membership:</b>	Bill Allen	ballen@downunderdiveclub.com	
<b>Safety Officer:</b>	Dale Purchase	dpurchase@downunderdiveclub.com	
<b>Dive Coordinator:</b>	Tom Croonquist	tjcroonquist@downunderdiveclub.com	