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FATHOMS

Official journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group

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EDITORIAL

Already we are into the fourth month of the year and there is every indication that 1991 is going to be a very active one for V.S.A.G.

New member enquiries are the highest they have been for many years, and dive and meeting attendances have also been strong.

The Easter bookings were an increase on last year which was also a record, and once again necessitated us requiring additional camp sites at Tidal River.

The Committee has been active in further tightening up on safety procedures with the mandatory introduction of octopus regulators, and the convening of a special meeting of boat owners to draw up a revised set of safety guidelines. All in all, V.S.A.G. is going from strength to strength. There are now 16 members in the Club with boats and whilst there are some that we don't see much of, it nevertheless represents a very healthy and envious pod.

I note from the Black Rock Underwater Diving Club's Newsletter, that three members of that club have in recent months had all their gear stolen. In two of these instances the gear was stolen from home and on the other occasion it was stolen out of a members boat.

As we all know diving gear is very expensive to replace and there are two precautions that can be taken to minimize your out of pocket loss should your gear be stolen:-

1. Insure it.

2. Keep it in as safe a place as possible.

Many times I have seen our own members gear left unattended around camping grounds at night. Such easy pickings for those wanting to pick up a reg, wetsuit or vest. Whilst I sympathize with those who like to leave their wetsuit out overnight to dry, I prefer to lock my gear away in the boot of the car overnight. Putting on a cold and damp wetsuit early in the morning is an invigorating experience.

At home it's best to keep your gear in a locked garage or inside.

With the way the economy is these days, theft unfortunately is becoming a way of life for many people, so take the precautions now, before it's too late.

> John Goulding Editor

> > *****

DRESS STANDARD

GENERAL MEETINGS

Members are advised that the minimum acceptable dress standard at the North Melbourne Football Club is neat casual attire.

The football club has specifically requested no thongs, singlet type I-shirts, etc.

Jeans and runner type shoes are acceptable if neat and clean.

If inviting visitors to meetings, please advise them of this requirement.

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COMMITTEE NEWS

The following points are a summary of major issues dealt with by the Committee in February and March.

- * The Club will purchase a quantity of diving emergency handbooks to be kept on members boats.
- * Ross Luxford will purchase boat launching and retrieval ropes, mats, etc. for Wilsons Promontory.
 - New members accepted: Herb Epstein. Chris Cartwright.
 - A new dress standard code for General Meetings was discussed and agreed.
- Octopus regulators will become mandatory for all members from 1st October. The Club will consider bulk purchase.
 - The Club will update boat first aid kits.
- * Club annual subscriptions to be increased to \$45.00.
- * V.S.A.G. cloth badges available from Doug Catherall at \$ 6.00 each.
- * Club funds as at 26th March were \$9,331.97.
- * Meeting of boat owners to discuss safety procedures to be held on 2nd May.*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

6 Hermay Crescent, PORT LINCOLN S.A. 5606

Dear Vice President, Social Secretary, Public Relations Officer and all V.S.A.G. members,

For those who didn't come to Port Lincoln, I would like to introduce myself, I am Russell's S.A. wife.

For those of you who did come, I would like to say it was nice to meet you and I look forward to seeing you all back here again, but next time Mick get it right, it was not 8 times, it was 10.

I am happy to report that Superman has finally found a ("real woman") to contend with, and that we are very happy. But one thing you did get right Mick, was his title well deserved.

Dorothy Olorenshaw (to be)?

Dear Dorothy,

Thanks for your letter. We all wish you lots of luck and laughs, and hope for your sake that you have great staying power.

We all thought Russell was going back to Port Lincoln to do some fishing, just what sort of bait is he using??!!

Editor



Dear John,

Due to a project sponsored jointly by Carlton and United Breweries and the Attorney-General's Department, I have now (and will have for some considerable time) got a major transport problem. However, all V.S.A.G. members and friends are more than welcome to visit Pauline and myself in sunny Venus Bay.

For the benefit of our fearless leader, Mr. Abell, and anyone else who doesn't know, we are very easy to find. Head down the road towards Phillip Island and continue on at the Anderson roundabout, through Wonthaggi and Inverloch. Pass through Tarwin Lower (make sure you stop at the pub, Tony Rossi has, I saw his business card stuck above the bar), and 5 kilometres further down the road you will find Venus Bay. We own the take-away food shop which you can't miss.

Venus Bay is a beautiful spot, with some 20 kilometres of lovely beach stretching from Inverloch to Cape Liptrap. We're only a very small detour when travelling to or from the Prom, so why not drop in the next time your down this way. There's always a hot burger and a cold beer at the shop.

Peter Jones

P.S. Don, I like the idea of our next Christmas function at the shop. How about a General Meeting so I can come along to one.

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REFUGE COVE REVISITED

by John Goulding

The V.S.A.G. fifteenth annual pilgrimage to Refuge Cove started out like many before it. A few quiet drinks at the Foster Pub on the Friday night.

Justin Liddy who was attending his first Refuge visit for many years was the first to arrive at Foster, and was well into his imitation Chinese food when Paul Sier and I turned up. As the evening drew on nearly all the crew arrived except for Neville Viapree and Charlie Brincat. Which was a bit of a worry, because Charlie had volunteered as Catering Master for the evening meals whilst at Refuge, and was bringing the food.

However, in true V.S.A.G. spirit, I shielded my comrades from the potential disaster at hand, and was more than relieved when Charlie, Neville and the food met us at the Port Franklin Wharf the next morning.

Rosalea was loaded with much enthusiasm, and before the sun had fully risen above the mangrove swamps, we were sliding down the perfectly still waters of the Franklin River towards the open sea.

The journey to Refuge Cove was uneventful and once again it felt warming to feel the beat of the powerful Mercedes Benz diesel propel our boat down the coast.

For the hardy sea souls who could recognize poor diving conditions on the first day, it was time to lighten the load of liguid amber that had been smuggled aboard.

Captain Dave and Decky Tony, who this time brought along a female decky (is that called a deckess), saw to it that we should not go thirsty, and made sure that their cold cans were shared around before our not so cold ones.

After arrival at Refuge and the erection of our camp, an afternoon dive was had by some, while the rest of us enjoyed the

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pleasantries of being all at sea. In fact, yours truly found himself in the sea at one stage, obviously knocked off balance by a "freak wave" crashing abeam into the boat. Funny how those "freak waves" suddenly catch you off guard!

After a quick rescue by Rob Swoffer and an even quicker trip in his boat back to Refuge, it was time to prepare the evening meal. "Where's the bloody women", shrieked Charlie! Who, looking, acting and sounding like a temperamental European Chef, needed someone to slice the tomatoes. Alas poor Charlie, the women had all gone to shower, that's right, shower at Refuge Cove! However, you've got to sweet talk the ranger first. He calls it fostering good relations with the public, I call it downright disgraceful and sexist, why weren't we blokes offered the ablution refinements of the rangers lodge? Does it have anything to do with the carefully positioned peep holes in the shower wall? . . Only joking Steve!!

So eventually they all trooped back, smelling as sweet as lilac in the spring, or was that Charlie's cooking?

A pleasant dinner, followed by a few drinks and laughs put an end to a long day.

On the Sunday we headed south into huge seas. Rosalea shook and shuddered as each wave slammed into her bow. Through the wheel house screen the view was just a moving wall of water. Massive waves erupting into a flume of white spray, yet Captain Dave assured us that he would find sheltered water across Waterloo Bay, and this is just what he did. A very pretty dive spot, lots of caves, pinnacles, gullies and plenty of fish, which became very inquisitive when we started feeding them with sea urchins.

After lunch a few opted for a second dive before heading back to Refuge. Whilst on route, Sally underwent some minor surgery from Sant to rid her of crabs, or sea lice, or ticks, or some other horrid little beasts which was making its home in her anatomy. Now Sally insisted it was a tick, which she probably picked up in the bush the day before, but by the way Sant kept away from her from that moment on, I reckon my first guess was correct! That night Charlie did some wonderful things with some sausages with the help of a recipe book, and we all feasted and then farted well.

On both the Saturday and Sunday nights we had some unwelcome visitors. In the wee hours of Sunday morning I awoke to the sounds of grunts and groans coming from the direction of the mess tent. I immediately checked to see if my tent partner, Paul Sier was at home, which he was, and then realized there must be something even more terrible routing around in the other tent.

Out into the night I went, myself grunting and growling to scare off whatever was there, and to rescue what, if anything was left of the food. The night was as black as a pharaoh's tomb, but the presence of a mountain beast was all around me. Just then, as I was about to scurry back to Paul, I mean the tent, a light flickered, it was Andy and Gail. "Shit! What are you two doing"?, I asked. Before Andy could answer, Gail shrieked as a giant wombat charged out of the tent carrying several boxes of Corn Flakes. We were lucky to be alive, imagine if we had been asleep in one of those boxes!

On the Sunday night it wasn't a wombat that disturbed us, rather it was drenching rain. Which not only made for a water soaked bed, but also wet all the tents and camping gear, and made cleaning up a real drag.

The next morning we decided to head straight back to Port Franklin in order to catch the high tide. For a while it was touch and go as Captain Dave maneuvered Rosalea through the shallow channels of Corner Inlet, but eventually we reached Port Franklin. The end of yet another quiet weekend at Refuge Cove.

Whilst the diving was not the greatest, and the inclement weather did put a dampener on things, it was still a fun time. As Don Abell described it, "The Refuge Cove weekend is becoming a famous and eagerly awaited event in V.S.A.G.'s calendar, not so much the diving, but more for the gourmet food".

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Ever since the area was reserved as a marine park and we could no longer take a feed from the sea, we have had to go to great lengths in keeping the crew happy with the food. Some might remember the near rebellion a few years ago over the notorious white chook, a dish prepared by an airlines chef's, which I along with thousands of passengers on Air Pakistan thought wasn't too bad. Now the weekend has become an over indulgent gastronomic experience, interrupted from time to time with some diving.

And, whilst on the subject of food, may I say that the 10 year old can of bean salad and the various other assorted, and as yet unused cans of food, most of which are veterans of many trips to Refuge, once again enjoyed their little holiday, and have now been safely returned to the cool store under my house. Perhaps the only way they'll ever be used is to raffle them at next years V.S.A.G. Christmas party.

Whilst at Refuge, I was most touched to receive from ranger Steve Voros, a T-shirt complete with print of the Mirrabooka and old Reg in a familiar bum bare pose.

Steve knows how fond I was of Reg and his boat, and this I-shirt will be a great momento of many happy days shared with Reg in the past.

This year at Refuge Cove the boat campers area was, I think, entirely occupied by V.S.A.G. and friends, for in addition to the 12 of us aboard Rosalea, there was a further 18-20 other members and friends either camped ashore or on boats.

Which of course raises the point - What if the weather had been great for diving and we all wanted 2 dives a day? We would have been up all night filling tanks, which of course can't be done. As it was we filled 26 tanks on the weekend, including 2 of one member who brought down empty tanks!

Finally, let me thank Charlie Brincat for his help with the food, and Mick Jackiw for once again bringing his compressor and organising the tank filling. Rosalea is again booked for next year. So for a weekend with a difference, get your name in early when details are released next October.*

ROYAL HOTEL, QUEENSCLIFF

SUNDAY 14TH JULY

2.00 P.M.

(MEET AT NOON FOR LUNCH)

V.S.A.G. PRESENTS

MARITIME HISTORIAN - JACK LONEY

Jack Loney will give a wonderfully entertaining talk on:-

"THE SEA WAR IN BASS STRAIT"

The timing for this presentation should fit in with the ferry schedule from Sorrento to Queenscliff, for those who don't wish to drive around to Queenscliff.

This will be a day with a difference.

The last time Jack gave a talk to the Club it was a great success, and we are counting on all members to support what will certainly be another most interesting presentation.

For further details contact Des Williams on (Home): 551 3201 or (Work): 597 0777.

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V.S.A.G. VALENTINE'S DAY NOTICES



V.S.A.G. SUBSCRIPTION INCREASE

by Don Abell

Those who were at the General Meeting in March will recall that I spoke of the necessity and decision of the Committee to increase the V.S.A.G. member subscription for the 1991-1992 year.

The matter has been raised previously and has been the subject of some discussion. Many members would like to see our subs remain at their current level. There is an equal number who encourage the Committee to keep our fees in line with Club expenses.

In summary, the Committee has voted to raise the subs to \$45.00 per annum from next year 1991-1992. At Committee level I am pleased to say that the vote, in the end, was unanimous. That does not indicate that there was no reluctance to approve the increase. What it does indicate, is that the Committee did agree that the decision was commercially and financially prudent for the Club.

The principal influences on our decision were:-

1. Our objective is to ensure that the subscriptions cover the cost of Fathoms. We (through the connections of Alex Talay and hard work of Committee Members) have kept these costs to a minimum. It is the opinion of the Committee that it is not reasonably possible to reduce these costs while maintaining the quality of the magazine at anything near its current standard. A reduction in the size of content of the magazine would have little effect on total costs. Approximately half of the costs are fixed, therefore having no relationship to content.

> The Committee is adamant that we should maintain the quality of our magazine. It is a major communication medium for many members who are not regular divers. It is, without doubt, the best club magazine in this country and is indicative of the professionalism of the Club and its approach to diving.

The flub has other funds available which are invested and 2. producing income.

> The income is used to subsidize the activities of the Club throughout the year. These activities may not use all the income in one year, but the Club does have irregular expenses which it must cover.

> An example of such expenditure is maintenance of the Club compressor. This does not happen every year, but may amount to between \$500.00 - \$1,000.00 (or more) when necessary.

> The Club is also looking at the necessity of insurance. If we proceed with this the expenses maybe, again, up to \$1.000.00 per annum.

> In addition we are aware that the Club may require funds for equipment and other activities in the future.

3. The current subscription of \$35.00 was first set five years ago. On a rough calculation the Club has maintained the increases in its subscription at or below the level of inflation for the past 10 years or so. If we keep this up there is no doubt we will be contributing to the remedy of this country's economic plight.

On behalf of the Committee, I hope that all members will accept and agree with the increase. There should be no doubt that your Committee is very conscious of all charges to members and no increase is imposed without good justification.

Subscriptions are due on 1st July, so you have 3 months to save for your \$45.00.*

CORONERS INQUEST ON DIVING DEATHS

At the recent Coroners Enquiry into the deaths of 4 recreational divers, the Deputy State Coroner made comments about the likelihood of reduced safety procedures in diving, when conducted from private boats, as distinct from commercial dive charter boats.

The Committee of V.S.A.G. decided that the Club should comment on the Coroners remarks, and Dr. Sant Khan was asked to prepare a letter, a copy of which follows.

Ms Wendy Wilmoth Deputy State Coroner 57 Kavanagh Street South Melbourne Victoria Dr Sant Khan 3/4 Wall Street Richmond VIC 3121

March 26 1991

Dear Ms Wilmoth,

I write to you as a recreational diver of approximately ten years experience and also as a practising anatomical pathologist with an interest in diving medicine.

I was trained in the UK by a non-commercial scheme in a private club governed by the British Sub-Aqua Club. The vast majority of divers in the UK are trained this way and the majority dive from privately owned boats.

I have now emigrated to Australia and am a member of a large non-commercial diving club - the Victorian Sub Aqua Group. I have been elected to the Club's committee and as part of our routine review of safety procedures I have recently presented to the committee your findings on the diving deaths of Dimitrakis and Moffat, having obtained the reports from the Coroner's office.

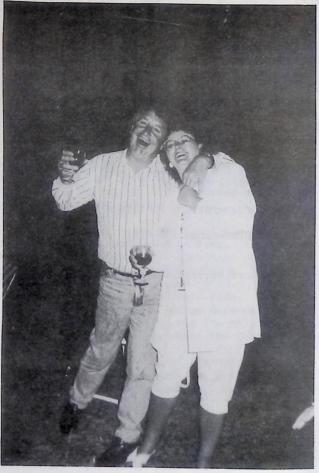
We were very reassured by your detailed recommendations. However, we were concerned by your impression that the use of private boats may result in a reduction of safety (paragraph 4 in the recommendations). This has not been my experience in the UK nor in Australia. Indeed, nearly all the recent recreational diving-related deaths in Australia have occurred in a commercial setting. The review of diving-related deaths in SPUNS, Vol. 20, no.3 and the cases of Dimitrakis and Moffat would support this. I am not apportioning blame, but wish to draw your attention to the good safety record of the private diving clubs to which I have been affiliated and indeed to that of the majority of private clubs. Both the clubs referred to above are very concerned with safety procedures and these are regularly reviewed in committee meetings.

We appreciate and sympathise with the pressures under which the commercial diving organisations operate. I have been prompted to write this letter by my, and the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group's, concern that diving with a privately run club may be considered a less safe alternative. The facts and my personal experience do not support that view and, in my opinion, diving with a wellorganised private club such as VSAG is both a safe and enjoyable experience.

Yours sincerely,

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

The following photographs from David Cowan capture some of the spirit at Port Lincoln on New Years Eve.



TONY ROSSI AND JENNY DON'T APPEAR TO BE IN MUCH PAIN AS THEY WELCOME IN THE NEW YEAR.



POOR OLD MICK! ALONE AND DEJECTED? OR JUST RESTING BETWEEN BRACKETS!





AAAH - JUST AS WE THOUGHT!

MICK WAS ONLY THINKING OF WHAT AMAZING DANCE HE WOULD NEXT DO WITH ANNIE.

THIS ONE'S CALLED . . . HOLD ME UP BEFORE I DROP!

V.S.A.G. TO INTRODUCE OCTOPUS REGULATORS AS MANDATORY EQUIPMENT

The V.S.A.G. Committee adopted a new policy at the February Meeting for the introduction of <u>DCTOPUS REGULATORS</u> as <u>MANDATORY</u> equipment from <u>1ST OCTOBER 1991</u>.

Many members already have octopus regulators and it is acknowledged that the incidences of necessary buddy breathing within V.S.A.G. is very rare. However, the Committee regards the fitting of octopus regulators as a further step towards ensuring that greater safety measures are adopted and implemented by the Club.

Members who attended the February General Meeting would no doubt have been moved by Mick Wright's (of the Police Search & Rescue Squad) presentation dealing with some recent diving deaths. Whilst it cannot be said that lives would have been saved through the use of octopus regulators, it can be stated that in at least one situation difficulties with buddy breathing from a single regulator was a contributing cause.

There is no question that two divers in an emergency buddy breathing situation have a far greater safety margin if using an octopus system, than trying to share a single regulator.

Apart from the fact that regulator hoses do tend to be fairly short, and therefore make it awkward for the divers to set themselves up for a sudden and unexpected emergency air share situation, there may also be an element of panic, as well as environmental conditions such as surge, current or cramped conditions, as in a wreck that further inhibit a trouble free buddy breathing situation to take place.

Divers buddy breathing with an octopus regulator will have both hands free to help stay in close proximity to each other, or to negotiate out of a wreck, or grab hold of a line. There is also a comforting reassurance to both divers using an octopus system, that one will not grab the regulator and hang on to it for too long whilst the buddy struggles to get a share of the air.

As I have mentioned in my Fathoms editorials from time to time, safety in diving is a responsibility we have to ourselves <u>and</u> our buddies.

In adopting this policy and setting a mandatory introduction date of 1st October, the Committee is giving members advanced notice and allowing members time to purchase this equipment.

Octopus regulators vary in quality and price from around \$130.00 upwards (including hose).

As a service to members, V.S.A.G. is prepared to seek a bulk supply arrangement for members. Those wishing to participate in this should complete the following tear off slip opposite and hand to the Safety Officer, John Lawler, at your earliest opportunity. Purchases of octopus regulators will only be proceeded with, after prices and brands have been confirmed and agreed to by each member requesting the equipment.

V.S.A.G. CHRISTMAS TRIP

1991

NAROOMA

The Committee has selected Narooma on the N.S.W. south coast for the next V.S.A.G. Christmas/New Year trip.

Site bookings and arrangements will be made by Mick Jeacle, Telephone: (059) 712 786.

OCTOPUS REGULATOR APPLICATION ENQUIRY

Please give to John Lawler, Safety Officer, V.S.A.G.

NAME :	
TELEPHONE: (Home) (Work)	
TYPE OF REGULATOR PRESENTLY USED:	
MAKE :	
MODEL:	

I am interested in having V.S.A.G. make enquiries to source an octopus regulator on my behalf, and upon my agreement to purchase the selected model, will pay the agreed price.

SIGNED:

DATE:

LOST AT REFUGE COVE

One small blue WENOKA dive knife (almost new).

FOUND AT REFUGE COVE

One small tick with great affection for human blood.

For further details, please read on:-(Courtesy of the Medical Journal of Australia).

A 24 year old veterinarian reported his illness in September 1989. In the first week of August he had camped at Refuge Cove and Sealers Cove, Wilsons Promontory, South Gippsland. At that time he detached a tick from his eyelid. Five days later he developed inflammation at the site and was prescribed cephalexin. Two days later he developed fever and headache, and a day later came out in a rash. The rash involved the trunk and limbs.

This case indicates that infections can occur in southern Australia in winter, and further extends the range south and west on continental Australia.

. . . so stay out of the bushes at Refuge Cove or risk the consequences!

P.S.: If anyone has found my dive knife, please call 429 9948. A small reward (guess what?) offered to finder. Thanks.

Sally Staddon

A summary of some of the articles in the January-March SPUMS Journal. (SPUMS - South Pacific Underwater Medicine Society)

Editorial

Discussion is initiated on the subject of whether current diving courses are adequately preparing new divers for "real" diving. More emphasis should be directed to the teaching of how to avoid the trouble areas eg. "out of air" than dealing with them once they have happened. In order to cover themselves both morally and legally, diving school systems have defined their training guide-lines so rigidly that not only can nothing be left out but very little can be added. This leads to the situation where the special needs of a group of students cannot be catered for. The medical criteria for determining if a diver is fit to dive should also be reviewed eg. what is the true danger of "childhood wheezing"? The only solution to all of these problems is better communication between the instructors, schools and the medical profession and a willingness to change their beliefs if evidence shows these beliefs to be flawed.

SCUBA diving fatalities in Australia and New Zealand - the Environmental factor. Carl Edmonds and Douglas Walker.

A study was conducted on one hundred consecutive recreational diving deaths. Sixty-two percent of cases had an environmental factor contributing to the cause of death.

The definition of an environmental factor included natural factors such as tides and sharks as well as artificial factors such as boats and dam outlets.

With forty-seven percent of the cases, the diver either had no experience of the diving environment or did not have sufficient previous experience to cope with the condition. The following table summarises the findings. The total deaths was 62 but more than one factor was involved in some cases.

Environment	Percentage
Water movement	36
Excessive depth	12
Poor visibility	6
Cold	5
Marine animals	5
Caves	55
Exit and entry problems	5
Entanglement	4
Boats	3
Trapped under a ledge or boa	at 3
Night diving	2

In all of the above, it was the environmental factor which was a *definite* factor. If a diver happened to have suffered a heart attack while cave diving, this is not included (all of the cave incidents involved marine caves in which cave diving procedures were not followed).

Obviously water movement is the most significant factor. In almost half of these cases it was a tidal current and in the others it was "rough conditions" with which the diver could not cope. Two died when they were drawn into a pressure outlet in a dam "Take note"

In most cases it was a lack of experience in an environment different to the one in which the diver had been trained.

SCUBA Diving and Pregnancy. Catherine Leslie.

Over the last two decades the number of women diving has increased significantly. Twenty percent of divers are women. A few of the many problems discussed are:

The potential for nausea is increased. Taking anti-nausea medication may be harmful to the fetus. Due to altered levels of hormones during pregnancy, the oxygenation of the blood as it flows through the lungs is decreased. The change in shape of the body has the obvious problems of wetsuit fit and equipment fit (vests, weight belts etc). Entry and exit may also be difficult.

During the last third of the pregnancy, some of the membranes become prone to leakage. This may allow salt water to enter the uterus causing infection or premature labour.

The fetus may become oxygen-starved or over-oxygenated depending on the partial pressure of oxygen in the breathing mixture. There are possible frightening side effects recorded, such as malformations which may be attributed to diving. There is also an increased risk in the likelihood of decompression sickness in the fetus.

The recommendations are that all women divers should be aware of the possibility of problems with the pregnancy if they continue to dive while pregnant. From a legal viewpoint, instructors, doctors and others concerned with directing a dive, should advise the woman not to dive. Although there is insufficient hard evidence pointing to a direct correlation between diving and problems with the fetus, many cases have been shown to suggest a relationship. Ultimately, the decision to dive rests with the woman but s^{+} must be aware of the possible consequences. If she must dive, make the dives shallow and short. Giving up diving for a few months is a small price to pay for a little more peace of mind.

Under Age Diving. Colin Macdonald.

The introduction of SCUBA diving as a school sport has made it possible for children as young as 12 to take up the sport. The author considers that there are a number of factors involved in determining whether a diving candidate is suitable for undertaking a SCUBA course.

Children below 16 years usually do not possess the maturity required to fully appreciate the demands put on them by diving incidents. The buddy system may be ignored, sudden panic may be more prevalent and the diver's limitations may not be fully appreciated.

There may be a possibility that bone growth is affected by increased pressure.

These factors must be considered when a new student applies to do a course and if accepted, the student must be very closely supervised both during and *after* the course. Very conservative use of dive tables should be made to avoid any problems with bone growth.

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REPORT ON SEA MARK MARINE DYE MARKER

by Neil Medhurst

I was asked to test Sea Mark Marine Dye Marker by Des Williams.

I must point out that the marker was supplied to our Club through John's Dive Store, who has supported our Club for many years.

So the results are as follows:-

I tested the marker after the dive on the "George Kermode", I waited until all divers had left the water, just in case the dye stained. I removed the tape from outside of the container and removed the small satchel from inside (the dye is in pallet form). I then threw the contents into the water. The pallets floated on the surface for approximately 5 minutes, it then began to spread out and go a bright fluorescent green. The dye is luminous as well, which would make it quite visible from the air.

It spread to approximately 20 feet in diameter, 30 minutes later it drifted to form a 100 foot x 30 foot slick. We remained at the dive site for l_2^1 hours while we had lunch, and the slick had not changed in size when we eventually left.

The dye does stain, after releasing the marker some of the dye did get on to my hands, and I had to use soap and water to remove it.

My conclusion is the marker is a great safety device for night divers, but at a cost of \$30.00 each, a bit dear for the average diver.*

'9 'PROM By ALAN BECKHURST

YOU know how it is, you plan everything meticulously months in advance, and watch it all go down the toilet as the wind howls. But this year was different. Melbourne Cup weekend, at the start of November, saw six Melbourne clubs, along with quite a few indi-vidual divers, setting up camp at Tidal River. The nature of boat launching at Tidal River calls for numbers of wetsuit clad helpers to push the boats over the beach and into the water, with retrieval requiring the same, plus sand mats, expertise, and at times, a four wheel drive.

This year asw a level of co-operation between clubs which, not only ensured the minimum of effort for boat unching, but when a few of the clubs had aremlins at work in their equipment, other clubs eagerly helped out with air fills and parts. Co-operation was not only club based as the weather for the four days could not have been better. The resultant flat seas meant that it was possible to dive almost anywhere within fuel tank range, and we did. Day one saw frantic active

ity on the beach as all the boals were launched to make the most of the conditions, and, with so many sites to choose from. I was surprised to find six boats anchored off Skull Rock, all planning to frolic in and out of the spectacular cave sys-tems in the sheer sides of the constant of the vis was excellent, and most divers were ac-companied by scals. Gliding down the sheer, kelp cov-ered walls, we levelled off at our maximum depth of 30 metres, and resisted the temptation to check out those big, black and inviting cave entrances some 10 to 15 metres further down. We were soon in large caverns with gorgonia and soft corals adorning the entrance, and had banded Morwoog, blue throat wrasse and long shouted boarfish providing the guided tours. In the main cavern, a seal was seen grabbins a sulp of air from an air pocket, and larne schools of Butterfly Perch curtained the entrance. We cut our dive time short in order to complete our double dive trip playing with hundreds of seals on nearby Kanowna Island. Talk about ideal condi-

tions, the foul smell associated with such a large scal colony was being taken away

by a light breeze and the vis was great here too. Before we had time to gear up, our boats were surrounded by scals, begging to be played with. In the shallow water, huge bulls came in to inspect us, but showed none of the aggression experienced on our last visit. The cows and pups were set to party, and some of us had the experipoint, hands between their point, hands between their pointy teeth in a show of mutual trust. These two dives are a real buzz, and can be carried out on a single tank of air.

This set the pattern for the remaining three days, with groups of divers visiting most of the popular sites, and even finding some new and even inding some new ones. One group even visit-ed the remote Moncur la-lands which are in Tassie waters: The Scuba Divers Federation of Victoria orga-nized a social barbeque on the beach, which was well attended with members of different clubs getting to know each other and exchanging tall stories. An interesting comment from some of the divers who were experienc-ing the Prom for the first time, was that this was better than the diving on their ro-

cent overseas trios. Can't imagine why, great vis, breathtaking scenery, huge schools of fish, seals, acres of soft corals, sea whips, and gorgonians, and the odd shipwreck or two: don't exotic locations have all this and more?

Perhaps the real social centre was at the works yard after 5pm, where rows of portable compressors rattled away filling literally hun-dreds of scuba tanks. In botween changing bottles, people were checking out other club's equipment and exchanging ideas. As there is also an area for boat washalso an area for tout water ing, most divers found themselves here amongs the scrap and mounds of dirt, at the foot of Mt Oberon.

After four perfect days and hundreds of dives. camps were packed up and plans made to return next year. Considering the amount of dives undertak-en, at depths to 50 metres. with no professional supernote that no accidents were reported. Diving this area is reported. Diving this area is not for the novice, or at times for the faint hearted, and anybody interested in experiencing, this area should contact the SDFV to be referred to a club with ex-perience in this location. Maybe 'PROM '91 will be-

come the southern rival to the likes of the Heron Island Dive Festival, only we'll let the area speak for itself.

Thanks to the SDFV for helping to bring so many clubs together. The Conser-vation, Forests, and Lands Ranners, for grading the beach and erecting signs to allow safer boat launching. and especially to the Black Nock floys for faking 2 boat loads of kids out to the Kan-owna Island seal colony -my kids are still talking about it.

PROM '91 will take place at Tidal River on 2nd, 3rd, at Tidal River on 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th of November 1991, and I'm sure that we'll are nearly all of the same faces as this year plus quite a few more. For any informa-tion regarding this weekend in respect to organizing a dive trin contact the Scuba in respect to organizing a dive ting, contact the Scuba Divers Federation of Vic-toria at PO Box 1705 P Media 3001, or phone Darren Salt-er on (03) 879 2434. The clubs attending "PROM '90 were ablication of the second

- API Diving Club
 Bottom Scratchers Dive
- Club Marlin Scube Club
- Black Rock Underwater Dive Group
- **Dive Experience Scuba**
- Club Victorian Sub Aqua Group

REPRODUCED FROM BLACK ROCK UNDERWATER DIVING GROUP MAGAZINE.

MURRAY BLACK REVEALS ALL ON NATIONAL TELEVISION

by John Goulding

By some unexplainable reason an event of international importance almost escaped my notice a short while back. No it wasn't the end of the Gulf War, or the admission by the Treasurer that we are having a recession . . . it was . . . <u>TWINS WEEK</u>. Now we are all familiar with those great crass commercially inspired events such as Mothers Day, Butchers Picnic Day, Bank Holidays and so on, but did you know that there is a whole week devoted to twins.

So what better way to expose this event before the Australian population, than devote the weekly Peter Couchman Show on the ABC to an insight into the life of twins.

ABC talent scouts searched the country far and wide to select some examples of twins to perform on T.V. There were young ones, old ones, big ones and small ones, but there in the middle were the Black ones. Recently joined V.S.A.G. member Murray Black and his brother recalling their lives as identical twins.

Growing up in New Zealand, their boyhood pranks of masquerading the other had even the sheep confused!

On arrival in Australia the Black brothers quickly gained lucrative acting parts, appearing as the "before" and "after" on some rather devious T.V. commercials promoting such products as acne cream, good looks lotion, facial hair remover, etc. (We're not game to say who was the "before" and who was the "after").

It seems that both boys married, which again was cause for much confusion, but according to Murray's wife Nicky, it made life interesting!?

Early in their childhood days the brothers developed their own special language which no one else could understand, traces of this strange communication can still be detected coming from Murray on occasions!*

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TIDE TABLES

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DIVE/SOCIAL CALENDAR

Date	Event/Location	Dive Captain	Meet At
14 Apr	Heads Area	Pat Reynolds 789 1092	Sorrento 9.30 a.m.
18 Apr	General Meeting - North	Melbourne Football	Club. 8.00 p.m.
28 Apr	Flinders/Cape Schank	Bob Scott 763 6872	Flinders 9.30 a.m.
2 May	Special Meeting of Boat Details to be advised. Organizer - John Lawler		e.
12 May	Slack Water Wreck or Wall Dive. (Slack water approximat	John Lawler 569 9851 ely 11.35 a.m.).	Sorrento 9.45 a.m.
l6 May	General Meeting - North	Melbourne Football	Club. 8.00 p.m.
26 May	Scallop Dive <u>Note:</u> This dive will de Boat Ramp.	Mick Jeacle (059) 712 786 epart from Rye	Rye Boat Ramp 10.30 a.m.
8-9-10 June	Queenscliff Heads Area (Long Weekend). Camp sites will be booke Queenscliff.	Pat Reynolds 789 1092 ed at Beacon Caravan	Park,
20 June	General Meeting - North	Melbourne Football	Club. 8.00 p.m.
23 June	Heads Area/Submarine (Slack water approximate	Don Abell 889 4415 Ny 10.35 a.m.).	Sorrento 9.00 a.m.

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Date	Event/Location	Dive Captain	Meet At
7 July	Flinders	Sant Khan 429 9948	Flinders 10.00 a.m.
14 July	Royal Hotel, Queenscliff.	Des Williams 551 3201	Queenscliff 12.00 noon

Presentation by Maritime Historian, Jack Loney,

FOR SALE

V.S.A.G. CLOTH BADGES

\$ 6.00

SEE DOUG CATHERALL - TREASURER.

ACTUAL SIZE

2.00 p.m.

GOLD ON BLACK

