

# FATHOMS

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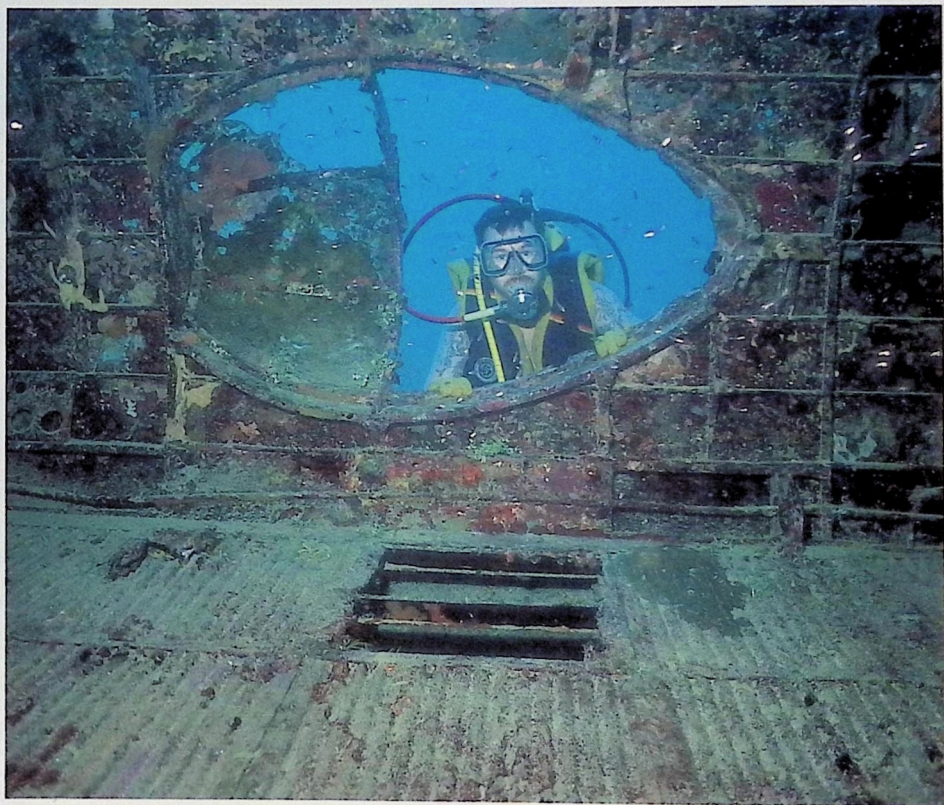
EST. 1954



Safety in Diving

**\$2**

*If undeliverable, return to  
Victorian Sub Aqua Group,  
Box 2526W,  
GPO Melbourne 3001*



# VSAG

VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP

OCT - NOV 93

# VSAG

Victorian Sub-Aqua Group. Box 2526W, G.P.O., Melbourne. 3001 Australia

**These magnificent photographs are all examples of Des Williams' work taken on the VSAG trip to Truk Lagoon 1990.**

**I am sure you will agree that they are all outstanding, so good in fact that I couldn't decide what to keep or reject, so I've used the back cover as well and reproduced them all.**

*Yours in Diving,  
Alex Talay*



**Front Cover:**

Chris Llewellyn at Port-Side Gun Port. Betty Bomber  
Wreck. Truk Lagoon.

**Back Cover:**

1. Alex Talay with Ships Telegraph inside bridge of "Nippo Maru" Truk Lagoon.
2. Chris Llewellyn with lamp on "Nippo Maru" Truk Lagoon.

3. Chris Llewellyn on bridge of "Nippo Maru" Truk Lagoon.
4. Stern of "Gosei Maru" Truk Lagoon, divers from left to right: Neil Medhurst, Justin Liddy, Pat Reynolds & Bob Scott (standing), Ross Luxford, Andy Mastrowicz (back)
5. Alex Talay inside fuselage of Betty Bomber Truk Lagoon.
6. Stern mast of "Gosei Maru" Truk Lagoon divers left to right Chris Llewellyn, Alex Talay, Justin Liddy, Pat Reynolds and Neil Medhurst.

The Victorian Sub-Aqua Group was founded in 1954 and has continued as a strong and active diving club since that time. It is incorporated as a non profit company and has no commercial affiliation with any organisation.

VSAG is committed to the preservation of independant diving freedom. It believes that divers must take a responsible attitude toward the protection and preservation of the marine environment but as a general rule is opposed to legislative measures that place prohibitive limitations and restrictions in diving activities.

Local diving is organised on a bi-monthly basis, generally out of participating member's boats. This is supported by weekend camps, charters to more remote locations and annual overseas trips. The club has a considerable investment in diving equipment. Regular functions provide an opportunity for members, friends and families to socialise. Each month VSAG meets at North Melbourne Football Club where bar facilities are available prior to and after the General Meetings. Visitors are very welcome - smart casual wear essential.

# FATHOMS

Official journal of the *Victorian Sub - Aqua Group*

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### Next General Meetings:

Thursday 21st October 8.00pm  
Thursday 18th November 8.00pm  
North Melbourne Football Club  
Fogarty Street, North Melbourne  
Meet beforehand at club for dinner

### Next Committee Meetings:

Tuesday 26th October - Sant Kahn's place  
Tuesday 23rd November - Bob Scott's place

### Editorial submissions to:

Des Williams  
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Dingley Village 3172  
Tel: 551 3201 (h)  
597 0777 (w)  
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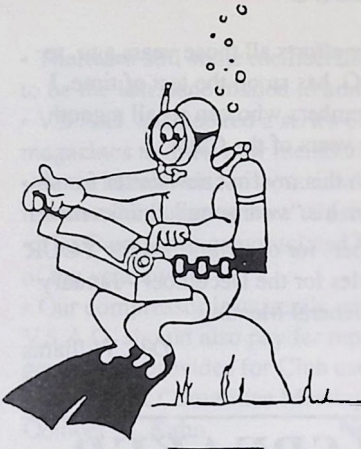
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John Lawler

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Telephone: 318 3986 (H)  
420 2425 (W)

Charlie Brincat  
57 Wellington Park Drive,  
Warren Wood, 3134.  
Telephone: 876 3395

## EDITORIAL



Well, here I am sitting at the keyboard once again with that feeling of *deja vu*. Thought I would get back on the V.S.A.G. Committee and try and make a contribution to the Club's 40th year celebrations So here I am as newsletter editor again!

Producing the newsletter these days is much more a group effort than it was many years ago - Alex Talay arranges all typesetting and printing (a mammoth task in itself) and John Lawler sees to the labelling and postage. We are all indebted to these guys for their help, especially me!

Since December 1987, John Goulding has been Editor and has produced 34 issues of *Fathoms* for your enjoyment. That's a hell of a good run for a dedicated member such as John, who has spent almost 20 years as a Committee member of V.S.A.G. So, on your behalf, I thank John most sincerely for his brilliant service to the Club and say to you John that your friendship and company over the years is warmly appreciated by all V.S.A.Gers.

At our next meeting in October, we have yet another guest speaker in Andrew Carter. Andrew is a State Marine Surveyor and a specialist in marine radio, so we are all going to learn more about safety in our boating activities. Be sure not to miss this meeting.

As I mentioned earlier, 1994 marks the 40th year of our V.S.A.G. and the Committee plans to mark the year with celebrations and of course the Solomons/Vanuatu trip. It is my intention to bring to you reports from very early members of the Club, together with their recollections of what diving was like in the early 1950's. For those early Club members who still receive our *Fathoms*, I hope you will give me a few minutes of your time when I call for information, so

## ***EDITORIAL CONT.***

as all current members can appreciate your earlier efforts all those years ago, to build the strong foundations on which the V.S.A.G. has stood the test of time. I would certainly be interested to hear from any members who can recall a good yarn about the diving and good times in the early years of the Club.

You should also know I got off to flying start with this my first newsletter for six years, with much of this issue prepared by John on his "swansong", thanks mate! This Editorial closes with my request to all members for contributions for YOUR newsletter. Please assist me by sending your articles for the December - January issue to me by no later than the November 18th General Meeting.

Des. Williams  
Editor

---

# ***SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER***

***OCTOBER MEETING***

***THURSDAY 21ST***

# ***ANDREW CARTER***

Andrew is from the "Spectrum Management Agency" which was formerly the "Department of Communications".

Andrew is the State marine Surveyor and is a specialist in marine radio.

This will be a very important talk as safety is involved.

Andrew will have a few good stories to tell.

Don't miss this one!

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## COMMITTEE NEWS

- There are still some membership subscriptions outstanding - October Fathoms to be the last issue mailed to non financial members.
  - V.S.A.G. has booked a series of 18 advertisement in Dive Log and Sport diving magazines to draw new members to the Club.
  - Andy Mastrowicz to nominate a date to arrange a training session for members interested in learning how to use our new G.P.S.
  - The Committee congratulated Don Abell on once again winning our Clubman of the year award.
  - Our compressor is currently undergoing repairs. The Committee agreed that V.S.A.G. should also pay for repairs to Mick Jackiw's compressor, which he so generously provides for Club use on trips away.
  - Venues for Committee Meetings over the next year were agreed to, viz:
- |                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| October: S. Kahn      | November: R.Scott   |
| December: Nil         | January: P.Reynolds |
| February: M. Jeacle   | March: A. Talay     |
| April: C. Brincat     | May: L. Maybus      |
| June: D. Williams     | July: D. Catherall  |
| August: A. Mastrowicz | September: D. Abell |
-

## ***SUMMER IS COMING***

JOHN LAWLER

Many divers pack their diving gear away for the Winter season and start diving as the warmer weather eventuates.

It is wise to ensure that your gear is checked thoroughly, or better still have a service check carried out.

Recently, one of our divers who hadn't used his gear for some months, dived to around 30 meters. When he depressed the inflate button on his compensator it stuck, causing a very rapid ascent. Fortunately, this diver is one of our most experienced and this dangerous situation caused no problems except for the shortest bounce dive on record.

There is however, a message there and it could be dangerous to dive with gear which has not been used for a while.

If your Scuba gear has not been used for a while - **HAVE IT SERVICED!**

Here are some reminders and check points:

### **CHECK:**

- Torch bulb and batteries
- Rubber straps on fins and face mask
- Zippers on wet suit and boots
- Zippers on diving bag
- Quick release catch on weight belt
- All B.C. mechanisms
- Your fitness level
- Cylinders for test date
- Cylinder mesh and replace if torn
- Renew fishing license

Good Luck -safe diving



***UNPAID 1993/1994 MEMBERSHIP FEES  
ARE NOW OVERDUE!***

The following people will officially become unfinancial from this newsletter, if they do not contact our Treasurer and pay membership fees immediately. We do not wish to lose contact with these members, but it costs money to run our great Club and your contribution is needed. Unfortunately, this issue of Fathoms will be your last if your subs are not received and your name is on the list below:

G.BIRTLES P.HARKIN A.STEWART W.HAYES R.OLERENSHAW  
M.TALIANA A.TUTTON F.BRUCE A.AUSTIN G.BOYLES  
I.JAEGER G.HIGGINS W.MAHER P.STEMSON T.BROOKS  
N.MEDHURST

We hope to hear from you very soon.

**22nd ANNUAL  
V.S.A.G. TENNIS PARTY**

**& HANDICAP MILE  
SUNDAY 21ST NOVEMBER  
AT CRANBOURNE SOUTH TENNIS CLUB  
HIT OFF AT 9.30AM**

- FAMILY FUN DAY
  - BBQ
- MIXED DOUBLES & SINGLES
  - PRIZES GALORE
  - PERVERTS WELCOME!

**CONTACT : TONY TIPPING 817 4956**

**BYO MEAT AND GROG**

**Browns Rd,  
Cranbourne Sth**

## **TIP'S TIT-BITS - CORAL BAY W.A.**

TONY TIPPING

It's about time I let the Fathoms readers know a bit about the diving in W.A. between the N.T. border and Coral Bay which is about 200km north of Carnarvon. I've been pretty selective re the spots: a few snorkelling pools in the Kimberley and Hammersley Ranges, a few snorkels off Cable Beach, Broome and 2 scuba dives off Exmouth plus plenty of snorkelling on the Ningaloo Reef which stretches 260km from Exmouth south close to the shore - it's the longest fringe coral reef in Australia.

At Broome I went to the dive shop with Scotty's letter of introduction (they did have Sonar wet-suits in stock Bob), all the bloke tried to sell me was a 5 day charter trip out to the Rowilly Shoals - so I gave that a miss and went snorkelling off a coral reef at Cable Beach - a fairly ordinary spot. In fact, the whole tourist thing about Broome is grossly over-rated. The Rowilly Shoals would probably be a top spot but it's a long way out and not many divers even get there.

Then the next dive spot was Exmouth where Malcolm Toole and Tony Medcroft run an excellent little operation called Exmouth Diving and Fishing Centre. Exmouth is situated on a peninsula between Exmouth gulf, the Indian Ocean the side which Ningaloo Reef runs south. The town of about 2,500 people is situated about 20km south of North West Cape on the more sheltered Gulf side. Since the Yanks left N.W. Cape it is still operated by the Commonwealth Police and the Navy and is the most important communications system in Australia for submarines. It's no longer looked upon as a nuclear target but I sensed from a few locals that there is concern about Indonesia who recently have built up a huge Navy by buying up old Russian warships.

The best spots I found for snorkelling were along the Ningaloo Reef off the Cape Range National Park at two places called Turquoise Bay and South Mandu Beach. These were easily accessed by dirt roads and safe enough for Marg and the kids to go in - they've really improved at snorkelling, although the 24° water temperature does help - we're still just north of the Tropic of Capricorn. Plenty of tropical fish - damels, angel, long snouted, various parrot fish, even a six foot leopard shark at Turquoise Bay, plus staghorn, platform, soft, cabbage, cup, brain and other varieties of coral.

On 26 July I hired all scuba gear and two tanks for a dive off the end of the Naval Pier and a boat dive out off North West Reef 5km from N.W. Cape. The boys at the dive shop arrange permits for the pier dive because it's in the restricted zone and the services people sign us in individually checking approved diver qualifications. Incidentally, "Sports Diver" rated the Pier dive in Australia's top 10 - so they tell me on all the brochures. I'm not sure if I'd go that far but it's definitely the best Pier dive I've ever done. Depth about 40 feet and I saw a school of Barracuda, a 400lb Old Grouper, Wobbies, Octopus, Lionfish, Coral Cod, Coral Trout, several Sea Snakes which become a nuisance when they swim through your legs! Visibility here on slack water was about 30 feet - good enough considering it's just inside the Gulf side. There certainly was an abundance of fish and growth - Reminded me of the Cod Hole at Byron Bay.

The afternoon dive was with Tony Medcroft and a group of seven including my buddy Moto, a young bloke from Japan whose command of English was about as good as my Japanese! Never mind, this dive to N.W. Reef was an amazing 55 minutes before we got there. We'd seen several dolphins and a huge Manta Ray leaping out of the water. At the dive site 45 feet deep and 50 feet visibility we saw heaps of all the small tropicals and more huge grouper, white tipped reef sharks, 2 Tawny Nurse (seven footers that just lie there like wobbies) and the highlight a huge school of trevally like you can fluke at Montague Island (ask Big Mick!!) Also saw more sea snakes, a turtle and everything I mentioned on the Pier dive. Without giving Malcolm and Tony too big a plug I can say I honestly had two very memorable dives and their outfit probably deserves better business because the area can be dived all year round - the weather is consistently dry - no rivers to stir up the viz and no stingers to worry about like further north. I guess the tyranny of distance limits the number of divers from the eastern states from ever getting over there.

Coral Bay is a great little spot for families to go snorkelling together. The reef protects you from any surge or swell and the slight current even makes it easy to swim along the reef about 50 meters from shore. Once again, like the other places mentioned, plenty of variety of coral and tropical fish.

Editors Comment: Thanks Tony for your interesting article - Sorry it is a bit late but you just missed the deadline for last issue.

## NOTICES

### WARM WATER DIVING MAY 1994

#### 2 WEEK OVERSEAS TRIP

- 1WEEK WRECKS & REEF IN THE SOLOMOMS
- 1 WEEK ON THE PRESIDENT COOLRIDGE AND OTHER DIVES IN VANUATU.

THIS TRIP IS CENTRED AROUND THE BEST WRECK DIVE IN THE WORLD - THE "PRESIDENT COOLIDGE".

INTERESTED?  
CONTACT DON ABELL FOR DETAILS.

### PETER JONES AND PAULINE TO SAIL THE PACIFIC

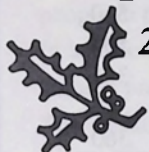
Club member Peter Jones, and his partner Pauline will depart from Townsville wharf on 26 october to crew a 45' yacht around the South Pacific for the next 7 months. If all goes well they'll meet up with the V.S.A.G. crew in the Solomons next May. Best Wishes to you both and have a safe & happy trip.

# 1994 VSAG 40 YEARS

V.S.A.G.  
**CHRISTMAS FUNCTION**  
**FRIDAY 3RD DECEMBER**  
**FLORINIS RESTAURANT**

258 SWAN STREET RICHMOND

7.30 PM



*Enjoy a superb 3 course dinner in the wonderful  
ambience of*

**FLORINIS RESTAURANT**

*We'll have our own private rooms*

*Heaps of raffle prizes*

*Only \$28 per head*

*BYOG and Licensed*



*Please advise names to our new Social Secretary*

*Mick Jeacle 059 712 786*

*and advise names at the October meeting.*

## CLUBMAN OF THE YEAR

Don Abell has once again won the coveted Clubman of the year award for the fourth time.

**Don Won with 865 points**

Second was John lawler	550
Third was Mick Jeakle	505
Fourth was Pat Reynolds	385
Fifth was John Goulding	375
Sixth was Bob Scott	360
Equal Seventh was Andy Mastrowicz & Doug Catherall	320
Ninth was barry Truscott	305
Tenth was Ross Luxford	255

The Clubman of the year award is a recognition of members' involvement in club activities. It is not a competitive contest but rather a token of recognition to the most active members.

### *CHANGE OF ADDRESS*

**DES WILLIAMS' NEW ADDRESS IS:**  
14 DORRINGTON COURT  
DINGLEY VIC 3172  
TEL: 551 3201  
WORK: 597 0777

***REFUGE COVE THE TRADITION CONTINUES***  
***29-31 JANUARY 1994***

Despite the efforts of the Victorian Government to reduce our Public Holidays V.S.A.G. will continue to celebrate our January long weekend at Refuge Cove.

The Luxury Cruiser "Rosalia" has again been booked for the first 12 people to pay their \$50 deposit to John Goulding.

In addition several club boats will also be in attendance.

Please contact John Goulding as soon as possible to ensure your spot

The weekend cost will be similar to 1993 (\$130) and this covers

- Boat trip
- Food
- Camping fees

**NOTE: CANCELLATIONS MADE AFTER PROVISIONS HAVE BEEN PURCHASED MAY BE FORFEITED**

John Goulding telephone 274 2213 (bus) 899 3468 (work)

## IMPORTANT INSPECTION NOTICE

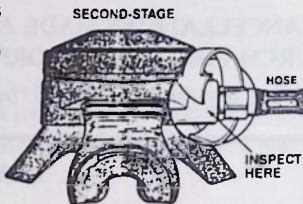
### U.S. Divers Regulator & Octopus Owners

U.S. Divers Co., Inc. is asking all owners of a U.S. Divers regulator or octopus with a plastic second-stage to perform a simple visual inspection of their second-stage and take corrective action, if necessary, before their next dive.

It has come to our attention that the plastic in the second-stage of U.S. Divers regulators and octopuses may develop cracks due to exposure to chemicals, over-torquing, or to other causes. These cracks may develop around the air hose connection and, as information supplied to us indicates, in some instances can become so severe that the air hose separates from the second-stage regulator in the water. If this occurs during a dive, there would be a rapid loss of air supply from the regulator or octopus which would result in the tank emptying of air. While there have been no reports of injuries, this is a potentially dangerous situation that can be avoided with a simple inspection of your regulator.

#### Visual Inspection Procedures

The visual inspection that we ask you to perform takes less than 60 seconds and does not require any tools, nor does the regulator have to be connected to an air supply. The plastic area in which you should be looking for cracks is shown in the diagram. Be sure to inspect the entire 360° area around the hose connection very carefully.



If there are no cracks, you can use the regulator. If you find visual cracks or are uncertain if there are cracks, take the regulator to any authorized U.S. Divers dealer. As long as the cracks are less than 1/8", you do not have to stop diving with the regulator, but should bring it to a U.S. Divers dealer for a free replacement as soon as possible.

This inspection notice covers all U.S. Divers regulator, equipped with plastic second-stage except models SEA2 (Part No. 1063-0-) and Micra (Part No. 1001-00). Metal second-stages are not affected.

For further information, consumers may call 1-714-540-8010 or 1-800-635-3483, ext. 4210

**U.S. DIVERS**  
AQUA-LUNG

3323 West Warner Avenue, Santa Ana, CA 92704



## ***A LETTER TO THE EDITOR***

FROM THE IMMEDIATE PAST EDITOR - JOHN GOULDING

Dear Des

Congratulations on your appointment to the position of Fathoms Editor.

You obviously don't need any introduction to this role as you previously held the position for 5 years during the 1980's.

I can recall at that time the huge job that I thought I had taken when I had to fill your shoes. However I recall the help you gave me in those early issues when I first became editor, and I certainly will reciprocate now.

I can well recall the hardwork of putting fathoms together - but overriding this was the pleasure of seeing the finished product and knowing that I was contributing in a meaningful way to the club.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members, partners and children who supplied me with articles over the years. I encourage you to continue as your articles, comments and ideas are the communication life blood of the club.

I would also like to thank the committee of VSAG for the 20 years of friendship and support given to me during my time as a committee man.

I feel that it has been a privilege for me to have served this club for 20 years as secretary, treasurer, president and newsletter editor.. I have chosen to resign from the committee at this point of time because I cannot dive as regularly as I used to. I believe that a good committee is made up of active divers and my stepping aside has allowed some new blood onto the committee.

Congratulations to Don Abell on being elected for his 6th consecutive term. Don's leadership over the past 5 years has been of major influence in strengthening the club. Congratulations also to Leo Maybus on his nomination to the committee. I have always maintained that the more you put into a club the more you get in return. I now look forward to a less formal involvement in club activities but hopefully will be able to return to more regular club attendances in the New Year.

JOHN GOULDING

## ***A LETTER TO THE EDITOR***

Dear Sir

I was relieved to hear John Goulding reconfirming that the traditional VSAG trip to Refuge Cove in January will go ahead despite Mr Kennetts attempt to rob us of yet another public holiday---- this time----Australia Day Long Weekend.

Australia Day should be celebrated as a long weekend for some good reasons. With the current governments' attitude it will only be a holiday if it falls on a weekday.

Imagine what will happen if it falls on a Tuesday or Thursday! Most of the population will take the Monday and Friday respectively as R.D.O's - thus making it a 4 day break.

So from the party that gave you-

- the butchers picnic
- the storeman and packers family day
- the 17½% leave loading and the R.D.O.

I support the VSAG tradition in making Monday January 31 as a V.S.A.G. Refuge Cove Long Weekend.

Signed: ROSS TURDOFF

## ***S.D.F.-V MEETING 3RD AUGUST 1993***

DES WILLIAMS

CLUBS IN ATTENDANCE: V.S.A.G., VALLEY DIVERS, BOTTOM SCRATCHERS, M.R.G, LA TROBE UNI, BLACK ROCK, MARINE DIVERS, A.P.I. & B.S.A.C.

(i) Victorian Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee are looking into Sth Rock Lobster fishery and its state of viability. All submissions from interested groups are in (including S.D.F.V.) and being collated. Discussions paper to be released for comment soon. A copy of this should be mailed direct to V.S.A.G.

(ii) V.S.A.G. still owe membership fee to S.D.F.-V. Des Williams requested an account be forwarded to V.S.A.G. for quick payment. Other Clubs are also non financial.

(iii) V.S.A.G. also have not return the S.D.F.-V census form circulated at the last meeting - this form is vital to keep S.D.F.-V records up to date.

(iv) The Land Conservation Councils' Marine Coastal Descriptive report is now available for \$17. The Council now wants comments on its report before next draft is made. S.D.F. - V had great input to this Council on the diver use of our coastline and is to be commended by all Clubs for their work. S.D.F.-V are closely monitoring the Council.

(v) S.D.F.-V asked all clubs to send a copy of their newsletters so the S.D.F. V can keep abreast of current matters.

(vi) Next meeting at 8pm 5th october 1993.

(vii) The Commercial dive Clubs body "Dive Australia" have agreed to remove "private clubs" from their draft document after S.D.F.-V contacted them explaining they cannot make decisions for private clubs unless we are included in their meetings.

(viii) HISTORIC SHIPWRECKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE-  
POINTS OF INTEREST:

The current amnesty on shipwreck relics doesn't apply to other Acts such as Customs, National parks or Navigation Acts. Divers will have to trust the M.A.U., who are not out to prosecute, but are listening attentively to all material brought to their notice.

If Clubs want more re-assurance of the above, they should contact the M.A.U. and have a member of staff address a Club meeting to explain more clearly.

M.A.U. have no plans to confiscate shipwrecks relics from divers & others as they are reported and therefore have no plans to set up a museum to house such relics.

Response from divers has not been great, to the amnesty so far, but 10 reports of cultural material have been documented by the M.A.U. with a further 14 being attended to now - just paperwork to complete on these. Also 5 wrecks have been reported to M.A.U., not known before, so the amnesty has been successful so far.

Within the next few months, the Government will present trophy-type awards to people who have in the past been responsible for reporting shipwrecks to the M.A.U. There are 18 State and 18 Commonwealth awards to be made. People who report a new shipwreck in future will also be eligible for an award from the Government.

The protected wrecksite of the "City of Launceston" has been raided by divers recently and it is now being investigated. The "Courier" wreck is being pillaged and diver was caught with artifacts from the protected "Sieria Nevada" wreck recently. All of this despite the publicity given to protection legislation, so divers are leaving not a lot of choice to the powers that be.

The blanket declaration of wrecks over 75 years old in Commonwealth waters is now in its 3rd reading Victorian State Parliament, so Victoria should have protection on all State waters wrecks very soon.

M.A.U. once again ask divers to participate in the amnesty and assure them their information will be welcomed - they are not on a relic collection drive.

## ***DIVING THE "TOA MARU"***

DON ABELL

To continue the articles highlighting next year's VSAG 40th Anniversary overseas trip, it is certainly worth looking at the "Toa Maru". This wreck is off Gizo- the first destination of our diving holiday.

The "Toa Maru" may be the best wreck dive in the solomon islands, particularly because of it easy accessibility for divers. The top of the wreck is in just 50 feet of water and it drops down to only about 130 feet. It is also in a sheltered Lagoon for easy mooring, but this does result in visibility being down to only 50-60 feet most of the time. But that is still a bit better than the average Melbourne dive.

The Toa Maru #2 is a passenger/cargo transport ship that was built at Nagasaki, Japan, for the Osaka Shosen Kaisha (OSK Line). She is 446' long, 58' 1" in the beam, and has a displacement of 6732 tons. She was launched on 8 December 1938, and her first voyage was from Kobe to West Africa. When war was declared in 1941 she was conscripted into the Imperial navy.

On 31st of January 1943, Toa Maru was carrying war materials to Kolombangara island in the New Georgia group. Her destination was Vila Harbour, locally known as Jack Harbour or Disappointment Cove, where the japanese had a supply depot to supply the "Tokyo Express". This was the Allied name for the operation in which small groups of high-speed modern destroyers, operating at night, were used to re-supply Japanese forces on Guadalcanal.

However, Coastwatchers on New Ireland spotted the Toa Maru after she left Rabaul, and advised the Allied command on Guadalcanal. Twelve Douglas Dauntless dive bombers from Marine Scout/Torpedo Bomber Squadron VMSTB-142, escorted by eight Grumman F4F-4 Wildcats from marine Fighter Squadron VMF-112 were launched from Henderson Field to attack the Toa Maru.

Two of the fighters returned to base with mechanical problems, leaving six to deal with the japanese aircraft escorting the Toa Maru through the Vella Gulf. In the ensuing battle, Lt. Jefferson J DeBlanc is credited with shooting down first one Zero fighter, then two floatplanes, and finally two more Zeros, despite injury

to himself and serious damage to his aircraft (#02124), which was already losing fuel because of mechanical failure.

Meanwhile, the bombers had already made several attack runs on the Toa Maru, but seemed to inflict no damage. This apparent lack of success angered L. T. James Secrest, who insisted on leading his Section of Wildcats in a strafing run on the Japanese ship despite the fact that he had undertaken the entire mission with virtually no ammunition because his armourers failed to rear arm the aircraft after testing its guns! The fighter leader, DeBlanc, reminded Secrest that their duty was to escort and protect the bombers, but Secrest and his Section dived towards the Toa Maru, and DeBlanc and his Section were therefore obliged to follow to help protect them. As they passed the Toa Maru she burst into flames, but at the same time more Zeros converged on the Wildcats and DeBlanc and LT. James Feliton were shot down. Both pilots bailed out, DeBlanc and his aircraft going into the sea, and Feliton following his aircraft into the Kolombangara rain forest.

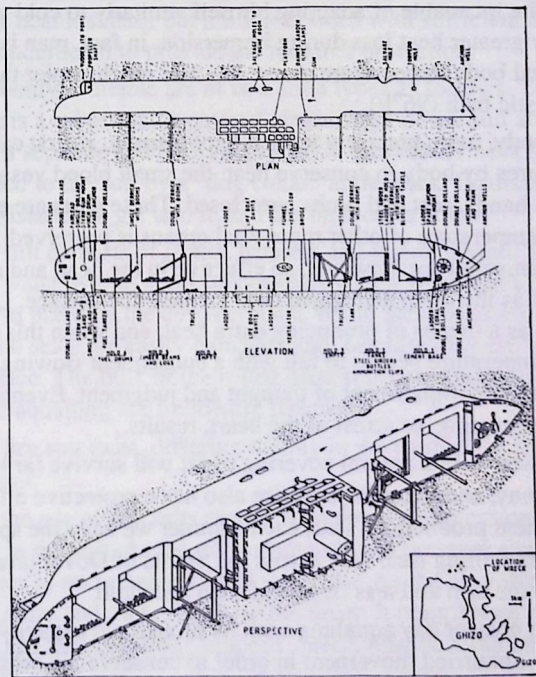
Lt. DeBlanc spent the six hours swimming towards Kolombangara, before eventually landing on the island. With assistance from the local people he was hidden from the Japanese, and eventually taken to a missionary. He was flown back to Henderson Field two weeks later, where he met Feliton who had been recovered earlier. For his efforts that day he was awarded America's highest decoration for valour, the Congressional Medal of Honour. His name is on the bronze plaque at Henderson Field, now Honiara's international airport.

However, Toa Maru was mortally damaged with at least one bomb hit in the port bow section, and a major fire burning in the after holds that DeBlanc credits to the strafing Wildcats. Eventually she sank on her starboard side just inside Kololuka Bay on Gizo Island, south of the battle site.

Diving the ship as she lies in the bay, you can see fire damage to the bridge, superstructure and after holds 4, 5 and 6, where glass and crockery are melted by temperatures of at least 1000 degrees F. You can see the bomb hole in the bow that allowed holds 1, 2 and 3 to flood and save their contents from the fire. In the accommodation decks you see personal effects, cooking utensils, typewriters, telephones, medical kits, gas masks and even delicate crockery with the blue

crest of the OSK Line. Spilling from the forward holds are bags of cement, a motorcycle and sidecar unit, a Type 95 tank, magazines of 75mm anti-aircraft shells, and crates of beer and sake bottles. An anti-aircraft cannon is standing upright in the sand at the stern.

Toa Maru is now into her sixth decade of service, albeit it of a different type and for a different nation from that for which she was built. Now as the focal point for tourism in Gizo, she serves snorkellers who can see her from the surface, novice divers on their first "real" dive, advanced divers interested in wreck exploration, and the myriads of fish, corals and sponges that have made their home. And she is the only ship in the world within sports diving depths that was sunk in an action that resulted in award or the victor nation's highest medal for valour.



## ***DIVING INTO THE PAST***

JOHN LAWLER

Wetsuit and protective clothing technology has advanced greatly since around the time that the article on the topic was written in this November 1969 issue of *Fathoms*.

I am sure you will find this article from 24 years ago interesting and by today's standing a bit humorous.

### PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

Cold water has always been a problem for divers, and one that many of us regularly meet. Although a resting unclothed man can stand low temperatures in still air, he is quite incapable of adapting himself similarly to cold water. This is due to the vastly greater heat loss during immersion, in fact, man is unable to maintain a normal body temperature at rest in water much cooler than a lukewarm domestic bath (96°F).

Cooling of the body, more precisely termed hypothermia, at first calls into play protective measures by body to conserve heat; the small blood vessels to the skin, especially of the hands, feet and limbs, are closed. These parts are allowed to cool while the temperature of other more vital organs is preserved. This protective mechanism is not, however, so effective in the head and neck where such vital organs as the brain and spinal cord are near the surface. Later, shivering occurs as a means of producing extra heat, and when this defence fails the deep body temperature begins to fall with a consequent slowing of reflexes and movement, and an impairment of thought and judgment. Eventually coma and death from drowning, or arrest of the heart, results.

Those well endowed with a natural covering of fat will survive far longer than the small and skinny, and vigorous exercise also has a protective effect by promoting body heat production. Thus each summer we have the spectacle of channel swimmers flailing their way across the Straits of Dover unscathed, in conditions where the thin and less fit would soon succumb.

Unfortunately the present day aqualung with its limited air capacity places a premium on slow unhurried movement in order to conserve air, while obesity as



a method of keeping warm has little to commend it, as it usually betrays a lack of physical fitness.

It follows from this that for comfort and safety a diver will need some form of protective clothing for all but the warmest of tropical waters. In addition to its prime purpose of providing thermal insulation, the clothing also gives welcome physical protection against abrasions from rocks, coral, jagged metal and similar hazards.

There are two basic types of diving dress, the dry suit and the wet suit. Neither of these is completely satisfactory and they each have different fields of usefulness.

Dry Suit: The dry suit is loose fitting and is made of rubber sheet or rubberised fabric with thin rubber seals at the neck and wrists to exclude water. In itself rubber is a poor heat insulator but the suit is worn with sufficient woolen underclothing underneath to provide the required protection.

Dry suits commonly available are of two main types as follows. The one-piece, neck entry, suit is a robust outfit entered via the neck of the suit and sealed after entry either by a separate and easily replaceable thin rubber neck seal or a hood which is clamped to the suit by a "dog collar" at the neck. Its disadvantages are the need for assistance to get into it, and the bulk of its collar.

The two-piece suit consists of jacket, trousers and cummerbund. They are joined together at the waist by thin sheet rubber seals which are rolled together after entry and held in place by the cummerbund. While these suits are easier to put on, the large thin seals are easily damaged and, because they are glued to the suit, difficult to replace. The bulk of the rolled up seal is convenient at the waist where weight belt and aqualung are frequently fastened.

Other types of dry suit exist, differing mainly in the method of entry and manner of sealing the suit.

Difficulties in the use of dry suits mainly arise from compression or the escape of the air trapped in the suit. As the diver descends and pressure rises the volume of this air decreases in accordance with Boyle's law. As the air volume shrinks, the suit is pressed more and more tightly to the diver. It compresses his clothing and becomes rigid and the so-called "squeeze" effect results. Ultimately, when the

clothing cannot be compressed any more, the air pressure in the suit can no longer be affected by outside pressure and a relative vacuum is produced. This causes bursting of small blood vessels in the skin which also becomes pinched in folds of the clothing. When a hood is worn instead of a neck seal, bleeding into the external cas passage may result - known as "reversed ears". The compression of air in the suit also results in considerable loss of buoyancy.

These difficulties can be circumvented in two ways. The simplest is merely to commence the dive with a surplus of air in the suit which will be compressed at the expected depth of the dive to a comfortable volume. Provided a shot line or anchor rope is available to assist in overcoming the excessive buoyancy during the initial stages of the descent, this is a satisfactory solution.

A more elegant way is to provide some method of inflating the suit at depth as required. This can be from a small compressed air cylinder operated by a hand wheel, or by taking a supply from the aqualung. This system has the additional advantage of providing a considerable degree of control over buoyancy. On ascent surplus air has to be bled off, usually via the cuff seals. Some may prefer to have valves at neck and ankles to do this automatically, but in practice these valves often leak water into the suit.

A logical development from this idea has been the French constant volume suit in which the half mask is an integral part of the hood. To inflate his suit the diver has merely to blow air past the edges of his mask. Surplus air is vented through valves are fitted.

Dry suits are particularly valuable for long period of diving especially when in dirty, cold or polluted water. .... to be continued next issue.

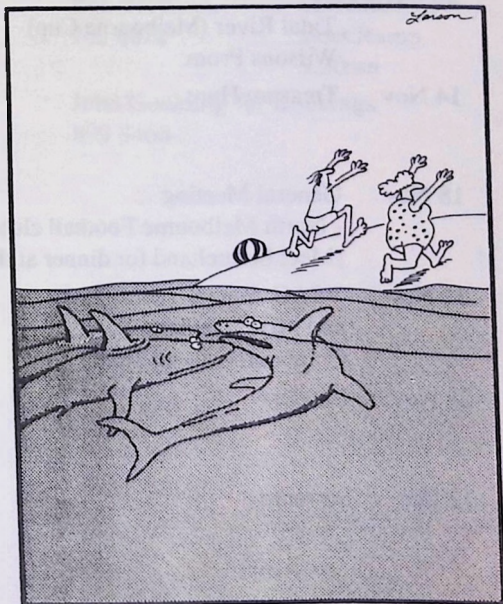
## MEDIA WATCH

Melbourne "Age" 26.8.93

### German U-boat yields cargo

Salvage experts entered a World War II German U-boat today to locate and remove torpedoes and ammunition, after successfully raising the submarine on to a barge off the Danish coast. "Some of the first artefacts we discovered on board were 100 bottles of German wine, a gross (144) of condoms, a splendid pipe and a pair of binoculars, all remarkably intact," said Mr Jonathan Wardlow, a spokesman for the operation. He said a full investigation of the submarine will be carried out at the North Sea port of Hirtshals and could take months.

— Reuter



"Well, somehow they knew we were—whoa! Our dorsal fins are sticking out! I wonder how many times that's screwed things up?"

**DIVE/SOCIAL CALENDAR**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>EVENT/LOCATION</b>	<b>DIVE CAPTAIN</b>	<b>MEET AT</b>
3 Oct	Abyss/Heroes Cave	Andy Mastrowicz 318 3986	Rye Boat Ramp 9.30am
17 Oct	George Kermode	Bob Scott 763 6872	Flinders Boat Ramp 9.30am
21 Oct	General Meeting (Guest Speaker) - North Melbourne Football Club (Meet beforehand for dinner at the club)		8.00pm
30 Oct-2 Nov	Tidal River (Melbourne Cup) Wilsons Prom.	Pat Reynolds 789 1092	
14 Nov	Treasure Hunt	J. Lawler 569 9851 or 018 395 428	Rye/Sorrento 9.30am
18 Nov	General Meeting - North Melbourne Football club (Meet beforehand for dinner at the club)		8.00pm
21 Nov	VSAG Annual Tennis Party and Mile Handicap Race Cranbourne South Tennis Club	Tony Tipping 817 4956	9.30am
28 Nov	Flinders	Doug Catherall 888 7774	Flinders Boat Ramp 9.30am
12 Dec	Sorrento	Don Abell 889 4415	Sorrento Boat Ramp 9.00am

**DIVE/SOCIAL CALENDAR CONT:**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>EVENT/LOCATION</b>	<b>DIVE CAPTAIN</b>	<b>MEET AT</b>
16 Dec	General Meeting - North Melbourne Football Club (Meet beforehand for dinner at the club)		8.00pm
19 Dec	Flinders/Cape Schank	C. Brincat 876 3395	Flinders Boat Ramp 9.30am
Xmas New Year Trip-	Marlo M. Jeacle	059 712786	
2 Jan	Sorrento/Heads	Don Abell 8894415	Sorrento Boat Ramp 9.00am
16 Jan	New Wreck	Bob Scott 763 6872	Sorrento Boat Ramp 9.30am
29-31 Jan	Refuge Cove	John Goulding for Bookings 899 3468	

## TIDE TABLES

PORT PHILLIP HEADS  
TIDAL STREAM CHANGE  
OCTOBER 1993PORT PHILLIP HEADS  
TIMES AND HEIGHTS OF HIGH AND LOW WATERS  
OCTOBER - 1993

LAT 38°18' S LONG 144°37' E TIME ZONE -1000

TIMES AND HEIGHTS OF HIGH AND LOW WATERS

OCTOBER - 1993		OCTOBER 1993		OCTOBER 1993		OCTOBER 1993		OCTOBER 1993	
Time m	Time m	Time m	Time m	FLOOD	EBB	FLOOD	EBB	FLOOD	EBB
1 0004 1.25	0502 1.38	0308 1.54	0712 1.28	1 FR	18 MO	0902 2134	0258 1515	1010 2250	0416 1619
FR 1213 1.25	SA 1654 1.23	SU 1232 1.38	MO 1912 1.14	2 SA	19 TU	0945 2213	0345 1553	1058 2340	0505 1708
1816 0.39	1816 0.39	1824 0.08		3 SU	20 WE	1021 2248	0424 1628	1144	0553 1756
0052 1.33	0545 1.31	0132 1.64	26 0045 0.48	4 MO	21 TH	1055 2322	0459 1702	0028 1229	0639 1842
0638 0.48	1116 0.53	0659 0.46	26 0901 1.22	5 TU	22 FR	1129 2356	0532 1736	0115 1315	0725 1927
SA 1251 1.28	SU 1736 1.19	MO 1321 1.44	TU 1325 0.54	6 WE	23 SA	1204	0607 1809	0202 1401	0812 2013
1855 0.51	SU 2322 0.26	MO 1917 0.01	2027 1.11	7 TH	24 SU	0029 1238	0640 1842	0248 1451	0859 2102
0131 1.39	0632 1.25	0223 1.68	27 0145 0.57	8 FR	25 MO	0103 1312	0716 1914	0335 1549	0940 2159
0716 0.46	1159 0.55	0747 0.44	27 0852 1.18	9 SA	26 TU	0108 1348	0752 1949	0423 1686	1043 2306
SU 1325 1.31	MO 1829 1.15	TU 1408 1.47	WE 1435 0.53	10 SU	27 WE	0214 1426	0831 2029	0519 1806	1144
1930 0.25			2137 1.12	11 MO	28 TH	0257 1514	0916 2120	0620 1915	0017 1245
0206 1.44	0911 0.32	0312 1.67	28 0256 0.63	12 TU	29 FR	0214 1426	0916 2120	0723 2014	0131
0751 0.45	0729 0.51	0834 0.42	28 0944 1.16	13 WE	30 SA	0257 1514	0916 2120	0821 2030	0230 1430
MO 1359 1.34	TU 1251 0.35	WE 1454 1.47	TH 1546 0.48	14 TH	31 SU	0350 1613	1010 2123	0921 2103	0319 1512
2004 0.42	TU 1935 1.13	WE 2057 0.62	2243 1.18	15 FR		0453 1731	1145 2345	0908 2143	
0239 1.47	0111 0.40	0359 1.62	29 0412 0.65	16 SA		0504 1852	1229		
0625 0.44	13 0834 1.19	0919 0.42	29 1034 1.16	17 SU		0620 2002	0108 1588		
TU 1433 1.35	WE 1358 0.52	TH 1539 1.43	FR 1647 0.41	18 MO		0716 2104	0220 1435		
2038 0.18	WE 2104 1.16	TH 2144 0.09	2341 1.28	19 TU		0821 2143	0322 1528		
0313 1.47	14 0226 0.48	0446 1.54	30 0519 0.63	20 WE		0831 2143	0322 1528		
0900 0.44	TH 0942 1.20	FR 1623 1.37	SA 1737 0.34	21 TH		0831 2143	0322 1528		
WE 1508 1.33	TH 1515 0.44	FR 1623 1.37	SA 1737 0.34	22 FR		0831 2143	0322 1528		
2110 0.18	TH 2229 1.26	FR 2229 0.17		23 SA		0831 2143	0322 1528		
0347 1.45	0347 0.52	0534 1.45	31 0028 1.34	24 SU		0831 2143	0322 1528		
0625 0.44	0515 1.04	1.25	31 0610 0.60	25 MO		0831 2143	0322 1528		
TH 1543 1.31	FR 1626 0.32	SA 1713 1.29	SU 1206 1.21	26 TU		0831 2143	0322 1528		
2141 0.18	FR 2238 1.40	SA 2313 0.28	1818 0.27	27 WE		0831 2143	0322 1528		
0424 1.41	16 0502 0.52	24 0623 1.36		28 TH		0831 2143	0322 1528		
0107 0.48	16 1140 1.31	24 1135 0.49		29 FR		0831 2143	0322 1528		
FR 1617 1.27	SA 1729 0.19	SU 1806 1.21		30 SA		0831 2143	0322 1528		
2210 0.20	SA 2357 0.38			31 SU		0831 2143	0322 1528		

Co-Right, The National Tidal Facility, Flinders University, South Australia

ADD 1 HOUR TO TIMES SHOWN FOR OFFICIAL "SUMMER TIME"

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# TIDE TABLES

## PORT PHILLIP HEADS TIDAL STREAM CHANGE NOVEMBER, 1993

## PORT PHILLIP HEADS TIDES AND HEIGHTS OF HIGH AND LOW WATERS NOVEMBER - 1993

LAT 38°18' S LONG 144°37' E TIME ZONE - 1000

HEIGHTS OF HIGH AND LOW WATERS

PORT PHILLIP HEADS		PORT PHILLIP HEADS		TIDAL STREAM CHANGE		TIDAL STREAM CHANGE	
NOVEMBER - 1993		NOVEMBER - 1993		NOVEMBER, 1993		NOVEMBER, 1993	
Time m	Time m	Time m	Time m	FLOOD	EBB	FLOOD	EBB
1 0107 1.41	0604 1.33	0206 1.67	0059 0.61	0949	0959	18 TH	1127
1 0650 0.56	9 1144 0.44	17 0750 0.50	25 1346 1.21	2220	1852	19 FR	0009
MO 1247 1.24	TU 1818 1.16	WE 1346 1.42	TH 1346 0.44	1027	0435	20 SA	0624
1857 0.21	TU 2250 0.38	WE 1547 0.02	2100 1.13	2254	1629	21 SU	1215
2 0142 1.46	0654 1.28	0255 1.67	0158 0.69	1104	0509	22 MO	0709
2 0727 0.82	10 1235 0.42	18 0819 0.46	26 0837 1.16	1706	1706	23 TU	1908
TU 1326 0.37	WE 1930 1.16	TH 1435 1.42	FR 1448 0.42	1141	0545	24 WE	0752
1932 0.17	0049 0.49	0341 1.62	2202 1.17	0732	1742	25 TH	1983
3 0216 1.50	0752 1.24	0906 0.43	0310 0.74	0004	0620	26 FR	0883
3 0802 0.49	TH 1338 0.38	FR 1523 1.38	SA 1553 0.37	1217	1816	27 SA	2038
WE 1405 1.29	2059 1.22	2123 0.13	2302 1.23	0037	0655	28 SU	0914
2007 0.15	0020 0.59	0425 1.56	0426 0.74	1253	1850	29 MO	2179
4 0251 1.51	0857 1.23	0952 0.42	0826 1.13	0112	0732	30 TU	0987
4 0838 0.47	FR 1450 0.32	SA 1610 1.33	SU 1650 0.32	0149	0810	01 WE	2227
TH 1443 1.28	2215 1.32	2206 0.22	2354 1.31	1412	2012	02 TH	1046
2040 0.15	0321 0.65	0507 1.48	0530 0.71	0232	0854	03 FR	2329
5 0327 1.49	1002 1.25	1037 0.42	1119 1.15	0322	0945	04 SA	1143
5 0913 0.46	SA 1600 0.23	SU 1638 1.26	MO 1740 0.26	1501	2104	05 FR	0036
FR 1520 1.27	2302 1.44	2247 0.32	0038 1.38	0232	0945	06 SA	1242
2111 0.16	0436 0.65	0546 1.41	0618 0.66	1603	2210	07 SA	1928
6 0403 1.46	1104 1.29	1120 0.42	0618 0.66	0421	1045	08 SU	0144
6 0947 0.46	MO 1748 1.20	TU 1209 1.18	1209 1.18	0421	1045	09 MO	1338
SA 1558 1.25	SU 1703 0.13	2328 0.42	1823 0.21	1719	2330	10 MO	0242
2142 0.19	0022 1.56	0624 1.33	0624 1.33	0529	1154	11 MO	1430
7 1022 0.46	0542 0.61	1204 0.43	1204 0.43	1833	0642	12 MO	0448
SU 1638 1.23	MO 1201 1.35	TU 1648 1.15	1648 1.15	0642	1301	13 SA	0328
2218 0.23	1801 0.06	0010 0.52	0010 0.52	1301	0048	14 SU	1516
8 0520 1.37	0638 0.55	0702 1.27	0702 1.27	0159	0169	15 MO	0302
8 1100 0.45	TU 1256 1.40	WE 1252 0.44	1252 0.44	1404	1404	16 TU	0357
MO 1723 1.20	TU 1256 1.40	WE 1252 0.44	1252 0.44	0852	1501	17 WE	1556
2300 0.29	1656 0.02	1955 1.12	1955 1.12	1038	0448	01 WE	0647
	0441 1.42	0624 1.33	0624 1.33	2321	1647		

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