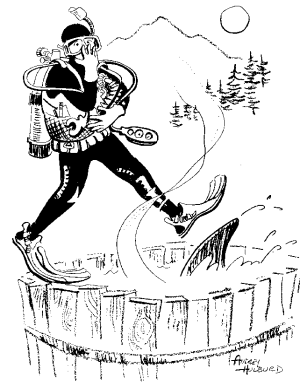


# MARIN SCUBA CLUB NEWSLETTER

Volume 15 Number 8

August, 2008



## **Crew Overboard – It's Not Just For Men Anymore**

by Clark Miller

[Ed. Note: Last month, I erroneously reported that the Crew Overboard Event had been scratched. My apologies to the sponsor and participants.]

On Saturday, July 19th, members of our illustrious Marin Scuba Club became voluntary victims of the Crew Overboard Event sponsored by Serving Others Aid Relief Inc, held at the Bay Model in Sausalito... That's California. The bodies of those who survived cannot be found in the obituaries of any of the local news rags. They were Virginia Bria, Dave Bueller, crew cut Steve (owner of Harbor Dive Center), and the author of this article who was passed up once again as poet laureate for the 16th year in a row now.

In short, the event was tremendously fun, extremely educational, and sorely needed.

Originally started back in the early 1990's, the program is designed to help sailors recover their crew when they fall overboard while under sail. Sparked by the unfortunate deaths of past sailors who might otherwise have been saved, the program became very popular before it ended here in mid 90's. Through education, and the advent and improvement of rescue equipment, fatalities from boating accidents and crew overboard have been dramatically reduced all across the country. Once again, the program is being embraced by the local boating community to help prevent these tragic deaths from occurring in the future.

The day began with a two-hour orientation that showed the latest and most effective equipment every sailboat should have on board, and the varied rescue techniques. When school let out it was time to shove off for an afternoon of practicing the drills everyone had learned back at the dock. Latitude 38, the local monthly sailing magazine, dropped in with their boat and photographer to take pictures for an article in their upcoming edition. In preparation, most of the

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## **Board Positions Open**

Two long-term members of the Marin Scuba Club have decided to take "early retirement." Elliott Zalta will be stepping down as President, a job he's held for the past four years. Chuck Ballinger, who has been coordinating programs for an even longer period, has also decided to step aside. We all owe heaps of gratitude to these two, whose hard work has contributed so much to the Club over the years.

With these announcements, the club will hold elections for all Board positions at the October 15 meeting. Nominations for all positions (listed on page 4) are being accepted through the September 17 meeting. This is a unique opportunity for new people to get involved and bring a fresh perspective to the Board.

To nominate yourself or someone else for any position, e-mail Elliott at [driftinez@comcast.net](mailto:driftinez@comcast.net), or mail your nomination(s) before Sep-

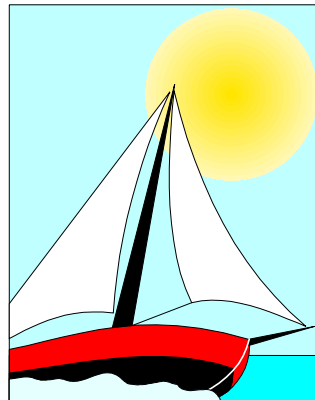
tember 15 to Marin Scuba Club, PO Box 3408, San Rafael, CA 94912.

If you'd like to know more about any job, please contact the person now doing it. Board meetings are held just before each month's general meeting, so the time demands are minimal. If you're not ready to serve on the Board, you can get your fins wet by offering to assist one of the officers or committee chairs.

## **Bahamas Quickie**

When our previously scheduled presenter cancelled on short notice, members Clark Miller and Virginia Bria stepped up to present photos from their recent adventures in the Bahamas. As always, their show was beautifully shot and professionally produced.

You can see more of Clark and Virginia's work in their interactive gallery at [www.aquaterraimagery.com](http://www.aquaterraimagery.com).



sailboat captains went out and purchased some or all of the equipment they would need for their vessels.

When a body goes over the rail there is a small window of time to retrieve a conscious victim in cold water. The captain needs to work smoothly and with diligence instructing the crew in the process. It was fun, but serious work for those at the helm. Mistakes can lead to injury, and missed opportunities can quickly turn to fatality with real victims.

Each of the four sailboats had between two and four people who would cycle in and out of the helm as captain practicing the rescue moves they had learned in the classroom. Two chase boats were on hand with medical support in case anything turned dour. Divers would launch themselves off the boat at the time of their choice to replicate the sudden shock of "Crew Overboard!" Most of them had never experienced someone going into the bay while they were under sail. Adrenaline was running high, not for divers, but for the captains. I was amazed at how disorganized a sailboat could become when something of this magnitude happens so quickly. At first it was stressful for them to remember the order of the rescue instructions; an immediate toss of a flotation devise, a mock call to the Coast Guard, assigning a person to keep an eye on the victim at all times, directing the setup of a life sling or throw-line, navigating the vessel in a particular maneuver to get back to the overboard victim under sail, securing the victim to the lee side of the boat, and hauling him or her back on board using either a variety of blocks and tackle, or aid from the boat's running rigging.

It sounded much easier in the classroom than it proved to be on the water. However, by the end the day most crew members showed a marked improvement and increased confidence in their ability to rescue someone out of the bay. The sailors were able to gain a great deal of experience that they would otherwise never have had were it not for the courage of our fearless (MSC) crew (the Minnow would be lost.... the Minnow would be lost). It WAS a three-hour cruise.

At the end of the day we all gathered back at the Bay Model for a debriefing and to share stories about what worked, what went wrong, and to summarize the use of the rescue aids as well as the effectiveness of their application.

This being the first year back with the program there were clearly improvements to be made from an organizational perspective. That said, everyone rolled with the waves, had a great time, and floated away with some valuable lessons. The sponsors and sailors provided our divers with lunch and a ride back to the dock, which was better than being stranded on Angel Island with Gilligan and the Skipper.

Our divers felt welcome and truly appreciated. Everyone was saddened that we were unable to come back on Sunday. Looking forward to next year, the Crew Overboard program is certainly worthy of our continued support.

## **Ashes to Corals**

Too cool to have your ashes merely scattered at sea? Well, here's an even saltier alternative.

The Neptune Memorial Reef, which opened last fall, is a cemetery 45 feet beneath the ocean's surface off Key Biscayne, FL. The artificial reef's first phase allows for about 850 remains, and its builders hope that one day the reef will cover 16 acres and have room for 125,000 permanent guests.

A deceased person's ashes are mixed with cement designed for underwater use and fitted into a mold, which a diver then secures into the reef. A copper and bronze plaque is installed with the person's name, date of birth and death. There is also a line for a message. Any certified diver can visit.

Check into Neptune Memorial Reef (figuratively, at least) at <https://www.nmreef.com>.



### ***Ships to Reefs***

Since 2005, the organization California Ships to Reefs has been dedicated to building a regional system of reefed ships along the California Coast through a statewide coalition of Sink Groups. CS2R believes these reefs will establish California as an international dive destination, boost tourism centered on fishing and diving and enhance California ground fish populations. At our August 20 meeting, Eleanore & Dean Rewerts (Executive Director and VP Reef Development of CS2R) will present an overview of the California Ships to Reefs project, with an update on recent developments.

### ***Reminder: Newsletter Available by E-Mail***

by Larry Clinton

Several members have opted to receive future newsletters electronically rather than in hard copy. Besides saving the club some postage, e-mailing the newsletter as a PDF attachment allows for full-color illustrations and better photo reproduction. If those advantages appeal to you, email me at [click@dipsymusic.com](mailto:click@dipsymusic.com) and I'll switch you into paperless mode.

# BOTTOM TIMES

**August 19 (Tues.):** *Newsletter deadline.* Contact Larry at [click@dipsymusic.com](mailto:click@dipsymusic.com).

**Aug. 20 (Wed.):** Board Meeting, 6:00, *Club Meeting*, 7:30. Ships to Reefs - Sites and info about sinking naval vessels for reef habitats. Call Clark (415-456-5628).

**Sept. 13 (Sat.):** *Cypress Sea boat dive* (3 Dives), Monterey. Call Pierre at SF Reef Divers (415-285-6293).

**Sept. 17 (Wed.):** Board Meeting, 6:00, *Club Meeting*, 7:30. Program TBA. Call Elliott (415-461-6644).

**Oct. 3-5 (Fri.-Sun):** *Fall abalone campout*, Van Damme State Park, Mendocino. Call Jane (415) 332-6196.

**Oct. 11 (Sat.):** *Cypress Sea boat dive* (3 Dives), Monterey. Call Pierre at SF Reef Divers (415-285-6293).

**Oct. 15 (Wed.):** Board Meeting, 6:00, *Club Meeting*, 7:30. California Wreck Divers, Lost Ships off our Coast. Call Elliott (415-461-6644).

**Nov. 8 (Sat.):** *Cypress Sea boat dive* (3 Dives), Monterey. Call Pierre at SF Reef Divers (415-285-6293).

**Nov. 19 (Wed.):** Board Meeting, 6:00, *Club Meeting*, 7:30. Santa Cruz artist Bryant Austin's life size whale images. Call Elliott (415-461-6644).

**Dec. 13 (Sat.):** *Holiday Party* at Mike and Sharon Royce's home. More details to follow.

**Dec. 13 (Sat.):** *Cypress Sea boat dive* (3 Dives), Monterey. Call Pierre at SF Reef Divers (415-285-6293).



**We need articles, recipes, short notes, pictures, SCUBA funnies or whatever for future newsletters and for our website.**

Website: E-mail photos with a caption and/or article and photo credits to John Brenneis ([webmeister@marinscuba.org](mailto:webmeister@marinscuba.org)). If you do not have a scanner, mail photos along with captions and photo credits with a self-addressed stamped envelope if you want the photos back. John's address is PO Box 3299, San Rafael, CA 94912.

Newsletter: Deadline is usually the first Wednesday of the month - two weeks before the meeting.

Send materials for future articles in one of the following ways. Note that these are listed in priority order.

1. E-mail text to Larry at [click@dipsymusic.com](mailto:click@dipsymusic.com). It's best to just send the material in the body of the e-mail and not as an attachment.
2. Send a CD to the address below. MS Word - PC format is preferred, otherwise include a note as to what the format is.
3. Fax typed manuscripts to 415-339-1361.

**Pictures and Graphics** - E-mail JPEG files to [click@dipsymusic.com](mailto:click@dipsymusic.com) or mail disks or hard copy to Larry Clinton, 29 Gate 6-1/2, Sausalito, CA 94965.

**Marin Scuba Club  
PO Box 3408  
San Rafael, CA 94912**



*Next Meeting*

**Wed., August 20**

**Program:**

**Ships to Reefs:  
sinking naval vessels  
for reef habitats**

**Happy Hour 6:00-7:00  
Socializing: 7:00  
Meeting: 7:30-9:15**

**Seafood Peddler,  
100 Yacht Club Dr.  
San Rafael  
(Look for tall boat sign  
off East Francisco)**

**MARIN SCUBA  
CLUB  
NEWSLETTER**

The Club meets the  
3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month  
(**except December**)

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**Marin Scuba Club  
Board of Directors  
[www.marinclub.org](http://www.marinclub.org)**

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