

BOTTOM TIMES

Newsletter for the Redwood Empire Divers Scuba Club
April Fools 2004

April General Meeting

April 1st at Round Table Pizzeria, 7:00 PM. We will be discussing the upcoming Fisk Mill Abalone dive, plus we will be having female oil-wrestling by California Hardbodies!

FISK MILL DIVE

This months club dive is at Fisk Mill Cove located at mile marker SON 42⁰⁸ on Highway 1. Fisk Mill Cove is a long cove starting at Stump Beach and going north for a couple of miles. The dive area commonly referred to as Fisk Mill Cove is usually limited to the north end of Fisk Mill Cove proper. This area is well protected from the prevailing north-west swells. Like the similarly protected North Fort Ross Cove, this dive site gets a lot of diving pressure and the selection of abalone reflect that fact. The fact that this site seems to be a popular location for poachers doesn't help the situation. (source: Rocky's website)

April Business Meeting

The next business meeting is on April 15, at the Redwood Café in downtown Cotati at 7:00 PM. All members are welcome. The March business meeting was attended by Jock, Gary, Paul, Charles & Dale. They talked about the new officer duties and spent some time discussing Bob's memorial plaque. Jock is checking prices on bronze plaque, still no real decision on location. Also talked about Lobster trip, Gary has all spots filled. We have 4 campsites reserved on Catalina for lobsters on opening weekend.

Memorial Weekend Campout

Charles is having his annual Memorial day camp out at Ocean Cove. Please call or email Charles, since he has to save a spot for you. Email is 1Doll@msn.com Phone number (707) 537-7056. First come gets the best spots!

ABALONE SEASON!!

As abalone season is about to open (April 1st), I strongly recommend that everyone go out and purchase an **abalone permit report card** (\$15.75), if you plan on diving for abalone. The ab card is required to be filled out immediately upon climbing back into the boat, or upon getting out of the water on the beach. The wardens are very strict about the ab regulations so please read the directions printed on the back of the card, or visit the DFG website at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/oceanfish2004.pdf>.

Two Harbors Trip

Charles has one camp site left for the Two Harbors trip. Cost is \$200.00 per camp site for 4 people for 4 days. We will be camping from Thursday September 30th to Monday October 4th. Leave and return times may vary a little. First one to pay their share of the camp site will be awarded the site. If you are two people it would cost \$100.00 and you would share a site with two others. So Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! and pay me the money.

Coming Next Month!

Your new club President Dale Swift (Dive Instructor) has written an great article about Nitrox, what it is and why to use it.

Editor's Corner

Here it is once again, that infamous time of year when the elusive snails are on the prowl and just looking for some unsuspecting newbie divers to attack. The aggressive and ferocious red abalone, AKA *Haliotis rufescens*, lurks in shallow water behind and underneath the various boulders, rocks and reefs of Sonoma and Mendocino Counties. Unfortunately, almost everywhere the Redwood Empire Divers like to go diving, these nasty mollusks make their home. Many a nonchalant diver has entered the ocean looking forward to an enjoyable dive, perhaps seeing some pretty fish or finding a tasty scallop, only to emerge from the water at the end of the dive haggardly, missing half their equipment, and with their wetsuit torn to shreds by the abalone's extremely sharp radula.

Personally, I have taken to spending most of my dives laying on my back at the bottom of the sea, waiting for an ab to swim by so I can shoot it with my spear gun. Just in case you are unaware, the only legal way to take an abalone is via pneumatic speargun, and they must be smaller than two and a half feet across in order to be legal. I sure wish I could spear those big ones though, as they are the ones which cause the most havoc, causing numerous divers to fear the water so much that they would gladly trade their encounter with one for a bite from the beloved *Carcharodon carcharias*, AKA "The Landlord".

And do not even think about taking your inflatable inner tube into the sea anymore, as

the abalone have become so attuned to the odor of black rings of rubber, that they will swarm all over you before you have a chance to get to the bottom. An inflatable boat is not much better, as the color red to an abalone is like waving a red flag in front of a bull. I have seen a score of snails link their feet together and charge a red zodiac inflatable with dire results. They seem to know which end has your outboard motor, and one ab will typically sacrifice itself to help the attack by attaching to the propeller in an attempt to break your shear-pin. They know that the Coast Guard can only rescue so many boats at a time, so they coordinate with other gangs of abs by releasing copious quantities of slime, which signals other snails in the area to converge for the feast of tasty human flesh.

Hopefully by now some of you have figured out that the above story may contain some embellishment, distortion, and misrepresentation of the facts. I sincerely apologize for any errors or omissions I may have made while relating the horrors of encountering a red abalone. As you can probably figure out, the numerous times I have been in proximity to these loathsome beasts has left me a quivering paranoid mess, and only extensive psychological treatment has made it possible for me to carry out a normal life. I can only give thanks to the powers of the eternal universe that abalones can't breath air, or we would be truly F#^K*D.

GENERAL MEETINGS

Start at 7:00 pm at the Stony Point Round Table Pizzeria, 2065 Occidental Road, Santa Rosa (Just west of Stony Point Road on the north side of Hwy 12)

DIVES!

Single day dives meet at 8:00 am. Alternate dives take place two weeks later at the same time and location as the first dive, but only if the scheduled dive is cancelled.

CLUB EQUIPMENT

Videos - Tom Stolzheise
Marine Radio - Jock Doss
O2 Kit - Mike Mendoza
Fish & Ab Log - Mike Mendoza
Picnic Supplies - Dave Batt
Contact these members for use of the equipment.

CLUB OFFICERS

Dale Swift - President
Jock Doss - Vice President
Keri Cline - Secretary
Charles Dollwet - Treasurer
Jed Douglas - Newsletter Editor

RED Events Calendar 2004

January

1-8 General Meeting (2nd Thursday)
1-10 Pt Lobos Dive
1-22 Business Meeting

February

2-5 General Meeting
2-7 Stillwater Cove - Bob's Memorial Plaque
Exploration Dive
2-19 Business Meeting

March

3-4 General Meeting
3-6 Fort Ross
3-13 St. Paddy's Day Party
3-18 Business Meeting

April Fools

4-1 General Meeting
4-3 Fisk Mill Cove Ab opening
4-15 Business Meeting

May

5-6 General Meeting
5-8 Arena Rock
5-20 Business Meeting
5-29 to 5-31 Charles Memorial Day campout

June

6-3 General Meeting
6-4 to 6-6 Anchor Bay Campout
6-17 Business Meeting

July

7-8 General Meeting & Potluck at Finley Park (2nd Thursday)
7-9 to 7-11 Doran Beach campout
7-22 Business Meeting

August

8-5 General Meeting
8-5 to 8-8 Van Damme Campout
8-19 Business Meeting
8-21 Shelter Cove Red Expedition
8-28 Jed & Kim's 29th anniversary party

September

9-9 General Meeting (2nd Thursday)
9-10 to 9-12 Russian Gulch Campout
23 Business Meeting
25 Rich's Flatty dive

October

10-1 to 10-4 Two Harbors adventure
10-7 General Meeting
10-9 Tomales Halibut
10-21 Business Meeting
10-23 Gary's crab dive
TBA Bamboo Reef Pumpkin Dive

November

11-4 General Meeting
11-6 Anchor bay
11-11 to 11-13 Lobster Dive on the Peace
11-18 Business Meeting

December

12-2 General Meeting
12-4 Timber Cove
12-11 Christmas Party
No Business Meeting

Redwood Empire Divers
PO Box 2971
Petaluma, CA 94953

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TO:

**SPECIAL GUEST
SPEAKER THIS
MONTH
Ex-Governor Gray Davis**

Check us out on the web!
www.redwoodempiredivers.com