



# UNDERCURRENTS

Newsletter of the Bluegrass Dive Club / [www.bluegrassdiveclub.com](http://www.bluegrassdiveclub.com)

October 2019

Volume 50, Number 10

## October Club Meeting

**Date:** **Tuesday, Oct 22**  
**Time:** 7:30-PM (business)  
Social at 7

**Location:** **Bronte Bistro**  
Lexington Green

**Program:** T/B/A

## President's Message

*By Mark Kidd*



Sorry I Missed last month meeting but Stella had a hip replacement on September 7th and I missed the great show about the trip to PNG.

Stella was released after a month and is rehabilitating as we speak.

Come to the next meeting and hear the latest about our trips to Atlanta, Bonaire, and a Honduras liveaboard. 🚩



## The Editor's Notes

*By John Geddes*



The pics for this month are from Doug and Noel from the PNG trip. The last meeting Noel brought his pics and presented a slide show with much detail of each. Great job on the photos!

Thanks to Alex for his article on the trip, made you feel like you missed going there and as always Bart has another good one. 🚩



## 2019 BGDC Officer's

Mark Kidd, President	221-7104
Kris Harn, Vice President	333-6911
Kathryn Bowers, Secretary	619-0166
Dan Miller, Treasurer	948-5133
Trip Director - Open Position	
Bart Bertello, Safety Info Dir.	502-299-3656
Alex Fassas, Webmaster	582-1600
John Geddes, Newsletter Editor	608-0682

---

## Vice President's Report

---

*By Kris Harn*



I look forward to seeing you all at our October meeting at Bronte Bistro. We will have appetizers/snacks at the meeting.

If you have information on a potential dive trip, we would love to hear from you. Please contact us or come to a meeting and let us know what kind of trip you would like to go on. 🚩



---

## From The Secretary

---

*By Kathryn Bowers*



The minutes for your Club's Regular and Board meetings are posted on our website for your review. You can find them here. 🚩

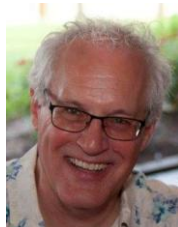
<http://fp.bluegrassdiveclub.com/Meetings.htm>

---

## Webmaster

---

*By Alex Fassas*



Well the club website is in need of updating with some more current information. My apologies, as I have been busy with travel to PNG and wedding planning for Kathryn Bowers and myself. I will get things current very soon.

Your Club Board is getting final details together for upcoming trips.

February 2020 trip to the Georgia Aquarium and the opportunity to dive with the Gentle Giants. We will have the opportunity for closed circuit rebreather, SCUBA, or snorkel experiences. Trying to put together a Crystal River Florida trip for a Manatee encounter as well.

March 2020 trip to Bonaire with Captain Don's Habitat.

July 2020 trip aboard the Aggressor IV, probably in Belize.

Look for these trips to be finalized and available for registration soon.

The Club Christmas party date has been set and it will happen on Saturday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 7:00PM at the home of Mark and Stella Kidd. Thank you to Mark and Stella for being such kind hosts to such a salty group. 🚩





---

## From the Treasurer

---

*By Dan Miller*



### 2019 Membership Dues

Student (High School or College ID) ..	\$10.00
Single & Family (1 diver) .....	30.00
Family (non divers) .....	30.00
Family (2 or more divers) .....	40.00

**Renewal:** Please send payment to the address listed below, please make sure there is a correct indication of your mailing address, phone number and it is very important to indicate an email address.

**Contact / Mail to:** Bluegrass Dive Club c/o  
Dan Miller  
824 Gunpower Drive

Lexington, KY 40509

**New Members:** Visit the website to fill out an on-line form or to access a Microsoft Word printable form. [CLICK HERE](#). 🚩

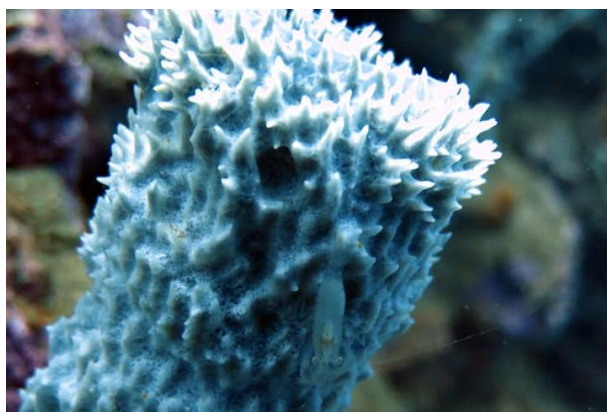


---

## PNG Trip Report

---

Eight club members have returned from the September 4-12 trip to Papua New Guinea. Six of us continued on to the trip extension to the Goroka Highlands Cultural Festival from September 12-16<sup>th</sup>. Three of us were new club members, Gayle Anderton from Adelaide, South Australia, Christie Davis from Astoria, Oregon, and David Megronigle from Louisville & Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Our trip was arranged by Christopher Bartlett of Indigo Safaris and Best of PNG.



We settled in for a week of diving at the Rapopo Plantation Resort near Kokopo in East New Britain, PNG. The food and beverage were tasty and plentiful. The Thai chef had several daily specials to choose from. We enjoyed local lobster served at least three different ways. The local beer was SP from South Pacific Brewing. The other SP beer offering was Export, a more malt driven brew. The Rabaul-Kokopo Dive operation is located just steps away from the dining and bar area. Gavin, the Australian owner, was supported by a great team of local PNG dive masters. Our group of eight had the sole large dive boat to ourselves for the first eight of the eleven dives that week. The boat would handle 12 divers maximum and had double platforms on the stern for giant stride entry. There was a short dinghy ride from the beach out to the boat mooring about 100 yards away. Our gear was handled by the crew during the week; so as long as we could get

---

## PNG Trip Report Cont.

---

our well-fed selves into the dinghy, for the transfer from resort beach to the boat, there were no issues.

The view from the resort across the bay to Mt. Tarvuvur volcano was stellar. The aqua color of the water with the vision of coral heads below did not disappoint. The August winds did not get the memo and had not abated as they should have by September, which led to a bit of chop on the water on some days. The 11 dives were evenly split between WW II wrecks, most of which were between 90 to 140 feet deep, and beautiful coral gardens and walls. Honestly, we did not see another dive boat or operator than ours the entire week. This part of East New Britain is not widely commercialized for diving like some other parts of PNG. The harbor in Rabaul was a base for the Japanese fleet during WW II and many wrecks are there. Not all wrecks have been found, marked and explored. There was an intact Japanese Zero airplane at about 80 feet that was a treat to visit. I will let the pictures do the talking for more description. The undersea fish and animal life was healthy and a welcome surprise for this Caribbean diver, as this was my first diving in the Pacific influenced waters.



On our last day at Rapopo, we enjoyed a full day tour of WW II historical sites, a local market, the hot springs at the base of Mt.

Tarvuvur, and a challenging trek up the 900 foot elevation to the rim of the still active volcano. Our local guides made sure that we made it, even if they did actually haul us up at times.

Six of our lot continued on to the Goroka Highlands, where we stayed at the Phoenix Hotel, one of the premier hotels for the area, and apparently the top restaurant for the city, The Steakhaus. When the local police and military officers are eating there and special events are held there you can be sure of it. Goroka sits in the valley at 5,000 feet above sea level with mountain peaks in all directions.



Our first morning in Goroka we traveled to the village of the Asaro tribe and the Asaro Mudmen. Our tour guide, Martin Kupos, who with his family lives in the Asaro village among his people, was very knowledgeable and well spoken. We were treated to 7 stories during



---

## PNG Trip Report Cont.

---

the morning and afternoon, which were acted out in dance and native theater to explain the cultural ways, meaning, and beliefs of the Asaro people. In the morning we watched as our lunch meal of soon to be roasted pig, yams, sweet potatoes, taro, greens were being prepared for the mumu or earthen oven. The lunch was a feast. A demonstration of the making of the Asaro Mudmen masks was given. The Asaro Mudmen donned the masks and white clay body paint in order to create a fearsome image to other tribes and keep their village protected. The indigenous people's beliefs and fears in various spirits were fed upon, when they would encounter the Asaro Mudmen, the invaders would flee.

Our instructions were to get an early start the next day and the hotel shuttle delivered us to the parade grounds by 9:00AM, where our VIP passes gained us entrance. As VIP guests we were afforded to be on the field with the tribes as they made their entrance in their native costume, dance, and song. Over 100 individual tribes would enter each morning. This festival is held each year in conjunction with the celebration of PNG's independence from Australia, which occurred in 1975.

The festival is a once a year gathering of tribes from all regions of PNG to celebrate and keep alive their individual heritage through native costume, dance, and song. By mid-morning, the cacophony of so many tribes in one area all singing and dancing was almost overwhelming. Really quite the experience. I felt like I was in the middle of a National Geographic television special. 🚩



---

## Safety Information Director

---

By Bart Bertello



### **I Learned About Diving Safety From That**

*My mission is to provide you relevant safety information for your use. Each article will focus on a specific safety risk. I will draw from my experience, hopefully yours, and the dive community to highlight real risks that we must be aware of. So, if you see or hear of something that we could all learn from, please pass it to me. There is nothing like first-hand experience to drive a point home.*

Thanks to BGDC member Dan Miller for suggesting the subject of this article. We all know and have all felt panic at some point in our lives. It is a very natural survival response. Scuba diving on the other hand is a very unnatural activity. As a result, panic while diving is life threatening. Don't let it happen to you! Here is a great read on the subject of panic prevention while diving.

### **How to Deal With Panic While Scuba Diving**

By PATRICIA WUEST

Google sayings for "cool," and you'll find a plethora of results that could apply to people who strap on tanks, giant-stride off the back of the boat, and drop down into the ocean to explore its wonders: cool customer, cool as a cucumber, and cool, calm and collected. But when a diver panics underwater, you can throw those sayings — and the diver's even-keeled demeanor — overboard.

You may have seen at least one case of panic in a dive buddy — a wide-eyed look, a desperate tug to get your attention, a rapid ascent. And if we're being honest, most of us have personally experienced at least a

---

## Safety Director Cont.

---

momentary bout of anxiety. But if you feel panic rising, it's important to keep small things from snowballing into an out-of-control disaster.

"Recognizing the warning signs is the best method to proactively defuse a panic situation," says Kell Levendorf, dive accident investigator for Dive & Marine Consultants International in Florida. If you notice a buddy panicking, "you must be prepared and practiced to control the fight-or-flight mentality by securing the regulator, controlling buoyancy, and safely aborting the dive," Levendorf says.

And if you are being overwhelmed by panic, "the best thing to do is stop what you are doing, take a deep breath, and start to think about what it is you are dealing with," says Liz Parkinson, an instructor with Stuart Cove's Dive Bahamas.

Sometimes this is easier said than done, and as David F. Colvard, M.D., and Lynn Y. Colvard, Ph.D., reported in "A Study of Panic in Recreational Scuba Divers," there are important distinctions to be made in understanding panic.



**Recognizing the warning signs is the best method to proactively defuse a panic situation**

## Losing One's Cool

The causes of panic underwater vary from divers struggling with equipment problems and task overloading to strong currents and dangerous marine life. Throw in things like poor fitness, peer pressure and fear of the unknown, and you've got the recipe for potential disaster.

In 2000, David Colvard and Lynn Y. Colvard, with support from Sport Diver's sister magazine Scuba Diving, undertook a multiyear study of thousands of divers to examine the incidence of panic while diving and the reasons why divers panic.



"We were impressed with how eager divers and instructors were to talk about their panic dive experience and how much they wanted to help us understand what had happened to them," says David Colvard. Overall, 37 percent of female recreational scuba divers reported a panic experience during a dive, while only 24 percent of male divers reported one.

"We categorized the divers into two groups: those with a history of panic prior to diving and those with no history prior to diving.



---

## Safety Director Cont.

---

We subdivided them into those who had a panic on a dive, and those who had not," says Colvard. "Age, years diving, certification level and lifetime number of dives were similar for each group."

The Colvards found that male divers with a prediving history of panic were 1.9 to 2.7 times as likely to panic than those without a prior history; females were 1.4 to 2 times as likely to panic than those without a prior history.

### Why It Happens

Panic is a sudden, uncontrollable surge of overwhelming anxiety and fear, often accompanied by wildly irrational thinking and behavior. "It's something that even a seasoned diver can experience," says Parkinson. "Many factors can lead to panic — misplaced equipment, rough weather conditions, diving in a new location, losing your buddy underwater."

The Colvards had to first define what they meant by "panic" before conducting their study. "Because panic can be an imprecise or vague term used in a casual sense, the survey defined a panic experience as 'an intense fear of losing control or dying,'" says David Colvard. "Consistent with a panic attack as defined by the APA, the essential feature of a panic attack is a discrete period of intense fear or discomfort that is accompanied by at least four of 13 somatic or cognitive symptoms ... often accompanied by a sense of imminent danger or impending doom and an urge to escape ... or desire to flee from wherever the attack is occurring."



### How is panic defined? Understand the major warning signs

In other words, part of what the Colvards wanted to know is whether the diver made a rapid ascent or another dangerous action in response to feeling panicked.



"Most divers who panicked during a dive reported they remembered their training in how to deal with panic, and used that training," says David Colvard. "Eighty-five percent of those who panicked while diving did not make a rapid or uncontrolled ascent. Even among the 15 percent who made a rapid or uncontrolled ascent, only 5 percent of males and 4 percent of females reported suffering from symptoms of decompression illness." That's the good news. But the reality is that it's a scary feeling to be panicked or to try to help a buddy who is panicking underwater. So how do you deal with it?

### Scared Stiff

"Divers who panic sometimes breathe too fast and hard, and may bolt to the surface or forget basic and easy lifesaving techniques that they learned in their Open Water Diver course," says Jo Mikutowicz, managing partner of Divetech on Grand Cayman. Parkinson underscores Mikutowicz's message: "You have the training, so use it."

Colvard recommends that instructors teach diaphragmatic or belly breathing. According to the University of Texas Counseling and Mental Health Center, "Diaphragmatic breathing allows one to take normal breaths

---

## Safety Director Cont.

---

while maximizing the amount of oxygen that goes into the bloodstream. It is a way of interrupting the fight-or-flight response and triggering the body's normal relaxation response." Says Colvard, "This way, you can make sure students and divers are calm and relaxed before getting into the water."

Levendorf says that instructors are trained to recognize when a student is about to panic. "We recognize the deer-in-the-headlights look mere seconds before the novice diver spits out the regulator and bolts," he says.

"With coaching, this can usually be resolved before they dive in open water." But Levendorf says when panic happens in open water, "it's a far more serious circumstance — the ultimate dive wrecker — and great care must be taken to protect both the diver and the instructor when trying to arrest a headlong flight to the surface."



**Divers who panic sometimes breathe too fast and hard, and may bolt to the surface or forget basic and easy lifesaving techniques that they learned in their Open Water Diver course.**

### Pro Tips

If you have a history of panic disorder, you shouldn't dive until the disorder has been treated and is under good control. "Likewise, claustrophobia or agoraphobia is a

contraindication to diving," says Colvard. "I once helped an instructor with an open water checkout dive student who had struggled in the pool. We dived, but she did not complete the checkout dives. On the surface she told me that she had taken up scuba to deal with her claustrophobia. I told her she was doing it backward." But if your stress is not related to a disorder, what can you do when you feel anxiety building?



**"Stay current with your diving,"** says Mikutowicz. "If it has been longer than a year, take a refresher before your next big diving adventure to get familiar with being underwater again, as well as how to properly use all of your equipment."

**"When you feel panic arising, concentrate on problem-solving techniques, relax yourself, regain your composure,"** says Parkinson. "And if you are able to communicate with someone, do so."





## Safety Director Cont.

Karl Shreeves, technical development executive with PADI, adds extra emphasis to the **importance of buddy diving**. "The problem with panic is that once it sets in, it usually requires intervention," says Shreeves. "People rarely calm down and stop panicking on their own. This means a buddy or someone has to intervene, but only if you can do so without getting into trouble yourself, which would only make things worse for you and the diver."



Instructors also teach this mantra: **Stop — Breathe — Think — Act**. Stop swimming for a moment. Slow down your breathing and take deep, even breaths from your diaphragm. Remember your training — such as what to do in an out-of-air emergency — and then act. 🚩

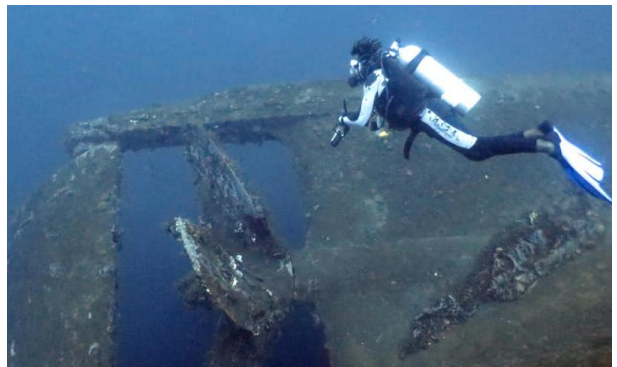


## Bluegrass Dive Club 2019 Calendar



### October

8, Tuesday Board Meeting  
22, Tuesday **Dive Club Meeting**



### November

12, Tuesday Board Meeting  
26, Tuesday **Dive Club Meeting**



### December

14, Saturday Club Christmas Party