



# UNDERCURRENTS

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

DECEMBER 2025

Volume 55, Number 10

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## Club's Christmas Party

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**Date:** Saturday, December 20th

**Time:** 6:00 pm

**Location:** 602 Apricot Dr, Richmond, Ky

**Program:** Eat, Drink and be Merry

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## President's Message

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*By Kathryn Bowers*



Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday Season everyone!

I hope everyone is healthy, Happy and finding ways to enjoy the holiday season with all it's excitement and bustle without becoming overwhelmed. Try not to let all the planning and festivities steal your joy. If you need to, take a moment for yourself. Close your eyes and take 10 slow breaths, I can tell you that, or a short video of a beautiful coral reef works wonders to "make the world go away". I recently found the relaxation channel on YouTube; I highly recommend it, the Red Sea reef really made me feel more chill. That

being said, I hope everyone can find time to join Alex and me at our home at 602 Apricot Dr, in Richmond, for the annual Dive Club Christmas party! Hope to see everyone, bring a dish to share and if you want an adult beverage of your choice. Please join us 6:00 – 8:30

I'm feeling very positive about the way we are closing out 2025! We sponsored trips to The Fort Young Hotel Dominica, Compass Point Grand, Little Cayman Beach Resort Little Cayman, and Iberostar Waves Cozumel, Cozumel Mexico. I think that was quite an accomplishment for our trip planners and set a great precedent and goal for our new trip planning committee! Along the way we have continued to grow our membership. I'm finally starting to feel like we have turned the corner from the dark, dry days of the pandemic. I have to tell you it was rough for a while there so THANK YOU to everyone who has served on the board and was instrumental in keeping things going over the months and months of Zoom meetings and no travel or diving. I know it wasn't easy staying motivated and enthusiastic. This is the perfect place to bid farewell to our outgoing board members, John Geddes, Kris Harn, Natasha Bowers, and Amy Hiatt. Thank you, thank you. We couldn't have kept the club going without you.

I want to welcome our new board members, Butch Mellot, David Carr, Priscilla Mellott, Bill "Doc" McGrady, and Scott Newby. I know you guys are all going to be great assets to the club.

In case you didn't see it earlier Your new officers for 2026 are:

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## President's Message Cont.

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President: Kathryn Bowers  
VP: Butch Mellot  
Secretary: David Carr  
Treasurer: Dan Miller  
Trip Director: Priscilla Mellott  
Safety: Bill "Doc" McGrady  
Newsletter: Scott Newby  
Webmaster: Alex Fassas

I'm supper bummed the Bonaire trip fell through, but I can tell you it wasn't for lack of trying on anyone's part (other than maybe the resorts). I still want to go back to Bonaire. Perhaps Caribbean Dive Tours can suggest someone they have worked with before. Stay tuned for future developments. We are also always soliciting ideas for destinations people wish to visit so keep dreaming of oceans you want to explore! 🚩

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## The Editor's Notes

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*By John Geddes*



The pics for this month are from Roatan, the first, third and fourth are the plane the Club was on when it crashed in Roatan in 1990. The others are of the Prince Albert.

Well it's been a long dive and I think its about time to come for air.

Serving as your Newsletter Editor for 23 years plus also as the President during the pandemic, that was a trip of its own. I sure have enjoy all the trips and Friend along the way.

I have a sand collects and it hang in my office where I walk past it everyday and always have a memory or two. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Bubbles next Year. 🚩

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## Vice President Report

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*By Kris Harn*



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Thank you for letting me be your Vice President! 🚩

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## Trip Director Report

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*By Natasha Bowers*



I know this news will be disappointing, but unfortunately the much anticipated Bonaire trip has been cancelled. Despite Alex and Dan working tirelessly with the resort the trip planning was not coming together and the Board made the decision to scrap the trip. To be transparent they delivered us inaccurate quotes multiples times and then wanted to charge our club more than the going rate you could find on their website. The communication break down, the short time until the trip, and the pricing factored into the Boards decision. However, rest assured we have heard the interest in Bonaire and will try to get a trip planned in the near future so stay tuned!

Don't forget there are still cabins available for the Turks and Caicos Liveaboard in August. This will be my first Liveaboard trip and I can't wait. I have the strong urge to submerge. As many of you know I have recently moved to Missouri to start my career as a nurse practitioner and frankly it's kicking my butt. So drowning out the world and listening to nothing but bubbles sounds like a dream. General reminder, if you have a place you want to go or a specific week you want to travel you General reminder, if you have a

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## Trip Director Report Cont.

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place you want to go or a specific week you want to travel you can submit a recommendation for a future trip through the club website. Someone has to pick the location and travel window so it might as well be you. I have enjoyed my time as trip director and appreciate all the help I've had in this position. I am excited to help train in my successor and contribute to future fabulous trips in other capacities.

Merry Christmas! 🚩



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## Secretary's Report

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*By Amy Hiatt*



### Board Meeting Highlights

The November regular meeting centered on board transitions, financial updates, dive trip planning, and preparations for year-end events. Members reviewed October's minutes, discussed the upcoming officer handoff in January, evaluated trip pricing for Bonaire, and confirmed 2026 membership dues. The meeting also included recognition of board members for their continued service—particularly through the pandemic—and shared highlights from recent dive travel, including Roatan and St. Vincent. Meeting Su

### Board Transitions & Officer Updates

The club acknowledged upcoming leadership changes, with Amy and Natasha completing

their board terms after the next meeting. The board reviewed October's minutes—covering nominations, trip updates, and financials—which were unanimously approved. Alex recognized John and Kris for their leadership and communication efforts during the pandemic and throughout the club's hybrid transition.

### Financial Review & Membership System Updates

Dan provided financial updates, including new memberships, dues payments, and ongoing trip administration for Cozumel. Alex announced continued work with Dan on implementing the new membership database, which will automate renewal reminders and streamline dues collection. The club confirmed that 2026 dues will remain unchanged at \$20 for renewing members and \$10 for new members.

### Dive Trip Updates & Cancellations

The club discussed several dive travel items. The Bonaire trip proposal was unanimously cancelled due to pricing discrepancies and higher-than-expected costs. Updated calculations showed direct booking rates were significantly cheaper than the wholesaler's quoted group rate. Turks & Caicos (August 2026) remains active with four members registered and additional staterooms available. Members also shared highlights and media from recent trips, including Roatan and St. Vincent.



### Health & Safety Updates

Alex provided an update on Bart's ongoing chemotherapy and immunotherapy treatment.

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## Secretary's Report Cont.

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The group reiterated support and well-wishes. The meeting also included a safety discussion centered on managing panic underwater and the importance of calm decision-making during equipment issues.

### 2026 Budget & Upcoming Events

The board scheduled the 2026 budget planning session for January 6th, involving both outgoing and incoming officers. Additional discussions included Christmas Party planning for December 20th, newsletter deadlines, and coordination for transitioning newsletter duties between Kris and John. 🚩

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## From the Treasurer

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*By Dan Miller*



Student with ID, New Diver, First Year **\$10.00**

**2026 Membership Renewal** **\$20.00**

- Student with ID
- Single & Family (1 diver)
- Family (non divers)
- Family (2 or more divers)

**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](#). 🚩

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## Webmaster

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*By Alex Fassas*



[Tales from the Watery Web](#)

*... and Visions of Sugar Plums Danced In Their Heads*

Now that it has reached the appropriate time on the calendar, IMHO, when Christmas decorations, music, and holiday gatherings should commence; it is time to consider your and your families and friends Christmas lists. Is there a special piece of diving equipment you would like to find under the tree? Or perhaps plans for that watery get away, just to combat the chill of winter. Make sure to let your loved ones know in plenty of time to make your wishes come true. Or give them a little bit of extra help and just order it and then let them give it to you.

*Disappointed When A Plan Does Not Come Together*

My apologies to my fellow dive club members for the premature announcement of the March 2026 trip to Bonaire. The trip that we subsequently cancelled due to the ever-changing pricing and package description. And Kathryn and I really wanted to go on this trip too.



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## Webmaster Cont.

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Such are the bumps in the road with the confluence of suggesting a destination that was new to both the club and to our new travel wholesale company. With the well-deserved retirement of Ken and Laura Scarbrough and the closing of their Ultimate Dive Travel company, we accepted and contacted their recommended travel agency, Caribbean Dive Tours of Morgan City, Louisiana. CDT worked with us since 9/27/2025 to get the Bonaire trip arranged and booked. It was a long two months of trying to get the resort and dive center to quote, reserve, and get us a contract; only to be blind-sided with pricing that was much higher than we had previously understood.

We still feel confident that Caribbean Dive Tours will be able to help us get some trips put together. We have now asked them to recommend some trip destination and packages and are waiting for their response.

### *Excited For The 2026 Club Leadership*

I am excited about what the club's new 2026 leadership team will be able to bring forth. I am looking forward to even more engaging club meetings, programs, social events, articles, and of course dive travel. This new team will be looking to input from the club's membership for help in what good things are coming.

### *Do you have news or a program to share?*

Your dive club has a fabulous email list with which to share news and information that would be of interest to its members and friends. If you have something to share forward it along to [webmaster@bluegrassdiveclub.com](mailto:webmaster@bluegrassdiveclub.com). If you have a topic or program that would be a good presentation at an upcoming membership meeting, let the club President, Kathryn Bowers know at [president@bluegrassdiveclub.com](mailto:president@bluegrassdiveclub.com).

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!

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## Safety Information Director

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*By Bart Bertetto*



### **I Got a Taste of Diving Safety from This SAFETY BITE**

#### *Ice Diving*

By Michael A. Lang, D. Philric Douglas

Over the last 50 years, polar diving has yielded a wealth of scientific information and proven to be an indispensable sampling and observational technique. Despite technological advances, exclusively mechanical or remote methods cannot replace divers in the water under the ice. Ice diving is both politically and scientifically interesting and has received international research funding in the fields of medicine,

physiology, fisheries and ecology. Basic climate-change research focuses on polar regions because of their global importance.

#### **Preparation**

Dedicated ice-diving equipment and specialized training of divers, dive supervisors and medical personnel must feature prominently in the operational logistics of ice diving. Traditional models of dive planning do not transfer well to extreme-environment diving; the margins of error are much narrower. Treating ice-diving operations as remote-environment activities and taking extra steps to prepare for managing decompression illness increase the probability of successful diving missions. Gas-management and

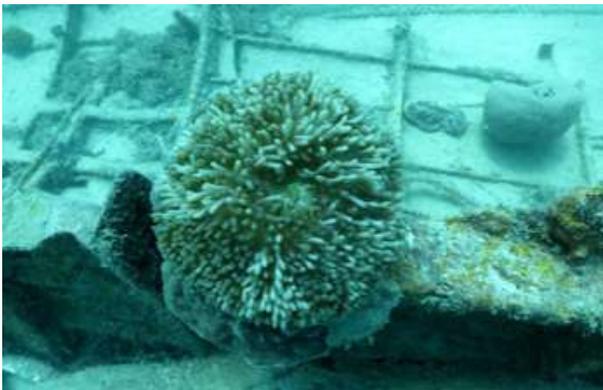
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## Safety Corner Cont.

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emergency-response planning in extreme-environment diving require special consideration — not unlike that required in cave, rebreather or wreck diving.

Diving under polar ice is an obvious example of extreme-environment diving because of the many physiological, equipment-related and training parameters that affect divers. Regulator performance and thermal protection are two principal concerns. In Polar Regions there is a chance that first- or second-stage scuba regulators will malfunction due to the accumulation of ice in or around the regulator, resulting in complete occlusion of air flow or a massive free-flow that could rapidly expend a diver's air supply. Factors that influence the likelihood of regulator freeze-up are design and configuration (determined by the manufacturer), quality control (unique to the individual regulator), depth (due to increased gas density), mass flow (a product of depth and respiratory volume), water intrusion, time and temperature. Most free-flow problems occur in second stages, which means careful pre-dive management is essential. Regulators must be kept warm and absolutely devoid of any residual fresh water. Not breathing from the second stage prior to immersion prevents moisture from a diver's breath from crystallizing on the low-pressure seat, which is a trigger for further ice accumulation and free-flow.



Minimum ice-diving qualification criteria that have proven effective in scientific diving include at least a year as a certified diver, 50 logged open-water dives, 15 logged drysuit

dives and 10 logged drysuit dives in the preceding six months. Unpacking a new drysuit for the first time on a liveaboard vessel is not considered good preparation; ice divers must become proficient with the gear and techniques that will be used prior to their deployment on ice-diving expeditions.



### Equipment

Divers should be equipped with two fully independent regulators attached to an adequate gas supply whenever they dive under a ceiling. Proper use and pre- and

postdive care substantially improve the reliability of regulators. A large volume of air exhausted rapidly through a regulator will almost certainly cause a free-flow. Drysuit inflator hoses are also subject to free-flows and are attached to backup regulators in case the air supply to the primary regulator must be turned off to stem the loss of air. When inflating a drysuit or a BCD, use frequent short bursts of air. The primary cause of regulator free-flow is entry of water into the mechanism and the water freezing once the regulator is used. Fresh water in a regulator from rinsing or melting snow may freeze as soon as the regulator is submerged in seawater or when it is exposed to extremely cold air temperatures. If multiple dives are planned, postpone freshwater rinsing of the regulator until all the day's dives are completed.

Drysuit fabric (vulcanized rubber, crushed neoprene or trilaminate) depends on the diver's

preference, the requirements for range and ease of motion and the available options. The choice of drysuit underwear is perhaps more

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## Safety Corner Cont.

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important than the choice of drysuit material because it is the underwear that provides most of the thermal protection. Many divers wear an under layer of expedition-weight polypropylene and an outer layer of 400g Thinsulate®.

Drygloves or mitts with inner liners (rather than wetgloves) are most commonly used with drysuits. Diving Unlimited International (DUI) zipseal drygloves see widespread use since they effectively permit the warm air that surrounds the rest of the body to also reach the hands at depth. Two disadvantages of dryglove systems are the complete lack of thermal protection if the gloves flood or are punctured and the related risk of flooding the entire drysuit.

Because a drysuit must be inflated to prevent suit squeeze with increasing pressure, it is most efficient to regulate buoyancy at depth by controlling the amount of air in the drysuit, which must be equipped with a hands-free exhaust valve. BCDs are considered emergency equipment to be used only in the event of catastrophic drysuit failure. This procedure eliminates the need to vent two air sources during ascent, reduces the chance of BCD-inflator free flow and simplifies the maintenance of neutral buoyancy during the dive. The main purpose of air in a drysuit, of course, is to provide thermal insulation.

Divers must wear sufficient weight to allow for maintenance of neutral buoyancy with a certain amount of air in the drysuit. Runaway negative buoyancy is as great a safety problem as an out-of-control ascent. Because of the amount of weight commonly worn (30 to 40 pounds) and the serious consequences of accidental release, weight harnesses are favored over weight belts.

### Hazards and emergencies

Extreme underwater visibility may make objects appear closer than they are; this illusion could entice divers to travel farther from the access hole than is prudent. The greatest hazard associated with fast-ice diving

is the potential loss of the dive hole. Access holes, leads and cracks in the ice are often highly visible from below because daylight streams through them. However, dive holes may be difficult to see due to low light or from the holes being covered with portable shelters. Therefore, a well-marked down line is required for fast-ice dives. Divers should maintain positive visual contact with the down line during the dive and take frequent note of their position relative to the access hole or lead. Problems requiring an emergency ascent are serious, since a vertical ascent to the surface is impossible except when a diver is directly under the dive hole or lead.



Pack ice is inherently unstable and its conditions can change rapidly, primarily from surface wind conditions. An offshore wind may blow pack ice away from the shoreline and loosen the pack, whereas an onshore wind may move significant quantities of pack ice against shorelines or fast-ice edges, obstructing what may have been clear access areas when divers entered the water.

As with diving in general, the best approach to ice-diving emergencies is prevention. Divers must halt operations any time they become unduly stressed because of cold, fatigue, unease or any other physiological reason. Similarly, terminate the dive in the event of equipment difficulties such as free-flowing regulators, tether-system entanglements, leaking drysuits or buoyancy problems.

To clearly mark access holes, divers deploy well-marked down lines, establish recognizable landmarks (such as specific ice formations) under the hole at the outset of

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## Safety Director Cont.

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dives, leave a strobe light, flag or other highly visible object on the bottom just below the hole or shovel surface snow off the ice in a radiating spoke pattern that points the way to the dive hole.

### Physiological considerations

Cold is the overriding limiting factor for dive operations, especially with regard to the thermal protection and dexterity of hands. Dives should be terminated before a diver's hands become too cold to effectively operate gear or grasp a down line. This loss of dexterity can occur quickly (within 5 to 10 minutes if hands are not adequately protected). Holding onto a camera will increase the rate at which a hand becomes cold. Switching the housing from hand to hand or attaching it to the down line may allow hands to rewarm. DUI dryglove systems have greatly improved thermal protection of divers' hands.

Heat loss occurs through inadequate insulation, exposed areas (such as the head in an insufficient hood arrangement) and from breathing cold air. Scuba-cylinder air is initially at ambient temperature and chills from expansion as it passes through the regulator. Air consumption increases as the diver cools, resulting in additional cooling with increased ventilation. Significant chilling also occurs during safety stops when diver's movement is reduced. Polar diving requires significant insulation, which results in decreased mobility and increased potential for buoyancy problems — two challenges ice divers must address.

Besides the dehydrating effect of breathing dry air on a dive, Antarctica and the Arctic are extremely low-humidity environments (polar deserts) in which dehydration can be rapid and insidious. Continuous attention to hydration is required; urine should be clear and copious.

Diving at the Earth's polar regions does not necessarily mean diving directly beneath the poles. At the South Pole you would find that

after drilling down through more than a mile and a half of vertical ice, you would hit bedrock and still be hundreds of horizontal miles away from open ocean. If you delayed your North Pole trip for a few years, drilling through sea ice might not be required at all in the summer, given the observed reduction of up to 75 percent of Arctic sea-ice volume over the last 30 years. And it would be a long distance to travel for an open-water dive with a bottom depth of nearly 14,000 feet 🚩

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## 2025 BGDC Officer's

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|                                 |              |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Kathryn Bowers, President       | 859 619-0166 |
| Kris Harn, Vice President       | 859 333-6911 |
| Amy Hiett, Secretary            | 303 815-8375 |
| Dan Miller, Treasurer           | 859 948-5133 |
| Natasha Bowers, Trip Director   | 651 786-9574 |
| Bart Bertetto, Safety Info Dir. | 502 299-3656 |
| Alex Fassas, Webmaster          | 859 582-1600 |
| John Geddes, Newsletter         | 859 608-0682 |

## Bluegrass Dive Club 2025 Calendar

### December

20, **Saturday** Christmas Party



# Bluegrass Dive Club 2026 Calendar

## January

13, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
27, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

## February

10, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
24, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

## March

10, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
24, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

## April

7, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
21, Tuesday E.C. Meeting



## May

2, Saturday Club's Derby Party  
12, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
26, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

## June

9, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
23, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

## July

7, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
21, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

## August

11, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
??, Saturday Club Pig Roast  
25, Tuesday E.C. Meeting



## September

8, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
22, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

## October

14, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
28, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

## November

11, Tuesday Club Meeting (Elections)  
25, Tuesday E.C. Meeting

## December

??, Saturday Christmas Party

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| Alex Fassas, Webmaster           | 859 582-1600 |
| Scott Newby, Newsletter          |              |