UNDERCURRENTS

Newsletter of the Bluegrass Dive Club / www.bluegrassdiveclub.com

May 2026 Volume 56, Number 05

Quick Calendar

Meeting: Thursday May 14
Time: 7:30
Place: Roosters on Richmond Rd

President's Message

By Kathryn Bowers

This has been a curious year. I'm not sure if I'm completely geared up for living back-and-forth between Kentucky and Florida. Maybe I would be if they both weren't having such strange weather years. I feel like I have been through three years worth of seasons! Between record-breaking cold snaps in Florida followed by unusually warm weather, and then another cold swap. We came back to Kentucky to unseasonably warm weather and then a really late cold Snap so I'm never quite adjusted to what the temperature is. I have enjoyed my long spring in the garden but I'm sorry I pushed Alex to get the pool open early.

I won't be doing another fish profile this month, maybe next. We have been very busy with some family matters and I'm just having a hard time getting my thoughts to coalesce. I'm very excited about some trips Priscilla and Lavon have been working on.
I really enjoyed the Derby party at Sherry's. If you missed it you missed out! Mark your calendar for next year.

I look forward to seeing everyone at Roosters.

The Editor's Notes

By Scott Newby

What a great Derby Party! Thanks to all that were there and A HUGE thank you to Sherry for hosting all of us. Unfortunately. Angie and I did not win any of the pools, not even the dead last one. We did have a big winner though:

Here is Carol Rushing-Carr receiving her winnings from John Geddes. Congratulations to Carol and the other winners!

With all the trips being planned, I thought I'd include the DAN travel checklist I use. I feel that it has saved me from leaving something important behind many times.

Dive Travel Packing Checklist - Divers Alert Network

Have a great month!

Vice President Report

By Butch Mellott

Hope all is going well and you are signed up for one of the club trips!

There are numerous trips scheduled and more being planned, join in and have fun.

This month I am attaching an article from DAN. as a DAN instructor I will pass on articles and DAN news as available.

Stay safe and dive often.

DAN at the ONR Undersea Medicine & NAVSEA Program Review

April 6, 2026

The DAN Research Department recently attended the 2026 Office of Naval Research (ONR) Undersea Medicine and Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) Deep Submergence Biomedical Development Program Review, hosted by Dr. Sandra Chapman and Capt. Joy Dierks in Washington, D.C..

The three-day program review featured 60 presentations from researchers, physicians, and military personnel. Key topics included atmospheric dive suits, dive support technologies, gas physiology, environmental protection, decompression sickness (DCS), disabled submarine (DISSUB) response, diving

technologies, oxygen toxicity, on-demand oxygen (GILS), and human performance.

The review highlighted collaborations across institutions, fields, and disciplines — a testament to the interdisciplinary nature of the undersea medicine and performance sector. DAN Research currently maintains four active contracts and collaborations with ONR. Additionally, a partnership between Geraldine Leman, PhD, of the Universite de Brest and Emmanuel Dugrenot, PhD, of DAN was recently awarded a project to examine the genetic basis of DCS protection.

The program review also showcased the number of individuals whose work is partially funded by or conducted in collaboration with DAN. This reinforces the shared goals of DAN, ONR, and NAVSEA to foster innovation, growth, and progress in diving safety and advancement.

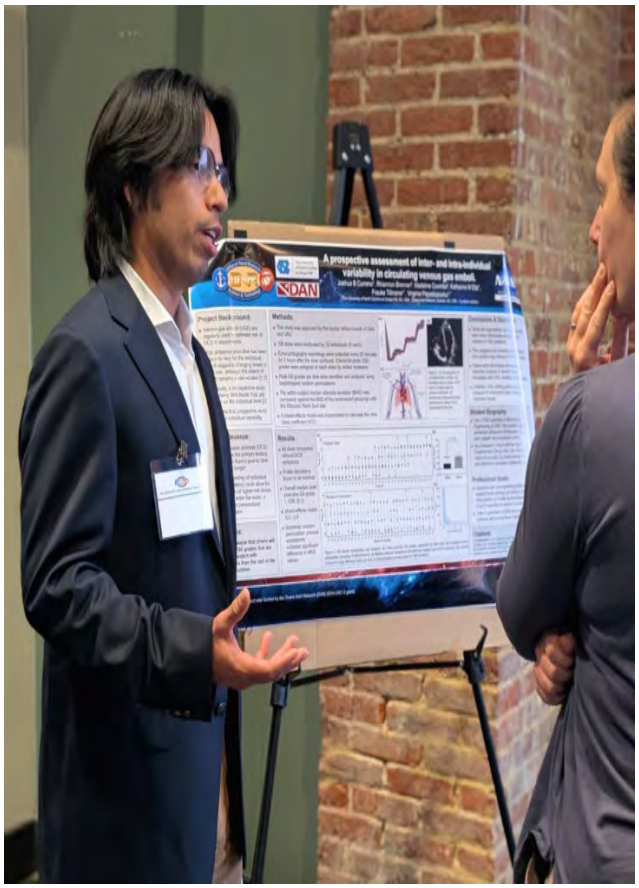
STEM INITIATIVES IN UNDERSEA EXPLORATION

This year's program review emphasized STEM initiatives. Attendees received updates on 2051 Sea Odyssey , an initiative designed to inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers in human undersea exploration. Diving and hyperbaric medicine have grown exponentially over the last 70 years, leading to safer practices and the completion of increasingly technical dives. Bringing new talent into the field remains critical to sustained progress.

2051 Sea Odyssey takes a multipronged approach to engage younger generations and those outside of diving medicine:

- Docuseries: An eight-part docuseries providing an overview of various forms of diving and human underwater exploration.
- University Challenge: An invitation for college and university students to tackle a real-world engineering problem faced by professional divers operating in demanding underwater environments.

The 2051 Sea Odyssey project is a multi-institutional collaboration between the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Utah, DEEP, and DAN. While at ONR, the 2051 Sea Odyssey team conducted interviews and filmed behind-the-scenes content for the upcoming docuseries.



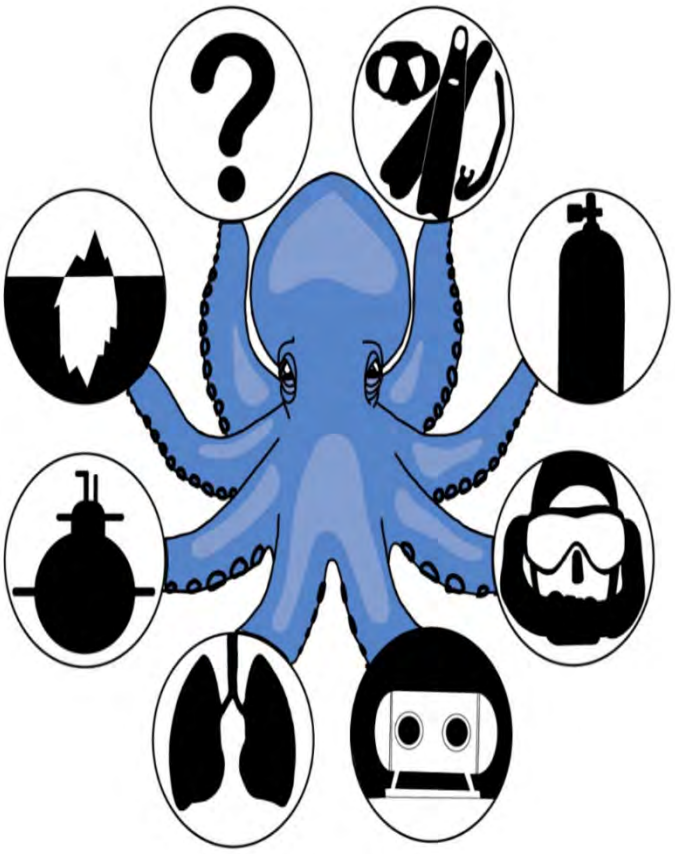
ONR also hosted its first student poster session, where seven early-career researchers presented work ranging from advances in technology and data capture to physiology and molecular research on DCS.

This furthered the goals of encouraging future collaboration and opportunity within the field and ultimately supports ONR's broader mission of advancing undersea operations and warfighter capability.

Vice President Cont.

A highlight of this year's program review was a presentation by Chris Lemons, a commercial diver and diving supervisor with more than 20 years of experience in deep-sea saturation diving. In September 2012, a catastrophic failure of his vessel's dynamic positioning system severed the umbilical supplying his light, heat, and breathing gas. With only five minutes of reserve gas remaining at a depth of approximately 100 meters, Lemons survived for 40 minutes before being recovered. He shared his extraordinary experience with attendees, focusing on themes of teamwork, safety, and leadership in unforgiving environments.

The program review underscored that the future of undersea exploration is built on a foundation of safety, innovation, and shared expertise. Through partnerships and investments in the next generation of talent, DAN Research and its partners continue to lead the way in diving science.



Trip Director Report

By Priscilla Mellott

Hi everyone!

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2026 is looking to be a busy travel year!

Cayman Brac

August 1-8 2026

The deadline to sign up for this is May 8th and full payment is due at that time.

Cozumel

October 24-31 2026

Playa Del Carmen

October 31-November 7 2026

Both trips should be posted on our website soon.

In addition, we should have more information on Pennyroyal and the Atlanta aquarium by the next club meeting.

Lastly, Fiji has been approved. The dates at June 3-10 2028. More information coming soon!

If there is somewhere you would like us to consider going in 2027 please let me know. I hope to see everyone at the club meeting.

Secretary's Report

By David Carr

Bluegrass Dive Club – General Membership Meeting Minutes

Tuesday 4/10/26.

7:00pm – 9:30pm

Board Member attendees: Kathryn Bowers, Butch Mellott, Priscilla Mellott, Scott Newby, Alex Fassas, Bill "Doc" McGrady, David Carr.

Absent: Dan Miller

Meeting Called to order by Kathryn Bowers 7:35p

Officer reports:

Secretary

-David Carr Minutes reviewed and approved Alex moved, John Boyd 2nd.

Treasurer

-Dan Miller's Financial spread sheet presented and reviewed by Alex. Bank balance 22,168.73.

-One Turks & Caicos trip bunk remains open. Dates 8/22-29/2026

Trip Director

-Priscilla Mellott Introduces Pennyroyal weekend 6/11-12/2026.

-Atlanta Aquarium in planning stages.

-Fiji trip in works for 2028, tentative dates 6/3-10/2028. Projecting 18 rooms/36 individuals, divers and non-divers.

-Member suggestions for other destinations included Raja Ampat and Philippines.

Old Business

-Derby party to be held at the home of Sherry McCann, 4:00p to 8:00p. Members to provide sides and BYOB

Safety

-Bill "Doc" McGrady began a series "First Aide and Kit building". Attendees were given beginnings of the "kit" to be part of a divers diving go bag. More kit items and basic skill building to come at future meetings.

17 members present.

Meeting adjourned by Kathryn Bowers 8:41pm

From the Treasurer

By Dan Miller

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

2025 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 Gunpowder 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

BCD Buying Guide

Article credited to www.scuba.com

Your BCD is the backbone of your scuba setup, providing buoyancy control, stability, and gear integration. Whether you're a beginner or a technical diver, choosing the right BCD is crucial for comfort and performance. This guide simplifies the process so you can find the perfect fit for your diving style.

Jacket-Style BCDs – Best for beginners, recreational divers, easy to use.

The Jacket style BCD consists of a wearable jacket into which an air bladder is integrated that **wraps around the diver.** The types and configurations of this kind of BCD are numerous, but the basic premise remains that the bladder wraps around and inflates both in front, on the sides and behind the diver. Jacket BCD's are extremely stable on the surface and act somewhat like a life jacket.

Cons: In the water they can create more drag as they contain more padding and a cummerbund.

Back Inflation BCDs

BCD Buying Guide Cont.

The Back Inflate BCD has no inflatable bladders on the front or sides leaving the diver's chest area completely uncluttered with the exception of chest straps. The flotation bladders are positioned on either side of the tank which give the diver a great degree of mobility and freedom of movement and also makes the diver much more streamlined in the water as there is less drag created by the BCD.

Cons: At the surface, the flotation bladders on the back tend to tilt the diver forward rather than keeping them upright. While this takes some getting used to, it's not a significant drawback.

Technical Harness: Back Plate & Wing Style BCD

The Back plate and wing BCD is perhaps the most streamlined of the three types of BCD's and does not contain, weight pockets or harnesses in the front. It merely consists of a metal back plate made of aluminum or steel through which a continuous harness with waist belt and crotch strap is looped through notches in the plate.

Cons: The single biggest drawback of the back plate and wing BCD is the lack of pockets for dive accessories or weight integration pockets.

Thanks to Dan Miller for contributing this article!

Webmaster

By Alex Fassas

Tales From The Watery Web

A Cautionary Tale

Disclaimer: I am not looking for sympathy or to have a pity party.

The past month has been for Kathryn and me an unplanned detour into what can only be called unplanned family support. My estranged sister, who lives in Lexington, KY, called me out of the blue because she needed a ride to be with her husband who was at the hospital due to stroke symptoms. This was quite a surprise as I very rarely speak or text with her. Last communication was August of 2024, and we have not been allowed to visit or see them since our wedding in October of 2019.

Fast forward, it turns out that her husband was dealing with complications from an undiagnosed lymphoma cancer. He passed away after several weeks and in the process my sister also became an inpatient at the hospital for lack of self-care. Her discharge orders were for a rehabilitative stay with physical, occupational, and speech (cognitive) therapies. All of this with the goal of determining if she could return home or live independently.
They are both intensely private individuals, and we have been their only support network in the past month. An exhausting time for us.

Now the cautionary tale! As she needed some things from home, such as clothing and taking care of a cat, we have been granted access to their domain. This sudden privilege from a sister that would not even answer her front door when I brought her a birthday gift.

Webmaster Cont.

We were appalled at the situation we found within their home. Clutter, a bent towards never throwing anything away and a general lack of maintenance and housekeeping which have apparently persisted for many years. Kathryn aptly said to me, “Don’t judge, lest you be judged.” The cautionary tale is that if someone enters our home and looks around, then we are well on our way to spiraling into a similar level of mess. Both within our home and in taking care of ourselves.

It is time for a Swedish Death Cleanse at Casa Bowers & Fassas and to follow through on better health habits. “We have seen the enemy, and it is us.”

Round To’it

As the club’s Webmaster, I am charged with certain responsibilities. These include the website, social media, and maintaining our email list. This includes the publication of and communicating of club dive trips and events. My sincerest apologies to all for my tardiness in getting these things taken care of in a timely manner. You should see several approved dive trips published between the time of this writing and our next meeting.

In addition to the regular duties, I suggested and was approved to proceed with a major upgrade to how the club handles membership and member renewals. This was a solo project by the Webmaster and to be completed by the end of January 2026. As of this writing, this project is still in its early stages.

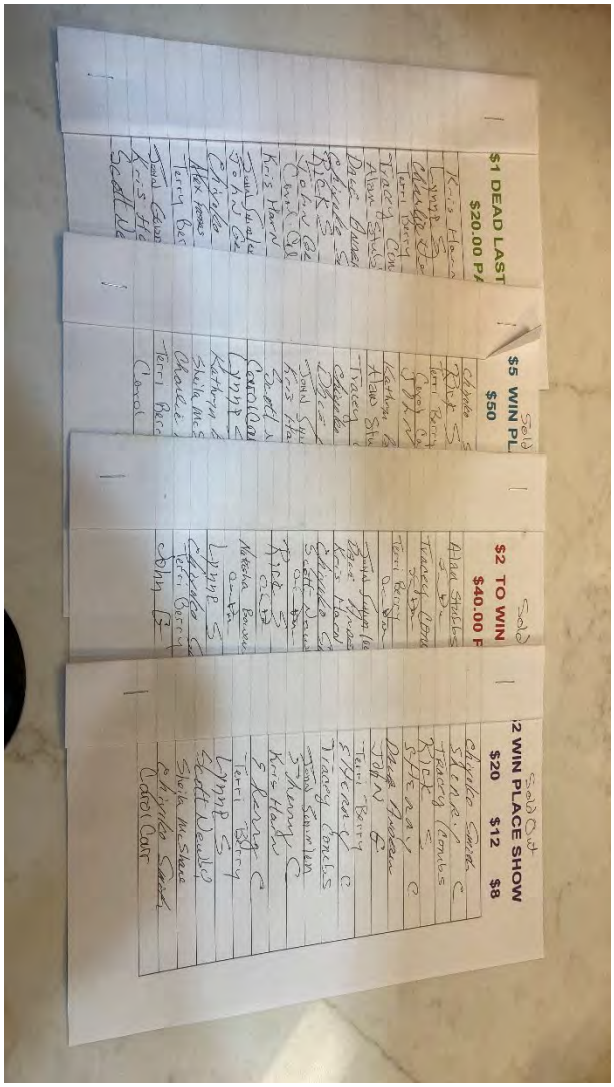
I am reminded of a high school shop (industrial education) teacher who kept a basket of round wood disks in the front of the classroom. When a student asked him what they were he responded by sharing that whenever he heard someone say that they would get around to it, concerning a project, task, or assignment as explanation of the unfinished business, he would hand them a “Round To’it”, his name for the round wood disks, and hoped that it would serve as a physical reminder to get it done and now they would have no excuse as they now had a “Round To’it.”

Dive Accident & Travel Insurance

Your club is an affiliate partner with Divers Alert Network (DAN) and with Dive Assure. You must use our hyperlinks to begin your online purchase or renewal to benefit your club, at no additional cost to you. More information about the club’s partners and links at https://bluegrassdiveclub.com/dive-travel-insurance/ .

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 or use the Contact Us web form.



Safety Information Director

By Bill "doc" McGrady

Spring-Derby and Fitting time!!!

Great news, everyone is very excited with Spring fully here and Derby weekend upon us!!! This is a great opportunity as we all celebrate Derby as well as the upcoming trips over the summer and following months….

I wanted to bring attention to our divers, a small but significant detail in dive safety and so often overlooked, yet very relevant. As this is Spring, this could be a great "spring-welcoming" habit for all our divers every Spring…….

How well does your wetsuit/straps of your BCD fit?

If like me, I bought my wetsuit and gear years ago… and though I am loathe to admit it, I've gained a few extra pounds around the waist!!! -LOL

The issue is that several episodes of getting "bent" -DCS, I've noticed the theme that gear [usually "wetsuit" but can include your wrap-around BCD or straps…"] can be too tight. Oner case of DCS was a regular scuba staff member doing 4 dives a day every day…. day in and day out. They never exceeded their dive computers and dove a standard group profile day in and day out. One day, they jumped on the boat and as he was dive-guiding his tourist group, discovered he left his suit at the shop, so he threw on a back-up suit that was on the boat. It was 1-2 sizes too small, but as it was neoprene, he was able to get it on and off to dive. Unknown, was that it constricts at the shoulders, and hips major circulation, as he dove a "normal" 40-minute dive with tourists, nothing unusual happened. They all did their 3-minute safety stop and to the top. He wound up getting bent and sent to the chamber and this is like 8 or 10 months of near daily diving [all tourist dives]. The factor that lead to this was too small a suit, it had constricted his circulation to pull the blood and nitrogen from his arms and legs while at the safety stop and then he got bent while at the surface interval. This appears to be the only "risk factor" to explain this DCS episode and ever since, he has never used anything too tight or constricting….

Another episode that strikes close to home, my dive buddy and I were in Papua New Guinea and doing daily dives. My dive buddy on the first dive of the day, and not even deeper than 40-50 feet got a small "hit" of bends to her back/shoulder region. The dive profile, first dive of the day, depth…… even used nitrox…. All of it didn't make sense. The only "change" or risk factor were that her BCD and shoulder straps were tightened "extra-tight" by her dive guide on the boat… well, that "over-tightening" [of course, we didn't know it at the time….] and a slight dehydration, [this dive buddy rarely has alcohol, so just the normal tropical island, extra heat, not lots of extra water….] so a slight "normal" dehydration + the extra strap-tightening lead to constriction at the shoulders…. And even with 3-minute safety stop, a very small DCS "hit" to the back on the safety interval….

So back to us, I know we all "gain some extra-milage" or at least I have…. Put on your wetsuit and gear and if you have "outgrown" it, please, please, please consider buying a wetsuit 1-2 sizes larger and or have a dive shop lengthen your straps!!! OR a dive guru at the club lengthens the strap! Remember, my straps were fitted to their length on my BCD back in 2019 and now I am going to make it a habit, [before I leave town] every spring, to put on my wetsuit and BCD and adjust straps and buy a suit if I have to BEFORE heading out to vacation!!!

Every Spring, around Derby, check your fit of your wetsuit and straps!!! This is my new yearly dive habit!!! A great time to knock the dust off the BCD and if the hoses are cracked or gear deteriorated…. lets take care of it before you are out of country, or worse…. get a "ticket" to the hyperbaric chamber!!!!
-Doc 'Grady.

Bluegrass Dive Club 2026 Calendar

May
14, Thursday Dive Club Meeting
28, Thursday E.C. Meeting

June
11, Thursday Dive Club Meeting
25, Thursday E.C. Meeting

July
9, Thursday Dive Club Meeting
23, Thursday E.C. Meeting

August
13, Thursday Dive Club Meeting
??, Saturday Club Pig Roast
27, Thursday E.C. Meeting

September
10, Thursday Dive Club Meeting
24, Thursday E.C. Meeting

October
15 Thursday Dive Club Meeting
29 Thursday E.C. Meeting

November
12 Thursday Club Meeting (Elections)
26 Thursday E.C. Meeting

December
??, Saturday Christmas Party

2026 BGDC Officer's

Kathryn Bowers, President	859 619-0166
Butch Mellott, Vice President	859 621-5160
David Carr, Secretary	859 585-5105
Dan Miller, Treasurer	859 948-5133
Priscilla Mellott, Trip Director	859 553-0739
Bill McGrady, Safety Info Dir.	713 259-9701
Alex Fassas, Webmaster	859 582-1600
Scott Newby, Newsletter	859 559-5105