



# UNDERCURRENTS

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

July 2013

Volume 43, Number 7

## July's Club Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, July 9th  
**Time:** 7:30-PM (business)  
Social at 7  
**Location:** The Racquet Club  
3900 Crosby Rd.  
**Program:** TBA

## President's Message

*By Tracey Combs*



Happy Summer! It is finally starting to get hot, hot, and hot and I am ready to get in the water. Keep an eye on your emails for information on our Mystery Trip that will be coming your way soon! Remember if you have any trip ideas or suggestions to please contact someone on the dive trip committee. Also, don't forget about our Facebook page. Your pictures and trip information can be posted there for all to see.

We are also updating our Diver Directory for all of our members. The directory will allow current paid members access to other members, which will make dive trip organization easier. This directory will be available only to members and we will be posting your phone number and email address that we have on file with BGDC. If you have changed your email address or phone number, or if you do not wish to have your personal information published, please email me at [traceysdc@gmail.com](mailto:traceysdc@gmail.com). Thank you for your assistance. 🚩

## The Editor's Notes

*By John Geddes*



The pics for this month are the last of the Derby Party; It looked like everyone had a great time. Wished I was there! 🚩



## 2013 BGDC Officer's

Tracey Combs, President	621-4066
Corrine Mulberry, Vice President	913-0892
Kris Harn, Secretary	278-4246
Dan Miller, Treasurer	948-5133
Doug Geddes, Trip Director	224-3197
Rick Stephan, Safety Info Dir.	223-3719
Mike McCann, Webmaster	255-3937
John Geddes, Newsletter Editor	223-7926

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## Vice President's Report

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By Corrine Mulberry



I am continuing to explore a few options for the July Program. I hope I can talk Judy Sullivan into sharing her dive pics and video with us.

If you have diving information that you would like to present at a Club meeting (past or potential dive trip, etc.), I would love to hear from you. Please contact me so that we can put you on the calendar. 913-0892 or mulberryc1@gmail.com

It was a bit of a slow month, no new visitors or members to announce. Be sure to tell your diving acquaintances about the BGDC.



I recently spent a few hours getting my "sand" collection sorted. It is amazing the different colors and textures of sand from different areas and locales. It was fun remembering all of the wonderful dive sites (and beaches) that I have been to with you all. Thanks for making these trips so wonderful.

See you at the meeting! 🚩

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## Trip Director's Report

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By Doug Geddes



DALE HOLLOW

If you haven't heard, we have cancelled this trip for July due to a lack of interest. Several regulars of this trip had other things going on and weren't able to make it, so we decided to cancel/postpone it.

### MYSTERY TRIP 2013

We are so close to choosing the location. Bonaire seems to be the front runner at the moment, but the Honduras area is pushing us also. It all comes down to numbers. We might offer both and see which gets the better numbers, once we decide on the resort. I have had people that would go to one, but not the other and vice versa, so we will let you help us decide soon. Come to the meeting to voice your opinion if you want to go on this trip.

### TRUK/YAP 2014

Once again we have had to fill a vacancy on this trip. That leaves us with no one on the waiting list, so if you had thought about it before, it is time to think about it again. You might be able to get on?? I would have never thought we would lose as many as we have, but it happens. Please go to the website and sign up, no monies required. Also if you are on this trip it might be a good idea to purchase trip insurance, we do not have any persons to take your spot if you cancel out. Air tickets should have been secured as of this meeting. Once we get our group number, we can go online and look at our seats and make changes if necessary. Can't believe it is this close, just 7 month after waiting over 2 years.

### SPRING/EARLY SUMMER 2014

Rebecca has gotten some pricing in for a couple of locations and we will be looking at those at our next dive committee meeting, which should be soon. Keep this one on your mind. 🚩

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## From the Treasurer

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*By Dan Miller*



### 2013 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](#). 🚩



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## From The Secretary

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*By Kris Harn*



### BOARD MEETING 05/28/13

Meeting called to order at 7:34pm. Tracey, Kris, Doug, John, & Rick in attendance. Tracey gave balance on account and announced June DVD for meeting. Rick went over article on dive rules, John needs newsletter article by 05/30/13. Doug reviewed trips. Midyear review set for 07/28/13. Meeting adjourned at 8:05pm.



### REGULAR MEETING 06/11/13

Tracey called meeting to order at 7:35pm. 17 people were in attendance. Dan gave treasurer's report. Corrine stated that John Schimmoeller rejoined dive club. Doug went over health problems that Gordon has been having and upcoming trips. Rick went over articles on diving rules. Patrick and Noel went over their trip to BVI. Corrine gave out door prizes. DVD on Costa Rica was shown. 🚩

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## Safety Corner

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By Rick Stephan



**Note:** *This month's article is taken from about.com. It deals with that crazy, almost drunken feeling we get when diving at depth - yes, nitrogen narcosis. I know many experienced divers who claim they have never been narced, and that may be true, but I think I would add the word "yet" to their statement. Your depth, physical condition, and other factors weigh into determining whether you will be a victim of this interesting condition.*

*Many years ago I was diving in the Florida Keys, when one of our group started behaving a bit strangely – shaking his head and acting confused. When his buddy went over to him and gave him the "What's wrong?" signal, the diver signaled that he didn't want to go any deeper; he wasn't sure of what was wrong. The buddy signaled "okay" but then pointed down. They were both laying in the sand (not much chance of going deeper there without a shovel!) So the buddy signaled to the diver to check his time (this was in the days before computers). The diver calmly looked at his right wrist before sheepishly looking at his left (the one with the watch). He then (very appropriately) signaled that he wanted to go up, which was done.*

*On the surface, the diver (who was very experienced and a certified instructor) admitted that he was narced (at 80 feet!) and said it had never happened before.*

*So, read on and understand what nitrogen narcosis is. Next month's article will go into some detail on how to treat and avoid narcosis when diving. A clear mind will help you make good and safe decisions, and as we all know:*



*safe diving is fun!*

### *Nitrogen Narcosis and Scuba Diving Part I - What Is Narcosis, How Does It Feel?*

By Natalie Gibb

Guiding a group over a small shipwreck at ninety feet, I looked to my right and noticed that one of my divers was laying on his side in the sand. What in the world? I swam to his side and flashed an "okay" sign at him. He looked at me, slightly cross-eyed, and grinned around his regulator. Then he giggled and pointed at the shipwreck. I had seen enough divers exhibit similar behavior to recognize that he was experiencing nitrogen narcosis. In diver jargon, he was "narc'd". I ended the dive and ascended. On the surface, he told me that during the dive he thought that he was upright, and that the shipwreck, the divers, and the ocean floor were all turned on their sides as some sort of silly joke.

#### What Is Nitrogen Narcosis?

Nitrogen narcosis is an altered state of mind caused by breathing nitrogen at a high partial pressure. The deeper a diver descends, the higher the partial pressure of nitrogen and other gasses in his air will be. For this reason, nitrogen narcosis is usually thought of as a function of depth. The deeper a diver goes, the greater the narcosis.

Although nitrogen is the principle component of air (79%), other gases in a diver's tank are also narcotic at great depths, such as oxygen and carbon dioxide. For this reason, many training agencies are now referring to the narcosis caused by breathing compressed air at depth as "inert gas narcosis" rather than "nitrogen narcosis". Of course, oxygen and carbon dioxide are not inert gases, so perhaps the best term to use is simply "narcosis".

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## Safety Corner Cont.

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Whatever you call it, the point is that more than one gas may influence a diver's level of narcosis underwater.

Narcosis has been called the "rapture of the deep" and many divers compare narcosis to a feeling of pleasant drunkenness. In fact, divers sometimes use the "Martini Rule" to roughly estimate the effects of narcosis during a dive. Depending upon the source, the Martini Rule states that for every 30 or 60 feet of depth, a diver experiences the narcotic effect of drinking one martini.



### At What Depths Do Divers Experience Narcosis?

The average depth at which a diver experiences at least a mild narcosis is 100 feet of seawater. By 140 feet, most divers will experience significant narcosis. Diving beyond 140 feet (the recreational diving depth limit) while breathing air is strongly discouraged by most training organizations. Some divers will make dives up to 160 - 190 feet on air, but such dives require deep air training, and are generally frowned upon. If a diver exceeds a depth of 200 feet while breathing air, he is likely to experience debilitating narcosis – even unconsciousness.

### How Does Narcosis Affect Scuba Divers?

Narcosis has an anesthetic effect on a diver. Of course, in most cases of narcosis the anesthetic effects are not extreme, and the

diver experiences a somewhat altered state without the complete loss of consciousness.

### 1. Emotional Effects of Narcosis on Divers

Depending upon the diver and the dive environment, narcosis may cause a diver to feel either positive, euphoric emotions or negative, stressful emotions. Both scenarios are dangerous.

A diver feeling overly relaxed and happy may fail to react appropriately to a dangerous situation because he feels that everything is fine. An example is a euphoric diver who notices that he has exceeded his tank reserve pressure, but decides to continue diving because he feels great and therefore isn't worried about running out of air.

A diver who experiences feelings of dread or stress may perceive problems which do not exist or may react inappropriately to those that do. An example is a stressed diver who notices that he has reached his tank reserve pressure. He panics, inflates his buoyancy compensator, and rockets to the surface because he is afraid that he will run out of air if he makes a normal controlled descent, even though he has more than sufficient air to do so.

### 2. Narcosis Slows and Impairs Mental Abilities

Narcosis affects a diver's ability to reason, evaluate situations, decide on appropriate courses of action, and recall information. Narcosis also slows a diver's thinking and reaction times. In effect, a diver experiencing narcosis thinks less clearly and more slowly than he normally does.

Foggy thinking and reasoning underwater is dangerous. Even normal situations can lead to potential disasters as a diver's mental abilities decline. As an example, a diver who is negatively buoyant may fail to inflate his buoyancy compensator because he doesn't recognize the problem (failing to evaluate the

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## Safety Corner Cont.

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situation). Or, he may try to compensate for negative buoyancy by kicking himself up (failing to decide on an appropriate course of action).

### 3. Physical Impairment from Narcosis

Narcosis affects a diver's coordination. He may have trouble accomplishing tasks requiring precise movements on deep dives. Another physical effect of narcosis is impaired thermoregulation (temperature control). The shivering reaction that helps to warm a diver's body is reduced with narcosis. Even though a diver experiencing narcosis may be dangerously chilled, he typically feels warmer than he is due to his changed perceptions and mental functioning. This leads to the possibility of hypothermia. Physical impairment due to narcosis tends to begin at greater depths than the mental and emotional effects of narcosis.



### How to Recognize Narcosis When Diving

The threshold at which a diver becomes narcosis varies from diver to diver. Divers experiencing narcosis are frequently unaware that they are functioning at a sub-optimal level. A diver's altered perceptions may cause him to feel well enough during the dive that he does not realize that his motor skills and mental functioning are impaired, making narcosis difficult to self-diagnose. To make matters worse, the diver's buddy is likely to be experiencing the same narcotic effects as the

diver himself, and may not be able to help him identify when he is narcosis.

To identify narcosis, note any unusual emotions (even good ones). Also be aware of difficulty perceiving information, such as reading your pressure gauge or dive computer. Many divers report having unusual thoughts during narcosis. For example, I once marveled at the huge, huge size of a butterfly fish and made sure to smile and wink at it so that it would know that I was friendly.

Divers have also reported bizarre effects such as salt water tasting sweet or seeing colors differently on their pressure gauge. The diver I mentioned in the introduction saw the world as sideways (which makes sense as he was laying on his side), but interpreted this information as everyone playing a silly joke on him and turning the whole world on its side. He didn't realize that he was the sideways one. While the effects of narcosis may feel enjoyable in certain circumstances, a diver should still take action to counteract narcosis the moment he notices it because he will not be able to efficiently and appropriately react to unexpected situations. ❖



# Bluegrass Dive Club 2013 Calendar

## July

9, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
30, Tuesday Board Meeting



## August

13, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
17, Saturday Club Pig Roast  
27, Tuesday Board Meeting



## September

10, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
24, Tuesday Board Meeting



## October

8, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
29, Tuesday Board Meeting

## November

12, Tuesday Dive Club Meeting  
(Elections)  
26, Tuesday Board Meeting

