NEWSLETTER

San Jose Flipper Dippers

DECEMBER 2024

GENERAL MEETINGS HELD 3RD WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH WWW.SJFLIPPERDIPPERS.COM



DECEMBER HOLIDAY TREATS

Besides the **election of officers** and our fantastic **Christmas holiday raffle**, another reason our

December General Meeting is so popular is that homemade holiday goodies are the main feature at refreshment time. Everyone helps out by baking their favorite holiday



specialty and sharing it with their fellow Dippers. Do *your* part to help feed the large turnout expected to attend this special holiday meeting. All donations will be greatly appreciated! •



Shocking Treatment!

Even at world's fairs, where glimpses of a science-fiction future can overpower anyone's attention span, an old-fashioned live stunt often reigns supreme. At the 1939-40 New York World's Fair, the Ford Motor Co. purposely shut down its revolving "Cycle of Production" exhibition. Then the automaker restarted it with a stunt P.T. Barnum might have envied. Dr. Christopher Coates, curator of the New York Aquarium's tropical fish department, along with two helpers, connected *Electra* the electric eel to the exhibit's giant turntable, which the elongated fish promptly restarted with a 500-volt jolt. (Image: From the Collections of The Henry Ford Motor Company.)

Dippers descend into the depths

The Flipper Dippers' November 9th Second Saturday

■ Scuba (S3) turned out to be an interesting adventure. This hardy group got to experience the challenges of direction finding skills, interactions with wild life and vision testing. See the report on page 4. ❖



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President's Corner



Happy Holidays to All!

The Dippers will finish off the year in style! In addition to the December Second Saturday Scuba (S3) dive, and our Point Lobos dive on Friday, December 27th, the December's General Meeting brings our Christmas Raffle, our homemade holiday goodies table and the election of our 2025 Club Officers. (Check out page 3 to see who's running.) I look forward to seeing all of you on

the dives or at the meeting.

If you haven't paid your club dues yet, please get them in! And remember to complete and sign the annual Assumption of Risk Agreement form (www.sjflipperdippers.com/sjfd.assumption.of.risk.pdf). See more information on page 3.

The November Second Saturday SCUBA dive was at MacAbee Beach and provided a great example of how the ocean conditions can change quickly. We didn't find the pinnacle on the first dive, but we had a great encounter with a raft of sea lions underwater and found some beds of tiny sand dollars. By the time we had geared up for the second dive, the swell had noticeably picked up and several people elected to sit out the second dive. The rest of the group watched the waves for a while and were able to time the entry and exit between the sets of swells. See the report on page 4.

Looking Ahead to 2025: On Wednesday, January 22nd, we'll have our virtual Annual Planning Meeting to plan the Club's calendar for the coming year. Everyone is encouraged to join in and share their ideas for dives and other Club events and activities. We're in the planning stage for the Annual Awards Banquet (date and location TBD). We'll discuss this at the December Business Meeting and have more information at the December General Meeting. This is always a great time!

Everyone stay safe and let's go diving! - Barbara

Whale pestering is getting common

Undercurrent

After we reported that unfortunate interaction between a snorkeler and a whale in Tonga in our mid-October email, we received emails from some who said he wasn't riding the tail; the



whale flipped his tail and caught the snorkeler off guard (photo top right). But should he have been so close? Since then, we have seen a video allegedly made in Mauritius and posted on social media that indicates that whale pestering is becoming a worldwide phenomenon (photo bottom right).

Isn't it time local authorities enforced the rules about whale watching? Or is the tourist dollar far more important? In the case of sperm whales, the need to rest on the surface between deepwater hunts is well respected by whale divers in Dominica..





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o Position Open o

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MEET YOUR 2025 CLUB OFFICER CANDIDATES



PRESIDENT:

BARBARA DAVIS Joined the Club in 1993 and has been a force to reckon with in the water. She has served as the Club's president the past three years. She really enjoys diving and has served as Club Vice President and President in the past. Barbara is always up for 2-tank dives on any of the scheduled S3 dives. She has been diving in many places around the world, including Cuba, and has now completed over 1,700 dives and is well on her way to 2,000!



SECRETARY:

GRACE CHI Joined the Club in 2016 and has been participating in a wide range of Club dives including beach dives, boat dives, the UW Easter Egg Hunt, and a trip to Bonaire. Grace has held the office of Club secretary the past three



TREASURER:

TOM GARDNER Has served as the Club treasurer during the past two years. He became a member in 2009. He was the Club's President for two years: 2018-2019. Tom has served as the raffle chair during 2013 (and assisting Jackie in 2012). He was the Club's President for two years: 2018-2019. Tom participates in many of the Club's activities including beach dives, campouts and bike rides.



VICE PRESIDENT:

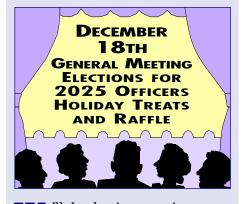
SIM UPADHYAYULA Got his certification in February, 2023, and since finding the Flipper Dippers, has participated in a great number of dives. He didn't waste any time completing his membership requirements and was voted into the Club in May 2023. He has lots of energy and has already collected his 1st Star in the Club's Star Achievement Program. Sim has served as the Club's Vice President for the last year.



SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:

HOWARD CHIEN Has been the Club's sergent-at-arms the past four years! He joined the Club in October 2020 and has participated in many club dives, campouts and bike rides. He is excited about the many activities the Club has to offer and has been a very active member.





We'll be having our in-person General Meeting holding 2025 **Elections** for Club Officers and a BIG RAFFLE. ②

RAFFLE NEWS

We're back again this month for our in-person General Meeting. More folks are showing up and having fun!

We're planning our big Christmas General Meeting with a BIG raffle with all those treasures you've safely stored as well as great treats! See front page for more information. 3

MEMBERSHIP

Ken Agur

We're a dive club and we're diving! If you're looking for a dive buddy look no further. See the Club's website for more information on becoming a member (Membership Requirements). Welcome Aneirin who attended the November General Meeting and is looking to dive with us!

Happy Birthday December Baby *Tristan Chutka*! ♥

CLUB DUES PAST DUE?

t is well past October and time to pay your **annual dues** at the General Meeting. Dues help cover a portion of the yearly room rental. website hosting, domain name registration and newsletter printing and distribution. Each member will also be asked to sign an "Assumption of Risk Agreement" when dues are paid (the form is available on the Club's Website). If you can't make the in-person General Meeting please send a signed copy with your dues in the mail to: Tom Gardner, 2986 Everdale Court, San Jose, CA 95148.

Contact Tom if you want to pay your dues in cash.

Club Dues this year are \$50.00 and **\$10.00** per year to receive this Newsletter via the U.S. Postal Service. Or download it FREE each month from the Club's Website in full color. Charter and Lifetime Members will continue to receive the Newsletter by U.S. mail.

CenCal (Central California Council of Diving Clubs) dues are \$15.00 and USofA (Underwater Society of America) dues are \$30.00. (Pay online at: www.cencal.org). These optional dues support the many efforts of CenCal and USofA on behalf of all divers in the areas of beach access along with conservation and state and national legislation.

A summary of annual dues are:

CLUB DUES \$ 50.00 Newsletter (U.S. Mail) 10.00 Optional: CEN CAL 15.00

Optional: USofA 30.00

Remember, associate member (non-diving spouses of Dippers) dues are \$5.00. Associate members may attend Dipper functions at member prices, but have no voting

Late dues incur a late fee of \$5.00 😂

November S3 Dive . . . and you missed a good one



You never know what conditions will really be like until you show up at the beach. For the Dippers' November 9th Second Saturday Scuba (S3) dive, members *Grace Chi*, *Barbara Davis*, *Tom Earl*, *Sim Upadhyayula*, *Taylor Sullivan* and *Carl Tuttle* met at MacAbee beach.

Conditions looked great with a small swell and sunny skies. The group got their gear on and made plans to go straight out to the kelp bed, drop down and start swimming and when they hit 50 foot depth turn right and head for the MacAbee Pinnacle.

Barbara took the lead and the others followed. The visibility wasn't as good as everyone hoped and there was a bit of surge but the group managed to stay together. It seemed as though finding the 60-foot depth took longer than expected. Soon the group found themselves covering a lot of sand. The visibility improved a bit – maybe 10 to 15 feet. A few rock formations with some metridiums were seen along with some rock fish. Someone also saw a cormorant swim by too! Then coming out of nowhere the divers were bombarded by a dozen or more sea lions. This was BIG FUN for the sea lions as it appeared they were playing a game to see which one could get closest to these divers without being touched. They kept dodging in and out of the divers, barking, blowing air bubbles, holding position in front of a diver until the last second and in general having a rip-roaring good time.

As the divers continued on it became apparent they missed the mark and were unable to locate the pinnacle. Barbara indicated the return direction and everyone followed her lead. As the group determined their air supply was getling low, they all did a safety stop and headed towards the surface. Oops! looks like they went a bit further out and south of the beach than they had hoped. Carl and Sim chose to go back down and travel as far as possible with what air they had left, while Barbara, Grace, Taylor and Tom made their way back on the surface.

While kicking back on the surface the group came across a sea otter and her pup. After watching the little one for a bit they continued on to the beach where Carl and

Sim where waiting.

After a long surface interval, some snacks and drinks, the group changed out their tanks and made their way towards the beach. At this time a large swell came rolling in crashing over rocks and onto the beach. This caught everyone's attention. The group then had a short discussion on what the visibility might be like now. Grace, Taylor and Carl opted out of the second dive while Barbara, Tom and Sim opted to go in.

After some time, Carl, Grace and Taylor met the returning divers on the beach. "You should have gone on the second dive. We had 20 to 30 foot viz!" Sure you did. Nope. Viz didn't improve much and that "Sneaker Wave" was just that. The swells did pick up a bit as predicted but the divers enjoyed their second dive.

After everyone changed into warmer clothes the group headed to a restaurant in Pacific Grove for some hot clam chowder.

Ed Note: The group could have used *Cedric Wright* on this dive. After all, he dives with not one, but two compasses. And he found the MacAbee Pinnacle with *Eva* and *Shelby*

Alexander on the September S3 dive when all the others got separated due to poor visibility!

Looking back to last year, these photos show conditions were a bust for the 2023 November S3 Dive.





Diving bell smashes the bottom

Francis Hermans, Commercial Divers World

- Facebook

In 1976 I signed a contract with COMEX HOULDER to be a sat diver on the jet barge CREEK, which belonged to the Santa Fe Company.

The work season started in May and until October the barge worked in the North Sea to dig many miles of pipelines.

pipelines.

I had started my off-shore freelance diver career one year earlier and had already worked



with British (and Scottish) on the L.B.27, but now I was a bit more anxious because I was going to make a saturation with them and therefore was afraid to not always understand their terrific accent.

The first days in sat were very difficult and more than once I had to ask my mates to write on a piece of paper what they wanted to tell me.

But fortunately for me it didn't take too long to get used to their Donald Duck voices.

At the same time, I suppose that my English was more pure than theirs, because more than once, the chamber operator came to me to ask what the other guys in the chamber wanted.

Since the beginning of the working season, I was making a team with Tiny Gulliver. He was at least twice as strong as me and the pair of us looked a bit like Stan Laurel (me) and Oliver Hardy (him). Nevertheless, we made a perfect team and I liked working with him.

As on every jet barge, our main task was to install the huge claw over the pipe and then make an inspection dive of the trench and the sledge about every six hours.

In fact a relatively well paid, easy job with a lot of boring moments between each dives. The only problem when you work on a jet barge is, if we except the dive made to install the claw, that most of the time, the inspection dives are made with zero visibility. This is due to the fact that the

water pumps and the airlifts of the jet machine are stopped at the very last moment, just a few seconds before the diver leaves the bell.

On the 19 of August 1976 the sea was really bad on Ninian field but nevertheless the barge continued to pull the jet sledge over the pipe and it was time for Tiny and me to dive for the inspection of the trench.

It was my turn to dive so Tiny went into the bell to make the checklist. Once completed I joined him in the bell and we were ready to be sent down.

During the translation of the bell to the stern of the barge we could see through the portholes that the sea was quite raging and we could feel a big swell. The entry in the water was a bit rough but after a few meters the bell stabilized and we could now be lowered to the bottom without being shaken like a plum – tree.

As usual the bellman announced the depths every 10 meters.

"60 meters" "90 meters"

"120 meters"

"145 meters" "145 meters"

"145 meters" replied the supervisor,

"we lower the bell slowly now."

At 150 meters the bellman announced "door open" and as usual, we decided to lower the bell 3 to 4 meters more so as to be closer to the seabed.

We were now stabilized at

154 m and the supervisor told me that I could get equipped. Tiny fixed the bail out, the hot water and finally the helmet and I was now ready to go.

Me: "Surface how do you read me?" Surf: "Loud and clear Francis. Ok everything is stopped, you can leave the bell."

Me: "Ok ready to leave the bell."

So I straightened my arms on the hub to ease the passage of the 1-stage reducer and gently let myself go through it, when suddenly Baouhhmm!!! The bell smashed onto the bottom and I was there, standing on the seabed in the middle of the bell.

Me: "Surface up at the bell quickly." Surf: "Say again."

Me: "Up Up at the bell quickly we hit the bottom."

Surf: "Roger, up at the bell."

Baouhhmm !!!, with the swell, the bell hit the bottom again with violence. I was still in the middle of the hub, trying to find a grip somewhere to avoid passing under the bell what would probably have been fatal for me.

Luckily for me, Tiny also had understood what was happening and this time before the bell hit the bottom for the third time he grasped the top of my helmet and pulled me completely out of the water.

Wouah! My neck I screamed but at least I was now save in the bell.

The bell smashed the bottom once more, but then we heard the supervisor shout at us that he was coming up at the bell for 5 meters.

When everything was stabilized, the supervisor asked me if I was OK and able to continue the dive or preferred to abort it.

Although this dive could have been my last one if I had started to dive a few seconds earlier I preferred to continue immediately before my mind realized the consequences of the situation.

So again, I slipped in the water and searched for the guide line which was to bring me to the sledge. In fact what had

happened? It seems that the pneumo installed on the jet was a bit faulty and therefore had given a false depth reading.

But the other cause of the near miss was that we dived with a very big swell, which made the bell have vertical amplitude of about 5 meters.

Luckily for us the ballast weight release system of the bell had been modified some time before and the fact that we hit the bottom several times didn't drop them off accidentally as it happened some years before to another stranded bell. •



Philippines Dive Trip October 2024

Barbara Davis - Photos by Jim Palluconi

Dippers **Barbara Davis**, **Howard Chien** and **Frances Lee**, along with Howard and Frances's buddies **Lori**and **Jim Palluconi** enjoyed a great dive trip to the Philippines
in October. We stayed at the El Galleon dive resort and dove
with Asia divers.

Asia divers has their own dock right in front of the resort, which made our arrival, departure and dive trips very easy. The crew was amazing and did all of the heavy

Ecalleon Beach Resort

Dippers and friends dive the Philippines: Frances (3rd from left), Jim (center back), Barbara (9th from left), Lori (6th from right) and Howard (4th from right).

lifting with our dive gear and tanks. The divemasters were experts on the dive sites and were able to point out the



Pregnant pigmy seahorse

the dives. We could do up to five dives a day, and some people managed to get in 32 dives on this trip. What did we see? Nudibranchs, turtles, rays,

amazing marine life during

Nudibranchs, turtles, rays, eels, shrimps, crabs, octopuses and fish, fish, fish! Did I mention the nudibranchs? So many different varieties. The resort had a number of critter books, and we pored over them between dives to identify what we'd seen.

We did a number of "muck" dives, where we

stayed shallow and looked for tiny critters. We saw frogfish, seahorses and lots of different kinds of shrimp. Howard really wanted to see a blue-ringed octopus, and we did! It was only about 2 to 3 inches long.

The diversity of the sea life was amazing! For example, we saw many types of moray eels, including clouded, yellow-edged, white-mouth, spot face and white-eyed. We saw spot-fin, zebra, common, two-eyed and black lionfish. We saw garden eels and snake eels. Barbara remembers



Yellow Frogfish

flagging down a photographer on one dive to point out four different cool critters to photograph in one spot!

We really wanted to see a pygmy seahorse, which only grow to 1/2 to 1 inch long. They are usually found on sea fans, so the divemasters would carefully inspect all of the sea fans we saw. Finally, on the last dive of the last day, we were rewarded with not one, but TWO, pygmy seahorses. And after looking at Jim's pictures later, we realized one was pregnant!

We did a day trip to Verde Island and did 3 dives there and enjoyed a yummy barbecue lunch. This was an area of strong currents, so we had to keep a close eye on the divemaster to stay on track. We were surrounded by huge schools of juvenile fish on some of the dives.

The staff at El Galleon took very good care of us. The food was tasty and plentiful and our ocean-view rooms were spacious and comfortable. We did make it to the bar one night to take advantage of the 2-for-1 cocktails during happy hour.

Our return home was unexpectedly postponed because of Typhoon Kristine (known as Trami

locally), and the ensuing wind and rain that came with it.

The storm tracked north of us, so we were spared the worst of the weather, but it rained so hard one day, the resort swimming pool overflowed. Power was out on a lot of the island. but fortunately the resort had a generator. No boats were al-



Pair of eels sharing a spot

lowed out for two days, so we hunkered down at the resort and just stayed put.

After the storm passed, we got in another two days of diving. Deeper sites were not really affected, but the shallow areas where we did the muck dives had been swept clean. Hopefully, the disturbed areas will recover soon.

All-in-all, we very much enjoyed our trip, and would recommend the resort and dive operation to anyone looking to dive in the Philippines.

DIVE & ACTIVITY CALENDAR

SIM UPADHYAYULA



www.SJFlipperDippers.com



DECEMBER 2024

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4 BUSINESS MEETING: 7:30pm

The meeting will be held **virtually** via Skype. All members are invited to attend. Please email Carl Tuttle if you need the link to join. Bring your own food, drinks, and internet connection and we'll discuss ideas for upcoming dives and events.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 7 NO SCHEDULED DIVE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14 SECOND SATURDAY SCUBA (S3) **BEACH DIVE: LOCATION TBD**

Coordinator: Grace Chi, email: chi.gracechi@gmail.com, text cell: 858-337-2674. Location will be determined based on conditions and comfort and skill level of the divers. Bring 2 tanks and plan on going for lunch after the dive. Be sure to contact Grace if you want to join in.

GENERAL MEETING WEDNESDAY, DEC 18

The **in-person General Meeting** will be held at **7:30 PM** at the Knights of Columbus Santa Maria Hall 2211 Shamrock Dr., Campbell.

The **virtual meeting** will continue to be hosted via Skype.

Please contact *Carl Tuttle* for more details on the in-person meeting or a link to the virtual Skype meeting.

Celebrate 60 Years of the San Jose Flipper Dippers!

Entertainment:

- Election of 2025 Officers
- Sign-ups for Monthly Dives

Big Christmas Social



SATURDAY DECEMBER 21 NO SCHEDULED DIVE



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25 **MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27 PT. LOBOS SCUBA DIVE

Coordinator: Carl Tuttle, (408-829-3660, tutcomms@sbcglobal.net). We have 6 Teams with some space available. Meet at the entrance before 8AM. Be sure to bring your reservation confirmation and YOUR "C" Card! Let Carl know if you are looking to join in, or if you've signed up and are not going to make it as we may have some folks who want to dive.

JANUARY 2025

- **Business Meeting**
- Second Saturday SCUBA 11
- 15 General Meeting22 Annual Planning Meeting



Grenada gets a second underwater sculpture park

Undercurrent

he first set of underwater sculptures by Jason deCaires Taylor was so successful that the Grenada Tourism

Authority allowed him to establish a second called 'World Adrift,' this time in Carriacou. It features a fleet of 30 small boats, each designed to resemble a paper origami and helmed



school child. The sculptures are constructed of high-grade stainless steel and pH-neutral cement and will lie 16 to 26 feet beneath the surface. Carriacou, Grenada's sister island, was hit hard by Hurricane Beryl in July. Hopefully this will help attract swarms of new divers. •

Five divers left adrift in Hawaii

Undercurrent

eft drifting for some hours, five divers were encountered, clinging to one another, off Hanauma on the big island by a couple in a sailing boat on November 11. One diver was reported as unwell and unable to climb the sailboat ladder. The Coast Guard was called, but just as its helicopter arrived. Aaron's Dive Shop's dive boat, Honey Ann, turned up and took their divers back on board. Aaron's Dive Shop says it's reviewing operations. More in the January issue. (Hawaii News Now).

When hyperbaric facilities might not save your life

Undercurrent

We recently wrote in Undercurrent about two rebreather divers dying in Malta. One was still conscious and happily gave a thumbs-up when he entered the recompression chamber. But he didn't survive.

It turns out a senior consultant left only a junior trainee to monitor the recovery and then went home after instructing the trainee to maintain phone contact with him and to avoid making independent major decisions.

Still, something went wrong. The consultant apparently misdiagnosed the diver's condition over the phone, suspecting oxygen toxicity rather than DCI, and he received excessive nitrogen, exacerbating his DCI. The consultant could face a prison sentence of up to four years and a hefty fine if found guilty of involuntary manslaughter.

NOTE: All certified divers are encouraged to attend San Jose Flipper Dippers' dives.

Non-Club members will be required to show proof of certification to the dive coordinator prior to entering the water with our group. Please sign up for dives at the General Meeting or call the coordinator. This is needed in case of cancelation or changes.







FIRST CLASS MAIL

2024 COMING EVENTS

Dec 4	Business Meeting
Dec 14	Second Saturday SCUBA
Dec 18	General Meeting:
	• Election of 2025 Officers
	Big Christmas Raffle
Dec 27	SCUBA Dive Pt. Lobos

2025

Jan 8, 2025	Business Meeting		
Jan 11	Second Saturday SCUBA		
Jan 15	General Meeting		
Jan 22	Annual Planning Meeting		
Feb 5	Business Meeting		
Feb 8	Second Saturday SCUBA		
Feb 19	General Meeting		
Feb 25	Labor Day Weekend Reservations		
	(Aug 25-Sept 1, 2025) Van Damme		

Watch This Space - Much More To Come!

See the Club's Website for the full Calendar



Are you looking for someone to dive with?

The San Jose Flipper Dippers Dive Club is a great way to meet divers who are always having fun times. Come join us!

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www.SJFlipperDippers.com