



KELP KRAWLERS DIVE CLUB

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PB4Y-2 Privateer

by Scott Boyd

On August 26, 1956, a routine training flight from the Sand Point Naval Air station went awry when the flight crew missed setting their flaps and the PB4Y Navy Bomber they were flying crashed shortly after takeoff into Lake Washington. The WWII bomber, a Navy version of the venerable B-24, sank in 175 feet of water after all crew were safely evacuated to life rafts. Salvagers eventually managed to get the plane back to the surface, where a shackle pin broke and the plane sank back into the depths of Lake Washington and all further salvage efforts were abandoned.

The official Navy accident report lists the final position of the plane in 210' of water, a forgotten bit of history lying undisturbed in the cold dark waters of the lake. When the plane was rediscovered by divers, it was found to be remarkably well preserved, lying on the muddy bottom in 150' of water, not far from Sand Point at Seattle's Magnuson Park.

I was fortunate to be able to dive the PB4Y-2 Privateer on a bright sunny day, with calm waters. We had dropped the shot-line about 10' from the aircraft, the first two dive teams descended to the bottom and were unable to locate the plane. Visibility at the bottom of the lake generally runs about 5 – 10', and the lack of contrast between the murky brown water and the muddy bottom actually caused both of the previous teams to "crash" into the mud on descent. Both teams humorously described their descent as watching their depth gauges go, "120', 130', oops, where did the lights go", as they were enveloped by clouds of soft mud from the bottom.

When it was our turn to dive, I found the descent dark and disorienting, with no visual reference other than our line. I stopped at 130', to make sure I was perfectly neutral, and then exhaled to descend slowly. At a depth of about 145, I observed the white down line simply vanishing and realized I was at the bottom. The shot line went down into the mud, but it was nearly impossible to actually see the bottom. Attaching a reel to the line, we swam north toward the plane. Ten feet, twenty feet, thirty feet, hmmm, we should have seen it by now. I felt something brush my fin tip, and turned to check, but couldn't see anything, so continued another ten feet, feeling something

brush my fin again. I turned to look, shining my HID light back, and saw nothing, so turned to go forward, and ran smack right into the side turret of the plane! Wow, we're here!



Once the reel was attached, we swam up over the top of the wreck where it was easier to orient yourself. We then swam forward to peer in through the escape hatches (used by the 11 man crew of the plane to escape as it sank) and into the cockpit. The flight controls are still in place (and flap controls still in the wrong position). At the very front of the plane, the .50 caliber machine guns still point off into the murky waters, protecting the plane from imaginary enemies in the gloom. The wings are still in place (110' wing span), and the starboard landing gear is down and is still helping to support the 45,000 lbs. plane off the bottom. The outer engines are in place, with large propellers that look as though they are ready to take off on another flight.

The machine guns in the tail turret are pointing down into the mud, and it was here that the dive story became very entertaining. As I descended down the rudder towards the tail turret, I spotted the line from our reel, running just below tail of the aircraft. It was heading off to the South, and within two fin kicks, I could actually see the shot line heading back to the surface, a mere ten feet away. I showed my dive buddy the line, and we both began to laugh. Apparently, we had swum right underneath the plane, below the port stabilizer and along the body of the aircraft for about 30' before I ran into the side turret. Even though sweeping from side to side and up and down with my light, we had missed the plane that was so close, I had actually brushed it with my fins twice. Did I tell you that it was MURKY and DARK down there?!

After a good laugh, we recovered the reel and began our slow ascent back into the world of

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sunlight and warmth. Water temperature at the bottom of the lake was about 45 degrees (about three degrees colder than my recent dives in Puget Sound), and visibility is very, very low. However, the lake is littered with historical wrecks, so I'll be back, prepared for the more difficult diving conditions encountered there but feeling privileged to be able to view such well preserved history.

The Prez sez

by Steve Fornoff

Is there more to life besides SCUBA DIVING?

For the past 6-7 years, ever since I started to take diving more serious, I've gotten away from doing the usual 'Honey-Do' list of activities.

My wife is like most wives who want their husbands to help with the little things around the house. All Honey-Do lists are generally the same, these duties included helping with laundry, washing dishes, vacuuming, washing windows, cleaning gutters, washing the cars, mowing yard, raking leaves, trimming tree branches, fix the leaking faucet, painting a guest bedroom, painting the house, adding a bathroom to the house, building that 3rd bedroom, repairing the bulkhead on the beach, and re-shingle the house.

I don't know about other husbands, but whenever I look at Carolyn's long list of chores I get a headache and start sweating. It wasn't very long before I found the best use of my time was to go diving. I would go diving every week end, and one or two nights during the week. The 'Honey-Do' list was always stuck on the fridge door, but nothing was ever getting done, except the list would get longer.

Feeling guilty about having all this fun diving while my wife sat at home, I talked Carolyn into learning to Scuba Dive. She did and now she loves it! As a result, the 'Honey-Do' list got shorter and shorter to where it finally disappeared. However, now I find a calendar in its place with dates clearly marked for the days she wants to go diving. She wants to go diving all the time, I mean really, ALL THE TIME!

She works long hard hours at her job as a nurse, so I figured this is great as now we can both go diving when ever we want.

This was all fine for a couple of years. Then over time, she started to find other dive buddies; she dives with Amy, and Ken, and Wendy, and Lee, and others. After a while I realized she had taken over most of my former dive buddies. Pretty soon I was staying home while she was diving.

Feeling like a weekend reject, I starting to find things to do around the house. So when my wife would get up early on Saturday to go diving, I'd get up and fix myself some breakfast. While eating I would make a list of things to get done around the

house. You know, the usual list of things to do like catch up on the laundry, washing the morning dishes, and vacuuming. It usually doesn't take long to complete those tasks, so I moved on to washing the windows, cleaning the gutters, washing the cars, and mowing the yard. Pretty soon I found my self fixing the faucet, painting the guest room and painting the house. Two winters ago, I added the new bathroom and last winter I remodeled the storage room into the 3rd bedroom. This year the bulkhead was repaired and the house re-shingled.

This last weekend after a long day of yard work, I looked around feeling pretty good about all the was accomplished around the house.....then it hit me like a ton of bricks. HEY, WHAT HAPPENED HERE? She's out diving and having a great time with the dive group while I've been home cleaning, fixing, building and repairing.

This depressed me so much that I had to lay down to rest. That's when I noticed a book sitting on her night stand next to the bed. It was "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" and there was a book-marker on the chapter where Tom Sawyer was painting the fence!

Do you think there's a connection here?

Dive Reports

Four Mile Rock Barges

by Scott Boyd

Well marked on nautical charts since the early 70's, the Four Mile Rock Barges lie near the 100' depth line about a quarter mile offshore from Four Mile Rock. Situated just below the Magnolia Bluffs in Seattle, this advanced boat dive was recently in the news as a possible source of "burping oil" seeping into Elliott Bay.

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The coast guard investigated the wrecks, and divers found no sign of seeping oil. Indeed, on my recent dive to these two barges, it is apparent that these are both bulk carriers, which have no storage tanks to even hold any seeping oil. An old report suggests that a barge sunk at this location in a collision with the Astorian in 1926, but it is apparent from the condition of the wrecks (which are very good) that they are much more recent (perhaps the older barge is buried below them).



The barges lie roughly parallel to each other, with about 50 feet between the sides. The barges themselves are about 200 feet long, 50 feet wide and nearly as tall as 20 feet off the bottom. The deepest part of the wreck would be the stern of the deeper barge, which is just over 100 feet deep at the mud line. The shallower of the two barges lies in only 75 feet of water.

Both barges are draped with layers of abandoned fishing nets, still killing, year after year. Care must be taken, as the fishing nets, along with some cave line left over from training exercises, poses an entanglement hazard for divers visiting this site. This is a good site for wreck training, as well as for those more advanced recreational divers that are comfortable with the 80-100 foot depths. However, there is a lot of commercial shipping and boat traffic in the area, so fly a dive flag and pay attention to the current.

We spotted several species of rockfish and greenlings around the wreck, which is covered with large metridium anemones, as well as the usual sea stars, nudibranchs and other local invertebrates. My dive buddy, Craig Miller, proved to be an excellent model during our dive, posing for several pictures. As an added bonus, he was diving his KISS rebreather, so I didn't have to "wait" to take his photos...no bubbles. How Very cool!

The large stabilizing fins below the stern of the barges make a great "Cavern" swim through. These are fun to carefully cruise through, parting the schools of rock fish while using careful fin techniques to make sure your buddy doesn't swim through a silt-out! All in all, a pleasant dive within plain sight of downtown Seattle.

Toliva Shoals

by Scott Boyd

As part of the required mitigation for the construction of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, the contractors made improvements to the fish habitat at Toliva Shoals. Between April 11 and 15, 2005, 2,600 cubic yards of quarry rock were added to the shoals from barges anchored to the site. This improved a rock shoal constructed more than 25 years earlier. The shoal, which provides habitat for rockfish and other species, is located five miles south of the narrows bridge and one mile south of Fox Island.

The rock was added to three large areas along the 475-foot wide and 700-foot long shoal. I recently had the opportunity to dive Toliva shoals, and the new rock, which has been down for about a year now is already covered with brightly colored coral-line algae. The older sections of the shoal are covered with huge metridium anemones, sea stars and I found several stunning *Janolus fuscus* nudibranchs hiding from the current behind the berms placed on the bottom to hold the rock.

Toliva Shoals is an outstanding dive site, but is subject to the full fury of the Tacoma Narrows Currents. I think the small craft advisories made this dive more difficult for the boat crew than the divers, but a live boat and a low tidal exchange are a must for diving this stunning location. Depths range from 35-65', and there are lots of concrete columns, large rocks and gravel covering the bottom.

DIVE SHOP NEWS:

Capital Divers

866-3684

www.capitaldivers.com

Palau trip on the Palau Aggressor June 25-July 2 2006. Nitrox, argon and hyper filtered air fills available.

Bandito Charters on May 13, June 4, July 16, Aug 17, Sep 17, Oct 14, Nov 12 and Dec 9.

Hood Sport 'n Dive

(360) 877-6818

www.hoodspordndive.com

The shop has now moved to a convenient new location in Hoodspport. Stop by, say hello and fill up with some nitrox while you wait. They are still offering discounted access to the **Sund Rock Marine Preserve** for paid members.

Underwater Sports

493-0322

www.underwatersports.com

The Olympia Shop is now pumping hyper filtered Air. Discounted air cards for Kelp Krawlers: 10 fills for \$25.

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Easter on the Down Time

Six Easter divers had a great time on a club dive with Don and Diane Coleman on Easter Sunday. The weather was a little wet, but that didn't dampen the spirits of our divers.

Sporting Rabbit ears and some other very bizarre looking head gear, we loaded up the boat and headed over to Rosie's Ravine. We had a pleasant dive at Rosie's and were treated to BBQ'd hot dogs and hot soup when we surfaced. For our second dive, we chose to try something different, and had a nice dive at Black Point, just outside of the Pleasant Harbor Marina.

I was especially proud of the three man dive teams, which managed to stay together for a 50 minute dive, even in visibility so low, that the first and third divers couldn't see each other, only the middle diver. Be sure to ask our fearless leader about his semi-dry suit.

Divers were: **Scott and Janet Boyd, Steve Fornoff, Amy Kurtenbach, Carolyn Thomas and Mark Reece.**

April Meeting Notes

Most of the April Meeting revolved around the touch tanks for the Wooden Boat Festival. Near the end of the meeting, Jerry received a call from Festival coordinator indicating that they were not going to be able to accommodate our request to move the tanks closer to the water and shore power. The club then decided not to participate in the Wooden Boat Festival this year rather than to continue in our old location.

Bonnie Smith then gave an excellent presentation on her trip to the **Seychelles**. Steve reminded volunteers that Ron would be moving his shop the last week of April and would appreciate any help we can give. Mark reminded everyone that we have a club dive scheduled for the **Fox Island Bridge** on **May 6th**. The **June club dive** will be with **Pacific Adventures** on **June 3rd** at 9:30 AM, contact Scott Boyd if you would like to go.

Members present were: **Rick Cooper, Hobe Pannkuk, Steve Griffith, Steve Sutton, Mark Reece, Carolyn Thomas, Janet and Scott Boyd, Carla Thurmond, Duane and Debbie Hamrick, Ingrid Sutton, Alan Niles, Brad Congdon, Rodger Gomez, Steve and Carolyn Fornoff, Wayne Campbell and John Brown.**



May Dive Club Meeting

David Behrens, the author of **Pacific Coast Nudibranchs** and **Nudibranch Behavior** will be joining us for a colorful and entertaining presentation on the wild world of nudibranchs. A **veteran diver and underwater photographer**, Dave has been practicing marine biology since 1974. For those who are new to sea slugs, Dave will provide an introduction that will send you off searching for these amazing and beautiful creatures. As an expert on our local nudis, Dave will share many interesting facts and observations about the biology and behavior of these creatures. Their diversity, shape, size and how they reproduce and develop, what they eat, why are some so colorful and others so cryptic will be discussed. You will also learn about many fascinating relationships nudibranchs have with other invertebrates and fish, and what their value is to mankind.

Come learn and enjoy an evening with the "butterflies of the sea." Dave will also be autographing his two newly released books — "**Nudibranch Behavior**" and "**Eastern Pacific Nudibranchs**".

Underwater Photo Contest

Photographers, be sure to submit your best images from the Pacific Northwest to the **Kelp Krawlers Photo contest**. Selected images will be published in **Northwest Dive News** magazine and **Cash Prizes** are being awarded.

Get the details at <http://www.kelpkrawlers.org/Contest/>

Calendar of Events

May 6th:	Club Dive, Fox Island Bridge, 9 AM, contact Mark Reece.
May 13th:	Treasure Hunt. Northwest Dive News. 8:00 AM, Owens Beach, Tacoma.
May 16th:	Club Meeting, 7:00 PM, David Behrens, Nudibranch Behavior and Underwater Photography
May 26 - 3:	Cozumel Dive Trip, Blue Diamond Dive Tours, Full. Contact Steve or Carolyn Fornoff
June 3rd:	Pacific Adventures Dive Charter, 9:30 AM, Pleasant Harbor Marina. Contact Scott Boyd, 3 spots left.
June 20th:	Club Meeting 7:00 PM
June 25 - 2:	Palau Dive Trip, Palau Aggressor II, Capital Divers, contact Craig Brown