



# KELP KRAWLERS DIVE CLUB

June 2006

[www.kelpkrawlers.org](http://www.kelpkrawlers.org)

Volume 22, Number 6

## Andrea Doria, after 50 years

*by Scott Boyd*

It was Wednesday, July 25th 1956. At 11:10pm on a dark and foggy night, when two great ocean liners, the T/N Andrea Doria and the M/V Stockholm, collided near Nantucket, Massachusetts. Anthony Grillo was only three years old when his mother dropped him from the side of the Andrea Doria and he landed in a blanket on a waiting lifeboat. Every year in July, Anthony would look at his scrapbook of photos and re-read the book, *Collision Course*, remembering the day it happened. Grillo's recent death marks the end of an era as we approach the 50th anniversary of the sinking of the Andrea Doria.

On July 17, 1956 the Andrea Doria began her last voyage from her home port of Genoa. At 637 feet in length, the distinctive white topsides over a black and red hull were both beautiful and sleek. Most of her crossings enjoyed fine weather, but conditions were extremely foggy when the Andrea Doria made her final approach to New York. The Stockholm, driven by 14,600 horsepower, sliced through the Andrea Doria's steel hull with the force of an icebreaker.

Thousands of tons of water flowed in through the hole in the starboard side of the ship, and within minutes the Andrea Doria heeled precariously over onto her side. At 6:05 a.m., July 26, the last of Andrea Doria's 1,662 passenger and crew had been evacuated. The primary rescue vessel Ile De France circled the Andrea Doria one last time and then steamed back to New York. At about 10 AM, nearly 11 hours after the collision, the once majestic 29,000 ton ocean liner rolled over, and gracefully slipped beneath the waves of the Atlantic. The grand dame of the sea went down in 225 feet of water with a loss of 52 lives, all victims of the collision.

Since that July day in 1956, divers have been stricken with what has become known as Doria fever. The Andrea Doria is the most famous ocean liner to sink since the Titanic. Though her hull can be reached in only 180 feet of water, the Doria has become akin to the Mt. Everest of shipwrecks for the recreational diving sector, and like Mt. Everest, she is still taking lives.

Just ten years after Peter Gimble first laid eyes on the Andrea Doria a group of Jersey wreck

divers chartered a fishing boat out of Montauk to begin the first of the Andrea Doria Expeditions. Since then, well over 600 divers have explored the wreck, but it was not until the 1980s and 90s that sport divers began regular journeys to the "Mt Everest" of dives. The list of divers who have visited the wreck reads like a who's who of diving. Divers like Jacques Mayol, Dimitri Rebikoff, Bruno Valatti, Jack McKenny, Stan Waterman, Chuck Nicklin, and Al Giddings are just a few of the early film-makers, divers and inventors who had a hand on exploring the Doria.

These pioneers with limited equipment brought back the early photographs and motion pictures of the sunken liner that were the catalysts to the Doria's future fame. It wasn't until 1981, 25 years after the Doria sank, that she began taking the lives of divers--again in 1985 and then again in 1988. As more charters began making their way through the Nantucket fogs, the divers would begin to die in search of their treasures.

The 1980's claimed four lives. The most gruesome was in 1985 when a Florida diver, John Ormsby, got trapped on a dangling cable and could not get free. At 210 fsw the narcosis coupled with panic sent him into a frenzy. His panic resulted in his mangling and twisting himself around more cables and wires to the point where recovery divers needed to use bolt cutters to extricate his body.

The 1990s became what would come to be known as the "decade of death" on the Doria. The summer of 1992 claimed two lives from insufficient gas supply. In 1994 another died waiting for his buddy to exit from the wreck, and during a 16 month period later in the decade, 5 divers lost their lives diving the Doria. Several popular books have been written covering these tragic events, and I encourage those interested in the Doria to read the books listed below.

Today, diving the wreck of the Andrea Doria is much more challenging than most shipwrecks, although statistically much safer than climbing Mt. Everest. There are several wrecks being visited by divers that are deeper and more challenging than the Doria, but she holds a special place in the minds and hearts of divers everywhere.

*(Continued on page 2)*

### 2006 OFFICERS

*President*  
Steve Fornoff  
426-1267

*Vice President*  
Amy Kurtenbach  
789-9992

*Treasurer*  
Ingrid Niles  
701-0665

*Secretary and Editor*  
Scott Boyd  
456-2066

*Historian and Dive Officer*  
Mark Reece  
459-1602

### MEMBERSHIP

Kelp Krawler dues:  
\$15 single or  
\$25 for a family  
Membership.

Mail to:  
Scott Boyd

[editor@kelpkrawlers.org](mailto:editor@kelpkrawlers.org)

### *Inside this issue:*

Dive Reports	2
Treasurer Hunt	3
Dive News	3
May Meeting Notes	4
June Dive Club Meeting	4
Calendar of Events	4
Club Contact List	5
The Last Word	5

(Continued from page 1)

A recent invitation to join a Doria expedition found me south of Portland listening intently to veteran diver Joel Silverstein talk about his 49 dives on the wreck. Joel went over the history of divers visiting the wreck, from Peter Gimble's first dive on the wreck 28 hours after its sinking to the current state of technical diving on the wreck. Joel's early dives on the Doria were done using air from steel 72's. The mind numbing effects of the nitrogen narcosis and the limited gas supply kept penetration short and direct, using "progressive penetration" methods to map the inside of the wreck in the diver's mind. The brain fog created



by diving air at depths in excess of 200' resulted in them shooting video of their dives and then reviewing the video topside. Upon watching the video, Joel would notice, "hey, you swam past the same china cabinet four times!". They would draw a map, dive again, come up empty and review the second video with a, "hey, you swam right past it again!". On the third dive, they would find the elusive china cabinet and come up with thousands of artifacts from the wreck.



Today's dives on the wreck are done using a mixture of helium, oxygen and air referred to as trimix.

The helium nearly eliminates the mind numbing narcosis, so divers have a calm, clear head at depth. The larger tanks used today allow for longer dive times, and deeper penetration is required to find the artifacts to satisfy the Doria fever that most

of the divers fall prey to. Many cave diving techniques, such as running guidelines and streamlining of the gear have worked their way into the wreck diving community, increasing the safety of dives to the Doria.

While the technology and training available for technical diving has vastly improved the safety of dives to this depth, Joel lamented that many divers venturing to the wreck today lack the experience needed for the tough environmental conditions at the site. He predicts that the high level of traffic to the wreck marking the 50th anniversary of the sinking will result in additional deaths on the Doria. To quote Joel, "anyone with an American Express card can get on a charter out to the Doria, but those lacking the right experience may not come back."

Deciding that I really wanted to "come back" if I dove the wreck, I'll wait another year or two before taking on an expedition to the Andrea Doria. In the meantime, there are plenty of wrecks to see in the Pacific Northwest, and it will give me plenty of time to re-read Deep Descent, Fatal Depth (both about diving the Doria) as well as the Last Dive to scare the heeby-jeebies out of me!

### Flagpole Point

by Scott Boyd

Six intrepid Kelpkrawlers boarded the Down Time on a sunny June 3rd for an expedition in search of the elusive Red Brotula. Excellent, detailed location information was provided by Amy Kurtenbach from her previous dives at Flagpole point, so confidence was high as we descended the down line and navigated out to "the Knuckle".

Like a man with a mission, I made a bee-line for the deep wall, and began cruising along at 110', looking for the distinct features Amy had provided. Sure enough, I found the features, then OH HECK, there it is! Up comes the camera, Flash goes the strobes, bye-bye goes the fish! Oops! We spent about 15 minutes observing this very rare species of fish, which is secretive, light sensitive and hid well back into a narrow crevice where it could move vertically at will to avoid all of us very-noisy divers.

After leaving the brotula, we spotted the usual Wolf Eels, Octopus and Rockfish (Coppers and Yellow Tails). During our surface interval, everyone had enjoyed the dive so much, that we decided to stay in the same location and dive the site again.

For our second dive, I navigated right to the Red Brotula Hotel, but the fish was still very skittish and just wouldn't come out far enough to get the camera to focus or to get any strobe light on it. They are great fun to watch though, and everyone on the boat had a chance to see a very rare and elusive species of fish. Some other interesting items observed during the dive were a pair of gobys mating and a freckled dorid nudibranch (a first for me), as well as the always beautiful Cloud Sponges found at Flagpole Point.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

## Dive News you can Use

### 2006 Treasure Hunt

Owen Beach in Tacoma, was the site of the fourth annual underwater Treasure Hunt on May 13th. There were only 137 divers this year (for 82 prizes) compared to something like 235 last year. The rules were changed significantly this year and worked much better than in previous years.

Each diver/snorkeler was only allowed to bring back one golf ball, so almost everyone that registered was in the drawing for the prizes. The diver that found the \$1000 treasure chest was pretty funny. He lost his dive buddy and was looking for his buddy when, "there it was!"

During the Treasure Hunt, divers searched for specially-marked golf balls that were redeemed for prizes. This year's \$40,000 worth of prizes included a drysuit package as well as trips to dive destinations in Australia, Indonesia and Fiji, dive equipment, charters in the Pacific Northwest, underwater cameras, clothing, jewelry and a bronze mermaid sculpture.

Next year we should take Rick up on his offer of a free booth if we have ten volunteers. There were several dive clubs and web sites at this year's event that had great success recruiting new members. This would likely be better exposure than the Wooden Boat festival among South Sound Divers.

Kelpkrawlers helping with the event were **Scott and Janet Boyd, Duane and Debbie Hamrick, Mike Scholl and Jeff Evans**. Many thanks to the hard work of the volunteers that put on this event. Debbie Hamrick was also the lucky winner of a free 2 tank dive on Bandito Charters. Way to go Debbie!



### WAKULLA SPRINGS, Florida (21 May 2006) --

After six long years of poor site conditions, WKPP Divers Jarrod Jablonski and Casey McKinlay broke their own world cave-diving penetration record at Wakulla Springs State Park. The dive team discovered a new passage along the cave's P-Tunnel at 17,000 feet, which was pushed an additional 3,000 feet to set a new cave penetration record in excess of 20,000 feet from the cave opening.

RB80 team one spent nearly 7 hours in the cave at depths of 250 – 275' and then another 14 hours of decompression stops, which included time spent in an underwater habitats and troughs made from an upside-down Rubbermaid horse watering trough. All members of the dive and support teams returned safely to the surface Sunday morning. Photos and dive reports are posted on the GUE web site

The divers from the Woodville Karst Plain Project ventured 3,000 feet into a previously unexplored cave passageway. It extended to the south and was getting larger as the divers turned back, said Casey McKinlay, project director.

"There is an extremely large tunnel on the southwestern side of the cave system," McKinlay said. "It appears to be getting larger and larger. And there is a large amount of water flowing through it."

The divers, McKinlay and Jarrod Jablonski, turned back only because they had not planned on spending more time in the water. They spent nearly seven hours in the cave and 14 hours underwater going through decompression before emerging at 6 a.m. Sunday.

The dive team plans to return to Wakulla Springs in about three weeks to explore even farther in the new passageway, McKinlay said. That dive, he said, could go about 2,000 feet farther than last weekend's exploration.

(Continued on page 4)

## DIVE SHOP NEWS:

### Capital Divers

866-3684

[www.capitaldivers.com](http://www.capitaldivers.com)

**Palau** trip on the Palau Aggressor June 25-July 2 2006. Akumal Cave diving trip November 4 - 15. Nitrox, argon and hyper filtered air fills available.

**Bandito Charters** on **July 16**, Aug 17, Sep 17, Oct 14, Nov 12 and Dec 9.

### Hood Sport 'n Dive

(360) 877-6818

[www.hoodsportndive.com](http://www.hoodsportndive.com)

The shop has now moved to a new location with convenient boat access 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](http://www.underwatersports.com)

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

(Continued from page 3)

## May Meeting Notes

David Behrens wowed a packed dive club meeting with his presentation on Nudibranchs. David has written several books that are used around the world to identify these colorful critters, and is recognized as one of the world's leading experts in nudibranch biology and behavior.



Some of the highlights of his presentation were: Nudibranchs smell with their rhinophores and breath with a variety of gills (the branchia for which they were named). Many have eyespots but we don't know if they can actually see as it seems to be an evolving optical system. Radula teeth are on their tongues, which they use to scrape their food. Most varieties specialize in one food source, which may impart color to the nudibranchs or even provide nematocysts for protection. Many display aposomatic coloration (I'm bad so don't eat me).

**Members and Guests Present:** Mike Scholl, Andy Mohrle, Steve Sutton, Steve Griffith, Rick Cooper, Duane Hamrick, Alan Niles, Fran Murray, Leo Shaw, Minette Layne, Scott and Janet Boyd, Amy Kurtenbach, Carolyn and Steve Fornoff, Carolyn Thomas, Bonnie Smith.

## June Dive Club Meeting

The June 20th Speaker will be **Mike Racine, President** of the **Washington Scuba Alliance**. The WSA has several projects in the works to promote diving in the Pacific Northwest. Projects include Ships to Reefs, Les Davis, Salt Water State Park, Titlow

Beach, Seacrest, Deception Pass, Maury Island, Keystone and others. For more information, see <http://www.wascubaalliance.org/projects.htm>.

## Upcoming Events:

**Bandito Boat dive – Sunday, July 2nd.** Sign up at Underwater Sports, Olympia.



**Sund Rock dive and BBQ – Saturday, July 15th.**

Meet at Hoodsport N Dive 9 AM  
Pot Luck BBQ at Fornoff's at 2 PM with Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, Steamer Clams, Oysters, and beverages.

Golf Driving Contest (75 yards to the bucket on the Dock)

Please sign up at the Olympia Underwater Sports so Steve and Carolyn can get a head count.

**Vancouver, B.C. – August 12-13.** Two days of 2-tank dives. UW Sports, Oly.

## **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

<b>June 20th:</b>	<b>Club Meeting</b> 7:00 PM, Mike Racine - NorthWest SCUBA Alliance, the "voice of Puget Sound Divers".
<b>June 25 - 2:</b>	<b>Palau Dive Trip</b> , Palau Aggressor II, Capital Divers, contact Craig Brown
<b>July 2nd</b>	<b>Bandito Charters</b> , two tank dive, sign up at Underwater Sports
<b>July 15th</b>	<b>Club Dive and Potluck BBQ</b> , 9:00 AM at Sund Rock and 2 PM at the Fornoff's, contact UW Sports
<b>July 18th</b>	<b>Club Meeting</b> , 7:00 PM, Dirty Dave's Pizza Parlor, Olympia
<b>Aug 12-13</b>	<b>Vancouver, B.C. Dive Trip</b> , sign up at Underwater Sports.
<b>Sept 19th</b>	<b>Club Meeting</b> , 7:00 PM, Dirty Dave's Pizza Parlor