

Priceless

ScubaH2Omag.com

March 2017 • Issue 3



SCUBA & H2O

ADVENTURES



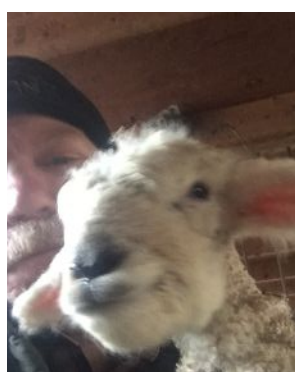
**NORTH
CAROLINA
DIVE INTO
HISTORY**

**TOBERMORY
FRESHWATER
CAPITAL OF THE
WORLD**

**SPECTACULAR
NANAIMO
BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

SE	North Carolina Artificial Reef 6 North Carolina - Diving into History 10
NE	LIDA Film Festival Recap 14 Ocean Wreck Divers Flea Market 18 Tobermory Adventure 20 Beaneath the Sea Honors 24 Chicago Show Recap 30 Lake Ontario Wreck Diving 32
MW	
NW	WSA Promtes New Dive Sites 38 H2O Show Seminars 40 Nanaimo British Columbia Jewel 42
SW	Force Blue Inspires Vets 48 Diving Balmorhea Springs TX 56 The Kitty Wake Connection 60
	DAN - Buoyancy Skills 62 Alec's Tech Tips 64 Basic Skills - Advanced Dives 66
	Critter Corner 69 Gear Check 70 Directories 72

March MADNESS



As March arrives I find myself looking out the window as I move closer to the heater and think fondly of the coming spring and the warmer weather ahead. This past month has been event filled as the dive industry prepares for the coming season by hosting regional dive shows across the country: Texas, Chicago, Boston, Ohio, and Wisconsin all celebrated diving last month.

For the past month my life has been filled with traveling to dive shows and celebrating new life and the arrival of spring with the birth of baby lambs on the farm. Most days and nights are filled with bottles, towels, and warm heat lamps in a barn. Nothings say spring like a baby lamb looking for her mother in the early morning hours!

As we usher in the baby lambs and attend dive shows, DNN staff worked hard on this month's edition finding great stories from all across North America to people in, on, and under the water.

In our Southeast, the regional news story covers the sinking of two new shipwrecks in North Carolina. The folks at the Eastern Carolina Artificial Reef Association (ECARA) are celebrating 10 years of creating sustainable underwater habitats and dive attractions by sinking two new reefs in 2017. The first wreck will be sunk in April and the second later this summer. Learn more about their mission on page 6.

Our Southeast destination features the incredible scuba diving in the great state of North Carolina. For those who think of North Carolina as the Graveyard of the Atlantic, that would only be partially correct. Depending on the time of year and the currents, these waters rival anything that the Caribbean has to offer. Moreover, this year marks the 75 year anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic – ready this story and find out why North Carolina is a must dive state.

In our Northwest regional news section, correspondent Gary Lehman reports on the recent LIDA (Long Island Dive Association) Film Festival, held mid January in NYC. Gary and his pals at the Scuba Sports Club enjoyed the evening and presentations by the many world-class speakers. Great job to LIDA and all those who attended the evening festivities and won the incredible door prizes donated by the many attending dive businesses. Mark your calendars for next year – more on page 14.

Galivanting across the state to nearby New Jersey, Gary worked with his pal Pat Considine to cover the annual Ocean Wreck Diver's Flea Market and Swap Meet. Held on Feb 19 in Tom's River, New Jersey, the event was attended by local divers, dive clubs and dive shops to bring camaraderie to the east coast dive community. Hats off to all who attended and supported the worthwhile event. Read their story on page 18.

In our Northeast destination we feature one of the best diving areas in the Great Lakes – the beautiful Tobermory in the Bruce Peninsula of Ontario. Located 200 miles Northwest of Toronto, Tobermory is recognized as the freshwater scuba capital of the world. Here divers can dive on shipwrecks that sank more than 100 years ago and yet they look like they are ready to sail again.

ABOUT THE COVER:
*Outstanding photo by
Jennifer Idol
of Ben Castro in
Balmorhea Springs, Texas*

Publisher: Rick Stratton
rickstratton.dnn@gmail.com
Managing Editor: John Tapley
dnn.editor@outlook.com
Editor-at-Large:
Jennifer Idol
Regional Correspondents
Gene Muchanski - SE
Rick Knight - SW
Editor: Selene Muldowney
selene.dnn@gmail.com
Advertising Sales: Rick Stratton
rickstratton.dnn@gmail.com
Circulation/Subscriptions:
360.639-8205
For more info, please visit
www.scubaH2omag.com

SCUBA & H2O Adventure is published monthly by the Dive News Network Media Group at PO Box 1494, Oak Harbor, WA 98277. The Dive News Network Media Group reserves the right to refuse service to anyone it chooses. © 2015-2017 Dive News Network Media Group. All rights reserved.

Important notice: The contents of SCUBA & H2O Adventure are opinions of individual writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher, editor or any of its staff. The publishers and contributors assume no responsibility for any mishap claimed to the a result of use of this material. Adventure sports contain inherent risks. Improper use of equipment or improper techniques may result in serious injury or death. Readers are advised to use their own best judgement in each individual situation.

We encourage readers to participate in determining the content of this publication by giving us their opinions on the types of articles they would like to see. We invite letters to the editor, manuscripts and photographs related to diving or dive-related business. Send us your stories and photos!

The Kittiwake Connection

Article by Michael Salvatorezza, photos by Christopher P. Weaver

It took a while to sink the *USS Kittiwake*. Ten years, and twenty minutes in fact. But on January 5, 2011, the *USS Kittiwake* (ASR-13), a chanticleer-class submarine rescue vessel that was launched on July 10, 1945 and decommissioned on September 30, 1994, began the next phase of her long and distinguished career as an artificial reef off the northern end of Seven Mile Beach on Grand Cayman Island. On that day, after three long hours of waiting in the warm Caribbean sun after the process of sinking the ship started, the hull finally began to fill with water and the throngs of onlookers began to cheer loudly as the ship slowly dipped beneath the clear, blue waters of Grand Cayman. The stern sank first, followed by a foamy burst of bubbles as the rest of the ship quickly disappeared from view. A new dive site had been created, one that was immediately popular and that continues to receive scores of divers each week to this day.

Divers who visit the *Kittiwake* today find a mesmerizing wreck sitting upright on a white, sandy bottom only a short boat ride from the resorts along Seven Mile Beach. The ship is resting in 62 feet of water, making her an ideal spot for divers of all certification levels. The top of the wreck is within seven feet of the surface, and can be enjoyed by snorkelers and divers alike.

It is a terrific wreck for divers wishing to explore its photogenic superstructure and its many exciting passageways. Open hatch doors, left over decompression chambers, ghostly staircases and various winches and other equipment all serve to capture the imagination of divers exploring the proud ship.

But many do not fully appreciate the long road traversed to bring this wreck to the island of Grand Cayman. Similarly, the history of the *Kittiwake*, with an important connection to one of the most tragic events in the history of space exploration, is not

often fully appreciated by those swimming through her now watery corridors.

To start, in the early days of the *Kittiwake's* career she primarily accompanied submarines during their sea trials and maneuvers to monitor diving operations, practice underwater rescue procedures and recovered practice torpedoes.

Notably, in her fourth year in 1949 she provided the divers and equipment used during salvage operations to free the battleship *Missouri* from the tidal banks off Thimble Shoals, Virginia, where she had run aground.

In the 1950s, the *Kittiwake* cruised up and down the Atlantic seaboard supporting ships of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet of Submarines in various activities and maneuvers.

Many of her missions up to this point were routine and fairly nondescript. But her connection to military history was sharpened when on July 20, 1960, the

THEIR FUTURE DEPENDS ON US

PROJECT AWARE
WWW.PROJECTAWARE.ORG

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR INCREASED PROTECTIONS FOR SHARKS AND RAYS

Photo: Steve Woods



Kittiwake stood by off Cape Canaveral, Florida as the submarine *USS George Washington* launched the first two Polaris ballistic missiles ever fired from a submarine underwater.

In contrast, on February 2, 1963, off Key West, Florida, she established herself as a permanent part of American history when she spotted the Cuban boat *Jose Maria Perez*, subsequently taking on board 12 refugees fleeing communist oppression in Cuba and carrying them to safety in Key West.

The *Kittiwake* served the United States admirably around the world, including several long tours of duty in the Mediterranean Sea. These types of service vessels operate behind the scenes and do not often receive the accolades or prominent publicity that other vessels engaged in active combat sometimes receive, but they are essential to the effective operations of our military. In 1986, this type of service from the *Kittiwake* came into clear focus.

On January 28, 1986, a horrified nation watched as the Space Shuttle Challenger exploded 73 seconds into its flight, killing all seven crewmembers on board. The spacecraft disintegrated over a section of the Atlantic Ocean off Cape Canaveral, Florida after the failure of an O-ring in its solid rocket booster allowed pressurized burning gas to compromise the structural integrity of the vehicle. At 11:39am EST, the nation watched as a schoolteacher, and six other astronauts, perished on national television.

In the immediate aftermath of the tragedy, questions were raised as to the ability of the astronauts to survive the crash. Naturally, the recovery of the vehicle's "blackbox", similar to those used on commercial airliners, became a prime focus for NASA

 A promotional graphic for the Southern Cross Club. The background is a collage of tropical scenes: palm trees on a beach, a diver underwater, a person on a beach, and a person on a surfboard. The text is centered on a light blue background with floral patterns.

EST 1958

Barfoot Elegance

SOUTHERN CROSS CLUB

LITTLE CAYMAN • BWI

Reservations:
1-800-899-2582
info@southerncrossclub.com
www.SouthernCrossClub.com

FISH • KITE • DIVE • RELAX



as they struggled to find answers to those types of questions. A lengthy search began, with ships combing the Atlantic for the blackbox, the crew compartment and any other vehicle fragments. The Department of Defense, on behalf of NASA, managed the search, with assistance from the United States Coast Guard. Of course, the exact location of the debris field was kept secret to discourage scavengers and was designated simply as "Area 37". The Coast Guard referred to the search area as the largest search in which they had ever participated.

In a little known footnote to this tragic story, but one of immense importance, it was the *Kittiwake* that eventually recovered the Space Shuttle Challenger Blackbox from the floor of the Atlantic Ocean. This Blackbox provided troves of valuable information to NASA and the rest of the world regarding the exact conditions that led to the explosion, and the eventual fate of the astronauts on board.

Less than 10 years later, in 1994, the United States government decommissioned the *Kittiwake* and she was mothballed in James River, Virginia. Her fate, at that point, was very uncertain.

In 2002, the Cayman Islands Tourism Association began looking for ways to boost dive tourism to the islands. Although scuba divers had been visiting the Cayman Islands for decades, enjoying the world famous reefs and wall dives and marveling at the gin-clear waters and pristine beaches, the association felt that a shipwreck of prominent stature was needed to keep divers interested in coming to the islands. The *Kittiwake* became the focus of their plan to bring such a ship to Grand Cayman.

The United States Maritime Administration (MARAD) oversees the disposition of decommissioned government vessels and

will provide ships free of charge to states or counties that can ensure that the ship will be responsibly sunk at an approved location. Part of preparing a ship for intentional sinking involves the cleaning of all contaminants and toxic substances. This is an expensive and time-consuming process. Oils, asbestos, PCBs and other contaminants are common on these vessels and all must be removed completely before any sinking is to be arranged. The *Kittiwake* was the first such ship undergoing this process to be given to a foreign government.

In addition to the preparation of the ship, many legal hurdles have to be cleared before a sinking can take place. One such challenge is the selection of the site and the environmental impact study that must be done to ensure that the ship will not create damage or cause harm to the environment. Once this was complete, and the ship was cleaned properly and completely, the plans to transport the *Kittiwake* from Virginia to the Cayman Islands were put into place. Even though the ship was ready in late summer of 2010, it was determined to be too risky to tow the ship during hurricane season. On December 17, 2010 the *Kittiwake* began her final voyage at sea, departing the James River facility in Virginia heading south to the Caribbean and the Cayman Islands.

It took years for the Cayman Islands' project to sink the *Kittiwake* to come to completion...ten years to be exact. Today, the ship rests quietly in the warm, clear waters of the Caribbean Sea, a popular dive site with scuba divers from around the world. But like so many other shipwrecks, the *Kittiwake* has a story to tell. It is a story of resolute service and connections to history. It is a story of search and recovery following a national tragedy. It is a story that is documented and stored away in libraries of Government records but one that is not often appreciated by those who

visit her remains today.

So, when you swim through the shadowy corridors of the *Kittiwake*, remember the many years of proud service she provided. It will make your dive all the more special.

Getting There

International visitors arrive into Grand Cayman's modern Owen Roberts International Airport. Visitors are required to hold a valid passport for travel to/from Grand Cayman. Passports must be valid for six months beyond the date of arrival. The resorts at Seven Mile Beach are a 15 minute ride by taxi from the airport.

Baggage

Baggage allowances vary for each international carrier, so check before you leave! Note: Some international carriers are now enforcing weight and size limits for carry-on bags as well what is considered a personal carry-on type of bag.

Weather

Grand Cayman lies in the Caribbean south of Cuba. There are two seasons on Grand Cayman: the summer or "rainy" season, generally from mid-May through October, moving into the winter or "dry" season, from November to April. March and April are the driest months and May and October are traditionally the highest rainfall months.

The average temperature in the winter is 75-85 degrees Fahrenheit and 80-95 degrees in the summer.

Currency

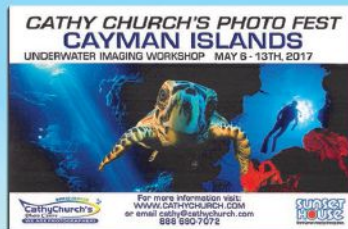
The Caymanian Dollar is the currency of Cayman Islands but US dollars are widely accepted.





© CathyChurch.com 2016

WORLD FAMOUS
CathyChurch's
 Photo Centre
WE ARE PHOTOGRAPHERS
 CAMERAS - CLASSES - GALLERY - RENTALS



CATHY'S ANNUAL PHOTO FEST
 MAY 6 - 13TH 2017



SEPT 5-16TH
& 16-26TH



CAMERA RENTALS

Try underwater photography by renting! All rentals come with a FREE mini lesson! Systems for every level.



LEARN PHOTOGRAPHY ABOVE AND UNDERWATER

from Cathy or our talented staff at the largest underwater photo school in the world.



DREAM CHARTER FOR UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHERS

The ultimate learning experience. Hands-on instruction from Cathy herself, on the boat, and in the water, to make sure you get great photos.



DUTY FREE DISCOUNT CAMERAS

LARGEST INVENTORY OF ABOVE & UNDERWATER CAMERAS IN CAYMAN AT GUARANTEED LOWEST PRICES

Visit our web site at www.cathychurch.com

Cayman (345) 949-7415 U.S. (607) 330-3504