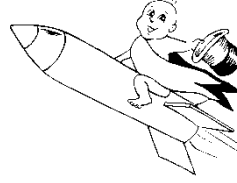




Kwajalein Scuba Club

The *First Stage* Newsletter – January 2013



Happy New Year KSC!!!

Proposed 2013 Changes to KSC Constitution

The KSC Executive Council discussed and agreed with the following changes to the KSC Constitution and presented them to the membership in attendance January 9th. A modified draft is to be posted to the website for final comment and editing at the February meeting.

Article IV – Elected Officers. Proposed change: Add term limits of two consecutive years and five year cumulative lifetime to section C of Term of Office for elected officers. Rationale: Look at our Congress and House of Representatives to see why term limits are needed and it is a simple fact that qualified people are hesitant or even unable to unseat incumbents. New and innovative ideas usually happen in the first two years for newly elected persons and rarely spring out of longtime incumbents or people who seek positions of power more for personal reasons. Focus should be on supporting the membership and make it a club people want to actively participate in. Enforcing term limits affords the opportunity for vitality and keeping an active club. Since Appointed officers are changed by the incoming EC it has been determined not to set a lifetime limitation on those positions but require the positions to be announced to allow people to express interest and qualifications for consideration.

Article V – Appointed Officers. Proposed change: Update from 4 positions to 5 by adding an Event Coordinator Officer position. Rationale: Look at this last year and ask yourself if the KSC has been more active than past years? Then ask where this effort has come from and you'll see the same officer(s) hosting events. Adding an Event Coordinator Officer who wants to help plan and oversee these events will help spread the workload to ensure fun and creative events continue. This is NOT a paid position and only a free membership for their time.

Article V – Appointed Officers, D.3 Qualifications. Proposed change: Reverse the 2011 decision for the Safety and Training Officer qualification and restore it to require an Instructor level certification. Rationale: For decades the KSC ST&O has been a position that required an Instructor level rating based on the duties for coordinating training activities, investigating violations, and investigating injuries. This was changed in 2011 since several instructors to include the incumbent ST&O were leaving Kwajalein. There was concern that with only four instructors remaining there may not be one who would volunteer so it was opened up to only a Dive Master rating. Technically, that could allow someone with only 50 dives and initial professional training to be appointed the ST&O. The ST&O should revert to Instructor rating since the requirements, training focus, and liability/risk analysis is much higher at the instructor level. The current EC feels the 2011 change wasn't needed and potentially reduces ST&O experience requirements/qualifications.

One additional change, to Article IV – Elected Officers Section B, was suggested by several members. Proposed change: Amend to include provision of verified proxy voting specifically if a KSC member is a current resident but is off island for vacation, TDY, or Medical during the May voting. Proxy voting should not be allowed if a person came to the April Safety meeting but just doesn't want to attend in May and should ONLY be considered if the resident is a current member who is off island

at the May voting. The logistics of this will have to be discussed and accountability should be verified by the user emailing proof of absence and candidate selection to the KSC Secretary which we preclude some anonymity of voting but still allow the member's vote to count.

Advanced Open Water - Why It's Important

Contributed by: Rob Clayton, KSC Safety and Training Officer

The Advanced Open Water course, as it is commonly known, is the next level of diver certification following Open Water. The course involves five dives, some of which are predetermined by the course requirements and the others are chosen by you and your instructor. Two dives will be a part of every Advanced course, as they are required by the training agencies. These are a Deep dive and an Underwater Navigation dive. A Night dive used to be a requirement as well and while these days, it has been converted to an elective dive by most, but not all, of the agencies, it is still highly recommended. The remainder of the dives are elective dives consisting of things like Wreck dive, Search and Recovery dive, Underwater Photography dive, etc. The list goes on, but you get the idea. You and your instructor choose two or three of these elective dives to add to the required dives in order to complete the five dives needed for the certification. The Advanced Open Water certification is available to all divers, ages 12 and up, although the maximum depth of the Deep dive is slightly restricted at the Jr. Advanced Open Water level.

As you should already know, the Kwajalein SCUBA Club has a requirement that all members must be certified to the level of Advanced Open Water within six months of becoming a member, if they do not already have the certification. What you may not know is how that rule came to be and why it's important.

Several years ago, there was an unfortunate incident which involved the tragic loss of a couple KSC members. After the incident, the club was given an ultimatum, of sorts, by USAKA - You do something to prevent this sort of thing from happening again, or we will do it for you. As a result, the club instituted the Advanced Open Water requirement to ensure that all KSC members received continuing training that went beyond the minimum that is received during the Open Water certification. That satisfied USAKA, the rule has been in place ever since and it's a rule we all agree to follow when we sign our membership agreement each year.

Regardless of whether or not we have a rule that says you must take the course, receiving your Advanced Open Water certification is just a good idea. Unfortunately though, many divers don't take advantage of the additional training when they need it the most. Some divers feel having just completed their Open Water course, they are not ready for the Advanced course. This is sometimes a result of their instructor's advice to go get some experience before signing up for the Advanced course. Most instructors agree however, the Advanced course is specifically designed to give newly certified divers the experience they need and ensures they do it under the guidance and supervision of an instructor, rather than learning new skills by trial and error, so it's best to do it right away.

Another reason new divers sometimes feel they are not ready for the Advanced course is the name of the course itself. I have always felt that Advanced Open Water is not a good choice for a name and to be fair, not every training agency uses that name. I would much prefer something like Open Water Part 2. Calling it Advanced Open Water implies, to many people, one of two things: One - They need to be a highly skilled diver before taking on such an intimidating sounding course; or Two - After taking the course, they will instantly become a highly skilled diver because their card says so. Both of these assumptions are incorrect.

The skills taught in the course are intended for new divers and these are skills that are best learned from an instructor rather than trying to figure them out on your own. A close call happened here on Kwajalein last year involving a group of Open Water divers that surfaced far away from their boat and almost didn't make it back. This was partially due to a simple navigational error and might have been prevented with the skills learned in the Underwater Navigation portion of an Advanced course.

It is also important to remember that receiving an Advanced Open Water certification does not magically grant you the complete mastery of all these new skills. It simply gives you the knowledge and the training to enable you to go out and practice them in the safe, proper way. Remember, an Advanced Open Water card means nothing more than a diver has completed at least nine dives with their instructor, has had training beyond the Open Water level and at one point in time, demonstrated competence in a particular list of dive skills. What happens next is up to you. It is important to then get in the water and practice what you have learned and THAT will help you become an Advanced Diver.

Scuba Santa Arrives at Emon Beach in Full Regalia

Contributed by: Ivy Springer, KSC Chief Dive Supervisor

Sunday, December 16th was one of those perfect evenings in paradise. The weather was pleasant, the tide was high, and children of all ages anxiously awaited the arrival of Scuba Santa, his elves, and the Christmas tree to emerge from the lagoon at Emon Beach at sunset – and they did so in grand Kwaj style. It was magical as the two tree handlers brought the brightly lit, decorated tree to the water's edge to the sounds of a cheering, picture-taking crowd.

Moments later Scuba Santa and his Scuba elves surfaced in full regalia as the crowd grew more animated. Scuba Santa and his entourage stopped for photos then proceeded up the beach to the lavishly decorated Scuba Shack. The crowd followed, and children shouted with delight as they received chem-lights, Christmas candy, and special holiday time with Scuba Santa. Happy kids and chem-lights were seen dancing up and down the beach as Yacht Club's Christmas Parade of Lights continued to adorn the lovely Kwaj night.

A huge round of applause goes out to SBM, KPD, Doug Hepler, Bob Greene, Ivy Springer, Jim Bishop, Tim Walker, Tracy Overby, Bill Glynn and the dozens of hard-working KSC members who volunteered hundreds of hours over several months - to make this a spectacular event for KSC and the entire Kwajalein Community.

2012 Christmas Party - Update

The Kwajalein Scuba Club Christmas Party & Diver's Alert Network (**DAN**) fundraiser was a sweet success. Members and their guests met at the American Legion Post #44 - Veteran's Hall for a Mongolian BBQ dinner where guests selected fresh vegetables, meats, and sauces that were grilled up before their eyes while DJ Neil Dye handled the ambiance. Each dinner ticket included one entry into a huge door prize raffle with nearly 40 prizes ranging from a donated t-shirt, KSC beach towel, orientation dives, AOW classes, all the way up to an \$800 high-end regulator won by Dave Scheivert.

The silent auction and additional raffle tickets sold generated a little over \$2000 for the non-profit Diver's Alert Network (**DAN**) which wasn't too shabby. Thank you to the volunteers who helped make this a success and to the KSC members who came to the event. I hope I haven't missed anyone but also a special thanks to the following vendor's for their gracious contributions to the fundraiser:

Rebecca Autry

Hand crafted Jewelry

John Breen

Framed sunset print

Jane Cavender	Stained glass turtle
Rob Clayton	Canvass print photograph
Kwaj Dive & Bike	Ladies wetsuit and t-shirts
Evangellen Ebel	Hand crafted plaque
Carolyn Eggers	Tapestry and Jewelry
Linn Ezell	Framed underwater print
Doug Hepler	AOW classes
Jim Hockenberger	Hand crafted Pottery
Sherry Olson	Hand crafted Pottery
John Pennington	Dive computer and Regulator set
Brad Pinnell	Engraved wooden scuba pen
Dick & Cheryl Shields	Several dance classes
Judy Shimamoto	Hand crafted Pottery
Ivy Springer	KSC orientation dive
Bobby Wells	Hand crafted Jewelry
Jane Woundy	Hand crafted Jewelry

Mayan Apocalypse Night Dive - Update



This KSC sponsored event on December 21st was a blast with over 46 divers in attendance. Many non-diving family members also came out to enjoy the evening and watched the divers from the rocks. Hamburgers and Hotdogs were grilled up fresh and ready for divers before and after their dive. Special thanks to Doug Hepler who conceived the event, Beachmaster Mo Oliver, and to all of the volunteers who helped with everything from decorations, moving tables, cooking, and other support for our membership. A commemorative t-shirt design was created and each participant will receive a free shirt. To keep the event “special” for those who came there will not be any extra shirts ordered.

Phew....what a year!!!

Contributed By: John Pennington, KSC President

I don't know about you but 2012 seems like a crazy blur of memories to me. Oddly enough it seemed to start slowly but then we ramped up for mission which meant lots of TDY diver support, KSC Executive Council changes, Splash-for-Trash, underwater Pumpkin Carving, Turkey Hunt, restored evening/night diving, new tanks, Scuba Santa, Christmas party & DAN fundraiser, Mayan Apocalypse dive, and a New Year's Eve dive!!! Holy smokes what a busy year for the KSC volunteers and what a great value to the KSC membership for their \$120 per year in dues. I would like to extend a heart-felt and sincere THANK YOU to all of the volunteers who have helped make the Kwajalein Scuba Club arguably the BEST and most unique scuba diving club in the World.

So, now that 2012 is gone, what is next? I am very eager to continue our KSC activities for 2013 and am really looking forward to events like the upcoming underwater Easter Egg hunt. My personal goal will be getting my “Torpedo Trail” idea for a compass navigation course in put place at zero cost to

the membership. I would also like to organize a trip to Lone Palm like I did in 2010 if we can get permission to do so. In a nutshell, I want to continue working to make the KSC the best club on island without depleting our financial or volunteer resources. I hope you have been happy with my contributions in 2012 and will be supportive of me in 2013 as we work to continue improving the KSC.

KSC Upcoming Events – Save these dates on your calendar!

❖ **January 9th, 2013**

KSC Monthly meeting, Wednesday at the Pacific Club. Dive Locker access will be 6:30-7:00 as well as a meet/greet social with desserts/beverages for TDY folks and regular members to share stories or find a new dive buddy. KSC Constitution changes to be discussed.

❖ **February 11th, 2013 10:00AM-3:00PM**

KSC Swap Meet

Did you get nice dive gear over the holidays and now you have an extra BCD, DPV, knife, or weights laying around that you would like to trade for cash? Are you interested in obtaining good prices on new and used gear? Have you made a New Year's resolution to do some house cleaning? If you answer YES to any of these questions then come out for the swap meet. Members can sign up for one free table to display your goods so come on down.

The hours were intentionally scheduled to bridge boating hours so you don't have to decide on diving or looking for new gear. Additional tables for member tables or dive vendors will be available for a small fee and on a limited basis relevant to pre-registration counts. Contact John Pennington with questions or to reserve a table.

❖ **February 13th, 2013**

KSC Monthly meeting, Wednesday at the Pacific Club. Dive Locker access will be 6:30-7:00 as well as a meet/greet social with desserts/beverages for TDY folks and regular members to share stories or find a new dive buddy. Final KSC Constitution changes to be discussed.

KSC First Stage Improvements? Any KSC 2012 Pictures to Share?

We hope you have enjoyed the information and pictures in the First Stage last year but we are always looking for input from KSC members to improve the newsletter. Please let us know if you have an interesting event or anecdote to share, a survey you would like to see, or other input to the First Stage. Also, if you have any pictures of the MANY activities this year, please share them with us. John Pennington is creating albums on the KSC Facebook page and would like to add pictures that you have taken at KSC event or other great pictures of diving in/around Kwajalein. Please send your input to penningtonscuba@gmail.com for consideration. Thanks!!!

Old But Relevant News:

USAKA Water Regulation 385-9 Has Been Updated!!!

In general diving hours of Sunrise to 10:00PM are in effect every day for Kwajalein residents. We still have to file a night dive plan and have two light sources if you will be under water after dark. As a simple example, you wouldn't go in after 6:00PM without filing a night dive plan with KPD and you will call them within 30 minutes of exiting to close the plan. TDY divers must have USAKA approval for night dives or to dive below 50-foot during the day.