

undercurrent

THE PRIVATE, EXCLUSIVE GUIDE FOR SERIOUS DIVERS

September, 1975

P. O. Box 1658, Sausalito, California 94965

Cable Address: Gooddiving

St. Thomas, Virgin Islands:

With three fine guides there's diving for everyone

Like many diving tourists, I arrived in St. Thomas not knowing who to dive with or even whether the diving was good. I had picked up brochures from my travel agent but had never talked with any one who had been diving there. Nevertheless, I decided to take my chances. It was such a hot day that I stopped in the airport bar to contemplate my dilemma. Over a cold Carlsberg I thumbed through a copy of St. Thomas This Week, a tourist guide available everywhere, and found a section on diving. I was in luck, I thought.

That evening, I strolled through the quaint streets of Charlotte Amalie, the main city. Sparky's Waterfront Saloon looked like a nautical place for a bite to eat, and indeed it was. At the bar, the fellow next to me said he knew where the lobsters were, and if I cared to go with his family on their boat he would pay me \$2 for every lobster I brought up. Not bad, I said, and took his business card. He introduced me to the bartender, who was quick to tell me that he had an article published in Skin Diver. I told him I was a vacationing diver (we reviewers for Undercurrent never mention our affiliation) and asked about the shops mentioned in the guide. He said they were ok, but most people thought that Armando Jenick and Dave Fredenbaugh were the best guides on the Island, and they didn't advertise. As it turned out later, he was right on target.

In Sparky's we were all entertained by an old hardhat diver, a feisty little Popeye of a man who weaved tales of his underwater work while occasionally interrupting his monologue to dodge imaginary sharks or giant squid. Once he was so startled by the opening notes from the juke box, that he spun around, spilling beer on everyone in his path, then fell over backwards. He apologized and said that his 440 foot dives had made him a little jumpy.

One unique aspect of St. Thomas diving is that old bottles abound in the harbor of Charlotte Amalie. It's a favorite port for tourist ships, and when they embark their enormous screws churn up deposits centuries old, exposing a new bottom each time. Bottle divers follow in the ships' wake, hoping to find artifacts never before exposed.

INSIDE UNDERCURRENT

Excursion Air Fares: <i>Getting to St. Thomas</i>	p. 3
Congress, The President, Diving Equipment and You: <i>Discount prices ahead, but some shops may suffer</i>	p. 5
Falling Over Backwards: <i>An Undercurrent safety reminder</i>	p. 5
Making Your Diving Less Taxing: <i>You and the IRS</i>	p. 6
Goody Bag	p. 8

St. Thomas has no full-fledged dive resort, but it's a fine all-around vacation spot and for a diving trip it's well worth considering, whether you're a beginning or experienced diver. There are an endless number of splendid diving locations where you're apt to see just about anything that lives in warm tropical waters. On this trip, the visibility never exceeded 80 feet, but unlike Jamaica (see August '75), even when it crept as low as 50 feet I was not disappointed. Locals blamed the visibility on a plankton bloom, which they say appears up to one-third of the year. The only disturbing feature was the fire coral, which I'm convinced is free swimming and aggressive in St. Thomas.

Virgin Islands Diving School (PO Box 4922, St. Thomas, VI, 00801) ... A short walk from the tourist ship mooring, the VIDS is the most complete dive shop on the Island and can promptly handle any equipment problems. I dealt mainly with Linda Ellis and her husband Marv, a graduate of Brawley's Instructional College in Monterey. The competent staff is aggressively sales-oriented; I bought \$30 worth of accessories I doubt that I needed.

When I arrived for the regular 11 a.m. boat dive, Linda made a thorough check of my equipment, insisting on seeing my BC and seawater gauge even though I said I had them. I was not asked, however, to prove my certification, a surprise after the thorough checkout. Like other Island shops, they normally have non-certified divers on the boat trips, but because of their central location they attract more neophytes than the other shops, except for the hotels. Of the five paying customers on the trip, two were not certified.

Dives are \$20 for one tank and \$30 for two, the same rate at all shops reviewed here. After paying, I hopped in their van for a short ride to the boat, and then there was a 30 minute ride to a small cay. As we dressed, Marv checked our equipment, gave us the dive plan, and carefully watched each of us enter the water. The dive was the least satisfying of my stay, however still enjoyable. The visibility was roughly 40 feet, the fish and coral nicely varied, but not particularly abundant. The bottom seemed exceptionally silty, as if covered by centuries of parrot fish excrement. Marv was disappointed and suggested a sunken freighter where we could expect much lower visibility, but surely a different type of dive. We quickly agreed.

With 15 foot visibility at the freighter, Marv carefully monitored all divers. It was exciting to cruise through the hatches and doorways, past standing bunk beds with their springs still intact, to swim by a lonely toilet, lid up and ready for use, to glide through the galley and past the resident eel weaving from a stove burner to menace these enormous intruders. One of our companions, an Englishman diving in warm waters for the first time, was sniffed at by a 4 foot barracuda. Later he asked "what was that curious large fish." His face whitened and his eyes widened when he heard the answer. He had never seen a barracuda before and he was glad to be going home, thank you.

The VIDS does most of its diving on the south side of the Island, which is not quite as good as the east end where the shops reviewed later are located. Marv will take you where he can find the best diving of the day, consistent with the skills of the people on board. Marv is a first-rate guide who helped the least experienced enter and leave the water, kept close contact with everyone below the surface, provided clear dive plans, and ran a text book dive. And, he loves to talk about diving. If you're a beginner you won't find yourself in more gentle hands anywhere. If you're experienced, you won't be disappointed getting your snorkel wet here before moving on to more adventuresome skippers.

John Hamber's Watersports (Star Route, St. Thomas, 00801)... The nifty little pitch in the weekly guide led me to John Hamber's. Hamber asked how I found his shop and I mentioned the guide, asking him how he got such a nice spiel.

"It cost me about a thousand," he said, and acknowledged that it was worth every penny. The ad got me out to dive with him.

Hamber's assistant, Gary Dearing, took me to the Cow and Calves, a popular dive site. I was the only customer for the afternoon dive. I asked if I needed a wet suit top and Gary said no. After entering the water, it occurred to me that he had worn his. I got cold. He didn't. Thanks for the advice, Gary.

Visibility ranged between 50-75 feet. A family of large queen angel fish provided a great show, and fish of all sort darted among the colorful rock and coral formations and tunnels. The depth never exceeded 60 feet, making it a fine place for natural light photography. Gary led me a little too fast to take the time I needed for photography, but I should have made my preferences known before entering the water. On the trip back, I found him difficult to extract information from. When I asked whether he had ever used the shark billy strapped to his tank, he would only say that sharks never come into water this shallow. He's a competent and careful guide, but because I also pay my \$30 for an inside rap on local folklore, shark stories, and good diving tips, I found Armando Jenick a better investment.

Armando Jenick's Ocean Adventures (55 Frydenhoj, St. Thomas, 00801)... Armando's shop is located at Compass Point Marina on the east end of the Island, 20 minutes from Charlotte Amalie. Armando, born in Argentina, is an accomplished underwater photographer. Mention photography and he'll show you his portfolio, which includes shots published in Hans Hannau's fine book on the Caribbean. Last winter he guided a trip by Ron and Valerie Taylor which included footage of nurse sharks that show up in January and February.

On the boat, Armando explained that he would be happy to use the dive to help me with my photography. To him, good photography employs posed settings, and he would show me how. Before entering the water he carefully checked out my equipment, then once on the bottom we exchanged ok signs, which he requested a dozen more times during the dive. He took pains to point out unique shots, and posed himself for my lens, and then posed me for shots he would take with my camera. He sat in a large basket sponge, he angled a nice trumpet fish between his face and my lens, he drove angel fish toward me. Once he grabbed his crotch and with his other hand pointed at what I thought was simply a cluster of fish. I shrugged my shoulders but he persisted. Then I noticed an angry sergeant major attacking a large parrot fish chewing on the coral. With a single snap the parrot fish would always turn back the noncom. Later, Armando explained that the parrot fish was eating eggs of the sergeant major, and only then did I understand his oblique reference.

Armando and I dove the same spot as I had with Gary Dearing. Unlike yesterday, however, Armando made it come alive. He was not on the dive only to make sure that I didn't run out of air or forget where the boat was anchored. He was an active participant and a constant communicator with the underwater environment and with me. Armando

Excursion Air Fares: Getting to St. Thomas
Round trip excursion air fares are the best deal for divers who want to arrange their own accommodations and are not traveling in groups. To take advantage of excursion rates, you are usually required to stay a minimum number of days (often 4-7) and depart before a maximum (often 30 days). There are usually no other requirements and you fly scheduled flights. A tip! *Don't just ask for the lowest fare, ask for the excursion fare.* American's best round trip rate between Washington D.C. and St. Thomas is \$251, their standard coach fare. Eastern's best is \$226. *But then there's Pan Am.* Their excursion rate is \$178 and they only require a 30 day limit on your visit. When you're planning a vacation, to get the lowest fare, *the rule is shop around.*

made the dive a full experience with his enthusiasm, skill and saavy.

For experienced divers, Armando is an exceptional guide. He's quite informative, willing to discuss in detail any aspect of diving, and willing to share his knowledge. If you've demonstrated your competency, he'll take you any place you want to go. Had I more time, I would have dived daily with Armando.

Dave Fredenbaugh/Lagoon Undersea Center (Harms Marina, Red Hook, St. Thomas, 00801)... The Lagoon Undersea Center is not affiliated with a chain of Undersea Centers at the hotels. They cater to inexperienced tourists, while Dave and his wife cater to experienced locals and touring divers. They are themselves such diving enthusiasts that everyday they close their shop at 11 a.m. to go diving.

A 25 minute boat ride took us to a large rocky island about a third of the way to St. John. Dave gave a brief dive plan and then said that sharks occasionally appear here. If we were to see one, back against the rocks and stare directly at him. That's always worked and, according to Dave, the last attack was 20 years ago, and that involved a diver carrying speared fish on his belt.

I rolled backwards into the water and found myself in a school of thousands of tiny bait fish. It was exciting to be among them. Mackerel and other game fish darted in and out, seeming much less successful in their hunt than I thought they ought to be. Overhead, scores of screaming gulls circled to nab tiny fish that ventured too close to the surface.

Depths go to well over 100 feet, but we spent most of the dive at 50 feet. The water had some current and surge, making the location best suited for good divers. Dave was not a participant in the same sense as Armando, although I certainly felt that I was in the hands of a competent leader.

On the way back, Dave reported that photographers recently arrived to film sharks. They submerged in cages to film sharks attacking bait carcasses, but none arrived, so the photographers gave up after a few days. However, locals spearing fish a few hundred yards away saw so many sharks they had to leave the water. I enjoyed the dive and the rap. I heartily recommend diving with Dave.

Best Bet in St. Thomas...

For experienced divers, and the brave beginners, it's Armando Jenick first and Dave Fredenbaugh a solid second. For photography, call Armando. For spearfishing, try Dave. If you just want enjoyable diving with a couple of real pros, call either. If you're inexperienced, try Marv at the VI Diving School.

Sea Horse Cottages (Box 312, St. Thomas, 00801)... A short walk from either Dave or Armando and a perfect port for a dive group to locate. Off-season rates run as low as \$10 per person. Maximum occupancy is 24. Because Dave's and Armando's boats can only take six divers, you need plenty of time to make arrangements in advance for morning, afternoon and night dives. Negotiate lower rates for groups. From the cottages to town it's \$4 plus 75¢ per extra person by cab. The cottages have kitchens and are a short walk to a private beach with snorkeling.

Divers compass... The big three auto rental agencies apparently fix prices at \$20/day minimum; make advance reservations with Econo-Car at \$14/day minimum they'll pick up at airport...all shops have night diving...good liquor buys (\$1.35 for Gilby's Gin), but save more out of tourist area in supermarkets... a day boat ride to St. John is a good trip; camping at Cinnamon Bay Campground is \$7.50 complete with luxury tent and cooking gear; cottages are \$14; for more

information write PO Box 4390, St. Thomas; good snorkeling and diving...don't miss lunch at the fish market next to Armando's; red snapper and chips in a unique batter at \$3.25 - dinners about \$7 - superb marina setting...race relations stable... Limetree and Bolongo Bay are good beach hotels...in town, Hotel 1829 is quaint - doubles \$18 summer, \$29 winter... Frenchman's Reef Holiday Inn is garish, gauche, overpriced, without snorkeling and smells like cat urine...in winter it's wise to write ahead for dive boat reservations; off season call ahead a day or two...in town try dinner at Andy's, if you can find it - about \$7 complete...Armando says he can get Fenzy vests for about \$90; ask him.

(C.C. 8/5/75)

Congress, The President, Diving Equipment and You:

Discount prices ahead, but some shops may suffer

Price fixing? Why we're all against that. But what about fair trade? Now, that sounds ok. Yet fair trade is a form of price control by which the producer sets the price charged by the retailer. Fair trade has been prevalent in the dive industry; US Divers, Scubapro, Farallon and Ikelite are among companies which fair trade many, if not all, of their products.

For the diver as a consumer this means that when dive shops have sales of fair traded equipment, it's usually because the producer has ordered the sale to clear inventories or to develop interest in new products. Fair traded products are often combined in diving systems for which a sale price is offered. This way the shop can discount the entire system without attributing that discount to the fair traded product.

You can expect fair trade to be outlawed before the year is over. A bill to abolish fair trade laws has cleared the US House and the Senate is expected to follow suit in September. Congressional insiders have reported in telephone interviews with *Undercurrent* staff that the two houses are working closely with President Ford and are likely to produce a bill supported by all three parties before September is out. *Look for the President to sign the measure immediately and abolish fair trade laws by the New Year.*

If you live in one of the more than two dozen states where fair trade laws prevail (12 states have repealed laws this year) this forthcoming change in the law should mean plenty.

1. If you're planning to buy new equipment and are in no hurry, wait until the bill takes effect. The more aggressive dive shops should begin to offer

deals that you previously couldn't find in your home town. Expect increased price competition among local shops to attract new customers.

2. Some dive shops give discounts on equipment to their present and former students, but have refused on fair trade items. They'll be able to once the law goes into effect.

3. Expect the marginal and poorly managed shops to face difficulty and perhaps go out of business. Although US government data shows that there is a greater rate of business failure in states *with* the protective fair trade laws than in states without them, borderline shops won't make it.

4. In well-populated areas expect the emergence of discount dive equipment shops that offer no frills, no certification courses, no service or repairs, no trips, that have limited advertising and display, are located outside high rent areas, but emphasize low prices.

NOTE: An *Undercurrent* Business Tip: Looking for a way to expand your present business or to move into the diving business? Give close scrutiny to discount retail business. There's great potential when fair trade laws are lifted and there's great risk. Discount retailing means high volume and low overhead; marketing is difficult and only the best business people prevail. But, there's profit potential. The Small Business Administration can provide you information about getting started.

Falling Over Backward: *An Undercurrent safety reminder*

Recently in Belize, a touring American diver hit the water with a perfect back roll out of the dive boat. Except, she did not hold her mask tightly and the impact knocked it off. Not a great disaster, but also she had failed to inflate her vest. She happened to be one of the fortunate divers whose ears clear easily because had she not she would have found that her meteoric descent to 95 feet might have just

about killed her. Luckily enough - no, skillfully enough - she did not panic and was able to reach the surface on her own. We can't imagine a much worse situation to get one's self into. Would you have made it?

Many dive boats are not properly outfitted for entry into the water, and that poses special problems to divers. Many inexperienced divers are quietly

frightened about entry from a boat, and in their fear make potentially dangerous errors. Many who fear backward entry struggle to find an easy way for forward entry. The motion of the boat can easily catch the diver off balance and the weight of a tank will easily throw that diver out of control. Should he fall into another diver, a serious chain of injuries could develop.

In nearly all cases, the best water entry method from a dive boat is to sit on the edge of the boat and roll backward into the water, landing directly on your back and tanks. For safe entry every time, memorize these pointers.

1. Don't hurry getting dressed. Dress as much as you can on the way out. Stow all your gear in one place so you won't have to walk around unnecessarily.

2. If you get nauseous from a rolling boat, jump in the water for a minute or two, but put on your vest first and inflate it. If necessary, have someone strap your tanks on you when you're in the water.

3. If necessary sit on the side of the boat while dressing. Pick a place from which you can roll into the water. Check below to make sure you haven't positioned yourself over any appendage such as a ladder.

4. Have a standard way of putting on your gear so after a few dives it becomes automatic. It's best to hook your regulator to your tank so you don't have to use one hand to prevent it from bouncing around while you're dressing. Don't hesitate to ask for assistance getting your tank on your back.

5. Inflate your vest so that when you hit the water you will float.

6. Finish off with your fins, mask and snorkel. Never walk around with your fins on.

7. Put your regulator in your mouth and take a deep breath to make certain your air is turned on.

8. Make certain your fins are not hooked under a corner and that your legs and fins will hit no fixtures when you roll backward with your legs up.

9. Hold your mask firmly with one hand. With the other hand hold your weight belt buckle so it won't snap open on impact. If you have cameras or other gear around your neck, you may use your upper arm or elbow to hold the gear against your body so it won't flop around or tear loose on impact. Make certain none of your gear is hung up on the boat and that your tank is off the boat railing.

10. Again, check the water below you to make certain that you will strike nothing and that no diver has swum under you.

11. Fall backward, gently kicking your legs upward. Give a little thrust outward with your rump when you push off. The momentum of your body will push the boat away from you, giving you plenty of room.

12. Immediately, the inflated vest will bring you upright in the water. Swim a few yards away from the boat so that other divers will have plenty of room for entry. Check all your gear again and have a nice dive.

We must re-emphasize three points. *Enter with your regulator in your mouth after taking a deep breath to test the air flow. Hold your mask and weight belt buckle tightly. Inflate your vest.* If you're slightly overweighted and your vest is not inflated one possible consequence is that the small blood vessels in the nose may break, filling your mask with blood. That old sinking feeling with your mask full of blood could precipitate a dangerous panic, particularly if you have failed to put your regulator in your mouth.

Follow the rules and there's plenty of good diving ahead.

Making Your Diving Less Taxing: *You and the IRS*

The rich get richer! And, indeed they do, even in the time of recession, unemployment and great economic insecurity. One reason is that they and their accountants pay careful attention to tax laws to take advantage of every last benefit. Those same tax laws may benefit you, the diver, if you take the time to study the rules and apply them to yourself and your diving expenses. How? Read on.

As divers, there are two categories in which you may fit. Each has a different tax situation. The first category is for the individual diver whose business and income are *not directly related to diving*. Taking advantage of legitimate business travel to places where you can get in some diving may help you get to spots you might otherwise never visit or may, in lieu of your normal vacation, provide substantial tax savings on April 15.

The second category is for the individual who is engaged either part or full time in a dive-related business. We are not concerned with the dive shop, the charter boat owner, manufacturers or resorts. *Undercurrent* is dedicated to the individual diver, and in this case we are speaking to divers who may sell a few photographs, instructors who teach a course while working another job, divers who lead tours, or persons who repair dive equipment in their off hours. Or, divers considering these ventures.

Job related travel in a nondiving occupation:

A significant possibility for tax savings is found in travel connected with your present occupation. Today, every profession and occupation have a score of associations created to serve both the industry and the individual. In the building industry, for example,

associations concern themselves with building material, heavy machinery, architecture and investment, not to mention related fields such as marketing or finance or even unions. Teachers and professors have associations for topics from Spanish to shells, besides groups for teaching problems, textbooks and types of curricula. The medical profession is especially prolific; the Undersea Medical Society has nearly 1000 members. Short of dishwashers and ditch diggers, every occupation is represented by an array of groups numerous enough to fill a small town telephone book.

What's this got to do with diving? They all have conventions, meetings and seminars. You might know how these can help your business, but have you considered how they can help your diving? If you attend a convention in Florida, New Orleans, Honolulu or Puerto Rico, all common convention sites, you may get some smart financial breaks plus a few days of good diving!

First, your employer might foot the bill. If not, you may be given administrative leave to take the trip, and then get some good diving in on the weekend before or after the meeting. Even if your employer will not support you, big savings are possible.

If the case can be made that the convention is job related and your employer is willing to state that in writing, then a large portion of the expenses will most likely be tax deductible as legitimate business expenses. What IRS generally will accept is as follows:

Suppose you spend Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday in conference. You're allowed travel days, in this case Sunday and Thursday. Four nights of hotels are deductible; up to \$25/day for meals (no receipts necessary); transportation from hotel to the convention (perhaps a rental car). If you arrive on Friday evening prior to the convention and leave the Sunday after, you spent three out of five business days in a convention; 3/5's of your airfare is deductible. If you conducted business on the other two days (made phone calls, met with clients) the entire fare may be deductible. Weekends on both ends are free for diving (you may sneak out for a mid-week dive or two), and a large portion of your expenditures are deductible. Depending on your tax bracket and your destination, your tax savings may be up to \$1000. *One note of caution:* the IRS is trying to crack down on deductions for foreign business travel to meetings and conventions but, as the July 28 *US News and World Report* points out, should you be audited a compromise will most likely be reached if your deductions are not fully substantiated or not accepted.

A variation of this basic theme is often provided by the convention-sponsoring association. For example, organizations holding conventions on the west coast often arrange for extension vacation flights at rock bottom rates. Suppose you're flying to a California convention. If your association plans ahead,

they may be able to provide an option for continuation flights between the convention site and Honolulu and home again at ridiculously low rates. By attending the convention, you may find that a lion's share of the trip between your home and Hawaii is deductible. Reduced air rates for your spouse may make the trip even more appealing. Extension flights for conventioners using group rates can also be arranged from host cities rimming the Caribbean.

Another twist applies to teachers, to employees with business development responsibility, and others. If there are legitimate business-oriented reasons to travel and the trip is directly related to one's employment, then the trip and related expenses are usually deductible. For example, Spanish teachers may take tax deductible trips to Spanish-speaking countries to brush up on their language. Appraisers of foreign antiques can generally deduct foreign travel expenses to further their ability and seek business. Business persons can look for expansion opportunities for their employer or themselves. And think of the good diving.

Deductions for those with diving income

For the individual with some income from diving the possibilities multiply. Many persons with diving income fail to use tax laws to their full advantage. Some generally acceptable deductions are:

a. Equipment, ranging from everything needed to maintain your underwater presence to photographic equipment if you sell your photographs or use them to illustrate presentations from which you receive income. Equipment with a life expectancy greater than a year is not directly deductible, but should be depreciated at its projected life span. For example, if you buy a \$150 regulator which you think has a life span of three years, you deduct the depreciable rate of \$50 per year.

b. Travel to your work site. As a free lancer, you deduct your actual travel expenses, housing and food. Auto mileage is deductible at 15¢ per mile, food up to \$25 per day before receipts are required. Suppose you teach a single course at a local dive shop and take your class to the ocean for a certification dive. Add your mileage and out-pocket costs. If your dive shop gives you \$25 in expense money subtract that from your expenses and deduct the rest at income tax time. If they give you more expense money than you use, you must report that as income. If they reimburse you at 10¢ a mile, deduct the additional 5¢ from your income. If you're not on a salary, but get a flat fee for teaching the course—if taxes have not been deducted you are not considered salaried—you are self-employed and can also deduct the mileage to and from your class meetings.

c. If you already show income from a dive-related business, then the cost of additional instruction is deductible, as long as you are not taking the course to qualify for a new occupation. That is, if you have

some income as an assistant instructor and your dive shop says that you can't continue unless you pass an instructors course, that fee is deductible, as are related expenses.

d. Miscellaneous items, all or part of which may be deductible include: additional health insurance premium assigned because you are in a high risk profession; business telephone calls; subscriptions and books (books are often depreciable, not deductible); office supplies; office rent or the annual value of the room in which you do business in your home or apartment; film and photoprocessing.

Finally, depending on the plan, self-employed persons may shelter up to \$7500 per year from taxes by establishing a retirement fund. Tax is paid only when one begins to receive income from that fund, after retirement.

Tax law is complicated and our discussion is not offered as official. Each individual case is different, and the legality of a deduction will be tested against the reality of one's business if it is audited. For the most part, deductions are not available until you have income—start up costs for new ventures may, however, be deductible if you show income shortly

thereafter. The IRS gives especially close scrutiny to people who claim deductions for business activities in so-called "hobby pursuits." To be acceptable, one must generally show profit in at least one out of five years. Further, display of the true intent of the business—a bank account, business phone, stationery—may be helpful.

If you believe you have substantial tax deductions, the best way to find out is to get help from a tax accountant. If you decide to prepare your income tax statement yourself, the Federal Government publishes two comprehensive guides: for individuals, *Your Federal Income Tax* (publication 17), and *Tax Guide for Small Business* (publication 334), free at any IRS office. The IRS will also answer most questions by telephone.

Get ready now for April 15, 1976. Careful tax planning can reduce your obligations. It's often difficult to make diving more exciting, but it's nice to have that smug feeling when you know you've planned your own diving experiences to allow you to pay a little less to Uncle Sam next year. That's how the rich get richer and there's no reason you can't join with them.

Goody Bag:



Editor: My husband and I were planning a Christmas diving vacation in Jamaica until we read the August issue. We've switched our destination to Hawaii. We couldn't afford a diving vacation last year, so thanks for saving us the expense of a not-too-satisfying dive trip. Now, how about telling us where to pick up that Nikonos for under \$200. With the \$80 we'll save over local prices we'll dive an extra day in Hawaii.

K.O., Seattle, Wash.

You made a wise switch for your dive vacation. Have a good trip.

We are planning to publish prices for a full camera system in a few months, but have received so many requests from divers who did not want to pay the list price on a Nikonos that we wanted to respond. This month Cambridge Camera Exchange (45-7th Ave.,

New York City, 10011) has the best price for the Nikonos II with 35mm Nikkor lens. Call toll free 800/221-2253 (or 212/675-8600), give them your Master Charge or BankAmericard number, and for \$188.95 plus a few bucks for shipping (NY residents add sales tax) you'll get your camera in 3-4 weeks. If you order by mail, send a certified check or money order or your MC or BA numbers. The cameras sell fast and occasionally there is a delay.

Undercurrent welcomes questions or, if you know the answers send them along and we'll find someone to ask the questions. If you have a problem with any organization in the diving community and need help solving it, let us hear from you. If it's of general interest to the welfare of the diver, we'll do our best to lend a hand.

Correspondents located strategically in the major diving areas of the world as well as on all coasts and major inland waters of the continental U.S.

The editors welcome comments, suggestions and manuscripts from the readers of Undercurrent.