

Introduction

This is a record of scuba dives done by me, after learning to dive at an advanced age, while working in Saudi Arabia. I accepted a position in Al Hada hospital, City of Taif. This was about a 3 hour drive from the Red Sea, and the large city of Jedda. Saudi Arabia is a country that does not allow tourists, and the Saudi men do not dive, or swim, in the Red Sea, also factories, steel mills, or even trains, did not exist so there was no pollution. The coral reefs were pristine.

Other ex-pats working there instructed and helped me learn, in the early years, without all the usual equipment. I am a certified water safety instructor, so had spent my adult life in, and around water. I had no fear. This is a journal, not meant to be judged for excellent grammatical skills. I am learning the computer, as I type this, excuse any errors. I am now age 84. The beauty under the warm seas is unbelievable! I have seen it.

October 31, 1981

Saudi Arabia, at Shoiba beach, an area about 30 kilometers from city of Jedda, completely unoccupied. We westerners, who worked at Al Hada, had formed a group, and visited this area often to snorkel, and view the beautiful fish and corals. This day, as I snorkeled, I saw a huge sea turtle, also a shark about 5 feet long. The men who were scuba divers offered to teach me to scuba dive, with air tank. They had a generator, and tanks, and today was my first try.

Pat and Tony helped me put on the equipment, which was very simple, straps to hold the tank on my back, regulator to breathe the air in tank, and depth gauge. There was a pressure gauge attached to the tank, which showed how much air was left, while you were under. I walked out from shore, over the very rough low corals in the shallow water, to the lagoon. Tony had to help me sometimes, to keep me from falling, coral broke underfoot, and the tank was very heavy on my back. I went down, following instructions, holding nose and blowing, to clear ears, that is equalize pressure, as you descended into the deep water. I had my own faceplate, snorkel, and fins, was used to this equipment, had taught snorkeling to people I worked with at the hospital. The water was rough, and not clear, and the tank kept sliding up, on my back, and hitting the back of my head. However, I had no trouble with breathing, and swam along under the water comfortably. Ascended o.k. then Pat said we would try it again another day, at the beach, for it was too rough today. Buddies: Pat and Darcy Morse.

No. 2

November 13, 1981

Location: Red Sea Shoiba beach

Objective: Learning to dive

Equipment: Tank, backpack, regulator, and depth gauge

Visibility: Poor.

Pat helped get tank and backpack on me, early in the morning, sea was very calm. He tried to adjust it better, so it would not bump head, also selected proper weight belt so I could descend easily. Practiced again, in the lagoon, then went over the reef, and down along bottom, about 15, 20 feet here. It was fascinating, I motioned to Pat I felt fine, swam along examining coral, seeing fish, then went down deeper, stood on the bottom, something I had looked at so often, while snorkeling above, was very much at ease. Ascended, went back to camp so tanks could be recharged, and Tony and Darcy could go down. While down; saw 2 lion fish, one the kind with feathery "wings", the other with the plain spines. They have poison at ends of fins.

No.3

November 27, 1981 Friday

Location: Red Sea Shoiba beach After heavy rainstorm, beach flooded

Objective: Exploring.

Went out through channel, to deep water, tank felt better on my back, was adjusted better. Water was cloudy in channel, but clear, after getting over the reef into deep. Practiced descents a couple of times, ears cleared o.k. at about 24 feet down. I really am enjoying scuba, sorry I didn't start sooner! Forgot matches, on this beach trip, so no hot coffee, when we got out. Saw very large lionfish, feathery kind, right in front of me, also moray eel.

No. 4

January 29, 1982

Location: Red Sea Shoiba beach

Equipment: Back pack, tank, depth gauge, and regulator

Objective: Search for fish and corals

It was very windy, choppy on the reef, water was cold in the shallows, cool down at the bottom. Lost body heat soon. This was my first dive after return from U.S., on 30-day leave. Maximum depth 45 feet. Tony caught a puffer fish by the tail, then I held it too. As I let go, it exuded the water it had taken in, and became flat again, as it swam away. Buddies were Pat and Tony, good instructors. Down time: 40 minutes.

No. 5

February 12, 1982

Location: Red Sea Triggerfish Point

Equipment: Tank, Pat's wet suit jacket.

I put flippers on, out on the reef, almost knocked over by big waves. Air cold. Took several descents, clearing ears, then went down. Buddies were Tony and Darcy Morse, Descended, and marveled that the water was not rough down below, like it was at top, was very pleasant. I followed the men, tried to use legs and fins more than arms. Could touch corals, large coral head appeared, there I saw a huge blue angel fish, biggest I have ever seen, he stayed near awhile. Touched many kinds of coral (was wearing my string gloves) then saw a large "finger" conch shell on the bottom, swam down, picked it up: stood on the bottom, looked at Tony's depth gauge, we were at 33 feet. Were down 40 minutes, was getting very cold. Darcy had gone up a bit earlier, was chilled, wore a wool sweater, but it did not help, wet suit was needed today. Tony took my tank off in the shallows, so I could walk to shore easier, It is a long way, over sharp coral. As we entered sea to dive, Pat said "now bring that lady back safely", they did. He is a good instructor.

No. 6

March 5, 1982

Location: Red Sea Shoiba each

Equipment: Tank, regulator, wet suit jacket back pack, pressure gauge

Sun was out, water quite clear, went out about 9:30, descended, swam directly to the big coral heads where there were so many fish!!! 3 large ones, about 2 feet long, quite close, then saw 3 more even bigger, looked like large jacks, who swim so fast past you, often in large groups. Down time 40 minutes. Was cold, walking back over the shallows.

No. 7

Location: Red Sea March 26,1982

Equipment: Tank, back pack, dive booties and fins, regulator, pressure gauge, gloves, face plate, snorkel, wet suit jacket

Conditions: Water clear, visibility very good. Down time: 1 hour and 20 minutes.

Tony Downey and family were at beach, also other friends put fins over dive boots today, it helped avoid scratches on ankles, from coral. Carried my own tank on my back, all the way out from shore, am getting used to the weight, shallows were not so sharp here, better walking. Descended easily, went to bottom of the drop off, found a large brown and black spotted grouper sitting next to bottom of drop off. Their color is their camouflage, they sit and wait for a meal to swim by. Water was nice and clear, I enjoyed myself so much. Too bad I waited so long to accept Pat and Tony's offer to learn scuba, it is wonderful. Didn't see any great big fish today, but so many smaller ones that are so colorful and beautiful, no sharks either today. Down about 28 feet most of the time, as I swam along bottom of coral reef drop off. Buddies: Pat and Tony.

No. 8

April 30, 1982

Location: Red Sea Triggerfish Point

Objective: Picnic with friends, Tony Downie & family, Darcy, Peter & Ellie, Pat

Equipment: Tank, depth gauge, pressure gauge, tennis shoes & socks, fins.

The tennis shoes helped me walk over the rough shallows, on the reef, took them off, put fins on over socks, to prevent chafing leg. Walked out with tank, getting easier. Had laryngitis yesterday, didn't know if ears would clear O.K., but they did, no problem. Had to repeat the clearing a couple of times, to get rid of crackling sound in ears, then all o.k. Went to coral heads, there must be about 100 different kinds of corals on each one, so interesting!! I studied the tubeworms there, the flowerlike things that come out, then quickly go right back into their tube, when you wave hand near them. Reached into a crevice, nearly caught a puffer fish by the tail, but he got away, I didn't hold tail firmly enough. Fun!!! We descended to 50 feet, the deepest I have been, and everything was o.k. as I marveled as to where I was. Schools of the small blue fish with yellow tails swam by, thousands of them, I am so used to seeing them now, and I call them my friends, and swim in amongst them. I feel like a fish too!!! Very careful to stay near to whomever I am diving with, easy to get "lost" down there, I haven't learned to use the compass underwater.

After first dive, came in to the beach, ate, rested, and then later in afternoon went down again, for a second dive with Pat and Tony. This time, the tank fit better and did not bump my head at all. I enjoyed this second dive just as much as the first one today, saw a big manta ray above me, when I was down at 30 feet. They are about 12 feet across, swim so gracefully, don't bother a diver, but seem to like to play around nearby. His tail must have been about 6 feet long, and his body "flapped" up and down, like butterfly wings. On a coral head, found 2 huge sea anemones, and could observe their stoma, or mouth, away down in their wavy tentacles. I had never been able to see the stoma before. There were clown fish swimming amongst the tentacles, which is quite usual. Tony got away from Pat and I, for he was following a fish he wished to spear. We searched a bit, then ascended when Pat motioned to go up to the surface. Tony was just coming up, further down the reef. He is a very experienced diver. We came in to the shallows, and the beach. I was a bit tired, but not as bad as I thought I would be. What a wonderful day!! Average depth, about 50 feet.

No. 9 and 10

June 4, 1982

Location: Closed Shoiba - Open Shoiba beach of Red Sea

Objective: Learning diving, with new buoyancy vest.

Conditions: Salt water came into mouth through regulator, ascended, corrected it.

Pat thought there was a grain of sand in regulator. Descended again. Wind was strong, sea choppy. Practiced inflating and deflating vest, learning the buttons to do this. Felt unbalanced in the strong surf. Vest worked well, allows diver to inflate it and snorkel out to deep water while breathing through snorkel, thus saving tank air until ready to descend in deep water, by deflating vest.

On second dive, after breakfast and a rest period, used the buoyancy vest again, and felt more comfortable with it, did not bob around so much, at the surface. We reviewed decompression tactics, stayed at about 30 feet most of the time. Though I went down to 42 feet and Pat motioned me to come up to 30 feet, remain there for 30 minutes, to avoid getting the bends. At one time he printed in the sand on the sea floor, HOME, to let me know I should ascend and head for the reef where we came into the sea. While down, saw a huge manta ray, and then very close, a huge sea bass, about 4 or 5 feet long and very wide. What a thrill!!!!. I just love being down in the sea, viewing all the marvelous life there. Down time 45 minutes, on the first dive.

No. 11 and 12

June 18, 1982

Location: Red Sea, Closed Shoiba beach, dunes area

Objective: Photos

Equipment: Tank, regulator, depth gauge, pressure gauge, fins, buoyancy vest.

An innertube, with ropes making a bottom, we pulled it out to the reef edge, Pat tied it to a coral, so we could take off tennis shoes out there and put on fins to descend to deep water. On the way out, over the shallows, one of my fins washed over the tube, didn't notice it till we were ready to remove shoes. So I did the dive with one fin on, it made me a bit tipsy, but did the dive o.k. On the way back, over the shallows, found it floating in the coral! Went out to the huge coral head, where there were at least 100 of the yellow spotted "rubber mouth" fish swimming around. They circle, and circle, are just beautiful to watch, have seen them every time I come to this spot. Watched a large tube worm, that grossly misnamed, beautiful flower-like coral that moves it's petals back and forth, filtering minute food particles from the water. I touched the petals, they quickly withdrew completely into the tube. In about 90 seconds they were out again, waving back and forth, as usual. Pat pointed out a hydroid, it looked like a feather from a bird, was about 7 inches long and 1 ½ inches wide, standing upright and waving in the sea, was green in color. In this area saw many different kinds of sponge coral. some like a large vase. Down time 1 hour 20 minutes.

Back at reef edge, I bobbed around like a cork, in the choppy sea, for the buoyancy of the vest, at the surface, overcame the 10 pound weight belt I wore.

Later, did a second dive, swam around slowly examining corals, and taking photos. Dive buddy: Pat. He had brought 4 tanks, so we could do 2 dives.

No.13

June 24, 1982

Location: Red Sea Cove at Shoiba open beach

Equipment: Tank, regulator, gauges, fins, gloves, mask & snorkel, vest

Buddies: Darcy, Pat, Irma

We entered the sea after walking through shallow water, out to first reef, descended. I had slight cold, needed to go up and down a few times, to clear ears. I adjusted the B C vest, took a while before I was able to get it just right, so I could stay at about 30 feet. Did not see many fish here, but the corals were beautiful, so colorful.

No. 14

June 25, 1982

Location: Red Sea Cove at Shoiba beach, open

Buddies: Darcy, Pat, Irma

Went out to the far out, second reef, saw a large octopus, his head sticking out of a hole, also a big moray eel. There were so many fish here, including a huge box fish. Darcy went up before us, signaled that he wanted to surface, learned later that he had a headache. Practiced inflating and deflating the buoyancy vest, before we returned to inner reef.

No.15

July 9,1982

Location: Red Sea at Shoiba beach

Equipment: Buoyancy vest, tank, gauges, fins, regulator, mask, snorkel, glove

Buddy: Pat

We went out at 8:20 a.m., water was clear, warm. Pat had me lead the way out, through usual channel, he wanted me to learn how to recognize a particular coral formation, so we could enter it again after the dive, and not be disoriented under the water. He pointed out certain colors, and kinds, of coral to remember. I was comfortable,; down time was 1 hour, I had about 500 pounds of air left on ascending.

2nd Dive: Later in afternoon, went down again to the far out reef, stayed at about 45 feet, saw ,many squid, some quite large, also 2 lion fish, at different places. Pat took a picture of one. My mask leaked a bit, I had water in my face and had to clear the mask often down below. Down time was 1 hour 20 minutes.

No. 16 & 17

July 30, 1982

Location: Red Sea – Open Shoiba beach, with marvelous corals

Buddies: George Swan, Pat.

I cleared ears easily, no nose bleed, was VERY comfortable. This was George's first dive, after instruction by Pat, an excellent instructor. Water was very clear, and still. George had no trouble clearing ears and descending. We swam along slowly, examining the colorful scene, corals of blue, purple, yellow, tube worm flowers, etc. I found a huge lion fish in a cave, took George's hand and showed it to him. This area is one of the best in the world for corals and fish, for Saudi Arabia does not allow tourists into their country, we are here because we are employed in Saudi. We saw a BIG sting ray, George was elated. Down time was 45 minutes.

2nd Dive: In afternoon, we three went down again, water was not quite as clear as in the early dive, waves were bigger. Swam along the reef, down about 40 feet, saw large barracuda swimming nearby, not very far under the surface. I examined a large anemone, showed it to George, waved my hand over it, to make it close partly, and show him the red underside. They curl up when they have a fish to digest, open again afterward. This one was about 18 inches across. After this weekend at the beach, I left Saudi to return to U.S. for a 21 day leave.

No. 18 & 19

August 27, 1982

Location: Red Sea – Shoiba

Equipment: Tank, regulator, usual items plus new Buoyancy Control vest that I brought back from U.S.

Pat's pressure gauge hose did not fit the threaded area of his vest, and he went down without a gauge, watched mine when we were down. We towed the innertube up the shallows quite a way, then swam out to the coral heads, huge ones. In the innertube were fins, weight belts, tanks, we put them on in the lagoon, and tied the innertube to big piece of coral. I wore 2 pairs of socks, then the fins, this worked better than dive booties. Descended easily to 30 feet. We scared up a couple of big rays down on the sand, they flapped away. I found a large box fish, down on the white sand bottom, swam to it slowly, touched it's tail, he slowly swam ahead, I followed him. What fun playing with a fish 30 feet under the water! Corrie was snorkeling above us on the surface, said later she saw me touch it's tail.

2nd Dive: Went down again in the afternoon, did not swim away so far, stayed in the lagoon area, directly out from our beach camp. Water was very cloudy, I stayed close to Pat, it was easy to lose vision of a buddy in these conditions. We practiced surfacing and descending a couple of times, then everything seemed easier. We examined soft corals, alcyonarians, that wave in the water like plants, but are coral – also saw hydroids again, they are very colorful. We surfaced again, my gauge showed only 5 pounds of air remaining, so we snorkeled on the surface back from the lagoon to the shallows. This

required strenuous swimming, as waves were very big – however, I want to lose 3 pounds of weight that I put on while back in U.S. so the exercise was good.

No. 20 & 21

September 17, 1982

Location: Red Sea – Open Shoiba

Equipment: Tank, regulator, gauges, fins , B/C vest, mask, snorkel, in the innertube.

We pulled it north toward coral heads, donned things there.

Coming to open Shoiba, car got stuck in sand, we used driftwood to put under the wheels to get out. Virginia was along today, just to snorkel, does not dive.

Water was murky, found big coral heads down at 20 and 30 feet, saw huge blue angel fish, a large bass that kept circling around the coral heads, a very big box fish hiding in a cove, Pat flushed him out, he scurried away, also several large bat fish and a new species to me, a very long, thin one, ?? maybe a needle fish.

Time out from beach was 2 ½ hours, sometime submerged, sometime snorkeling at surface. I was very comfortable, really enjoying myself!

Dive 2: I had a second dive in late afternoon, mainly in the lagoon area. Water, not clear. Examined corals, saw many staghorn variety, in several different colors. Downtime: 30 minutes.

No. 22

September 24, 1982

Location: Red Sea at area of Hamdana, 160 KM south of Jedda

A group of friends went to this spot for a week long campout, and diving. It was a very remote area, and in going across the very wide sandy area, 2 cars became stuck in sand, one got out, by pushing, and they went for help to the group already at the beach. They left Virginia Marx and I alone with the stuck suburban, we did not get rescued until night time! We had to check our iquamas with the coast guard station, before they let us pass.

Equipment: tanks, regulator, gauges, fins, etc. Here, we could go through a cut in the reef, which was very near shore, making it easy to enter the deep water.

Buddies: Pat, Ralph, Irma

Water: Warm, very clear, beautiful. We swam along reef drop-off, explored the area. The fish here were much larger than at Shoiba beach, saw angel fish, many “one spot” snapper, the largest bat fish I have ever seen, also a “crown of thorns” starfish. These have about 10 arms, and 2” long spikes on these arms, hence the name. They crawl onto a large coral, envelop it and eat the polyps, destroying the coral. Whole reefs can be invaded by them.

No. 23

September 25, 1982

Location: Red Sea, at Hamdana beach camp

Equipment: Tanks, regulators, gauges, weight belts, fins, gloves, compressor to fill tanks, camera, small inflatable boat.

Buddy: Pat, Irma

Went through a cut in reef, out to deep side. Swam along, observing corals. Had no problem going down, I feel more at ease with each dive. Water was murky, so ascended in short time, to save air in tank for another dive at a better time. At surface, snorkeled a very long way along reef edge, saw marvelous sights, including a crown of thorns starfish spread out completely over a coral.

Time: This day, was snorkeling, or diving, for total of 7 hours.

No. 24

September 28, 1982

Location: Red Sea, at Hamdana

Equipment: Tanks, regulator, gauges, weight belt, fins, vest, Pat's camera

Buddy: Pat

Scuba dive in morning, swam a very long way up along coral reef, saw many beautiful, large fish, also a blue-spotted sting ray. Took pictures with Pat's camera. The fish are curious, if you hold onto a large coral and remain motionless, they come right up to your mask and nip at it, or at your finger if you hold it still! spotted 2 large barracudas circling above me. They seem so menacing, and stay near you as you swim along. I fear them more than the sharks. Early this morning, there was a reef shark about 4 feet long, swimming very near shore of our beach camp, probably hunting for food. These are not dangerous. The water was so clear, every detail of him could be observed.

We rested, after the dive, then did more snorkeling. My lips are sore from salt water, sunburn, and holding mouthpiece of regulator in my mouth for so long. The diving is worth the pain!

No. 25

September 30, 1982

Location: Red Sea, Hamdana beach camp (last dive here)

Equipment: tanks, compressor, gauges, regulator, weight belt, fins, mask, snorkel, vest, boat

Buddies: Pat, Virginia, Ralph

Water: Clear, delightfully warm.

Hans took us out to a small atoll, two at a time, in the small inflatable boat. It was about 10 minutes away from our beach camp, and there we donned our dive gear, descended to a wonderful area of coral, all around the atoll. Took many pictures, saw 8 LARGE bump head parrot fish, crown of thorns starfish, a big grouper 5 feet long, a different, blue, big

trigger fish. This remote area seems to have larger fish than at Shoiba beach where we usually dive. More friends from Al Hada hospital arrived today, we now have 16 people camping here, to snorkel and scuba dive. Permission had to be granted from Coast Guard, to be here.

No. 26.

October 1, 1982

Location: Red Sea - Hamdana area (last dive here)

Equipment: Tanks, gauges, regulator, weight belt, fins; mask & snorkel, vest, camera, boat

Buddies: Pat, Virginia, Ralph

Weather: Very hot, windy at times

Water: Clear, warm, visibility very good for picture taking

This was last time to dive here, had to return to Taif later today. Hans again took us to the atoll, such a tiny piece of sand sticking up in the Red Sea!!!! Descended to 30 and 40 feet mainly, swam around this entire tiny island, enjoying the great varieties of coral and fish. Saw many small barracuda, and one VERY large one, huge bat fish (I got his picture), a feather star down on the white sand bottom, and many more. I am doing much better with finning, leaving arms free to hold, and use the camera., Certainly enjoyed this great spot!!!!!!

No. 27

October 15, 1982

Location: Red Sea - Shoiba beach

Equipment: Tanks, gauges, B/C vest, weight belt, fins, socks, booties, camera

Buddy: Pat

Water: Clear, good visibility, still comfortably , warm

We entered sea from beach, floated tanks on innertube out to lagoon area, donned equipment and descended. We swam to the large coral heads, explored one and found many varieties of coral, would ascend and discuss them, then descend again and look for more. We did this several times, Marie and Corrie were snorkeling above us, and we explained what we had seen. Some men from the French company, in Taif, were camped nearby, one had caught a 5 foot shark, had it on the beach when we came in from the dive, and we could examine it closely. That was great.

No. 28

November 5, 1982

Location: Red Sea - Shoiba, closed area

Equipment: Tanks, gauges, new fins, weight belt, vest, camera

Water: Clear warm

Buddies: Rolf, Pat

The first part of dive was near coral heads, then we swam along the deep side of the reef, where we saw a huge 4 foot long parrot fish, then several more came along. They chomp on the algae that forms on the coral, and leave large teeth marks. You can also hear the sound their teeth make!! How wonderful to see, and hear that. A very large manta ray, about 12 feet across, swam near us. This was a VERY good dive.

No. 29

November 12, 1982

Location: Red Sea - Shoiba beach, coral cliff area

Equipment: Tanks, gauges, weight belt, vest, fins, tennis shoes, camera

Buddy: Pat

Conditions: Water warm, clear. Cars had to park on the top of the 12 foot cliff above the beach camp spot, all equipment had to be lowered down to beach, then we walked to spot 1/8th mile away, and walked down to camp spot.

Dive depth: 45'

This was an interesting area, was hard to get over sharp coral in the shallows, but fine after descending, saw many varieties of both hard, and soft corals. Pat motioned me to swim ahead of him, I did, kept going and exploring happily. Looking back, after awhile, I didn't see him! First time I was completely separated from a buddy, kind of scary. Waited awhile, then decided I had better surface, came up - - - it was mighty lonely, looking out over that sea! Soon Pat surfaced, quite away from me, I waved my arms up high, he saw me. He had stopped to take a picture, while I kept swimming ahead, and we became separated. So we descended again and explored the bottom of the reef, at 45 feet, came up to 30', and swam around some more. At the inlet to shore, the current was strong and Pat towed me a bit there, I was glad for the help, was a bit tired.

No. 30

December 2, 1983 (my 68th birthday)

Resumed diving, after 11 months absence

Location: Red Sea - Shoiba beach south area

Equipment: B\C vest, weight belt, smaller aluminum tank, less weight for me to carry, regulator, gauges, fins

Objective: Retraining \ exploring

Buddy: Pat, Aksom

Water: Cloudy

On descending, my regulator pushed too much air at times, which made salt water come into my mouth. I surfaced, purged it, then it was o.k. Swam along easily at depth of about 30 feet. Encountered a sting ray, with the barb at end of it's tail, in the end of a canyon-like area, it was flustered at finding the exit, I avoided it's tail so I would not be stung, and did get his picture. Stayed down until air was about gone, then ascended, and returned to shallows. I was so glad to be able to dive again. What a nice birthday present!

No. 31

December 3, 1982

Location: Red Sea – Shoiba beach, south of desalination plant construction

Equipment: Tanks, regulator, weight belt, fins, socks, B\C vest, camera

Water: Clear, tepid, calm

Objective: Training \ exploration \ pictures

Buddies: Rolf, Pat

We floated the innertube, with tanks and equipment in it, over shallows to chest deep water, donned tanks, vests and belts there. Going out to deep water, descended and ascended a few times, to clear ears, then went down to 30 feet and explored the area. There was much soft coral here, pinks, lavender, yellow, also saw Gorgonian corals, the fan-like soft corals that stand upright and wave in the current. So beautiful!!! We swam slowly along, Rolf descended more, I followed, and saw so many varieties of fish here, all brightly colored. Once, while quietly observing an orange colored Gorgonian, I felt a nip on lower leg, a small blue fish, about 6 inches long, had taken a nip. No problem, it didn't hurt. Rolf showed me his depth gauge (I had forgotten mine), we were down at 75 feet and I was feeling fine. I felt it was the best dive I've had. When my pressure gauge showed 400 pounds of air left, I ascended, stayed at the surface and watched my buddies below for a short time, while they took pictures. They ascended and we all snorkeled to the innertube, tied on the reef, took off equipment there and floated it in the innertube, to shore. The regulator, mask, gauges, all have to be rinsed in fresh water (which we must bring along) after every dive, to keep them in good condition.

NOTE: I left Saudi Arabia December 31, 1982 to return to the U.S. for my leave. When I returned, I was to resume work at Al Hada hospital, but was injured in an auto accident going from Jedda to Taif, was hospitalized and then became ill with hepatitis, so was incapacitated for months. I went to the beach with friends, in

August, but could only snorkel, could not dive until my liver function test was normal, finally, in November.

No. 32

December 2, 1983

Location: Shoiba beach, south area

Equipment: B\C vest, regulator, gauges, weight belt, smaller aluminum tank which made less weight for me to carry on my back.camera.

Objective: Re-training

Water: Cloudy

Buddies: Aksom, Pat

Walked out through shallows, to deep water, descended. My regulator pushed out too much air at times and made salt water come into my mouth. I surfaced, purged it, then it was o.k. I took it easy, was down about 30 feet and in a canyon-like area, saw a sting ray close to me. He scurried around looking for the way out, stirred up the water, but I got his picture. I avoided his tail, with the poison barb on it.

No. 33

December 15, 1983

Location: Red Sea - Shoiba - dunes area

Equipment: Tank, B\C vest, regulator, weight belt, fins, booties, gauges, gloves, camera

Objective: Training, explore, photography

Water: Clear, cool

Buddies: George, Pat

We floated tanks out, an easy walk over the sandy bottom, no coral humps here to scrape ankles. When in deep water, donned tanks, put on fins over booties and swam out to the break in reef, went through, and descended. We stayed mainly along the deep face of the coral cliff, taking close up photos of corals, and fish. I was very comfortable, stayed mainly at about 35 feet, saw a very large turtle, a big barracuda and the usual variety of exotic fish. What a glorious place to dive !!! My down time was 1 hour and 15 minutes, used almost all my air in the tank.

No. 34

December 16, 1983

Location: Red Sea - Shoiba, south of desalination plant construction

Equipment: Tank, B\C vest, regulator, weight belt, fins, booties, gloves

Objective: Pleasure dive, along deep outer side of reef

Condition: Water clear, beyond reef, strong rip tide today, as coming in toward shallows, through the break in reef

Buddy: Pat

We floated tanks, on the B\C vests, to chest deep water, donned them, swam to reef and then down through break in reef, to deep side. Stayed at about 30 feet most of the time, saw a very large box fish out in the open water, not in a hole, as they usually are. There were many schools of the flashy "jacks", saw needle fish so long and thin, many blue fusiliers with the yellow tails, and sometimes I feel I am in the midst of a thousand fish, the schools are so large! When staying very still, down below, sometimes one will come to your mask and "eyeball" you. I tired easily, fighting the strong current, but really enjoyed the dive. This will be my last dive, until I return from a short leave. I told Pat I would buy my own tank, for I want to continue diving and have used the men's tanks.

No. 35

February 3, 1984

Location: Red Sea, at beach camp. Had 4 cars and 14 people, big group today.

Equipment: Tank, regulator, fins, mask, snorkel .

Buddies: Lloyd, Pat, George

Conditions: Very windy, sand blowing, sea very choppy.

We swam out toward the reef, it was very hard to make progress. The waves crashed on the reef, I was knocked around so much, one glove even got pulled right off my hand, but I rescued it. Salt water came into the snorkel as we swam, was battered by the waves. It was so difficult, we decided not to go any further, But returned to the shallows and camp. Not a good day in the Red Sea! I rested at camp, and studied the P.A.D.I. dive book, with Pat and Lloyd's help. I hope to take the exam and become a certified diver. Ron Shelasky is a dive instructor and is working here in Taif, at the Italian helicopter company, they service and maintain the helicopters for the King, he has 2 of them ready at all times.

No. 36

February 17, 1984

Location: Red Sea: Shoiba beach - south

Equipment: Tank, regulator, B\C vest, weight belt, fins, wet suit top

Objective: Practice, and searching for fish.

Conditions: Water cool – surface choppy

Buddies: Pat, Aksom

The water was cold, I wore wet suit top, no pants part available. The top, plus the B\C vest, made me so buoyant, I had trouble descending, even after deflating the B\C vest. Pat pulled me down, by fin, then I did descend, but had trouble staying at 30 feet, had to keep fighting to stay down, that made me tired. I practiced techniques, took off mask, flooded it, then cleared it; did buddy breathing while at 30 feet. I got salt water in my mouth a couple of times, surfaced, then descended and did it again. The first time I had put the regulator in my mouth upside down ! I didn't become panicky, and second time I did it properly and it was o.k. Buddy breathing (sharing air from a buddy) is practiced in case it is needed, if one runs out of air while down. It is a skill I must know, to be certified.

Later - I snorkeled with George and daughter Tina, we saw 2 octopi, on a large coral head, one was partly in a hole, the other out, and very visible and close to the first one., They were a big, pulsating mass!

George took a picture, poked at it , they slithered away across the coral head, all the brown arms crawling along.

No, 37

March 9, 1984

Location: Red Sea - Shoiba, south, past desalination plant construction

Equipment: Tank, regulator, B\C vest, weight belt, wet suit top

Conditions: Windy, sea choppy, water: cold

We walked up the beach, to find a spot that would give us easy walking in the shallows. Went out to deep water, it was cloudy, poor visibility there, but clear on the deep side of the reef where we descended. I was weighted properly this time, had put an extra lead weight in the B\C vest pocket, and descended o.k. We saw many kinds of soft corals here, they are so beautiful, come in many colors. I practiced removing the regulator from my mouth, and replacing it: Water came into my mask when I opened mouth to remove the regulator, then I would have to clear the mask, I was down at 35 to 40 feet. It is necessary to practice these skills before taking the certification test.

No. 38

April 5, 1984

Location: Red Sea: Shoiba beach, south of desalination plant construction

Equipment: Tanks, regulator, gauges, weight belt, fins, socks, B\C vest, camera

Objective: Training \ exploration \ pictures

Water: Clear, tepid, calm

Buddies: Rolf, Pat

We floated innertube with tanks and equipment over the shallows to chest deep water, donned tanks and vests there, put on weight belts and fins. In deep water, descended and ascended a few times to clear ears, then went down to 30, 40 feet and explored area. Saw much soft coral here, pinks, lavender, yellow, they sway in the current, look like plants. Also saw Gorgonian fan-like corals, some orange, some black, just like lace, swaying back and forth. Once, while quietly observing a Gorgonian, I felt a slight touch on lower leg, a small blue fish about 6 inches long, had taken a nip!!!!They are very curious and look in your mask.

Rolf showed me his depth gauge, we were down at 75 feet. No problem, I felt fine, thought it was the best dive I've done. When my pressure gauge showed 400 pounds of air left, I ascended, stayed at surface awhile, watched my buddies below for a short time, taking pictures. They ascended, we all snorkeled to the innertube, tied on the reef, took off equipment there, floated it, in the innertube, to shore. The regulators, masks, gauges, snorkels, all have to be rinsed in fresh water after every dive. We must carry this water with us on the weekend.

I left Saudi Arabia December 31, 1982, at end of my contract, to return to U.S. for several months. Returned, and resumed work at Al Hada in August, 1983, but was injured in auto accident going to Taif, hospitalized, then contacted hepatitis, and was hospitalized again. Did resume beach trips with friends, after recovering, but could not dive until Doctor had found lab tests normal, in November. Did snorkel, took it easy, enjoyed that.

No. 39

April 5, 1984

Location: Red Sea - North Shoiba area, Triggerfish point

Equipment: Tanks, regulator, gauges, B\C vest, fins

Buddies: Joe Baggett, Dave Adams, Pat

Objective: Practice skills, buddy breathing

Water: Warm, quiet

After entering from the beach, we descended to 30 feet, swam slowly along deep side of coral reef. I found a dragon fish hiding in a crevice, took a picture of it emerging. Dave, a novice diver, was not near us when we looked for him. Pat ascended, I stayed with Joe. Pat found Dave at the surface, he had run out of air already, probably was tense and breathed too fast. He decided to go back to shore, Pat descended, we still all had plenty of air and stayed down another 45 minutes, practiced buddy breathing.

No. 40

April 6, 1984

Location: Red Sea - Triggerfish point

Equipment: tanks, regulator, B\C vest, fins, compass, wet suit top, camera

Objective: Practice dive skills, photography

Buddy: Pat

After placing regulator on tank, testing for air, doing all preliminary precautions for safety, by myself (for practice), Pat and I walked over the shallows until bottom became too sharp with coral, then floated tanks and B\C vests, pushed them ahead while lying on our stomachs and finning, out to deep water, where we donned them. I did everything by myself, am learning to be independent when preparing to dive. I need to be able to do this, to pass the dive test and be certified by P.A.D.I. (Professional Association Dive Instructors). Then I can dive anywhere in the world, just present my certification. Joe was above us, observing, then he descended. Pat had me swim with the compass, had the lubber line at 270. I swam a short way, holding the compass out at arm's length, then turned my body until I read 90, and swam back to the starting point. It was easier than I expected.

We then swam along the great coral cliffs, with all kinds of beautiful fish in view. My buoyancy was just right, stayed about 5 to 8 feet above the sandy sea floor; the wet suit top kept me warm, yesterday I was cold. My mask leaked a bit when I practiced taking the regulator out of my mouth, and re-inserting it, but I cleared it o.k., down at about 40 feet depth. This was a very good dive. Back on the beach, I rinsed regulator, mask and snorkel.

No. 41

April 12, 1984

Location: Red Sea - Shoiba, near new structures, lagoon area

Equipment: Tanks, regulator, B\C vest, compass mounted on piece of styrofoam, depth gauge

Buddy: Pat

Water: Very choppy, windy.

Entry to water was easy here, we donned tanks at beach edge and walked to the deep, put on fins there and descended to 30 feet. Pat had given me a course to swim with the compass, reciprocate (return) and stay at 30 feet. I swam as far as I wanted (270 degrees) then reciprocal course, east (90 degrees). I held the styrofoam piece, with compass on it, in front of me as I swam, kept eyes on it, and the depth gauge. I went down to 40 feet, and then up a bit, trying to stay at about 30 feet. At this time saw very many jelly fish swimming around me. The wave motion was quite severe, and after swimming the compass course, surfaced once, then went down again. I think I did the compass work o.k., but was cold, even with the blue wet suit top on, and ascended after 30 minutes. Walking through the choppy water to the beach area, I took off the tank, and felt very unstable, not dizzy, but felt

like I was on a rocky boat. It lasted about 20 minutes, then went away. I never had such feeling before, after diving, but it probably came from the very rough conditions.

The compass training was a good learning experience. The jellyfish seen were the gelatinous, round kind, had flat bodies with appendages hanging down, and curious "flags" sticking up, which were lavender, yellow, whitish, green. There were so many of them!!!!. That night, a few drops of rain fell, hitting my face as I lay on the beach in my sleeping bag. This is only the 3rd time; in three years of camping out almost every weekend, here in Saudi, that we have had any rain.

No. 42

April 13, 1984

Location: Red Sea - Shoiba beach, north

Equipment: Tanks, regulator, gauges, weight belt, fins

Objective: Compass practice

Buddy: Pat

Before the dive, we did navigation with the compass, on the beach, held compass out in front of me at arm's length, and walked a course. Then went into the water. It was windy today, but water was not as rough as yesterday. I swam a bit in the shallows and found a nice 8 inch "finger" shell, hung it on the coral cliff at the beach, so the animal would come out, and I could clean the shell at my room, during the week.

No. 43

April 20, 1984

Age 68 ½

:Location: Red Sea – Shoiba beach

Equipment: Complete gear, wet suit top, B/C vest

Objective: Open Water Certification test with PADI instructor Ron Shelasky

Water: Clear, cool

Buddy: Pat

Depth: 50 feet, and lower

We floated tanks out from beach, descended in deep water, and did a buoyancy test at 40 feet, also buddy breathing at this depth. Next, had to remove mask and toss it out, replace, and clear the water out of it: next, hover in place at 35 feet, and then follow the instructor wherever he went, for 20 minutes, ascending and descending again. Next step was to follow him to the bottom, and swim around there, then ascend slowly, decompress @ 30 feet for required time, and go to the surface. I completed it all o.,., passed the certification, was given a certificate and log book when we were back on shore. I WAS HAPPY.

No. 44.

April 20, 1984

Location: Red Sea - Shoiba beach

Equipment: Full, complete

Objective: Pleasure dive, all relaxed after passing certification.

Water: Clear, calm, comfortable with wet suit jacket

Buddy: Pat

I did a very relaxed dive, to celebrate passing the certification. I put on all the gear by myself, after attaching tank, checking air, etc., then descended down the face of the coral reef to 50 feet, swam along, observing the beautiful sea life. I saw three turkey fish, then found a stone fish, first one I've seen, in all my dives. They are so ugly and poisonous If stepped on. They sit on the bottom, partly under a coral rock, and are hard to see, they look just like the coral. We didn't have a camera with us today. I also saw 3 strange, long, thin fish, with circular black rings, they changed color from deep grey / green, to lighter shades as we got near. Learned later, they are named coronet fish, from the book I now have of "Red Sea Fishes", bought it in a Taif bookstore, can identify the fish.

No. 45

April 27, 1984

Location: Red Sea – Shoiba, near desalination plant construction

Equipment: Tanks, regulator, gauges, vest, weight belt, gloves, wet suit top, camera

Objective: Pleasure dive and photography

Buddies: George, Pat

Now I am an official "Open Water Diver" , having passed my test. I appreciate so much, all the help given me by the men, and assisting me in learning the class work, depth decompression, etc., contained in the books and charts I had to learn, studying it a lot before coming to the beach on weekends. Here in Saudi Arabia, the weekend is Thursday and Friday, they do not use the western calendar.

In the morning, we went out to deep water, on the shore side of the reef, found some very large coral heads, 10 feet high, all surrounded by many kinds of beautiful fish. One of the heads had so many kinds of soft, and hard corals. Some were stalk-like, with large knobs on the ends. The soft corals (alcyonarians) wave in the motion of the water, and their short finger-like tentacles open and close constantly --- this is how they grasp tiny particles of food from the sea water. I took a lot of pictures, was very comfortable with breathing and buoyancy, but got a big coral cut on my leg. I have learned so much here, underwater in the Red Sea! Some things are unbelievable,. The water was chilly, surface was rough. We were down around 35 feet depth, and after 45 minutes I was cold, ascended, and went back to the beach.

No. 46

May 11, 1984

Location: Red Sea – Shoiba beach

Equipment: Tanks, vest, weight belt, gauges, fins, mask, snorkel

Buddy: Pat

Was easy to walk out to deep water here, donned tanks and swam out to the large coral heads. This is such a great spot to observe fish and other sea life, saw at least 100 “rubber lips”, those spotted yellow and black fish about 15 inches long. They kept circling the coral head slowly, was easy to get a picture. We also saw a different kind of sea cucumber, which looks like a very long vacuum hose going along the bottom. It is a scavenger, has about 8 to 10 short “shovel-like” tentacles extended out in front, eating bits of detritus as it moves along. The men had told me about it, if you pick it up and break it in half, it will grow new parts, like a starfish does.

On this weekend dive, and later snorkeling, I saw (1) sharks, (2) large bump head wrasse, (3) 2 very large rays, (4) crown of thorns starfish, (5) a large barracuda. I identified all things seen today, in the book “:Reef Fishes of the Red Sea”. It is so great to see, and learn about all these sea creatures.

No. 47, 48, 49, 50

June 29 to July 6, 1984

Location: Red Sea, at Ras Mahasan, on the beach 80 km south of Al Lith, over 150 km south of city of Jedda, Saudi Arabia

This was a 9 day beach camp with large group of friends “The Adventure Club” who all work in Taif. We had 9 days free from our positions, due to holiday time here following the Muslim time of Ramadan.

Equipment: Tanks, regulators, vests, compressor to re-charge tanks, fins, weight belts, tent tops for shelters for cooking and eating areas. Mats to sleep on. Many plastic cans of fresh water.

Objective: Pleasure dives, exploration this remote area, photography with Nikonis underwater camera

Buddies: Jim, Terry, Pat

We went into the water easily here, no rough coral to walk over, and the reef is quite close, with a break in it, to swim through to the deep water. Only stayed down 15 minutes this time, for water was cloudy, poor visibility, wanted to save air for a future dive when visibility was better.

No.48

June 30, 1984

A wonderful dive, visibility very good, down time was 90 minutes. We saw many large bump-head parrot fish, a lot of snappers called the “one spot” because they have a large blackish round spot on each side of their whitish body, also many kinds of corals, as we swam along the deep side of the reef. Were down 90 minutes on this dive.

No. 49

July 2, 1984

Location: At Hamdana, beach camp on Red Sea, 5 hour drive south of Jeddah.

This is such a superb place to dive, very remote and untouched. Don't think there have been very many divers here, our friend Hans, who has worked in Saudi for 25 years, building roads with a large company, had worked in the south part, and knew of this area. Neither he, nor his wife, dive, but like to snorkel. I have taught the 2 little girls some beginning swim lessons here. It is very warm and water is very comfortable, even without a wet suit. We swam along the reef face a long way, marveling at the large size of the fish, and the many different kinds of corals. Down time on dive: 40 minutes

No. 50

July 6, 1984

Location: Still at Hamdana beach camp, this will be last day here

Equipment: Inflatable boat with small motor, carries 3 people, and a much smaller boat towed behind the first one, to carry tanks and equipment. Usual tanks and other gear. On this dive we used the boat, Hans drove us out to a very small atoll, 2 at a time, then returned for others. This atoll is really just a tiny round spit of sand, sticking up in the Red Sea, quite away from the beach. It has coral all around it, a wonderful reef. We donned gear on the atoll and descended

To about 45 feet, saw a very large group of hump head wrasse, each about 3 feet long, then a very large bat fish, they are slender, and shaped so differently, almost like a hatchet. The fish seemed curious, and swam near us for awhile, not hurrying away, gave us a good advantage for photography! I obtained one shot of a red starfish, all spread out, have't seen this color before. Terry saw a 10 foot long shark take off swiftly, from the bottom and swim away. I missed seeing it. This is a most beautiful place to dive, will hate to leave here.

No. 51

July 20, 1984

Location: Back at our usual spot, Shoiba beach, dunes area

Equipment: Tanks, regulator, vest, fins, inflatable boat with 8 h.p. motor

Objective: Photography, viewing

Buddy: Pat

Conditions: Water and air were warm

This is the first time we have had use of the boat in this location, Hans carried it, deflated, on the top of his car, down to the beach. We did a test drive first, exploring, and looking for a canyon area, where the boat could be tied to the reef coral, and we could descend. Waves splashed over us, as we rode, it was different to be riding on the surface, instead of swimming down below. Another different event today, an Egyptian family with 6 children, was spending the day close to us, usually our group is alone. The Saudi natives do not dive, or swim in the Red Sea. Their statement to me was "baden kabir samak eckle inta" (then the big fish will eat me). The boat was tied to the reef, then we went down to about 60

feet and explored. Swimming along, I saw a long rope draping from the reef edge, I swam down deeper and found a large anchor at the end of the rope. It was too heavy for me to lift, I motioned to Pat, he cut it loose with his knife, and I kept the rope. It would come in handy, with our camping equipment, tying the mats on top of the cars, when we travel. I was thrilled, swimming along the deep reef face, looking in holes and crevices, there is something interesting in every one. I saw a white-tipped shark, about 5 feet long, swimming slowly near us. They don't bother you. I can't describe how thrilled I am, to be a part of the deep sea, right along with the fish!

No. 52

The second dive, on same day

Later on, in that day, again rode in the boat to a different canyon area below, and descended. I wore an extra weight today to keep my buoyancy right, for I had the hood of a wet suit jacket on and it traps air, making one more buoyant on descending. That worked well, and I was o.k. I saw a very different fish today, quite flat, was green with dark markings, and his caudal fin at the back, moved up and down as it propelled him, not sideways as most tails move. Maybe it was a triggerfish. I also saw a large sea turtle, Pat was ahead of me, with the camera, so I swam forward, grabbed one of his fins, pointed to the turtle, he got a picture. Our down time was 90 minutes, I enjoyed every minute of it!!!!

No. 53

August 3, 1984

Location: Red Sea – Shoiba beach, near desalination plant construction

Equipment: Tanks regulator, gauges, wet suit jacket, boat, camera

Buddies: Terry, Pat

Water: It seems colder this summer, last year I could snorkel for about 2 hours, and not be chilled. I need wet suit top now, to be comfortable on diving.

We took the boat out to the far reef, anchored it to the coral, put on gear and descended. The reef face is always full of fish, they feed there. As I swam along, saw again, the white-tip shark, he was in about 4 foot depth of water on top of the reef, and he swam away on noticing me. They do not bother us, and I really love being in the sea, observing all these things. The average depth today was 30 to 35 feet, down time 55 minutes, then I was chilled.

No. 54

August 10, 1984

Location: Red Sea, near desalination plant construction

Equipment: Tank, regulator, gauges, weight belt, fins , boat, camera(large one)

Objective: Pleasure dive, photography

Water was calm in the early a.m., we took the boat out to the far reef, tied it there, put on gear and descended. Today I wore a wool sweater under the wet suit, a pair of pants, and a bathing cap, and I was comfortable, not chilled, and was down 1 hour and 25 minutes, had 500 pounds of air left on ascending. We swam up into canyons, around large coral heads, and along the reef. It was so beautiful!!!! Today we saw a different kind of surgeon fish, it was completely yellow, with unusual black markings near the eyes. It stayed near for awhile, did get a photo. Also saw four different lion fish, at intervals. We did not see a shark today, though they are usually in this area. The largest one I've seen was about 10 or 12 . feet long, it was the first one, and it frightened me, but I have learned just to keep on swimming along slowly, and they pass by. I was not cold today, and much more comfortable on this long dive. This is my last one, before my leave, back to the U.S. I will miss it.

No. 55

September 27, 1984

Location: Red Sea – Shoiba, north area

Equipment: Tanks, regulator, gauges, fins, gloves, boat (sweater under wet suit)

Buddy: Pat

This was my first dive, after returning from the U.S. and my home. We took the boat out to the reef, anchored it, put on vest, tank, and descended on the inner side of the reef. Then we went through the cut to outer side, and lazily swam along it. I saw a moray eel partly inside his cave, his mouth opening and closing, making him look scary, but this is the way they get oxygen, it's a normal habit and does not mean he is vicious. We saw many, many fish, but nothing really large, and took many pictures. I was very comfortable, the water was not as cold as it was in summer. We took all gear off, at the reef, and put it in the boat. This is so much easier, with a boat, than all the "walk-in" dives I have made, entering the sea over the rough coral underfoot. Our time down was 1 hour and 35 minutes.

No. 56

September 28, 1984

Location: Red Sea , north area

Equipment: Tanks, regulator, gauges, fins, boat

Weather: Very warm, humid, no wind

Buddy: Pat

We prepared for dive very early in morning, went out in boat, with gear, to the reef, but to a different spot. We anchored the boat, and snorkeled around for about an hour, then put on

gear and descended. We saw that BIG barracuda again, he is about 6 feet long, with a very large head, all full of teeth! We also saw 2 others, not as big, at different times. This was a new, and beautiful area, and also saw another very large turtle, they swim along so gracefully. I went down deeper to 23 meters, and then saw a crown of thorns starfish, picked it, and took some pictures. Pat came, when he turned it over, pricked his finger on a thorn, squeezed the finger to make it bleed, and the blood looked green, down at that depth. Colors are lost, at great depths, the blues last the longest, red disappears soon on descending. This was a great dive, I was down over 100 feet, was very comfortable, saw a large manta ray on the bottom, slowly moving along, scaring up molluscs in the sand, his food.

No. 57

October 19, 1984

Location: Red Sea - Shoiba beach, north side

Equipment: Tank, regulator, gauges, B\C vest, weight belt, fins - No boat today

Air pressure : in, 2500 - out 500

Buddies, John Duncan, Pat

The sea was calm, so we went out early, at 7:30 a.m., snorkeled and floated tanks out to chest deep water, suited up there. Then snorkeled further out to the reef, and descended. Swimming along so easily down below (it is like floating in outer space) and enjoying the lovely sights, I observed a very large sea anemone, all spread out and I could see the very center, the os, or mouth. When the anemone traps a small fish, which it has stunned by it's stinging cells, it then curls up and devours the catch. The outside of the anemone then looks like a big red tomato! This was a very large one. We also came upon a nursery area coral head, with thousands of tiny baby fish swimming about, several different kinds. This was a first time I've seen this. We looked for an area of beautiful white "stalk" coral, which we had seen once before while diving in this area, but did not find it. There are no road maps, or signs, down below in the sea, one tries to remember certain colors, or formations of a particular coral, when trying to come back to it at another time. We took many photos today. At one time John and I became separated from Pat, and surfaced: he came up shortly, we united, and then all went down again, were down for 55 minutes. We swam back to shore, and I rinsed all the equipment. Then we ate a good breakfast, cereal, milk, (we carry dry milk and water), bananas and bread. On arising this morning, I noted the trails of the white "ghost" crabs, which had crawled over my sleeping bag during the night, they come up out of their holes in the sand, during the night, and crawl over the sandy beach, where we all were sleeping. They don't bother us.

No. 58

October 25, 1984

Location: Red Sea, north of desalination plant construction

Equipment: Tank, regulator, gauges, B/C vest, fins, socks, camera

Water: Cloudy in lagoon, clear over the reef, cool

Buddy: Pat

Group from BSAC dive class were present today. We floated tanks out to chest deep water, suited up there, then swam through a cut in the reef, to deep side, and found the large coral head with the myriad of small fish swimming there, just like last week. We also saw a HUGE barracuda, which swam near us for awhile, they surely are big, here in the Red Sea. On noting that visibility was not too good, and we still each had 2000 pounds of air left, ascended, to save the air for a dive tomorrow.

A group of 5 employees from Al Hada hospital, where we work, came to the beach later on, to do their dive test tomorrow, with the British instructor. After dark, we swam and snorkeled, with the underwater lights, and saw a cuttlefish very close to us, also a couple of the long, thin flying fish, right in the path of light they stopped briefly, then leaped up out of the water, and swam away. That was a very neat sight!

No. 59, 1984

October 26, 1984

Location: Red Sea - same area as yesterday (see dive No. 58)

Equipment: Tank, regulator, gauges, B/C vest, weight belt, camera

Weather: Warm, calm

Buddy: Pat

At 7:30 a.m. we floated and swam the tanks out to deep water, suited up, then swam through the cut in first reef, and out to the second one, descended there and explored the area. We came up a couple of time to the surface, discussed the very strong current down below, and descended again. Scuba diving is SO NEAT, I float so freely, like being in space, I move up or down, or turn in different direction so easily, have learned to move along by finning, keeping hands free to hold, and use the camera. While down at about 35 feet, we saw a very large wrasse in a lagoon, as we came through a pass. He swam away quickly, they are shy, not like some of the other fish. We ascended again, and just snorkeled around awhile, eyeing the area below, then went down again at a different spot. When our air was about gone, we came to the surface and then had a very long swim back toward our camp. It was 10:30 when we got back to shore, my back muscles were tired, from 3 hours of finning, but worth it, for such a good dive.

No. 60

November 8, 1984

Location: Red Sea – Shoiba beach, near plant construction. We are always at the beach on the weekend, which is Thursday and Friday, in Saudi Arabia, they observe the Muslim religious calendar.

Equipment: Tank, regulator, gauges, fins, wet suit jacket, boat

Buddies: George, Pat

We arrived at Shoiba beach in mid afternoon, and went in for a dive after 4 p.m., took the boat out over the reef, and suited up, with much difficulty, for the waves were very big, and tossed us around. We descended. Usually we don't dive this late in the day, now everything looked mauve and grey colored. I saw a large turtle go by me, and a lot of the usual fish, and swam around for awhile. Looking at my watch, noted that it was 5:40, and motioned that we should ascend, for it would be dark about 6 p.m. We came up, took off gear, put it in the boat, and George and I got in. Pat stood on the reef, untangling the rope and anchor from the coral. The waves were bigger than when we came out ---and now, the motor would not start! We bounced around in the waves, the boat was really loaded, with tanks, gear, the large camera, and the three of us. The waves washed over us, as Pat tried to start the motor, finally he got it going, just as a huge wave smashed against us, completely filling the boat with water. I was sitting in it up to my chest. George and I immediately started bailing out water as another huge wave knocked Pat over the side, but he held onto the handle of the motor, and managed to climb back in. It was scary!!! I felt nauseated from the wave motion. The motor choked a couple of times, but then ran all right, and we did make it back to camp without capsizing, it was already dark when we arrived, and friends there were worried about us. They had a big fire going on the beach, that helped us find our way to the camp. It was a good ending, to an unusual dive. Another different happening that evening, a herd of camels, which wander in the desert, came to our camp. We gave them water and they stayed around all night, went and layed down in the desert near us. During the night we were awakened by low cries of a baby camel in the group. In my lifetime, I've been awakened at night by crying of a baby, or a puppy dog, but this is the first time, by a camel! Pat had pain in his shoulder and arm, probably it was wrenched, when he was washed overboard , after our dive today.

No. 61

November 9, 1984

Location: Red Sea - outer reef at Shoiba beach

Equipment: Tank, regulator, gauges, fins, weight belt, camera, boat

Buddy: Pat

We went out in the boat to the far reef, where we dived yesterday, and the sea was much calmer today, no huge waves but large swells were present. He anchored the boat on the reef, we suited up and descended, only to about 35 feet. We swam slowly along the face of the reef, observing beautiful fish and corals, then I went down lower to about 48 feet, and saw a crown of thorns starfish spread out over a coral. Pat had the camera, was ahead of me, but I swam to him, grabbed his flipper, pointed down to the starfish, and we swam down. We didn't want to pick him up this time, and get a finger stuck again, so used a broken piece of staghorn coral to pry him loose and turn him over. Then we got pictures of

the underside of his arms, showing the hundreds of little "tube" suction feet, on the underside, that he uses to move along. How interesting!!!! We played around with him for quite awhile, and now our air was almost gone, so ascended. Our down time was 1 hour and 21 minutes. We took off the gear at the boat and had an uneventful ride back to shore. A Good Dive!

No. 62

November 22, 1984

Location: Red Sea - desalination plant area

Equipment: Tank, regulator, wet suit jacket, gauges, B/C vest, camera

Objective: Photography

Weather: Windy

No one brought the boat to the beach today, so we floated tanks and vests out to chest deep water, and suited up there. Then we swam to the coral heads in the lagoon. The surf washed very high up on the reef, and the water was cloudy, so on descending we did not see anything unusual, but I did get a few pictures. There was a very strong current down below, which made swimming quite tiring. We stayed most of the dive around 45 to 50 feet, and down time was 50 minutes. This was Thanksgiving Day, in America. After the dive I made a fire on the beach, and grilled lemon pepper chicken over it. I had brought along cooked rice, prepared before coming to the beach, and cooked brussel sprouts over our little propane stove, we also had cheese and wine, while the chicken was cooking. This was our Thanksgiving dinner on the beach, my 5th one while working here in Saudi Arabia, we shared it with our friends.

No. 63

November 30, 1984

Location: Red Sea, closed Shoiba beach, dunes area

Equipment: Tank, regulator, sweater under wet suit jacket, bathing cap, weight belt, boat

Weather: Calm, water warm, visibility very

Buddy: Pat

This was my deepest dive. We went out in the boat, with tanks and gear in it, drove out to the furthest reef and found deep water. There we anchored the boat on the reef, I put on gear and slid over the side, and we descended. Below was a glorious sight, so clear and light. There were many fish, and all kinds of coral on a sloping sea bed. I found a HUGE clam, the mantle was grey and a little different than those we had seen on other dives. I swam ahead, grabbed Pat's fin, to alert him to come back with the camera. We took photos of it, then he had me pick it up and hold it, for another photo shot or two. It was so heavy I could hardly hold it!!! We saw more of them later, in another spot. At one time a huge school (hundreds) of a different kind of fish appeared (maybe Emperor ?), they circled us for about 5 minutes; then we were joined by a large school of fusiliers, and both groups of fish circled round and round, such a beautiful sight. Next, a very big barracuda swam slowly nearby, eyeing us for awhile. He went up toward the surface, but stayed near

for quite awhile, I could see his body plainly above me. On this dive I went down to 100 feet at times, and we stayed under 1 hour and 20 minutes, until our air was about gone, came up, decompressed on the way. This was a great dive, maybe it will be my last one here, for I leave Saudi in about 4 weeks. We went back to the boat, took off vest and tank in the water, Pat lifted it into the boat. The motor started o.k. this time, and we rode back to the beach.

No. 64

December 7, 1984

Location: Red Sea - Shoiba beach

Equipment: Tank, regulator, gauges, sweater under wet suit jacket, B/C vest, weight belt, camera

Water: Cold at surface and in shallows, warmer in the deep

Buddy: Pat

My last dive in the Red Sea ! We were camped with Jerry Montelius, another Californian working over here. He let me use his innertube to pull my tank and gear over the shallows for the sharp coral humps are hard to walk on, carrying the gear, and this made it easier. We anchored it out on the reef, suited up, and descended to about 45 feet. An eagle ray swam past us swiftly, too fast to get a picture. We also saw 5 large yellow goat fish in a group, that was unusual, they most often swim alone. We ascended once, discussed what we had seen, and descended again. I had trouble going down, and discovered the hood of the wet suit (which I did not have on my head), trapped air, and acted like a balloon, holding me up. Pat had to pull me down by my foot. That was funny!

It was a very good dive, we were down 1 hour and 20 minutes, I had used most of my air,. I was also getting chilled, and had to keep swinging my arms a lot the last 20 minutes, to get warm. I am so pleased to have learned to dive, while working over here in Saudi Arabia, the Red Sea is one of the best places in the world, for corals and fishes. My contract at the hospital ends soon, and I'll be leaving here. My age is 69.

No. 65

October 31, 1985

Location: Caribbean Sea - Barbados Island

Equipment: Tank, regulator, Tee shirt, simple vest, weight belt, fins

Buddy: Ferguson, a native Barbadian divemaster

Objective: To compare corals in the Caribbean with those in the Red Sea

I have just started a trip around the world, by myself, and now am in the island of Barbados. I arranged with a dive shop to do a dive here in the Caribbean. The divemaster took me out (after renting equipment from his shop) in a boat driven by his son, to a deep water area far out from shore, where there was coral. I put my mask, snorkel, and fins on in the boat, slipped over the side and donned the tank in the water, with Ferguson's help. He put his on, and we descended, looking for corals and fish. His son followed in the boat, tracking us by our bubbles. I did see different kinds of corals, but not near the variety that is

in the Red Sea, and they were not colorful but seemed rather drab, many appeared to be dying. The Gorgonian fans we saw were very large and beautiful, the staghorn coral was plentiful and large, but nothing was as colorful and the "flower gardens" of coral under the Red Sea. Ferguson was very safety conscious, and a good buddy. There was a strong current flowing, a little difficult to swim against, and I was getting cold, so we ascended after 45 minutes and went to the boat. Again, I took off the tank in the deep water, Ferguson put it into the boat, then he boosted me as he tread water and his son helped pull me up over the side, there was no reef here, just deep water. Ferguson also entered after removing his tank in the water, and we were driven back to shore. I'm glad I made the dive here, and made the comparison. We did see many of the same kinds of fish, seen in the warm waters of the Red Sea.

NOTE: In my visits to other countries, as I went around the world, I did plan to do a scuba dive in the south China sea, but in the remote area where I was, I did not approve of the equipment I saw being used by divers, and the compressor filling the tanks, did not work well, it gave out a strange odor, and I chose not to use a tank from there, so didn't dive but spent my time snorkeling a lot. I was in warm oceans and seas, all around the world, While circling the globe, enjoyed all of them, and gained a great knowledge of the varieties of coral. I went to the library one day when I was in Cairns, Australia, and spent a few hours studying books about corals of the area, that the librarian selected for me.

No. 66

March 12, 1987

Location: Caribbean Sea, Key Largo, Florida

Objective: To study coral reef of U.S.A. At John Pennekamp Nat'l. Park

Equipment: Rented Tank, regulator, wet suit top, B/C vest – My mask, snorkel

Dive boat: Admiral I - Rope descent from boat, with tank on back. Arrangements made through dive shop.

Buddies: Divemaster, and 2 young men from England

The reef was 5 ½ miles out from shore, depth 25 to 35 feet. The color of the corals was very drab and grey, nothing bright at all. We did see brain and staghorn varieties of corals, nothing was colorful. There were many fish: angel, parrot, wrasse, unicorn, snapper, nothing was very big. I was not weighted enough, only 10#, and floated upward often, even after letting all the air out of the B/C vest, also I became very chilled, for the water was cold. The divemaster had a full wet suit on, even the hood and booties, I had no protection on legs or lower body. Our down time was 46 minutes, I had 350 pounds of air remaining.

No. 67

Dive 2, same location on Admiral I

I was shivering and shaking, from the first dive, was too cold to enjoy it more than a short time. I was disappointed in this location, for the reef was drab and damaged from pollution. Also, this water is too cool for a bountiful growth of coral.

No. 68

September 2, 1987

Location: Great Barrier Reef, Townsville, Australia - On Brewer reef

Objective: Observation and comparison to corals in the Red Sea

Equipment: Tank, regulator, gauges, 10# weight belt and a 1# weight in pocket of B/C vest. Shorty wet suit

Buddy: Steve Balsun, from the dive shop

I went out on a ship "Reef Link" for 2 hours, to a stationary platform in the sea, donned gear there, then was transported in a small tender to the dive site, descended there. We saw many fish and corals, which were not as colorful as the corals in the Red Sea. The sea fans were very large and beautiful, we also saw many hydroids. I followed my buddy through narrow places, once my regulator hose caught on rough coral, but I freed it and kept going on.

There, just ahead, in a sort of a cave, was a very large 4 foot long toadfish, he was also big around, not a thin fish. My buddy approached it slowly, reached out and petted it, and motioned for me to do the same. I did, then the fish swam away, did not seem to mind us being there. How exciting it was for me, to stroke that fish!!! We were at a depth of 50 to 60 feet, and swam around some more, I was very comfortable. The south Pacific water is much warmer than the Atlantic. We ascended after 55 minutes and swam back to the tender, which had a platform in the water, at the stern, and gear could be taken off there. This was a great dive.

No. 69

September 2, 1987

Dive 2, same location as above

This second dive of the day was in a similar area, and from the tender. I donned the tank while standing on the platform at the stern, and descended alone, for the divemaster was busy with a novice diver. In a short time they both descended and we explored together. Visibility was poor here, and the corals were grey in color, seemed damaged by pollution, nothing was colorful though there were several varieties of coral seen. There were large fish here but not many different varieties were seen. We explored the area close to the floating dive platform, and also went further out: I was very relaxed and enjoyed the dive, though disappointed in the corals. There was no strong current here. Our down time was 45 minutes.

At this site, a diving accident had occurred on a nearby dive boat, one diver was suffering from the "bends", from coming to the surface too fast. Our ship captain related to us that a rescue helicopter had been called, and while we watched from the tender, it came down on a stationary platform out here at this dive site, and took the diver back to land, to a hospital. One cannot ascend too fast, from a dive of 100 feet the diver must stop part way up, remain there to decompress the body, go up a little more, decompress again, then ascend to the surface. In taking the scuba diving course in Saudi Arabia, I had to learn these things, to become a certified diver. I hope the man recovers.

No. 70

September 8, 1987

Location: Australia, Great Barrier Reef, out of Cairns

Equipment: Tank, regulator, gauges, belt with 5 weights, flippers, B/C vest

Objective: To find better corals, I was disappointed with the last dives here. Dive booked: At Peter Tibbs dive school, Cairns

Buddy: Ralph, the divemaster

We rode over 3 ½ hours out to Michaelmas Cay, on a ship with many snorkelers, and a few divers. The snorkelers were let off at a small island, were taken there in a skiff that was carried on the ship, and it took several trips to move them all there. We then proceeded further out in the Coral Sea, to a dive site. The sky was grey, and clouds looked stormy. I donned tank and vest on the ladder, with Ralph's help, and descended, he followed. We swam a long way, saw a HUGE clam, about a meter long! Then we found 2 very big shells, a baler, and a triton, which we picked up, examined, and replaced them back on the bottom. They were alive, and were the biggest I have ever seen. There were many fish swimming around: emperor angel, blue stripe snapper, one spot grunts, etc. , this was more like the Red Sea. The dive was very relaxed, I was comfortable with finning, but after 55 minutes, I was cold, and we ascended. At my age, I was satisfied being down that long.

No. 71

September 8, 1987

Location: Australia, Coral Sea, Great Barrier Reef – Hastings Reef, further out than earlier dive today

Equipment: Tank, regulator, gauges, B/C vest, wet suit top, 10# weight belt

Ship: Sea Star

Buddies: Martin, an Australian, and Diggeree, and Englishman

Weather: Storm brewing, big clouds forming

The cruiser went farther out to sea, for a better dive site. I descended, with 2 buddies, to about 60 feet, and now was pleased, for we saw beautiful colors of coral, green, yellow, pink, blue, just like the Red Sea! This was the best dive, here in the Great Barrier Reef. There was white mushroom coral, needle (hystrix), blue antler type, soft corals, hydroids, alcyonarians, and big Gorgonian fans. Everything was lovely, I enjoyed it thoroughly. I only had a "shortie" wet suit on, (the divemasters had full wet suits, hoods, gloves, and booties) and I became cold at 55 minutes down time. The water was cold here. As I climbed the ladder to enter the ship, high waves banged me against the side, it was not easy to get up, the wind was blowing very hard. I took off the tank on deck, but then went down with mask and snorkel, and swam around a bit more on the surface, for it was so beautiful down below. I saw reef sharks down there, they don't bother the divers, I also saw another HUGE hump head wrasse, while snorkeling near the ship.

The storm broke, as I was changing into dry clothes, the wind howled, huge waves washed up on us, it stormed all the way back to the harbor and it took us 5 hours to get there., it was already dark when we arrived. Despite the storm, this was a great dive. At the harbor, the

driver for the Peter Tibbs dive school took me back to my hotel, and I obtained some food at the Lebanese restaurant next door, it was too late for dinner in the hotel. I am traveling alone, and make all my dive arrangements in the city I am staying in. I'll be 72 in a couple of months. My next adventure, here in Cairns, will be riding the rapids, in the Baron river.