

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Department of Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine
The Prince Henry Hospital
Anzac Parade
LITTLE BAY

25 February 1985

Dear Sir

I write to correct a number of errors and misconceptions arising from comments in the article DAN (Divers Alert Network) Australia by Robert Sands in the October-December 1984 edition of the *Journal*.

The multi-chamber facility in the Hyperbaric Unit at The Prince Henry Hospital, Sydney, is, and will be, available for diver treatment 24 hours a day, as it has for many years. The State Government has denied categorically any future interference with the full functioning of The Prince Henry Hospital, and intends that full service including Hyperbaric will be available for all civilians in the State and from elsewhere. The complex will continue to be fully available and used by divers even after the new complex opens at HMAS Penguin. Any suggestion that adequate facilities or staffing expertise do not exist at The Prince Henry Hospital will be construed as libellous and therefore actionable, and any attempt to dissuade patients from voluntarily using The Prince Henry Hospital facilities by insinuation of lack of expertise or facilities will be similarly regarded. The Hyperbaric Unit in this State Public Hospital has been provided by the State Government for the treatment of civilian diving casualties, and will continue in this role.

Ian P Unsworth
Director of Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine

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13 April 1985

Dear Sir

I have been an associate member of SPUMS since 1976 and as a keen and regular diver I have gained a great deal of information contained in the *Journal*. Of particular value are the detailed reports from Operation Stickybeak and the annual diver accident reports from the United States. For practicing divers and those who teach it I don't think that there can be too much of this type of material.

Given the recent increase in the number of recompression treatments carried out both in Townsville (in the AIMS chamber) and Morwell (in the NSC chamber) there is an obvious need for an increased level of diver education and advice in the areas of decompression and repetitive diving.

This leads me to comment on item 3 in the General Business section of the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting reported in the *SPUMS Journal*, Vol. 14, 1984 headed "Diving Tables". I quote, "J Knight suggested that SPUMS should print Bruce Bassett's revision of the USN tables on plastic and distribute it free through dive shops and the National Qualification Scheme as the best compromise between safety and repetitive dives at present available. After lengthy discussion it was decided that SPUMS could not recommend any particular tables." The report continues to say that diver education in this matter should be stressed.

While agreeing with the Executive Committee's decision to stress the importance of diver education, I feel that SPUMS should also be prepared to give an informed lead to the diving community and recommend which tables it thinks should be used and to participate actively in the distribution of such tables.

Decompression and repetitive diving is a fact of life, both amongst sports and professional divers. We are all told of the limitations and dangers inherent in the USN tables and how they are not conservative enough. So here is a chance for SPUMS to contribute in a real way to diver awareness and safety. It's pointless pushing tables that don't allow for repetitive diving. They will not be used by the diving community. But a revised and safer version of the USN tables will. If such a scheme saves even one diver getting bent, it will have been worthwhile.

Yours sincerely
David Parer

The Bassett tables, in an easily used format were presented at the SPUMS Annual Scientific Meeting on Bandos Island in the Maldives Republic. The paper is printed on page 8 of this issue. A commercial version will shortly be on sale in the dive shops.

Mr Parer will be pleased to see that other people are also pushing the Bassett tables as the book review, on page 18, makes clear.

PROJECT STICKYBEAK

The aim of this investigation is to receive, store, and if appropriate publish and make available for discussion, an accurate record of all types and severities of problems encountered by divers.

CONFIDENTIALITY is maintained and no details are published to identify persons involved or sources of information.

Please send reports to:

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