

The Shoreline

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Holiday Harbor-Wilmington

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Hello everyone,

Abraham Lincoln, who was recently voted, our best president ever, once said, "You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves." This quote has absolutely nothing to do with what I intend to write about, but I thought it was something interesting to think about.

I thought I'd write about we humans and instincts or the lack thereof. It is widely viewed by professionals in the field of human behavior that humans have no instincts, at least none apart from babies suckling. They say it's logic and reasoning that's kept us from extinction and guides our way through the human experience. I know what the professionals think. Give me your view after reading this newsletter of an incident that happened to me shortly before I started here at the marina.

I was assigned to an emergency medical services helicopter. This aircraft is manned by a doctor, two paramedics/divers, a crew chief and two pilots. We had just completed a call and were approaching Lake Pyramid when a call came out regarding a boating accident and subsequent sinking. We were told there were possibly four victims still inside the boat. Within seconds, we were on the ground and within minutes we were in wet suits and at the dive site. A marker buoy and 30 lb clump weight had since been deployed. The water depth was 150' with zero visibility. Factoring in our elevation, we would have 17 minutes of bottom time from the moment we broke surface.

The plan seemed simple enough - swim to the bottom and immediately begin line (rope) circle searches. When we were nearing the limit on our bottom time, guys in the surface would pull hard, in rapid succession, on the down line alerting us to return to the surface. Once on the bottom, my partner sat on the clump weight, then I started swimming the search. With every circle, Doug, my partner, would feed out more line and the search area grew larger. Sounds simple, huh? Okay, here is where the whole instinct thing comes into play. We're down 150' and we can't see anything. I'm starting to feel cold. I keep swimming. I'm thinking I've been down a long time. Remember, we only had 17 minutes. I keep swimming. I sense the regulator is getting hard to draw air...I keep swimming. I sense the search line is more slack than taunt, indicating greater distance from Doug... I keep swimming. I'm swimming in an ever expanding circle with no lights and zero visibility.

I ignored all these signs (instincts) and more. Then it happens...the regulator thumps shut. Instantly, my brain puts all the pieces together and I panic pushing off the bottom and dropping my weight belt. Once on my way up, I get a breath of half water, half air. At this point, it occurred to me I would not make it. The next thing I remember is being held next to a support vessel and having all my equipment removed by assisting paramedics. There is more to tell, but I think you get the picture. So there you have it. Maybe we have instincts, maybe we don't. You decide.

On a lighter note, life goes quick, go out and have some fun for Cinco De Mayo.

We were recently notified by Web Services (our washer/dryer services company) that effective immediately, they will be implementing a \$.25 increase to wash.

Until next time,
Jerry, HHW Marina Manager