

Commentary: Dive Certification by Kirk Leissner

You may have asked yourself on one occasion or another "Why do I need to be certified for diving?" Although the answer may sound like heresy, dive certification is not for everyone. There exists individuals, albeit very few in number, who have no interest in the serenity and beauty of our marine environment. Therefore, these persons do not require the training which accompanies certification in order to safely visit this underwater world.

They may, however, have an interest in a favorite topside activity practiced by most divers, i.e., telling dive lies. For example, I recall a dive where my buddy and I came upon a two foot barracuda. No big deal, so I thought. But back on the boat, my buddy was telling this story about a three foot barracuda that charged at us. At the dock, this same barracuda was four feet in length and had taken a bite out of me. Back in Houston, this very same barracuda grew to six feet, I had nearly been eaten alive, and only my buddy's quick resourceful action of harpooning this leviathan with a hastily fabricated coral spear had saved my life. By now, the barracuda is probably responsible for sinking a tanker. I don't know what vitamins that barracuda takes, but I would like to have a bottle.

This tale demonstrates a little white dive lie, although some stories are really whoppers, known as dive fantasies. Fairy tales and dive fantasies differ only in their introduction. Instead of "once upon a time", dive fantasies begin with, "this is no bull". For individuals who wish to participate only in this topside activity, certification is not necessary.

Presently, a void exists in the art of telling dive lies. Bookshelves are lined with such works as "The Amateur Carpenter", "Plumbing Made Easy", and "How to Rewire your Own Home Without Plunging the City into Total Darkness", but no book exists on the art of spreading dive lies. Fear not, for I am coming to the rescue with my soon to be published book, "Embellishing Dive Tales" or "How to Tell Dive Lies with Composure". Enclosed with the books will be a genuine imitation C-card to fool your non-diving friends with, and lend an air of authenticity, however slight, to your fabulous tales. For those who cannot afford the hardbound copy, a paperback version will be printed in six months. So send those checks to "Certifications Are So Hokey", or the abbreviation C.A.S.H., care of this site's address.