

HSA HISTORY & PURPOSE

The founder of HSA is Jim Gatacre, NAUI Instructor #CD-6969. In his own words, “I started diving in 1973 as a result of my own disability and have spent my entire diving career assisting, teaching and sport diving with handicapped students and divers. I have a B.S. degree in Biology from the University of California at Irvine, and taught Marine Biology for two years at the Dana Point Marine Science Laboratory. I founded the HSA in 1981.” The HSA’s History and Purpose are as follows:

The HANDICAPPED SCUBA ASSOCIATION

- ❑ HSA had its genesis in 1975 at University of California-Irvine as a research pilot program looking at self-image changes. All AB’s (able-bodied divers) and HC’s (handicapped divers) were expected to perform training exercises. Two classes were conducted and the program ended two years later.
- ❑ For the first class in 1975 we were unable to find a boat Captain willing to take us out for training dives. HOW FAR HAVE WE COME? Two decades later, the Kona Aggressor Live Aboard yacht was retrofitted to accommodate wheelchair users, then later that same year the FIJI AGGRESSOR was launched, “built” to accommodate wheelchair users, with accessible, rooms, bathrooms and an elevator to the upper decks. Dan Ruth, HSA Instructor #1241, of Live/Dive Pacific in Kailua-Kona Hawaii, did this he said “because it’s the right thing to do”.
- ❑ Formally organized in 1981 as a grass roots teaching and sport diving group for the handicapped. The Handicapped Scuba Association, HSA (USA with an H), was named in the parking lot of US Divers Corp. June 1981 when Gatacre went to pick up the first equipment donation. The donation of 6 Sea Otter BCD’s, 6 Aquarius Regulators and 6 Aluminum 80 scuba tanks had been authorized by John Cronin himself, and marks the founding date of HSA.
- ❑ By 1982, we were involved with disabled divers workshops conducted by Council for National Cooperation in Aquatics (CNCA), Undersea Medical Society (UMS) and Our World Underwater These workshops formed the basis for the specialized **Physical Performance Standards**, which we developed working closely with Walt Hendrick, Sr, NAUI; Dennis Graver, PADI; John Stewart, PADI; and Jim Hicks, NAUI.
- ❑ Based on these **Physical Performance Standards** we have developed a diver Certification Program, written two manuals and created the *HSA Instructor Training Course (ITC)*, the *Dive Buddy Course*, and a *Course Director Training Course (CDTC)*.
- ❑ The HSA Instructor Manual was written based upon Gatacre’s own questions about disabilities, training problems, accessibility issues and the questions asked by other Instructors who were teaching people with disabilities. The HSA Instructor Manual and **Physical Performance Standards** have been revised each year since 1986 utilizing input from some of the finest HSA Instructors teaching in over forty-five countries worldwide.
- ❑ The Instructor Training Course provides instructors with specialized knowledge usually found only in a medical environment. Dive stores are mainstream settings, where our trained instructors can be very effective in providing DE-INSTITUTIONALIZED REHABILITATION OPPORTUNITIES.

IN ITS FIRST QUARTER CENTURY, HSA INTERNATIONAL has created:

- ❑ An INTERNATIONAL NETWORK of specially trained instructors, including over 40 medical doctors, in over forty-five countries. Using this network of HSA instructors we are able to provide an online instructor referral service that matches students to instructors for training, and for open-water completion of training.
- ❑ An ACCESSIBLE TRAVEL PROGRAM and a RESORT EVALUATION PROGRAM. In 1984 we

contacted Joyce Wiggins of Divi Flamingo Beach Resort on Bonaire and asked them to provide ramps for our first accessible dive vacation. When we arrived, they had installed ramps to most everything. Today, Divi Flamingo Beach Resort is a model for resort accessibility, and is a destination of choice for divers with disabilities from around the world. This was the beginning of our Resort Evaluation Program, and our accessible travel program. We conduct three or four accessible dive vacation trips per year.



- ❑ Two films. "**Freedom In Depth**" with Jean-Michel Cousteau features nineteen handicapped divers exploring the waters of California. And "**To Fly in Freedom**" with the Cousteau Society, filmed in Fiji, features Jacques-Yves Cousteau, Jean-Michel Cousteau, the *ALCYONE* wind ship, and HSA divers from Brazil, Japan, the former Soviet Union, Canada, and the US.
- ❑ **To Fly in Freedom** is Jean-Michel Cousteau's film. The HSA held a fundraising dinner and dance called "A Caribbean Night with Jean-Michel Cousteau", in 1989. It was very exciting, Jean-Michel was the host, Buzz Aldrin Jr., the second Man on the Moon!, came and the two of them met and took pictures with everyone. At the height of the event Jean-Michel said to Gatacre, over the sound system, "the film we made a few years ago is good, but it is getting old. I think we should make a new one, think about it Jim and tell me what you want to do." Since the HSA was by now International, the film would be also.



Astronaut Buzz Aldrin, Jean-Michel Cousteau, and Jim & Pat Gatacre during "Caribbean Night" fundraiser.



Gatacre & Thompson challenge the California Surf. Circa 1981



Accessible dive vacation in Hawaii with Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead, Michelle Galler C-0006, and

ITC COURSE OVERVIEW

Lectures (10 hours)

Disability Types:

As Instructors you need a good understanding of the disabilities you will be working with. During these lectures you will be introduced to anatomy, physiology, psychological effects disabilities have on people, accessibility issues and their relationship to scuba diving. This will give you more confidence and that gives your students confidence in you and makes them more comfortable.

Criteria for Certification:

During these lectures you will learn the HSA certification system, how the performance requirements are applied in teaching, insurance issues and something about the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Training Issues:

During these lectures you will learn about various types of special problem you may encounter, and how to solve them.

Special considerations:

These are topics specific to students with disabilities, subjects you need to know and teach to your students, such as Dive Table concerns, preparation for diving, donning wet suits, best equipment and diving from boats.

Confined Water Training: (5 hours)

You will simulate paraplegia, quadriplegia, amputee and blind diving students, performing skills that are typically problematic for these disability types. As instructors you teach your students dive and solve problems the way you do, so you must experience the problems to gain the tools you need to train your students.



Tadeusz conducts Open Water training during his CDTC in Poland.

Open Water Training: (4 hours)

During these exercises you will be in a team of three, an instructor, with a paraplegic and blind student. You will learn the problem solving techniques and logistics.

Final Exam: (2 hours)

The final exam is open book and taken in discussion groups. Each question is to be discussed among the group members before answering. This will help you own the materials.



Mike Cavanaugh, HSA 0079, diving as a paraplegic during his ITC.



Mark Conrad, HSA 0077, leads 'blind' diver Bob Lewallen, HSA 0080, during their ITC.