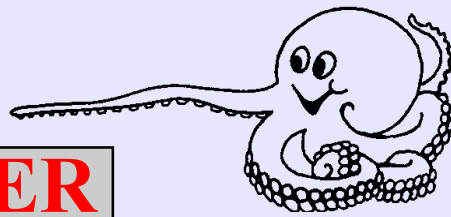


THE REEF SEEKER



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April 1, 2024



FULL FACEMASK NOW REQUIRED TO DIVE CATALINA

Over the weekend, the Avalon City Council passed a new ordinance (AF-040124) that will require all divers and snorkelers to wear full facemasks when diving anywhere around the island. Avalon Mayor Annie Sullivan pointed to a recent study that showed that many drownings, not necessarily of divers, got started because people got water up their nose. "We know that when the entire face is covered, the odds of that happening are significantly lessened," Sullivan said.

She also pointed out that this ordinance solves another problem for Avalon in that the emergency phone at the Underwater Park has been out of commission for some

time and the City hasn't gotten around to fixing it. (It apparently flooded and the column filled with water due to all the rain and it shorted everything out.) But the City felt that requiring the full facemasks would lessen the chance of an accident at the Underwater Park, which lessens the chances of someone needing to use the emergency phone, which lessens the chances of someone suing the City of Avalon because the phone didn't work. As one City Council member who asked to remain anonymous said, "It's all about our program of Controlling Your Adventure, or CYA."

There's no requirement as to which diving or snorkeling mask you have to use but you should note that the regulation goes into effect as of the start of April, which is today. If you have questions about this or need further clarification, you can contact the City of Avalon Clerk at 310/510-0220, ext. 122.



L.A. KINGS NEED SOME DIVERS

The ice at the Crypto.com arena (aka Staples Center) is apparently deeper than we thought because we got a request from the L.A. Kings that they're in need of some divers. The good news is that you DON'T need to be an ice diver to do this because it involves helping them change the water that then makes the ice.

It seems that when they do this, there's a film that develops as the ice starts to freeze which needs to be scraped off. This is similar to what the divers at the Aquarium of the Pacific do in terms of scraping algae off of the repli-corals there. The difference here is that you must exit before you get frozen in the ice, so a drysuit is necessary.

The best part, especially if you're a hockey fan, is that this comes with premium seating tickets to a bunch of the Kings games. They're doing this on Tuesday (the Kings aren't home until Wednesday) so you need to act quickly. It's also OK if you don't have a buddy as they're seeking to get four people and will match you up.

If you're interested, call the Kings at 310/535-4441.



OIL RIGS WILL BE TURNED INTO DIVE RESORTS

Solving a years-long dilemma about what to do with them, Marriott has announced they are purchasing all of the offshore California oil rigs and will turn them into dive resorts. They'll be known not as HoTels, but RigTels. "People will now literally be able to start their dive from the front door of their room," says Marriott spokesperson Ima Fisch.

What to do with the rigs once they're decommissioned has been a problem with many different options discussed. Until now. Marriott says they're investing heavily in this project and plan to have the rigs ready to accommodate guests by the summer, but they're taking reservations now. There will also be limits on how many divers each rig will accommodate. "We plan to cap occupancy at about 30 divers per rig," says Fisch, "which is the same as you'd get on a large dive boat."

Marriott also announced that a few of their RigTel resorts will be geared to high-end divers. For instance, the Eureka rig will accept only Marriott Bonvoy members who have at least an Advanced card or can show a logbook with proof of 10 dives in the past year when they check in.

Like when they operated as oil rigs, the new RigTels will be ser-

vised by shore boats that will not only bring the divers out but also can ferry supplies. One wrinkle is that among those supplies will be filled tanks because some arcane federal regulation prohibits Marriott from installing compressors on the rigs. It seems that the way the regulation is written, pumping hazardous fuel is permitted but pumping clean air is not. Go figure.

So each day, the supply boats will bring about 100 tanks out and take 100 tanks back to be filled. This should allow guests to get in at least three dives each day, and maybe more if your air consumption is good or you stay very shallow.

The other interesting feature is going to be the availability of special water-level rooms known as Pinnipeds. Because these rigs are a home to many sea lions, and because Marriott can't just evict them (another federal regulation), some of the rooms near the water-level will have special balconies which will allow the seas lions to congregate. Those particular rooms will also be outfitted with special tempered soundproof and shatterproof glass so the resident

sea lions can't break into the room nor keep guests awake all night with barking.

Minimum stay in one of the RigTels is 3 days. Maximum is 14 days. There's also a special offer if you pre-pay for your stay that, should you get bent while diving with Marriott, they'll pay for the cost of your hyperbaric treatment.

Reservations are being taken now by calling 888/236-2427. Ask for the RigTels desk and tell them Reef Seekers sent you.

AVALON U/W PARK WILL BE CLOSED THIS WEEK

Just a quick note to remind you that the Park is closed this week to change out all the kelp. This is something that's done annually. There's a good chance that it might be done quickly but if you're going to dive the Park, you'd better double-check before you go over. You can call Catalina Divers Supply at 310/510-0330 and ask if they've gotten the kelp change completed. (It usually improves the viz so it's a good thing. Wish they did it more often.)

2024 DIVING VACATIONS

May 18-25 • Roatan

July 8-19 • Indonesia

September 9-21 • Yap

September 2025 • Maldives



HAVE YOU CALIBRATED YOUR FINS LATELY???

Not everyone gets told this when they buy a new set of fins, but they require calibration every now and then. Otherwise, they lose their efficiency and/or they will start swimming you in circles when you kick. The good news is that calibration is something you can do yourself at home or in a pool. If you don't have access to a pool, a bathtub full of water will do the trick.

Start by filling up your tub. Then get in the tub and kneel down. Hold the fin in front of you with both hands and move it up and down, simulating a kicking motion, exactly thirteen times. At that point, the fin will be re-calibrated. If you do it less or more than thirteen times, you may find that you're drifting to the side when you kick.

It's also very important to do the left fin first and the right fin second. If you don't know which is which, look on the bottom of the fin as many of them have an "L" on the bottom. (If both of your fins are marked "L," it means wherever you got them sold you two

UPCOMING LOCAL DIVES & CLASSES

DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED DESTINATION	PRICE
Sat.	Apr. 13	Redondo/Vets	Taming Surf Entries	35
Wed.	17	--- CLASS ---	--- Tables & Computers ---	35
Wed.	24	<i>Catalina Express</i>	Avalon Underwater Park	180
Wed.	May 1	Boats/Aquarium	Chamber Day/Eve 2024	150
Thu.	9	Redondo/Vets	••• Night Dive •••	35
Sat.	11	Redondo/Vets	Beach Diving	35
Wed.	15	--- CLASS ---	--- Photo Workshop ---	FREE
Wed.	June 12	<i>Catalina Express</i>	Avalon Underwater Park	180

left fins and you'll need to trade one of them in for a right.)

Fin calibration is something that should be done once a year, usually in April. Don't go diving again until you've done yours.



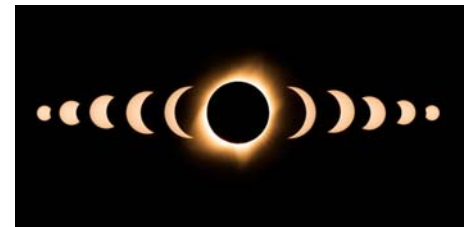
TOLL BOOTH INSTALLED AT ANGELS GATE

As you may know, Angels Gate is the main entrance/exit out of L.A. Harbor from San Pedro. In an attempt to raise funds, and since the Port of Los Angeles is a unit under the City of Lo Angeles, the city has decided that more revenue needs to be generated from boats going in and out of the harbor so they've installed a floating toll booth.

Starting today, any boat going in or out must stop at the toll booth and pay a \$10 fee. This includes cruise ships and freighters (although their fee is \$20). Exact change is preferred. The good news in all of this is that the toll booth is on the E-Z Pass system, so any vessel having one of those can sail

on through, and the charge will automatically be applied to their account.

We know this sounds ridiculous but sometimes that's simply the state of government today.



APRIL 8 SOLAR ECLIPSE POSTPONED

Due to projected inclement weather along the path of the April 8 eclipse (including in Dallas where I plan on being), NASA has announced they are re-scheduling the eclipse for a time when the weather along the path is more favorable. This is so the maximum number of people can see it. They haven't decided on the date yet but are looking at sometime during the summer when there are less clouds and storms over the US. NASA says they've made arrangements with airlines and hotels along the path of totality to allow people to delay their reservations until the re-scheduled date.

If you have questions about this, call NASA in Washington D.C. at 202/358-0001, and ask for the Eclipse Postponement Hotline.

SAN DIEGO SELLS CHILDREN'S POOL NAMING RIGHTS TO CITIBANK

It seems the City of San Diego has sold the naming rights to the Children's Pool to Citibank to the tune of \$5.1 million dollars. "It will provide a much-needed infusion of cash to the city," says San Diego PR spokesperson April Phoolz. "We thought long and hard about this," says Ms. Phoolz, "before we made the 10-year deal."

As part of the overall agreement, which takes effect Monday, signage around the Pool will be changed to read "Citibank Children's Pool." Citibank will also replace all the existing parking meters so that they will accept

credit cards, though it seems that the ONLY cards they'll accept will be Citibank ones.

Citibank also tried to get the naming rights for the offshore area too but was rebuffed, believe it or not, by the Department of Fish & Wildlife because no one on the Citibank Board of Directors held a current California fishing license and DF&W will not allow anyone, including a corporation, to "possess" anything in off-shore waters without said license.

It's probably too late to do anything but if you'd still like to register your comments about this, you can call the City Clerk Diana Fuentes' office at 619/533-4000 and demand to speak to Ms. April Phoolz to register your opinion. Make sure your voice is heard!!!

DID YOU NOTICE THE DATE ON THIS NEWSLETTER?

If you've gotten this far and haven't yet caught on, well, bless your heart (and let's talk about some land I own in Florida on which I can offer you a sweet deal). The date says specifically "April 1" for the reason that it's our annual and hopefully-much-anticipated April Fools newsletter. Except for the local boat/class sked and the foreign trips, not a word of this was true (although the phone numbers are actually all legit). Hopefully you've enjoyed reading it as much as we enjoyed writing it. And if this was your first time seeing an April edition, be forewarned: We do this every year. Happy April Fools!!!!

PICTURE PAGE - Fish ID made easy

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2024)



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**George, Gina, Geoff
GSBs**



**Sally
Southern Ray**



**Harry
Horseshoe Crab**



**Stuart
Sailfin Snapper**