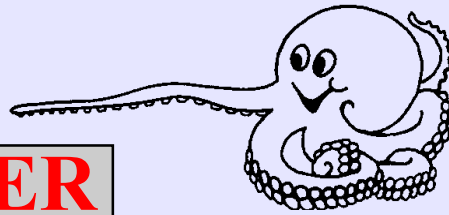


THE REEF SEEKER



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March - 2024



CHAMBER DAY 2024

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

As you may already know, since the early-90s, Reef Seekers has served as Chamber Day HQ and we're proud to fill that role again in 2024. That being said, let's start with this: Chamber Day 2024 is Wednesday, May 1.

And then there's this: Can we top the record-setting amounts we've raised the past few years? Can we make this 50th anniversary year of our Chamber REALLY special? We certainly can when you pitch in to help.

We are live and in-person again this year, both for Chamber Day on the dive boats and for Chamber Evening at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach. But, because we realize some of you are still not comfortable attending

these types events in-person, we've got virtual options for both Day & Eve as well.

We hope you'll remember that even through the height of the pandemic, your Chamber remained open and operational. So while other businesses may have been able to cut expenses during COVID, that's NOT the case with your Chamber. Our expenses generally stayed the same as they would have in a normal year, so YOUR support is still vital.

It's also important to remind you that every dollar raised from this event goes directly towards funding our Chamber for the coming year. The Chamber relies on our diving community for roughly 50% of the annual operating funds. Chamber Day is not only a vital fund-raiser for our Chamber, but is also the largest single-day scuba charity event in the U.S. and we're hoping you'll help us make this one another resounding success.

THE HISTORY OF CHAMBER DAY

Although the Chamber opened October 5, 1974, and had the first treatment a week later, by the mid-80s there was regular talk of L.A. County removing their funding, which might have caused our Chamber to close. In 1988, loss of funding seemed imminent. Roger Hess, owner of Charisma Charters

and the Father of Chamber Day, came up with the idea of all of the local boats getting together on a single specified day to go diving over at Catalina and tour the Chamber, with all the proceeds donated to the operating account of our Chamber. Thus, Chamber Day was born. The first event was held in June of 1988 and raised a little over \$15,000.

In the years since, the event has grown tremendously, both in scope and participation. (It also moved to always being the first Wednesday in May.) In 1991, we added a raffle. In 1998 we added Chamber Eve, the Flying Dutchman, and the Chamber Challenge. In 2020, as a response to the pandemic, we added Virtual Chamber Eve.

The financial success of the event has increased as well. From our humble beginnings, we passed \$50,000 raised in the 90s. We made it past \$100,000 for the first time in 2006. We passed \$150,000 in 2021. And we are now within striking distance of the event raising \$200,000 for our Chamber. We can do it with your help.

Here's what we have planned for 2024:

CHAMBER DAY

Once again, we want to take you diving and touring.

We've got seven boats ready to

plop you into underwater SoCal on May 1. In alphabetical order they are: Giant Stride, Liberty (free-diving), Pacific Moon, Pacific Star, SoCal Diver, Sundiver, and Sundiver Express. We'll have 119 boat diver spots this year.

All of our May 1 boats will do two dives as well as a walking tour of our Chamber. Some boats will do the tour first and then dive. Others will do their dives and then come in for the tour. All participating divers will receive a Chamber Day 2024 t-shirt, ten daytime raffle tickets, food and an airfill on the boat, and a walking tour of our Chamber facilities, which will include a chance to talk with various rescue and first-responders. The cost remains at \$150 total, which breaks down as \$110 going to the event and \$40 going back to the boats to help with their expenses. Generally, the boats leave their respective docks at 7AM and return no later than 5:30PM.

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN – FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T TAKE THE DAY OFF

We know not everyone can play hooky on a Wednesday and go diving. We also know that some of you simply don't like diving cold water anymore. And that's why we've got the Flying Dutchman, our mythical boat that lets you "dive" Chamber Day without actually having to take off work or go in the water. And we're holding the price for the Dutchman at \$95. You'll get the unique Flying Dutchman t-shirt (only available to those who sign up for the Dutchman) along with 10 daytime raffle tickets as well as a ticket for the "on-board" boat raffle as well. When you sign up, give us your "pirate" name and also indicate

your regular shop/club affiliation (we'll post a running tally – there's also an "unaffiliated" option) and you're good to go.

CHAMBER CHALLENGE

This is a major factor in our record-setting totals and a key to the financial success of the event. Every Challenge donation – big, small, and in-between – makes a difference. That being said, we give special recognition to \$1,000, \$5,000, and \$10,000 donations. (And new this year is a \$15,000 level. Any takers???) Companies that offer matching grants help increase the value of your contribution. We absolutely appreciate – and need – the help and every donation will be put to good use.

CHAMBER EVENING – LIVE AND IN-PERSON AT THE AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC

We are delighted to invite you to join us in-person again at the fabulous Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach for Chamber Evening. (More on the virtual option in a moment.) The date is also Wednesday, May 1, and the Aquarium doors will open at 7PM. Last year we limited attendance to 300 people (30 tables of 10 - in previous years, we've had as many as

450) but this year, due to heightened demand, we're going to expand slightly to 350 people (35 tables). Every one of our tables is hosted/sponsored by a local dive shop, club, or boat. Some tables have already started filling. So look over the options and don't get left behind.

As with the last two years, the cost of a seat which will be \$150 (the same as the total price for the Daytime portion). For those in attendance, you'll have a chance to wander around and explore the Aquarium from 7-8PM. We're working on another fabulous feast that will start a little after 8PM. You'll also get five evening raffle tickets and you'll have an opportunity to buy more at the Aquarium. We'll have interesting and different items available. Our program of raffle prizes and recognition starts a little after 9PM, and we'll send you home around 10:15PM.

Speaking of prizes, would anyone like to win a week of diving with the fine folks at Atlantis Dive Resorts in the Philippines? Because that's what our Grand Prize is this year and ONLY people who attend Chamber Evening (or sign up for the virtual version) will have

2024 DIVING VACATIONS

March 18-22 • San Ignacio

May 18-25 • Roatan

July 8-19 • Indonesia

September 9-21 • Yap

their names in the hopper with a chance to score this wonderful dive experience. Note that you must be present to win (except for virtual attendees).

CHAMBER EVENING V.G.D. (VERY GENEROUS DIVER)

If you'd like to enhance your evening experience, sign up for the V.G.D. package as an add-on to your Chamber Eve ticket. In honor of the 50th anniversary of our Chamber, we're knocking the price of the VGD down to \$50 this year. That will give you get early access to the Aquarium (starting at 5PM), 10 extra raffle tickets, 2 extra Grand Prize entries (Atlantis Philippines is calling your name), a private outside lounge area (Harbor Terrace Veranda) with assorted appetizers, complimentary soft drinks, a cash bar for alcohol, and a Chamber 50th anniversary t-shirt (which you'll get that evening). We limit this add-on so if you're interested in getting the ultimate Chamber Eve experience, make sure you get the V.G.D. package.

But if you'd rather stay home . . .

THE VIRTUAL CHAMBER EVENING – TAKE THE WORRY OUT OF BEING CLOSE

As we have done for a while now, we're offering a virtual version of Chamber Evening. This is perfect for those of you who either can't spend the evening in Long Beach or who still aren't comfortable with this type of an indoor event. As we did last year, we've got sponsored virtual tables as well. (Some organizations have both an in-person table and a virtual one.)

Cost for the virtual version of the event is the same as the Flying Dutchman - \$95. Virtual attendees

UPCOMING LOCAL DIVES & CLASSES

DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED DESTINATION	PRICE
Wed.	Mar. 6	--- CLASS ---	--- Secrets of Fish ID ---	35
Sat.	9	Redondo/Vets	Navigation Made Easy	35
Thu.	14	Redondo/Vets	••• Squid Dive (night) •••	FREE
Wed.	27	Catalina Express	Avalon Underwater Park	180
Sat.	Apr. 13	Redondo/Vets	Taming Surf Entries	35
Wed.	17	--- CLASS ---	--- Tables & Computers ---	35
Wed.	24	Catalina Express	Avalon Underwater Park	180
Wed.	May 1	Boats/Aquarium	Chamber Day/Eve 2024	150

will get ten raffle tickets (since you can't buy more) and will also be entered in the drawing for the Atlantis Philippines grand prize. Plus, you'll get a Chamber Evening t-shirt mailed to you (after the event) as part of your package. And because we want you to feel connected to what's happening at the Aquarium, you'll receive a private link to our live-stream of the evening. You can observe and enjoy from the comfort of your own home.

So that's where everything stands. All the monies raised go to benefit our Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber, which in turn benefits our diving community. For more information about all of this, visit our website at www.chamberday.org. You can sign up there using our secure server, you can get info and sign up directly through some of our sponsors, or you can call Chamber Day HQ at (310)652-4990.

Mark your calendar for Wednesday, May 1 and Chamber Day & Eve 2024.



50 YEARS STRONG

In the last 50 years, almost 1,200 people have come to our Chamber with suspected cases of decompression illness. For a variety of reasons, not everyone who arrives at the facilities in Big Fisherman's Cove ends up getting treated. Even so, our Chamber has performed over 1,000 treatments.

The need for our Chamber continues into the future. So we also will remind you that our Chamber relies on the financial support of the diving community to stay vital and available. Every year, Chamber Day, the main source of public funding for our Chamber, manages – through your generosity – to provide over half of the money needed to keep our Chamber going.

This year, we hope you'll not only join us in saluting the men and women who staff our Chamber but that you'll be honoring their service by diving on a Chamber Day boat, crewing the Flying Dutchman, dining with us on Chamber Eve, or donating to the Chamber Challenge.

The first fifty years have been a success because our diving community came together to make sure this valuable resource remains available to all of us. And the next fifty years will be bright as long as we continue to do so.

OIL SLICK REACHES BONAIRE

There's a dive site in Bonaire called Oil Slick Leap but this isn't about that. This is about a REAL oil slick that has reached the shores of Bonaire.

It seems that in the beginning of February, a now-abandoned barge/vessel capsized in Tobago, some 500+ miles east of Bonaire. The vessel has been leaking bunker fuel since it was discovered. The owners of the vessel have been evading Tobagan authorities trying track them down.

Ocean currents and wind have now carried portions of the slick to Bonaire where it came ashore on February 26 along the southeast-

ern side of the island, in Lac Bay. This is a very sensitive area for mangroves, as there's a very healthy mangrove forest there, and the concerns are that the oil might permanently damage the mangroves. There's also a large Flamingo colony there.

As of this writing, there's no report of any of the main dive sites, on the protected western side of Bonaire, being affected. Obviously, that could change.

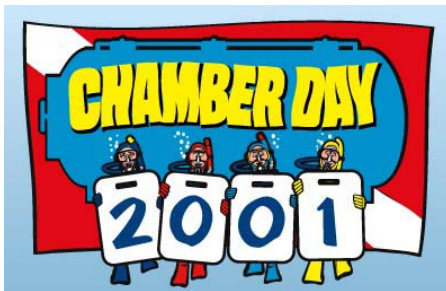
A picture published in the Bonaire Reporter - shown at the end of this story - shows oil along the shoreline and also states that the entire Lac-Sorobon area is closed to all activities not related to cleaning up the oil. It's unclear as to how long this will be in effect. It's also

unclear as to how much longer oil might continue to drift towards Bonaire. We'll keep you posted as best we can but if you have travel plans to Bonaire in the next few months, you might want to double-check with your contacts down there as to the most current information.



PICTURE PAGE - Ch-Day logos past

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2024)

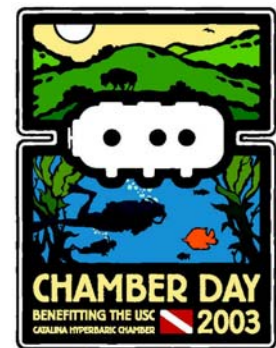


2001
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