

# THE REEF SEEKER



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March - 2022



## CHAMBER DAY 2022 – BACK TO LIVE IN- PERSON AS WELL AS VIRTUAL OPTIONS

Let's start with this: Chamber Day 2022 is Wednesday, May 4.

We are pleased to announce that we're able to resume live in-person involvement this year, both for Chamber Day on the dive boats and at the Chamber facilities at the Isthmus on Catalina, as well as at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach for Chamber Eve. In addition, because we realize some of you are still not comfortable attending this type of a large in-person event, there are options to participate virtually as well.

One important thing to point out is that even though much of SoCal - and the world - has been dealing with various iterations of COVID

mitigation measures, your Chamber has remained open and operational all throughout this pandemic. We haven't shut things down but have been standing at the ready should a diver need us (and some have in the last year). So while other businesses may have been able to cut expenses during this pandemic, 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.

We know these have been trying times for everyone and hopefully we're seeing the light at the end of this COVID tunnel. Here's what we have planned for 2022:

### **CHAMBER DAY – THE BOATS ARE RUNNING!!!**

We're delighted to announce that we can take you diving again and welcome you for a walking tour of our Chamber facilities!!

We've got eight boats ready to plop you into underwater SoCal on May 4. In alphabetical order they are: Asante (the boat will be retired from diving after May 4 so this will be their LAST dive trip), Cee Ray, Explorer, Giant Stride, Pacific Moon (the new sister ship to Pac Star), Pacific Star, Sundiver, and Sundiver Express. We plan to run most of the boats with somewhat limited loads (roughly 80%

of normal diving capacity – and who doesn't like a less-crowded boat?) as a mitigation measure. But this also means we don't have as many spots available as we normally do. The number this year will be around 140 boat diver spots.

All of our May 4 boats will do two dives and also do 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 2022 t-shirt, five 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 this year is \$150 total, which breaks down as \$115 going to the event and \$35 going back to the boats to cover their food and airfill costs. (This is only \$10 more than it was previously.) Generally boats will leave their respective docks at 7AM and return no later than 5:30PM.

COVID mitigation protocols will be in place. When you show up for your boat, the protocols for that particular boat will be what are in effect. For those who will do the island tour, USC protocols for COVID will be in effect on the island. Because these protocols will likely change between now

and May 4, we will give out the specifics as we get closer to the event. If you have any questions now, you can call Chamber Day HQ at 310/652-4990 and we'll answer as best we can.

### **THE FLYING DUTCHMAN – THE ULTIMATE WAY TO SOCIAL DISTANCE**

For those uncomfortable with being on a dive boat on May 4, we've still got the *Flying Dutchman* at your disposal. And we're holding the price for the *Dutchman* at \$95. When you sign up, give us your "pirate" name, indicate your regular shop/club/affiliation (we'll post a running tally – there's also an "unaffiliated" option) and you're good to go. You'll get a unique *Dutchman* t-shirt with the "pirate" name in a mosaic on the front of the shirt and you'll have a shot at some *Dutchman*-only raffle prizes as well.

### **CHAMBER CHALLENGE**

This hasn't changed and was a major factor in our record-setting total from last year. Every Challenge donation – big, small, and in-between – makes a difference. Companies that offer matching grants help increase the value of your contribution. Please contribute whatever you can. We absolutely appreciate – and need – the help.

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

We are delighted to invite you to join us again IN-PERSON at the fabulous Aquarium of the Pacific for Chamber Evening. (There's a virtual option too. More on that in a moment.) The date is also Wednesday, May 4, and the doors

will open at 7PM. But as we navigate our way out of this COVID nightmare, there are some changes in how we have to do this portion of the overall event.

One major change is that we're limiting attendance to 250 people. (In the past, we've had as many as 450 people jammed into the Great Hall.) This is in accordance with USC protocols (don't forget that our Chamber is operated by USC so we have to adhere to their regulations) which require a minimum distance of seven feet between tables for any indoor seated dining event which limits how many tables we can fit into the Aquarium's Great Hall. We will still be 10 to a table but can only fit 25 tables in overall. This also means that most table sponsors will only be able to get one table per group this year (a few groups might get two). So tables will fill quickly and you won't want to be left out.

Although this may change by May 4 as COVID protocols adjust, we are at this moment requiring all attendees to be fully vaccinated with proof of such, and to wear a mask when not actively eating or drinking, whether indoors or out-

doors at the Aquarium. As we get closer to May 4, we will publish the specific requirements should any of this change.

The other major change is pricing. Because we are severely reducing the number of people in attendance, we're forced to raise the cost of a seat, which will now be \$150 (the same as the total price for the Day-time portion). But for those who attend, you'll still have a chance to wander around and explore the Aquarium from 7-8PM, we're working on a fabulous feast that will start around 8PM, then we'll go into our program of raffle prizes and recognitions a little after 9PM, and we'll send you home around 10:15PM.

Speaking of prizes, would anyone like to win a weeklong trip on the Turks & Caicos Aggressor??? 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 their names in the hopper with a chance to score this wonderful dive experience. Attendees will also get five evening raffle tickets as well as have a chance to win some Blind Bid items that we'll have on-site.

But if you'd rather stay home . . .

## **2022 DIVING VACATIONS**

**March 11-20 • Socorro**

**May 20-28 • Bonaire**

**July (??) • Indonesia**

**Fall (??) • Yap**

**VIRTUAL CHAMBER EVE  
– TAKES THE WORRY  
OUT OF BEING CLOSE**

As we did last year, we're offering a virtual version for those who are not yet comfortable with this type of an indoor event. As we did last year, we've got sponsored tables as well. (Some organizations have both an in-person table as well as a virtual one.)

Cost for the virtual version of the event is the same as the *Flying Dutchman* - \$95. Virtual attendees will get five raffle tickets and be entered in the drawing for the Turks & Caicos Aggressor Grand Prize, as well as you'll get a Chamber Evening t-shirt mailed to you. And because we want you to feel connected to what's happening at the Aquarium of the Pacific, you'll also receive a private link to the live-stream of our event. So you can observe and enjoy from the comfort of your own home.

Essentially for 2022, we have both an in-person and a virtual option for both the Day and Eve events. All the monies raised go to benefit our Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber, which in turn benefits our diving community as we're sure you understand. For more information about all of this and to get involved, visit our website at [www.chamberday.org](http://www.chamberday.org). You can sign up there using our secure server, or you can call Chamber Day HQ at (310)652-4990.

Mark your calendar for Wednesday, May 4 and Chamber Day & Eve 2022.

*Ken Kurtis (Chairman, Chamber Day/Eve 2022)*

&

*Karl Huggins (Director, USC Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber)*

**UPCOMING LOCAL DIVES & CLASSES**

DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED DESTINATION	PRICE
Wed.	Mar. 2	--- CLASS ---	--- Secrets of Fish ID ---	<b>\$30</b>
Thu.	24	Redondo (Vets)	••• Squid Dive (night) •••	<b>FREE</b>
Sat.	26	Redondo (Vets)	Mastering Surf Entries & Exits	<b>\$30</b>
Wed.	30	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	<b>\$170</b>
Wed.	Apr. 6	--- CLASS ---	--- Easy Tables & Computers ---	<b>FREE</b>
Sat.	16	Redondo (Vets)	Beach Diving (single tank)	<b>\$30</b>
Thu.	21	Redondo (Vets)	••• Night Dive •••	<b>\$30</b>
Wed.	27	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	<b>\$170</b>



**RETURN TO  
SOCORRO**

We're looking forward to going back to Socorro, more properly known as the Revillagigedo Islands and consisting of San Benedicto, Socorro, and Roca Partida. Clarion Island is also part of the chain but sits too far west.

We're leaving on Friday, March 11, and will fly down to Cabo San Lucas. We overnight there, spend the day in Cabo, and then board the boat Saturday evening. Because the islands lie some 220+ miles SSW of Cabo, we'll be sailing all day Sunday, arriving in the early evening. Then we'll spend Monday-Friday diving, have Saturday at sea, and arrive back in Cabo around 6AM on Sunday, March 20. We'll (sadly) get off the boat shortly after that and fly back home in the afternoon.

Socorro is home to lots of Manta Rays, various species of sharks,

occasionally a Whale Shark, and also this time of the year serves as a calving ground for Humpback Whales. So we're very hopeful of many large animal encounters. That being said, there's plenty of not-huge animals to see as well, including the gorgeous and endemic Clarion Angelfish.

The boat has Wi-Fi so I am hopefully going to be able to post my Daily Top 10 pix to my personal &/or Reef Seekers FaceBook pages. Be on the lookout for those. I'm not sure if I'll be able to get out TWARS on 3/13 but if I can I will. And when we return, I'll be happy to regale you with a trip report and pix.

And don't forget, especially as COVID winds down, we're resuming our travels. Next up is Bonaire in May. We're happy to have you join us for any of the trips that tickle your fancy.

**DAYLIGHT  
SAVINGS TIME**

Don't forget that it starts on Sunday, March 13 at 2AM. (Ironically, Mexico doesn't start until April 3 so this won't impact our trip.) But make sure you adjust your clocks before you go to sleep Saturday lest you miss boats or planes or whatever on Sunday because you're an hour off.

## GOOD CLEANUP

Over 600 divers descended (figuratively and literally) upon Avalon last Saturday for the 40th Annual Avalon Underwater Cleanup. Since COVID restrictions required us to do the event virtually in 2021, this is the first time in two years that we've been able to do the event in-person.

And the fact that two years worth of trash was now on the harbor bottom certainly contributed to the vast amounts of goodies that were being brought up. There were the usual requisite of bottles and golf balls but there was also parts of boats, a wallet full of credit cards, and even a still-working cell phone (which was actually reunited with its owner, who had accidentally

dropped it off the end of the Green Pier).

The record number of divers certainly put a strain on the gear availability for those who like to get it in Avalon instead of lug it on the Express, but Catalina Divers Supply – still on the Green Pier and now in their new location at the base of the Casino – was able to keep everyone equipped.

An event of this magnitude always has hiccups and Saturday was no exception. Most of them are in-water navigational with people not knowing where they are or starting at Point A and coming back to Point B. Our favorite wayward divers were a pair who went in the water at Casino Point and magically exited at the base of the Green Pier, all the while thinking nothing

was wrong until they realized where they were.

The post-dive awards ceremony started off with a moment of silence for Dr. Bill Bushing, who died in December. He was also posthumously awarded the Jon Hardy Award for promoting diving in Avalon. Bill's sister and son accepted on behalf of the family.

Event chair Jill Boivin, who is stepping down after 20+ years, announced a preliminary total raised of \$33,000. The final amount will be determined down the road with that check presented to the Chamber at Chamber Evening on May 4.

We'll do all of this again next year so mark your calendar for the 41st Annual Cleanup on February 25, 2023. See you there!!!

## PICTURE PAGE - Cleanup pix

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2022)



**And . . .  
they're off!!!**



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**Contemplating  
the entry**



**The gang's  
all here**



**The official  
logo shirt**



**Aquarium divers  
Angelique, Ashley, & Josh**