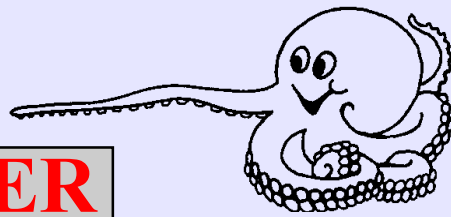


# THE REEF SEEKER



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March - 2025



## CHAMBER DAY 2025: ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

Let's start with this: Chamber Day 2025 is Wednesday, May 7.

And then there's this: Can we top the record-setting amounts we've raised the past few years? Last year, we were tantalizingly close to going over \$200,000 for the first time ever. Can we make this year the year that happens? We certainly can when you pitch in to help.

Once again this year, we're back to Chamber Day as "normal." We'll have a number of boats coming over to Catalina to do two dives as well as a walking tour of the Chamber facilities, we'll have the Flying Dutchman for those who can't take the day off to dive, we'll have the Chamber Challenge for direct donations to keep our Chamber going for another year, and

we'll have a sit-down dinner for Chamber Evening at the fabulous Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach.

Even during the height of the pandemic, your Chamber remained open and operational. It was difficult, but diver safety is our overriding priority, so we found ways to make it happen so that we could stay open 24/7/365. And while other businesses may have been able to cut expenses during COVID, that's NOT the case with your Chamber. But, like any other business, our expenses continue to grow each year.

A quick case in point are the backup generators that we need to buy for both the volunteer crew apartment and the Chamber itself in our big hangar. These generators are an unplanned expense and can run anywhere from \$7,000-10,000 each. And we need to find money for TWO of them.

That's just one example of why it's important for you to remember that every dollar raised from this event goes directly towards funding the Chamber for the coming year. Our Chamber relies on the diving community for over 50% of the annual operating funds. Chamber Day is not only a vital fundraiser 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 2025 another resounding success.

## THE HISTORY OF CHAMBER DAY AS AN EVENT

Through the help of a grant from Los Angeles County, our Chamber opened on October 5, 1974, and had the first treatment a week later. But 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 this funding seemed imminent. Roger Hess, owner of Charisma Charters, 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. (This is why we always refer to Roger as the Father of Chamber Day.) 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 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 went all-virtual. In 2022, we returned to doing everything in-person but kept Virtual Chamber Eve for those who

weren't yet comfortable attending in-person events.

The financial success of the event has increased over the years as well. From our humble beginnings, we passed \$50,000 raised during the 90s. We made it past \$100,000 for the first time in 2006. We passed \$150,000 in 2021. As mentioned earlier, 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 2025:

### **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 7. In alphabetical order they are: Cee Ray, Giant Stride, Pacific Moon, Pacific Star, SoCal Diver, Sundiver, and Sundiver Express. We'll have 122 boat diver spots this year.

All of our May 7 boats will do two dives in the general area of the Isthmus, as well pull into the Chamber dock to unload people for 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 2025 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. For a host of reasons, we have to raise the price this year which will now be \$175/person. This breaks down as \$125 going to the event and \$50 going back to the boats to help with their expenses for the day. 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're holding the price for the Dutchman at \$95. 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. 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 (there's also an "unaffiliated" option – we'll post a running tally) and you're good to go.

### **CHAMBER CHALLENGE**

This is a straight donation to our Chamber and is a major factor in our record-setting totals. Every Challenge donation – big, small,

and in-between – makes a difference. That being said, we give special recognition to donations of \$1,000, \$5,000, \$10,000, and \$15,000 or higher. Companies that offer matching grants help increase the value of your contribution. We absolutely appreciate the help, and every donation will be put to good use.

### **CHAMBER EVENING – THE AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC**

We're 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 7, and the Aquarium doors will open at 7PM. Last year we limited attendance to 350 people (35 tables of 10) and we'll hold at that level as that seemed to be a comfortable amount of people. 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.

Due to rising food costs – we don't pay anything to have the Aquarium to ourselves for the evening, but we do have to pay the caterer for

## **2025 DIVING VACATIONS**

**March 8-15 • Easter Island #1**

**March 15-22 • Easter Island #2**

**June 28 - July 5 • Roatan**

**September 19-28 • Maldives**

the food – the cost of a seat this year will be \$175 (the same as the 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. 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 spend nine days exploring the amazing reefs of Indonesia? Our Grand Prize this year is a nine-day "Passport to Paradise" with our good friends at Murex Dive Resorts in Manado, Indonesia. This is one of the most biologically diverse regions of the underwater world 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. 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. We're holding the price of the VGD at \$50 this year, the same as last year. That gives you get early access to the Aquarium (starting at 5PM), 10 extra raffle tickets, 1 extra Grand Prize entries (Murex Dive Resort is calling your name), a private outside lounge area (Harbor Terrace Veranda) with assorted appetizers, complimentary soft drinks, and a cash bar for alcohol.

**UPCOMING LOCAL DIVES & CLASSES**

DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED DESTINATION	\$\$\$
Wed.	Mar 26	--- CLASS ---	--- PHOTO WORKSHOP ---	<b>35</b>
Sat.	Apr 5	Veterans Park	Navigation Made Easy	<b>35</b>
Wed.	9	Catalina Express	Avalon UW Park	<b>180</b>
Thu.	24	Veterans Park	••• Night Dive •••	<b>35</b>
Wed.	May 14	--- CLASS ---	--- NITROX ---	<b>95</b>
Sat.	17	Veterans Park	Surf Entries Made Easy	<b>FREE!!!</b>
Wed.	21	Catalina Express	Avalon UW Park	<b>180</b>
Thu.	Jun 12	Veterans Park	••• Night Dive •••	<b>35</b>

Especially if you're coming from far away, this add-on will greatly enhance your enjoyment of the evening.

But if you'd rather stay home . . .

**VIRTUAL CH-EVE – FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME**

As we have done for five years 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 and has not increased - \$95. Virtual attendees will get ten raffle tickets (since you can't buy more) and will also be entered in the drawing for the Murex Dive Resort "Passport to Paradise" 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, so you can observe and enjoy from the comfort of your own home.

So that's where everything stands

as we get started. The key takeaway to remember is that ALL the monies raised go to benefit our Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber, which in turn benefits our diving community. We'd hate to think of how diving SoCal would change without having our Chamber standing guard 24/7/365 in case a diver is in need. For more information about all of this, visit our website at [www.chamberday.org](http://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 7 and Chamber Day & Eve 2025.

*Ken Kurtis,*  
**Chamber Day 2025 Chairman**  
*and*  
**Karl Huggins**  
*Director,*  
**Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber**



## FUN CLEANUP

Last Saturday, hundreds of divers descended on Avalon to do good deeds. Specifically it was to participate in the annual Avalon Harbor Underwater Cleanup. Lots of interesting items were brought up including some very weird bathroom keys from the Lobster Trap (a local Avalon restaurant), boat parts, lawn chairs, and even a bassinet (without a baby inside).

After the actual cleanup was done – the diving occurs from 9:30-11:00AM – it was time for lunch and then the awards ceremony began at 1PM. Lots of raffle prizes were given away, we introduced the crowd to the 2025 Chamber Day logos, Jon Council was given the Jon Hardy Award for promot-

ing diving at Catalina, and Karl Huggins was given the Golden Flipper Award for longtime service to the event. (Karl organizes the Kayak Patrol each year.)

Afterwards, it was time for our annual Golf Gardens Miniature Golf Championship and all I can say is that Karl picked the right day to shoot well, and I picked the wrong day for a case of the yips. Karl prevailed by shooting a 56 (par is 51) and I limped home with a 61. But a (relatively) good time was had by all. Golf Gardens is a great non-diving experience if you're over there and have some extra time. (It takes about 90 minutes to play.)

Mark your 2026 calendars for February 21, the next Cleanup.

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DOWN-SIZING

Regardless of your political leanings, pay attention to what's going on in Washington with regards to firings and layoffs as some of it could affect divers, especially if you are looking to renew your passport or you need to update your TSA Pre-Check or your Global Entry registrations. While I haven't heard specifically of any Department of State layoffs, there is supposedly a mandated minimum 10% staff reduction-in-force going on so there's a chance that those areas are impacted, which means longer wait times to get those things renewed. If you're looking to renew, give yourself as much time as possible.

## PICTURE PAGE - Past Ch-Day logos

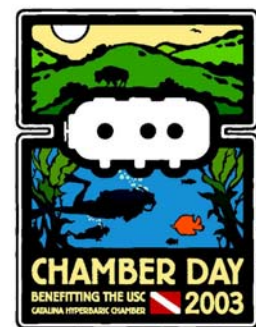
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