

# THE REEF SEEKER



REEF SEEKERS DIVE CO.  
P.O. Box 634  
Beverly Hills, CA 90213  
Phone & text: (310) 652-4990  
web: [www.reefseekers.com](http://www.reefseekers.com)  
e-mail: [kenkurtis@aol.com](mailto:kenkurtis@aol.com)

April 1, 2021



## WAVE-MAKING MACHINE INSTALLED IN AVALON UNDERWATER PARK

Looks like the days of “easy entries” might be behind us. The powers-that-be (whoever they are) have installed a wave-generating machine in the Underwater Park. The alleged thought behind it was that the stairs made everything “too easy” and that this is a good way to take diving and dive training back to the days when you had to be tougher to survive. (There’s also some thought this will make the Park an attractive surf destination as well.)

The good news is that the wave-making machine will be turned off every day from Noon-2PM for routine maintenance and that’ll also give anyone diving a break from the turbulence. But then they’ll fire it back up for the rest of the day. Fortunately, they’ve agreed to turn it off at night, so it shouldn’t affect night dives.

But if you’re planning a trip to the

Park anytime soon, better add some kneepads to your wetsuit and be prepared to move quickly when getting in or out. Surf’s up!!!



## VOLUNTEER DIVERS NEEDED IN EGYPT

Even though the EverGiven has now been unjammed from being stuck sideways in the Suez Canal, the crisis is not over and the Egyptian government is asking for your help.

One of the big tasks at hand right now is ensuring that the area along both sides of the Suez Canal where the bow and the stern buried themselves, are safe and stable. This inspection has to be completed before the Canal can fully open again to cargo traffic. And the only way this inspection can be done is visually underwater. It also needs to be done as soon as possible.

The area where each end of the ship got stuck is relatively shallow, as little as 3-10 feet deep. But

in a quirk in Egyptian law, any qualified divers who are Egyptian are not allowed to dive in waters shallower than 15 feet. It has to do with a requirement in Egyptian diving law, punishable by up to five years in prison, which requires every Egyptian diver to complete a 15-foot safety stop for three minutes after every dive. The way the law is written (it’s obviously currently under review and appeal), this applies to EVERY dive and obviously for a dive that’s only 10 feet deep, it’s impossible to do a 15-foot safety stop. (Gotta love those bureaucrats and the Egyptian ones are among the most stringent in the world.)

But due to another legal loophole, this safety stop provision does NOT apply to American divers. Hence the urgent request from the Egyptian government for volunteer divers to do the critical inspection. Best of all, they’ll pay for it and you’ll get a vacation out of it too.

You’ll be flown business class to Cairo and then down to Al Kibrit via military transport. To get from that base to the area of the blockage (which isn’t all that far), you’ll have to transfer to camels so any experience in riding camels, in the circus or even as a kid, is a plus. Once you’re down in the area where the blockage occurred, you’ll gear up (they’ll have tanks

on site – be sure to specify air or nitrox in your application), you'll be handed a GoPro (yours to keep post-inspection), do your inspection dive, let them know what you saw and if you think it's safe, and you're done. No special training, certification, or even intelligence is needed to be chosen for this.

As a reward, on top of everything else, the Egyptian government will then treat you to a weeklong vacation diving the Red Sea. Ironically, Evergreen shipping, owners of the EverGiven, has taken one of their older tankers and converted it into a dive boat based out of Hurghada. The new boat has been named (they may need to rethink this) the EverBent and has all the creature comforts you'd expect from a rusty Egyptian freighter.

As long as you're certified, your passport is current, and your COVID results are negative (being fully-vaccinated is a plus), you're qualified. They're only taking 20 divers for this adventure and if you'd like to find out more, you can call the Egyptian Consulate here in L.A. at (323)933-9700 and tell them you want to be a member of the Suez Canal Underwater Bilateral Army. Then they'll tell you where to go.

---

## **BETTER VIZ AT REDONDO??**

At the Redondo City Council meeting this past Monday night, the topic of visibility at Veterans Park was brought up and it seems that the City Council members are actually embarrassed by all the comments we make about how bad it can be. So they actually voted to do something: They've purchased

a large pool filter and will install it to help clean things up. Unfortunately, they brushed off concerns from the public that these things aren't really made for the ocean.

The biggest issue will be powering it. The plan right now is to run a very long extension cord from the bathrooms at the base of the stairs, dig a trench under the bike path and under the sand on the beach, and then run it straight out to a depth of about 100 feet (which should be about 50 yards offshore) and that's where they'll place the filter. They estimate the project can be done for about \$1.2 million and should take about 6 months to complete. Of that total, the filter itself will account for about \$1,000.

Their stated goal is to get the visibility, at least within 20 feet of the filter location, to consistently be at least 5 feet. When someone pointed out that that was case even without a filter, they declared that that meant they were on the right track.

There's still time to file public comments if you like. You can do so with Mayor Bill Brand at [bill.brand@redondo.org](mailto:bill.brand@redondo.org). Good luck!!!

## **NITROX SNORKEL**

For the diver looking for that extra margin of safety, Atomic Aquatics is introducing the nitrox snorkel, which they are marketing under the name Snorktrox. And it's quite ingenious the way it's designed.

Atomic has managed to insert a special filter into a standard snorkel which, much like a membrane system for filling nitrox tanks, filters out nitrogen in the air you're inhaling, thereby raising the partial pressure of the oxygen in the inhaled breath. Like with nitrox, you can choose the percentage of the mix you want, all the way up to 50%.

The internal filter will have to be changed once a year to maintain freshness but that's something that Atomic says any diver can do with some simple tools and about two hours of time. And this snorkel will really revolutionize the kick back to the boat as it will definitely impact your off-gassing.

These should be in retailer's hands starting April 1 and Atomic is using a novel marketing campaign slogan: "Snorktrox – For Those Unclear on the Concept."

## **2021 DIVING VACATIONS**

**We're all dreaming  
of being able  
to travel again  
very soon**



## NEW AUDIBILE ALARMS ON DIVE COMPUTERS

Alarmed (no pun intended) by divers seemingly ignoring warning alarms and buzzers and the like built into most dive computers, DEMA (the marketing company for the diving industry) has mandated a new type of alarm modeled after a nagging mother. In fact, the voice commands were all done by Carol Ann Susi. You may not know her name but you know her voice because she played the voice (you never saw her) of Howard Wollowitz' mother on "The Big Bang Theory." And the thought behind all of this is that there's no way anyone will be able to ignore what she says. (Remember that water is a pretty good transmitter of sound, with sound waves going four times faster in water than they do in air.

Some of the sample alarms:

- "What, you think you're Jacques Cousteau?"
- "You've never heard of a safety stop?"
- "You call this buoyancy control Put some air in your BC already!!"
- "Watch your depth!! A trip to the Chamber's not free you know!!!"

## UPCOMING LOCAL DIVES & CLASSES

DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED DESTINATION	PRICE
Wed.	Apr. 7	--- CLASS ---	NAUI NITROX	<b>\$75</b>
Thu.	22	Redondo (Vets)	••• Night Dive •••	<b>\$25</b>
Wed.	28	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	<b>\$160</b>
Sat.	May 8	Redondo (Vets)	Beach dive (single tank)	<b>\$25</b>
Thu.	20	Redondo (Vets)	••• Night Dive •••	<b>\$25</b>
Wed.	26	--- CLASS ---	FISH ID	<b>\$25</b>
Wed.	June 9	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	<b>\$160</b>
Wed.	23	-- CLASS ---	TABLES & COMPUTERS	<b>FREE</b>
Sat.	26	Redondo (Vets)	Navigation (single dive)	<b>\$25</b>

- "You're sucking this air so fast it's like you're using your lungs for the first time!!!"
- "So suddenly, you're smarter than Haldane??"
- "Keep ascending at this rate and I'll NEVER get any grandchildren!!!"

DEMA officials are certain these commands will cause divers to behave more responsibly while in the water, or cause them to give up the sport all together.

## AQUARIUM TO OPEN BLUE-RINGED OCTOPUS TOUCH TANK

As part of their post-COVID opening plans to entice visitors back, the Aquarium of the Pacific has announced that they will open a Blue-Ringed Octopus touch tank. It should be mentioned (and it may have slipped their notice) that the Blue Ring octopus has some of the most toxic venom in the world. However, Aquarium officials say that's it's also a good way to encourage people to get the COVID vaccination.

"We're pretty sure that the vaccine, either the Pfizer or the Moderna, will counter-act the effects of the Blue Ring's toxin,"

said one Aquarium official who preferred to remain anonymous. "If it doesn't, we'll have some anti-venom on sale in the Gift Shop at a reasonable price. And Aquarium Members will get a 10% discount if they can complete their purchase before paralysis sets in."

Blue-Rings are found in tropical waters and only show their blue rings when agitated. Asked how they'll keep them in an agitated state for the visitors, the Aquarium employee revealed that, "We're going to have a TV right in front of the exhibit and it'll be tuned in to CSPAN all day long showing what's happening in Congress. If that doesn't get the octos agitated, nothing will."

The Blue-Ring Touch Tank opens at 9AM on April 1. Advanced reservations required, along with





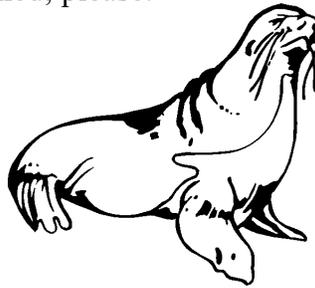
## STARBUCKS TO OPEN ON SANTA BARBARA

In a move that has some environmentalists up in arms, the National Park Service announced an agreement to open up a Starbucks on Santa Barbara Island, right at the top of the stairs at Landing Cove.

“We’re getting more and more visitors each year, and we feel this will be a great service to them,” an NPS spokesman said. “It’s a per-

fect idea,” he said. “Coffee’s brown, sea lions are brown, and anyone who doesn’t see the connection simply isn’t using their God-given brains.”

The coffee chain also announced that they’ll be changing their nomenclature when ordering at the Santa Barbara Island Starbucks. Large drinks will now be known as “Bulls”, small drinks will be referred to as “Pups”, and if you want milk or cream, the appropriate phrase will be “I’d like that weaned, please.”



## CONFUSED??

If all of this has seemed a bit strange, look at the specific date on the first page of this newsletter and then ask yourself if the April 1 date has any special meaning . . .

Hopefully you enjoyed our annual April Fools edition. (The local stuff was legit.) Each year we try to figure out how “catch” you on this special day and each year it gets harder and harder.

For instance, we were giving some thought to claiming the UCLA basketball team had spent time in a hyperbaric chamber to improve their basketball skills and that this allowed them to make it to the Final Four . . . but sometimes truth is stranger than prankdom, even on April 1. (Go Bruins!!!)

# PICTURE PAGE - Common Avalon fish

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2021)



**Blue-banded Gobies**



P.O. Box 634  
Beverly Hills, CA 90213

[WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM](http://WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM)



**Bat Ray**



**Ubetcha Wrasse**



**Mayor of Avalon**



**Female Sheephead**