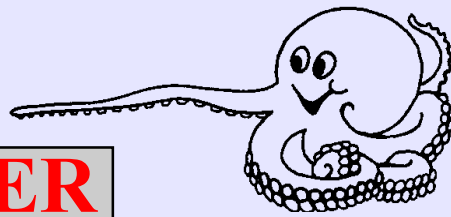


THE REEF SEEKER



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FLORIDA BANS SCUBA TEXTBOOKS AS PORNOGRAPHY

First it was Michelangelo, now it's scuba divers.

Florida announced that it is banning scuba textbooks from both NAUI and PADI because they meet the definition of "pornography" under new Florida laws. Parents have complained that the books have pictures showing what they call "scantily-clad people" in bathing suits or with their wetsuit tops pulled down.

Florida's Secretary of Decency explained that they are doing this to protect children. "Because children as young as 10 can be certified, it is our duty to protect them from these types of images when they are so impressionable." Asked to be specific what was wrong in seeing people in bathing suits – as

they can be seen on beaches along the Florida coastline - he stumbled a bit but then said, "It's obviously step one on the road to decadence. On top of that, there's suggestive language in the text as well." When challenged to again specify he said, "We understand the true meaning behind phrases like 'Go down on a reef' which are nothing more than sexually-charged innuendo."

When it was pointed out that there were texts from other agencies besides NAUI and PADI he said, "We're aware of that. This is just the first step since these are the largest two agencies. We definitely will be getting around to those other filthy books. And we certainly have our eyes set on CMAS because you know how risqué those French people can be."

There was also talk of pursuing legal sanctions against NAUI. He said Florida's legal moves against Disney for opposing the "Don't Say Gay" bill set the tone. "Since NAUI is based in Florida and recently changed their charter to officially incorporate here, that gives us tremendous leverage. We'll be referring this matter to the Attorney General for further action under Florida's anti-pornography laws. This could result in a revocation of their business charter and jail time for their executives."

When asked why this has become

such a hot button item, the Secretary said, "It's our duty to protect the minds of our children and isolate them from the filth that permeates society today. Parents, even though many of them are closed-minded, should be the only ones to decide how to indoctrinate their children so that none of the things the parents hold true are ever challenged or examined. And if we have to ban every book ever written to achieve that, then that's what we'll do."

If you would like to help us fight this ridiculous notion, then you should contact the Florida Governor's office and state your views. They can be reached at (850)717-9337. It's important for good people to reach out and protest actions like this and hold those who feel so sanctimonious to account for their actions.

BEGG ROCK TO BE MOVED

Begg Rock, off of San Nicolas Island, is truly one of the jewels of diving in Southern California. It is festooned with life. Literally every inch of the rock has something growing on it, competing for space with other creatures as well. And the fish life is amazing.

But it's a schelp to get there. From Angel's Gate, the breakwater open-

ing you pass through when you leave from 22nd Street Landing, it's 85 miles to get to Begg Rock. Too far. So they're going to move it closer.

The Department of Fish & Wildlife has concocted a plan to relocate Begg Rock to an area roughly halfway between the mainland and Catalina. They've arranged for a contractor who will literally slice off the rock at a depth of 100 feet, load it onto a series of barges, and then "replant" it at the new designated spot.

The advantages here are obvious and outweigh the impossible logistics. By moving it closer, you've changed it from an 8-hour journey to get to dive it to about an hour. So that makes it much more accessible. Plus it will actually relieve some of the diving pressure on Catalina since some boats that would have gone over to dive Ship Rock, Bird Rock, the West End or other Catalina spots, can now stop at Begg instead. And because it's a shorter run, the dive boat operators will be saving fuel as well.

The biggest issue to overcome will be getting the fish to follow to the new location. Obviously, you can't just round them up with a net. But DF&W officials says they've got a plan that once Begg is loaded on the barges, they'll be able to create a chum line as the Begg is moved, and they're pretty confident the fish will follow.

This entire operation is starting up this weekend and they hope to have it all completed in the next few days. Once Begg Rock is in its new location, they will have to redo some navigational charts, but the Coast Guard says that won't really be an issue because nobody

pays attention to them anyhow.

Keep an eye on the horizon for the new location of Begg Rock. It's hard to believe this will happen without problems but have faith.

FISH WALKERS NEEDED

One of the problems of keeping fish in an enclosed environment is that they sometimes don't get enough exercise. And yes, fish can get fat. So the solution is to try to take them outside of the exhibit and let them "run around" a bit. And that's where you come in.

Every year, the Aquarium of the Pacific tries to exercise their animals in this manner and they need help doing it. Many years we've had enough volunteer divers to do it but we lost a lot of people during the COVID shut-down and we're currently only at about half-strength so more bodies are needed to be fish wranglers.

Because you wouldn't be considered a regular Aquarium dive volunteer, there's no extensive training required. Basically, you simply need to be certified and have at least 10 open-water dives under

your belt. The training will consist of going over the fish-walking protocols, and a rudimentary fish ID class so you'll know who's who.

The way it works is that a special sluice allows for easy transfer of the animals from the exhibits into the harbor area around the Aquarium. (There will also be nets set up to prevent a run to open water.) Basically you let them swim around for an hour or so, make sure they're not trying to eat each other, and then herd them back in when everything is over. If any of the fish are reluctant to return, you'll be issued a Hawaiian Sling and shown how to "encourage" them to swim back.

When it's done, as a measure of thanks, each fish walker will get two free tickets and a parking validation to come back to the Aquarium at a future date and see how your charges have adapted.

They're taking sign-ups this weekend so they can get this done right after the Long Beach Grand Prix is completed. They've set up a special e-mail for you to use to register: fishwalker@lbaop.org. If you have any questions or issues, let us know and we'll try to explain what's what.

2023 DIVING VACATIONS

July 10-23 • Yap #1

July 21 - Aug. 2 - Yap #2

August 19-26 - Isla Mujeres

November 15-29 • Maldives



QUEEN MARY TO DO CATALINA TRIPS

As you may have read, the *Queen Mary* has undergone extensive renovations and is now re-opened to the public for tours. What they will announce today is that they are also going to start doing short cruises over to Catalina and back, so you can really get the feel of what a luxury liner is all about.

These cruises will only happen once a month and will likely sell out as they're limiting them to only a few hundred people. Cruises will depart from the *Queen Mary* dock at 7AM and should return by 5PM. And given that the top speed of the *Queen* is a little over 35 miles an hour, you'll get over to Catalina very quickly. However, the plan is generally not to disembark passengers on the island but to then circumnavigate the island, and give you a very unique view of the entirety of Catalina.

Cost of this excursion seems pretty reasonable at \$250/person. And it includes meals while on-board at any of the restaurants that are open. (Parking, however, is \$20 extra.)

If you'd like to sign up for this too-good-to-be-true experience, give them a call at 562/435-3511. And here's a tip: Because they're trying to keep this limited, they may at first say the trip doesn't exist. But be persistent and don't take no for an answer.

UPCOMING LOCAL DIVES & CLASSES

DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED DESTINATION	PRICE
Wed.	Apr. 5	--- CLASS ---	--- Tables & Computers ---	35
Wed.	19	<i>Catalina Express</i>	Avalon Underwater Park	175
Sat.	22	Redondo/Vets	Beach Diving	35
Thu.	27	Redondo/Vets	••• Night Dive •••	35
Wed.	May 10	<i>Catalina Express</i>	Avalon Underwater Park	175
Sat.	13	Redondo/Vets	Navigation Made Easy	35
Wed.	17	--- CLASS ---	--- Secrets of Fish ID ---	35
Wed.	June 7	--- CLASS ---	--- Photo Workshop ---	35



THE ULTIMATE DRIFT DIVE

The rain we've been getting is one thing but the big excitement is going to come in a while when the snowpack starts melting and all of the runoff needs to find a place to go. And it also sets up an incredible opportunity to do one of the most exciting drift dives you can ever imagine.

Years ago, we used to do a dive that started just south of Hoover Dam and we drifted down the Colorado River for a mile or two. That was pretty high-voltage excitement. But this will make that look like going into the kiddie pool.

We've made arrangements with the Metropolitan Water District to direct us to areas that will have the greatest flow. At the appointed hour, we'll suit up and enter the water and off we go!!!

One of the problems here is that, while the MWD will be able to exercise some control over what channels the water is diverted into, it's not absolute. And there's no

guarantee we'll all end up in the same place (which is part of the allure and fun). However, because Reef Seekers is known for safety, we've made arrangements with Nautilus Lifeline so that everyone will be equipped with one of those devices and if/when you get separated from the main group, you can activate the Lifeline and we'll be able to find you.

Given the nature of this dive, and that we'll be going down concrete channels that are likely to be filled with debris, crash helmets are required of everyone. If you don't own one, you can rent one from us.

We would also recommend you purchase special flood drift diving insurance that's available through DAN. In the likely event that you break a bone, the DAN policy will pay for out-patient hospital treatment of your injuries. And, if we can't get to you before you drown, the policy also has an accidental death provision that will cover all funeral expenses and which includes an extra \$1,000 to throw a wake in your honor.

We're not sure yet of the exact date we'll be doing this as it's weather (and water) dependent. But give us a call at 310/652-4990 to get on our list of thrill-seeking divers who want to do the ultimate drift dive. We promise an experience that will seem all too crazy to possibly be true.

THE KELPMOBILE

It's long been known that kelp has the potential to produce power for an automobile when processed correctly. And leave it up to the Japanese to be the ones to figure out how to do.

Toyota's calling it the Macrocyctis and it's debuting this weekend at the Cincinnati Auto Expo. Color choices are rather limited, though, as the vehicle only comes in brown with a brown interior.

There are two options to fuel up. You can go to one of the soon-to-be-opened "kelpoline" stations, or you can go the do-it-yourself route by going to a beach and harvesting the kelp that's washed ashore. All you then need to do is take the kelp, cut it up smaller, and put it all

into a blender or food processor and make it into a puree. In fact, the Macrocyctis has as standard equipment a food processor in the trunk. There's even a handy power outlet built in as well. It generally takes about an hour to process enough kelp to "fill it up" but that's really no worse timewise than charging an electric vehicle.

Stop by your Toyota dealer and ask to see the Macrocyctis. It's simply an unbelievable vehicle.

ONE MORE THING . . .

If you're a veteran of this newsletter, you already know what this final note is going to say. For those of you who may be new to Reef Seekers, or for those of you who

may have simply not noticed that the date on this newsletter is April 1, or for those who may have forgotten how in the past the "facts" printed in the April 1 newsletter should be considered . . . suspicious as to their veracity . . . let us just say this: At Reef Seekers, we believe in having a good time. We try not to take ourselves too seriously. And we've sort of established a tradition that every year when April 1 rolls around, we might just stretch the truth a wee little bit when we put out the newsletter.

And if that vague statement doesn't clue you in, let us suggest you go back and re-read the articles contained herein and keep two words planted firmly and prominently in your mind . . . April Fool!!!

PICTURE PAGE - My best & favorite shots

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2023)



Only a true professional can get this shot



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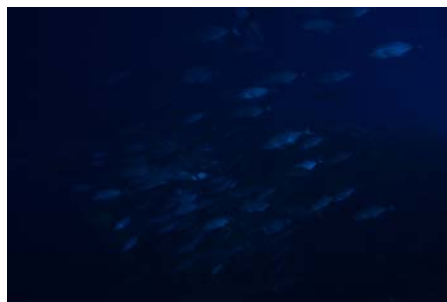
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Secret technique to get this one



One of my all-time favs



Incredible never-before-seen action



Perfect head-on turtle shot