

THE REEF SEEKER



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May - 2017



CHAMBER DAY 2017- WEDNESDAY MAY 3



IT'S ALMOST HERE . . .

A lot of people ask us why we do this. My answer is pretty simple: I've always had a strong belief in the duty of community service and giving back to what provides for you. Scuba diving certainly is an integral part of my life. Whether it's a boat, a store, a club, a manufacturer, another organization, or an individual, those of us who work behind the scenes put a lot of time and effort into Chamber Day & Eve 2017 because we believe it's really important to have our Chamber available to us 24/7/365.

When a dive accident occurs, getting an injured diver to our Chamber alive means that he/she has an excellent chance of survival and recovery. Knowing this while you're performing first aid, administering oxygen, or doing whatever it takes is a reassuring thought.

Our Chamber is an invaluable safety net that we simply don't want to lose. Your participation helps to ensure our Chamber's future. Please go to www.chamberday.org and support our Chamber. And there are two specific things you can do that will make a big difference in our final total.



THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

If you are one of those poor, unfortunate souls who can't take a Wednesday off, we have the perfect solution—sign up for the *Flying Dutchman*. In nautical lore, the *Flying Dutchman* is bad news as it was the name of a mythical ship doomed to sail the seas forever and never reach port. But from a Chamber Day perspective, the *Dutchman* is a good thing because it helps us raise more money for our Chamber and gets you a unique T-shirt.

Our *Flying Dutchman* is the answer for folks who can't get wet on May 3 but who want to say they "dove" the event. You won't really go anywhere but you'll get all the other benefits of Chamber Day participation. An "on-board" raffle will be conducted, just like on all the other boats, and you'll get a T-shirt—but yours will be unique. (And every year the *Dutchman* logo is new and different.)

Cost for the *Dutchman* remains at \$95. This includes your T-shirt, on-board raffle ticket, and 5 Chamber Day raffle tickets. It's a great way to participate if you can't get

away for the day. Last year, we had 119 people "dive" the *Dutchman* each year and we're hoping that 2017 will be even better.



THE CHAMBER CHALLENGE

Each year the SoCal diving community raises extra funds for our Chamber through the Chamber Challenge. These funds are vital to the operation of our Chamber and account for over 50% of what we generally raise during the entire event. It's a simple concept: you make a donation and then "challenge" your friends and associates to do the same. Last year was an incredible year, with al-

most \$55,000 in Challenge donations so we've got our work cut out for us and we still have a ways to go since right now, we're just above \$47,000. So we can really use your help.

Although contributions of any amount are welcome, we have a tiered level of donations, as follows:

- Diamond – \$10,000
- Platinum – \$5,000
- Gold – \$1,000
- Silver – \$500
- Bronze – \$100

All Diamond, Platinum, and Gold donors will receive special recognition from our Chamber for their donation. Contributions can come from individuals, clubs, stores, boats, publications, and others. Contributions can also be made in someone's memory, either as an individual, or grouped together for a larger total. If the company you work for has a matching grant program, Challenge donations usually qualify.

Donations can be made either through our secure server at www.chamberday.org or by calling 310-652-4990. Cash, check, and credit card are all fine.

2017 DIVING VACATIONS

July 7-19 • Yap Immersion #1

July 21 - Aug 2 • Yap #2

Sept. 1-6 - Isla Guadalupe

Nov. 2-12 - Fiji (SOLD OUT)

SNORKEL OR NO SNORKEL?

What's your preference? This is not really so much a scientific survey as it simply is trying to see what people's thoughts are on the matter. Larry Schnabel posed the question to us and we thought we'd throw it out to you.

Personally, although I always have a snorkel in my dive bag, I rarely use it on dives. I keep it around in case something should pop up suddenly and I need to get in the water quickly sans tank. That could be because a Whale Shark is swimming by, or someone surfaces in need of help and I'm the first one to respond.

When I got certified back in The Dark Ages (which would have been 1978), a snorkel was a requirement for every scuba dive. Over the years, outside of class situations, it has become less so. (As a matter of record, students in basic classes are still required to dive with a snorkel as is the instructor teaching the class.)

I can't remember when or why I abandoned regular snorkel use on non-teaching dives. But I always come back with lots of air, I'm a pretty good navigator so I'm not surfacing miles from the boat, and a snorkel certainly could seem like an extraneous piece of dangling gear that never got used. And if I DID need to "snorkel" my way on back, with my reserve air supply, I can always use my regulator.

In his original note to me, Larry said, "I find a snorkel irksome when attached to my mask strap, and a real pain to put on if I keep a fold up in my BC pocket; I only use one when I think I may have a

UPCOMING LOCAL DIVES

I'M BOOKED LITERALLY EVERY WEEKEND IN MAY
AND I'LL BE IN YAP ALL OF JULY
SO I'LL TRY TO SET SOME STUFF UP FOR JUNE
BUT IT'LL TAKE ME
ANOTHER WEEK OR SO TO GET TO IT.
PATIENCE, MUDSKIPPER.

long swim out or back from the dive site and for some reason don't wish to use up my tank's air."

To that last point, that used to be one of the points in favor of snorkels: Save some air. Another way to think of it was that every time you took a breath of air from the tank, it was costing you money since you paid for an airfill. But using a snorkel gave you access to "free" air and - since we all know diving is an expensive adventure sport that attracts the cheapest SOBs in the world - why pay for what you can otherwise get for free?

Jim Sheaffer also had some thoughts and wrote, "On beach dives I always bring a snorkel along so I can look down with my mask on and not waste precious air as I kick it out as far as I can go to deeper waters. I guess that some divers feel that a snorkel is a 'drowning tube' if not used correctly. Prior to getting my scuba certificate I free dove for years, so it's just natural to bring it along. It is a hassle though to have it hanging off the mask strap while scuba diving."

So what do you do and why? I think it's always a good idea every now and then to think about all the various things we do, in diving as well as in life, and analyze why we do what we do and, if the reasons

are no longer valid, come up with a modified game plan.

So if you're interested in sharing some thoughts, e-mail them to me and I can share them with the rest of the world.

YAP IMMERSION

I'm really looking forward to July this year because I will get to spend an entire month in Yap, one of my truly all-time favorite places in the world to dive and to be. Best of all, as usual, I'll be encamped at Manta Ray Bay Resort. (They will also be exhibiting at the Scuba Show May 6-7, booth #337.)

This is because of our back-to-back Yap Immersion programs we're offering this year. These are 10-day trips (we normally do seven day trips) and the idea is to really "immerse" ourselves in all that Yap offers, both from an under- and above-water basis as well.

Because of the extra time we're spending, we'll not only be able to visit the manta cleaning stations at Stamtisch and Goofnu (and maybe M'il) but we're also including a PADI-sanctioned Manta ID class which will detail how to identify these graceful creatures. As part of that, during the whole trip, we'll try to catalogue how many different mantas we see over

the course of the dives.

With the extra days we'll have in Yap, we'll also take a day off from diving and do an island tour (most likely led by the wonderful Theo who really knows the ins and outs of the place) which will cover not only Yapese culture (did you know it's one of the few places in the world that still has a caste system?) with some stops in local villages, and will also cover the role that Yap played in the war in the Pacific during World War II.

We'll have lots of time to dive. Our general day will be a 3-dive day with two in the morning, a break for lunch, and then a single tank dive in the afternoon. We'll also do some dusk dives from the Manta Ray Bay dock for those so

inclined, and we'll do at least one dive to observe the nightly mating rituals of the tiny little Mandarinfish. I've literally seen this dozens of times but it never gets old.

But given the time we've got and the size of the group, I'm also hoping to do at least one day during each Immersion that's an Exploratory Day where we set out for dive sites unknown and see what we can find. One great reason for diving Yap this time of the year is that the winds are pretty much absent, which means that both sides of the island should be accessible to us.

The two weeks being offered (dates are beginning/end in LA) are July 7-19 and July 21-August 2. I'm

staying in Yap between groups so I'll fly in with the first group and fly home with the second group. Group size in both instances is limited to a maximum of 12 divers (plus me). Right now, we've got 6 for each of the two weeks and if that's where it stays, that's fine too. But we can certainly add people last-minute. (And if you'd like to do a week in Palau prior to the week in Yap, we can set that up, too.)

If this is something you'd like to consider, check out our trips reports and pictures from previous trips (links are all on the Reef Seekers website) and if you have questions or are ready to commit, give us a call at 310/652-4990. We're gonna have a blast and hope you can share it with us.

PICTURE PAGE - Diving in Yap

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2017)



**Leaf
Scorpionfish**



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WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM



**Inquisitive
Turtle**



**You might see a shark . . .
or two or twenty**



**Colorful
Lobster**



**Usually shy
Masked Angel**