

THE REEF SEEKER



REEF SEEKERS DIVE CO.
P.O. Box 634
Beverly Hills, CA 90213
(310) 652-4990
www.reefseekers.com
e-mail: kenkurtis@aol.com

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CHAMBER DAY & EVE 2020

We're now only a few days away from Chamber Day 2020. In case you haven't noticed . . . it's this coming Wednesday, May 6. Obviously, due to the COVID pandemic, we've had to radically alter the way we're doing things and this year and have gone 100% virtual. And we REALLY appreciate the way many of you have adapted to our new reality and stepped. We've still got time to add you to the list of donors and, COVID or not, our Chamber still needs to maintain funding levels.

Diving is an amazingly safe sport . . . until it isn't. But we're all human and things happen. In fact, a study has shown that 69% of diving accidents are caused by diver error. So the last thing you want to hear is, "Sorry, there's no chamber in the area so there's nothing we can do for you." Fortunately, that's NOT the case in Southern California. Since 1974, divers have relied on the USC Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber to bail us out when things go awry.

Although many people assume that the Chamber is fully funded, that's not correct. While the Chamber gets a grant from L.A. County, that covers a bit less than half of the annual operating expenses. The rest has to be raised from public and private contributions.

So here's quick reminder of what's happening and what you can do to help:

SIGN UP FOR THE FLYING DUTCHMAN – In nautical lore, seeing the Dutchman was a bad thing, but for Chamber Day, it's a good thing. The Dutchman is our mythical boat that's normally for those who can't take a day off to go dive but which this year, due to COVID-19, can accommodate everyone who wants to "dive" the event. For a donation of \$95, Dutchman divers will get five raffle tickets plus a special limited-edition T-shirt available only to folks who sign up for the Dutchman. You also get to choose your "pirate" name which will be part of a skull mosaic on the front of the shirt.

DONATE TO THE CHAMBER CHALLENGE – These are direct donations to the Chamber. Mostly they're \$100 pledges, but also \$500, \$1,000, and even \$5,000 and \$10,000. It's pretty simple and straight-forward: You donate, and then you challenge your friends to match your generosity. You can also designate your donation to be in someone's memory or honor.

THE VIRTUAL TABLE CHALLENGE – The highlight of the event is usually a sit-down dinner at the fabulous Aquarium of the Pacific, in the Great Hall under the life-sized Blue Whale. But, again because of COVID-19, that can't happen this year. So we've created a virtual dinner event as a subset of the Chamber Challenge. Normally at Chamber Eve, shops and clubs sponsor tables of ten and have their followers sit with them. This year, those will all be virtual tables. "Seats" are \$120 each and for that amount, instead of dinner you'll get a Chamber Eve short-sleeved t-shirt, raffle tickets, a shot at the Grand Prize (which is a week of diving in Yap) and some other goodies. Sign up for a seat at a table, and find your favorite shop or club and "sit" with them.

We know these are trying times for everyone but with everything going on in today's world and whatever the fallout will be down the road when regular diving resumes again, we can't be without an asset and a safety net like the USC Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber. We hope you'll give some thought to doing one or more of the aspects of the event, knowing that your donations will be put to good use.

To participate or just to get more information, visit the web site at www.chamberday.org. You can sign up there using our secure server, and if you still have questions, you can always call Chamber Day HQ at 310-652-4990.



INTO THE BLUE

If it's a RED tide, why is the bioluminescence BLUE?

Hopefully you've gotten a chance to see in person a somewhat rare occurrence and that's the blue bioluminescence that's inhabiting our waters currently. Not sure how much longer it will last. But it's caused – by of all things – a red tide, which is an explosion of algae in the ocean. Usually, during daylight hours, it all looks red, hence the name.

But at night, when the algae is disturbed by the motion of a passing wave or even your hand during a dive, it glows and gives off light and in this instance, that light is blue. Perhaps the most amazing example of this was when some lucky boaters got two dolphins riding their bow wake at night and the animals were graceful blue streaks in the water.

The pix above is from the Orange County Register and shows waves breaking on Sunset Beach and giving off the blue glow.

Not sure how much longer this will last nor how easy it will be to see. With many beaches closed along with their parking lots, it might be hard to find a place to park let alone find a way to get down to the edge of the water to observe this up close. But if you can manage to accomplish that, it will be a sight worth seeing.

WE'LL BE LIVE!!!

You can join us LIVE on Wednesday, May 6, as we plan to live-stream virtual Chamber Evening and go through our normal program that we'd do if we were all at Scuba Prom in the Great Hall of the Aquarium of the Pacific.

We will be setting up a Zoom Webinar (we may also be able to simulcast on FaceBook Live) so that you'll be able to join us for all the festivities. We plan to start at 7PM with a pre-show that will consist of some PowerPoint thank yous and a couple of short videos, and then we'll go LIVE at 8PM with the raffle winners, the successful blind bidders, some more thank yous, the presentation of the check to Chamber Director Karl Huggins, and the drawing for the winner of the Gran Prize: A week of diving in Yap with our good friends at Manta Ray Bay.

So plan to join us Wednesday, May 6, for Chamber Day 2020 LIVE starting at 7PM PDT.



THE SCUBA SHOW???

Not happening. It's not officially been cancelled yet, but I have it on good authority that there's simply no way this can occur. Part of the reason that's there's been no official announcement is for the same reasons that I've given our travelers about any trip during these times: cancellation fees and penalties. It's better for THEM to cancel than for YOU to cancel since that gives you more leverage to ask for a refund. And I'm sure you can understand that for something as large as the Scuba Show, which involves the Long Beach Convention Center plus some hotels, the cancellation fees could be staggering. Whether the show will be cancelled outright for 2020 or postponed remains to be seen. But I think it's a pretty good bet that there will not be a mass gathering of divers in Long Beach on May 30-31 (although most of us DO like wearing masks).

2020 DIVING VACATIONS

August 1-8 • Isla Mujeres

Aug. 28 - Sept. 5 • Bonaire

October 17-28 • Indonesia

January 14-22 • Socorro



THE FUTURE OF TRAVEL

This is the \$64,000 question. (And I'm probably dating myself by using that as a reference.) But what will the future of travel, not just dive travel, look like in the "new" normal?

Possibly the biggest question is: When will people be comfortable to travel again? JetBlue just announced that they are making it a requirement for all passengers to wear a mask or face covering for the entire duration of a trip. How long will that policy last and what other airlines will adopt it? Can you really expect people to wear a mask all the time on the non-stop LAX-Singapore flight which is 17 hours? Where's the line?

Once on the plane, how do you deal with social distancing? Will they actually remove seats to enforce spacing? (And how ironic would THAT be given that they've been jamming more and more seats into planes for the last few years.) Or do they just make some seats off-limits to create space? But even if you left every middle seat empty, if there's someone in the row in front of you and someone in the row behind you, how does that create social distancing?

By the same token – and obviously this will change as restrictions are lifted - you've got planes flying now with as few as one passenger. When travel resumes, what will

UPCOMING LOCAL DIVES & CLASSES

DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED DESTINATION	PRICE
Wed.	May 6	100% virtual	Chamber Day/Eve 2020	Varies
Wed.	June 3	- CLASS -	- PHOTO WORKSHOP -	\$25
Sun.	7	<i>Catalina Express</i>	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$150
Thu.	11	Redondo (Vets)	••• Night Dive •••	\$25
Sat.	20	Redondo (Vets)	Beach dive (single tank)	\$25
Wed.	July 8	- CLASS -	NAUI Nitrox	\$150

(Scheduled, but we're not sure which ones we'll really do.)

passenger loads be? Maybe it'll be a GREAT time to travel because few people will feel comfortable flying and having a row to yourself will be the norm, not the exception.

How will they deal with bathrooms? Will they have to be disinfected every time someone goes in and comes out? And what will you think when you're waiting outside the door and you hear the person inside cough or sneeze?

The other big question, and perhaps the more problematic and variable one, is what will be the attitude of countries that are opening up to receiving foreign visitors? Some countries are talking about the idea of requiring a 14-day self-quarantine once you arrive in their country. Planning on a 7-day trip somewhere? Add two weeks to it. And hope that there's not a similar quarantine requirement when you return to the United States. I'm all for extending a one-week vacation into a five-week one, but not if I have to spend four of the five weeks sitting on my butt behind closed doors.

In short, there are no easy answers and LOTS of questions. It's likely going to be similar to flying right after 9/11. You tended to view everyone as a potential terrorist. This time, we'll tend to view everyone as a potential Typhoid Mary. And it's going to take a

while for things to return to "normal." In fact, one article I read said it would be 3-5 YEARS before the airline industry returned to load levels like they had in 2019.

On the one hand, that's a good thing. On the other hand, travel's going to be very strange for quite some time IMHO.

EXTRA RAFFLE TIX

At Chamber Day, there is always an opportunity for you to get extra raffle tickets. In California, however, it is illegal to sell raffle tickets directly over the Internet. But charitable events (like Chamber Day 2020) are allowed to provide a request form for you to order raffle tickets.

So here are the details:

Send your name, phone number, and how many tickets you would like to chamberday@aol.com. Send your reply no later than this Saturday, May 2, 2020, 6:00PM PDT. We will call you on Sunday, May 3 or Monday, May 4 to get payment information.

How much are raffle tickets?

- * 6 tickets: \$20
- * 13 tickets: \$35
- * 35 tickets: \$50
- * 50 tickets: \$75
- * 75 tickets: \$100

(continued on next page)

There are limits to how many you can buy.

- * Chamber Eve “attendees” - \$100
- * Flying Dutchman Crew - \$75
- * Everyone else - \$50

This is a virtual raffle so you will NOT receive physical tickets.

How will the raffle drawing work? The raffle drawing will take place during our virtual Chamber Evening live-stream on Wednesday, May 6, 8:00 – 9:00PM PDT. Winners will be chosen throughout the evening. You do not have to be viewing the live-stream to win. Limit two prizes per person.

Questions? Send us an email to chamberday@aol.com or you can call us at Chamber Day HQ which is 310/652-4990.

LOCKDOWN SURVIVAL KIT - ONE OF THREE CH-DAY 2020 BLIND BID ITEMS

Every year we have a number of Blind Bid items. Blind Bid works like a Silent Auction but the difference is that you won't know what anyone else has bid, so give it your best shot. (And you can certainly submit a second higher bid later on.)

This year, we have some great choices (A.E.D. unit and Dive Immersion for Two at the Aquarium of the Pacific) but the unique one is our LOCKDOWN SURVIVAL KIT. It consists of all of these hard-to-get items as pic-

tured below:

- 6-roll pack of toilet paper
- 2-roll pack of paper towels
- Lysol wipes
- Dial anti-bacterial soap
- Pearlessence hand sanitizer
- Lysol disinfectant spray
- Box of 100 latex gloves
- And some candy to get you through these difficult times

Put in your best bid!!! Bid acceptance for this and all other Blind Bid items will close at 6PM PDT, Wednesday, May 6. Winner will be notified and asked to pay (credit cards only) that evening. Use the link below to place your bid. And remember: Anything in excess of the retail value is tax-deductible.

Good luck!!! And thanks for supporting your Chamber.

PICTURE PAGE - BLIND BID #3

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2020)

