

THE  
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SEEKER



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May - 2021

## **CHAMBER DAY 2021 IS THIS WEDNESDAY**

We're in the final stretch as Chamber Day 2021 approaches THIS Wednesday, May 5. As we've told you many times – but it never hurts to reemphasize – this is the major fund-raiser for the Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber. (It's also the largest single-day scuba charity event in the U.S., and likely the world.) Chamber Day generally provides a little bit better than 50% of the annual funding needed to keep our Chamber strong. And it's still not too late for you to get involved as we've still got five days to go (from when we're writing this) until all is said and done.

Here again are the main areas when you can contribute:

**CHAMBER DAY** – Our slogan this year is: “Real Boats – Fake Dives.” It's Virtual Chamber Day so the boat names are real but they're not really taking you diving. It's a great way for you to “vote” for your favorite boats(s) and you'll get a special Chamber Day t-shirt that will have our logo on front, and the names of the boats and the virtual divers on the back.

**FLYING DUTCHMAN** – The original “fake” boat. Originally designed for those who couldn't take the day off but who wanted to be able to “dive” anyhow. Make sure you enter your pirate name. These folks also get a unique shirt with our pirate name skull mosaic on the front and the Dutchman 2021 logo on the back.

**CHAMBER EVE** – Same idea as when we go to the Aquarium of the Pacific, only we're not really going to be there. Sign up with your favorite dive shop or club and “sit” at their table. You'll get a Chamber Eve t-shirt for your participation and this year, because we want you to experience the Aquarium, you'll also get a ticket good for free Aquarium admission through the end of the year.

**CHAMBER CHALLENGE** – It's a really simple: This is a straight monetary donation. The Challenge has also been the strength of our overall success and while we're already doing very well this year, as the saying goes, more is better.

**T-SHIRTS** – You can buy Day short-sleeve shirts, Eve long-sleeve shirts, or Eve short-sleeve shirts. Doesn't matter if you're doing any other part of the event or not. \$20 for short-sleeve, \$30 for long-sleeve, plus a \$7 shipping charge per order.

**BLIND BIDS** – We're still finalizing what's what, but we'll have eight Blind Bid items available on the website starting Monday. Anyone can place a bid regardless of whether you're doing anything else with the event. Bidding will start on Monday, and will close at 8:30PM on Wednesday. Winners will be announced shortly after that.

**WATCH THE WEBCAST!!!!** – This year, we're doing TWO live webcasts through FaceBook and Zoom. We'll do a Day webcast from Noon-1PM that will pretty much replicate what the on-island experience would be if we could have you over. And we'll do an evening webcast from 7-9PM to do some thank yous, recognitions, and present the final amount to Chamber Director Karl Huggins.

Lots going on, lots of fun, lots of activity, and all for a good cause. Hope you'll join us and more importantly, hope you'll make a donation.

**WWW.CHAMBERDAY.ORG**



## WATCH US LIVE ON WEDNESDAY

This year, we'll be doing TWO live webcasts for the event, one for the Day and one for the Eve. In both cases, the webcast will be available through both Zoom (limited to the first 500 people to sign in) and FaceBook Live on the Chamber FB page (no limit).

For Chamber Day, we'll be live Noon-1PM and we generally try to replicate the on-island experience were we able to have you come visit. (To be clear, the USC Wrigley campus where the Chamber's located is still closed to all non-staff.) We've got presentations lined up from USCG, Baywatch, and LA County Sheriffs, all of whom normally greet you on the dock. We'll also give you a video walk through the Chamber hanger and explain what's what, including taking you inside. On top of that we've got a couple of other little surprises planned plus we'll be doing the drawing for the winners of the Daytime raffle prizes. Those winning names will be drawn from everyone who signed up for either one of the virtual boats or the Flying Dutchman.

For Chamber Eve, our overall sked is 7-9PM. From 7-8PM, we'll do

what we call our "pre-show" which will consist of a number of pre-recorded segments showing you Blind Bid items, thanking our prize donors, some diving tips, and a bunch of other stuff.

The Big Show starts at 8PM with our formal Chamber Eve webcast. This replicates what we'd normally do at the Aquarium of the Pacific post-dinner. We'll be announcing our Eve raffle prize winners (everyone who buys a "seat" is entered), we'll be thanking the boats, recognizing table sponsors, remembering some of those no longer with us in the "In Memoriam" segment, plus we have a couple of other things up our sleeve. The evening ends with the announcement of this year's final grand total (and we really do keep Karl in the dark until we tell him the actual number).

If you can't join us for one or both of these, they will be recorded and archived and available through the Chamber's FaceBook and YouTube pages.

But please make plans to join us for or both of these webcasts. We don't yet have the URL links, but should have those available by Monday at the latest.



## BONAIRE TRIP POSTPONED AGAIN

Even though things are absolutely heading in the right direction here in the U.S. regarding COVID, that's not the case lately in Bonaire as they've had a very severe outbreak and have essentially gone on lockdown. We originally had this trip scheduled for May, pushed that back to late August, and are going to push it back again. Granted things may be better there in four months, but at best they're going to be far behind the curve and we just don't want to take a chance of either not being able to go or going and getting stuck down there. (Although I can think of worse places in the world to be stuck.) To give you an idea of the severity of the situation, United has cancelled all flights to Bonaire until November.

Our new dates are May 14-21, 2022. We are fairly confident that a year from now, the world will be in a different COVID place than it is now. (At least, we hope so.)

### 2021-22 DIVING VACATIONS

**Maybe something**

**in the late fall????**

**Socorro • March 12-20, 2022**

**Bonaire • May 14-22, 2022**



## GUADALUPE IS OPEN

On the other hand, we got very nice news a few days ago that the Mexican government has reversed course and has decided that Guadalupe WILL be open for Great White Season. Originally, much to the dismay of boat operators who had to keep shifting boats around and changing itineraries, Guadalupe was to be closed for the remainder of 2021. No clue as to what changed their minds, but it's nice to have this as an option.

This also could become our next trip for 2021 if there's interest. As many of you know, I was very pleased with our experience with Nautilus in Socorro. An advantage of being on a boat is that you're essentially in a bubble. As long as you can get to the boat COVID-free and the crew is COVID-free, once you cast off there's simply no way that anyone on-board can infect anyone else if you were able to ensure that COVID germs were not on the passenger manifest. (The other side of that coin is that if COVID comes aboard, it can be like being on *Nostramo* with Ripley and the crew of "Alien.") But I'm confident this can be done safely.

We've had four great trips in the past. As I said, nothing specific right now but if you're interested, you should let me know so we can see what the options are. Nautilus is running trips as early as mid-

## UPCOMING LOCAL DIVES & CLASSES

DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED DESTINATION	PRICE
Sat.	May 8	Redondo (Vets)	Beach dive (single tank)	\$25
Thu.	20	Redondo (Vets)	••• Night Dive •••	\$25
Wed.	26	--- CLASS ---	FISH ID	\$25
Wed.	June 9	<i>Catalina Express</i>	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$160
Wed.	23	-- CLASS --	TABLES & COMPUTERS	FREE
Sat.	26	Redondo (Vets)	Navigation (single dive)	\$25
Thu.	July 1	Redondo (Vets)	••• Night Dive •••	\$25
Wed.	7	<i>Catalina Express</i>	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$160

July and usually goes through mid-November. Early in the season you get mainly males and later in the season, the females are coming in. And I certainly don't mind doing multiple trips.

Figure this to be roughly a \$4,000 trip depending on which specific accommodation you choose. These trips leave out of San Diego so the first day is a drive down there and then an evening border crossing and luxury coach ride to Ensenada, where we board the boat and then depart. There's a day at sea, three full days of shark observing/diving (usually 3-5 cage dives a day), an evening and morning at sea coming home, afternoon departure from Ensenada back up to San Diego (border crossing is always a crapshoot), and then an evening post-rush-hour drive back up to LA.

So if you're interested, let me know and we'll see what's what. But if you've ever wanted to look a Great White Shark in the eye, this is the place to do it.

## THE SCUBA SHOW??

Not happening. It's officially been cancelled (it was supposed to be May 30-31) and even with the loosening of L.A. County restrictions, because a lot of this has to happen so far ahead of time, it just wasn't

going to be practical. The next show should happen on May 14-15, 2022. In the meantime, their website indicates that there will be "something" planned for the timeframe of this year's show so that exhibitors can stay in touch with you. Last year we did a whole series of well-received on-line seminars. So keep an eye out on the weekly TWARS you get Sunday nights (in case you were wondering, it stands for "This Week At Reef Seekers") for the latest.

## TURN IN YOUR REPORT CARD

Your lobster report card, that is.

This is admittedly a little late (by the time you read this unless you do it almost right after it's sent) but don't forget that each year you get a lobster report card, you're required to turn the card back or post the info online and the deadline to do that is/was April 30. Failure to do so can result in a fine of a whopping \$21.60. But it's the principle because, assuming you filled it out correctly which means each time you TRIED to collect bugs, not just the times you were successful, it really does provide DF&W with critical information to help monitor the fishery. So if you're a lobster hunter, please do the right thing.

## AVALON DAY TRIPS

As the summer approaches, give some thought to those mid-week Avalon day trips we offer periodically. They've been quite enjoyable plus we've had 100% success spotting at least one Giant Sea Bass on every single trip.

But the nice thing about going mid-week – this will be a little less so during the summer – is that you avoid the weekend crowds. Granted even the weekend “rush” at the Underwater Park is not the same now as in “before times.” But mid-weeks have been wonderful and there were a couple of times this year that by 2PM, we had the entire Park to our selves.

So keep it in the back of your mind. We usually leave out of San

Pedro around 9AM which means by the time we get there, take the taxi around, and pick up tanks/weights, we start diving a bit after 11:30AM. We can easily get in 3 dives, return the tanks by 4PM, and then leisurely change into our civvies in time to make the 6PM boat back, which also gives us time to grab a hot dog at the little deli by the Catalina Express ticket office. (Amazingly good dogs.)

The other nice thing about these trips is that I can usually do them with as few as three people. So, especially if you haven't been in the water for a while (which is most of you), it's a good way to have a relaxing dive with some indirect low-key supervision/instruction (from me) along the way. Good times had by all.



## APRIL FOOLS

I know it seems like it was a year ago (seems that way to me at any rate) but I hope you enjoyed last month's April Fools newsletter. If you're new to the Reef Seekers e-mailings, it's an annual tradition. (And it becomes harder and harder to hook you each year.) It's both a joy and a challenge to write and I truly do appreciate those of you who take time to send a note of appreciation back.

## PICTURE PAGE - Dutchman logos

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2021)



2017



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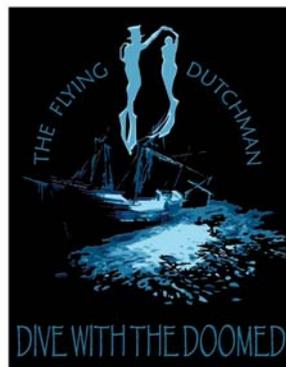
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2018



2019



2020



2021