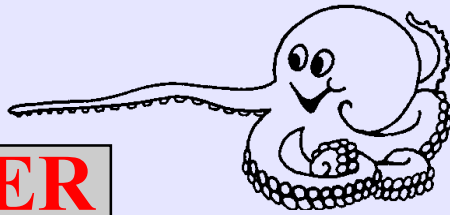
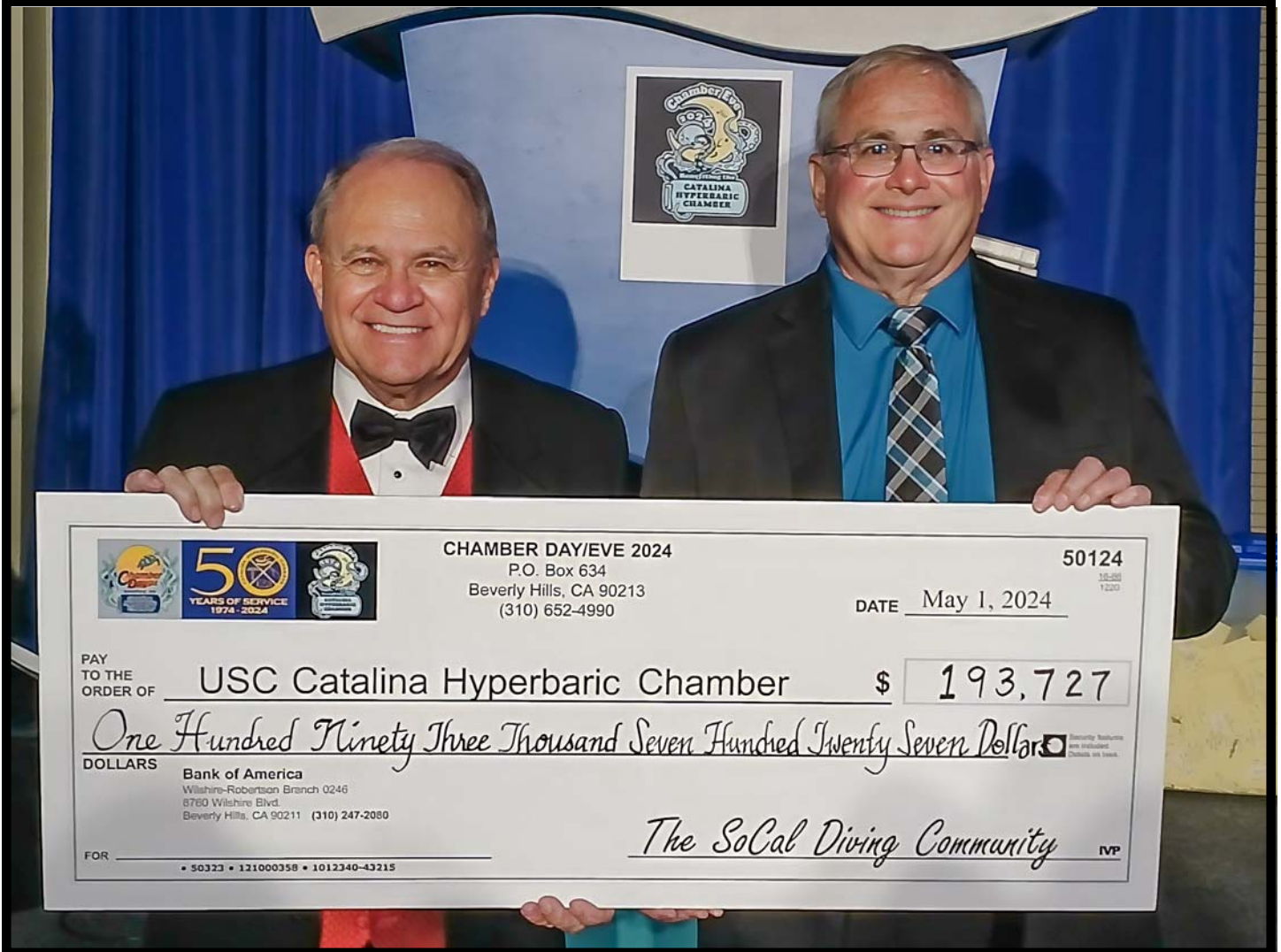


THE
REEF
SEEKER



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May - 2024



NOT
TOO
SHABBY

CHAMBER DAY & EVE 2024

In case you haven't heard, it was a pretty big night. Record-setting in fact. Overall, we raised \$193,727 for our Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber. We had over 100 people diving on the boats, another 100+ people on the *Flying Dutchman*, 350 people at the Aquarium of the Pacific for Chamber Eve, another 100-ish people who watched the live-stream through Virtual Chamber Eve, and yet another 142 people and businesses donating to the Challenge to provide a whopping \$142,000. "Amazing" doesn't even begin to express our collective appreciation.

Best of all, your generosity helps insure that our Chamber remains on firm financial footing for another year. Additionally, the entire event, but especially Chamber Evening (aka "Scuba Prom") has become a great way to kick the diving season into high gear. So be sure to take note of the shops, clubs, and boats that get involved and thank them for their dedication by doing some business with them in the coming months.

Also make note of May 7, 2025, as that will be the date for the 37th annual Chamber Day and 27th annual Chamber Eve.

LIST OF CHAMBER DAY & EVE WINNERS

In case you were wondering . . .

CHAMBER DAY

1. Gerardo Ramos (Pac Star) - XS Scuba Inspire reg & Octo
2. Bob Sanders (Dutchman) - Dive Rite CX-9 light

3. Jerry Vertigan (Sundiver Express) - Aqualung Explore II daypack
4. Connie Thousand (Sundiver) - PADI backpack
5. Robert McKenna (Dutchman) - PADI dry bag
6. Martin Berman (Dutchman) - PADI e-learning cert
7. Kyle Shippee (Sundiver) - SSI e-learning
8. Sammy DeKeyan (SoCal Diver) - SSI e-learning
9. Mike Madden (Dutchman) - SSI e-learning
10. Tingboo (Pac Moon) - SSI e-learning
11. Sara Ontiveros (Dutchman) - SSI e-learning
12. Scott Barnes (Dutchman) - D.U.I. Mask Tattoo Clear Blue Ultra Clear
13. Kevin Lee (Giant Stride) - D.U.I. Mask Tattoo Clear Blue Ultra Clear
14. Megan Hayes (Sundiver Express) - D.U.I. SMB 3.3' Orange, Closed
15. Laura Sheeks (Pac Star) - D.U.I. SMB 3.3' Orange, Closed

CHAMBER EVE

1. Alex Hageman - Aqualung Legend MBS regulator w/octo
2. Steven Rogers - Halcyon Infinity 40 BC system

3. Gina Boster - OTS Guardian Full Face Mask
4. Traci Stahl - Sherwood Wisdom 3 dive computer
5. Brad Crocker - DAN Rescue Pack Extended
6. Martin Carreon - TUSA DC Solar wrist computer
7. Danny Graham - Scubapro MK-11 regulator
8. Ruby Smith - Garmin Descent G1 solar dive computer
9. Paul Vargo - Aqualung i330R computer in 2-gauge console
10. Richie Kezcel - Atomic Z2 regulator
11. Dalton Hamm - Ultralight gift certificate
12. Ethan Roberts - Stephen Holman artwork (Octopus)
13. Glenn Suhd - Stahlsac Curacao Clipper bag
14. Robert Wisdom - Cyd Yonker hand-made Chamber Eve quilt
15. Randy Brannum - Fourth Element Tidal Robe
16. Jessica Marroquin - SSI e-learning course
17. Kacy Bryce - PADI e-learning course
18. Carlos Linares - Fourth Element duffel bag
19. Lenny Ortiz - Profile Systems drysuit (blind bid)
20. Susan Bangasser - Atlantis Dive Resorts trip (Grand Prize)

2024 DIVING VACATIONS

May 18-25 • Roatan

July 8-19 • Indonesia

September 9-21 • Yap

Novembr 1-10 • Palau

CONCEPTION CAPTAIN SENTENCED

The federal trial court passed sentence on *Conception* captain Jerry Boylan last week, giving him four years in federal prison with three years of supervised release following that. Boylan could have gotten as much as ten years, but the judge felt that the overall circumstances did not warrant that. U.S. District Judge George Wu said that while Boylan's behavior was reckless, sentencing guidelines didn't warrant the full ten years. "This is not a situation where the defendant intended to do something bad," Wu said.

The short version of this is that no one is going to be happy.

The families of the 34 victims are furious in that they wanted the full 10-year prison sentence to be imposed. Others in the diving community feel that while lack of a roving watch, required in the CFRs, is clearly a violation, it is also not slam-dunk proof that that's what allowed the fire to spread. There are many unknowns, including where the fire started, how quickly it spread, and that a roving watch could have been down in the engine room when the fire broke out and emerged to see the vessel already engulfed, and the result could have been the same.

Many are also pointing fingers at the Coast Guard for lack of oversight. Pointing to the fact that the *Conception* was not only inspected every year since it was built, but that it was built to the standards at the time and that as standards changed and evolved – the size of the escape hatch is a good example

UPCOMING LOCAL DIVES & CLASSES

DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED DESTINATION	PRICE
Thu.	May 9	Redondo/Vets	••• Night Dive •••	35
Sat.	11	Redondo/Vets	Beach Diving	35
Wed.	15	--- CLASS ---	--- Photo Workshop ---	FREE
Wed.	June 12	<i>Catalina Express</i>	Avalon Underwater Park	180
Wed.	19	--- CLASS ---	--- NAUI Nitrox Diver ---	95
Sat.	22	Redondo/Vets	Navigation	35
Thu.	27	Redondo/Vets	••• Night Dive •••	35
Sat.	July 6	Redondo/Vets	Taming Surf Entries	35

– older boats were grandfathered in and not required to do upgrades. But as the post-fire investigation proceeded, not adhering to the standards from which they had been excused was cited as being part of the reason none of the passengers survived. Should that fall into the lap of the Coast Guard? Or should the boats have said, "You need to make us do more than what the standards require."

There are also questions about the origin of the blaze and the speed at which it spread. Although the ATF conducted a test where they concluded that the fire started in a plastic trash receptacle just outside the salon, some have called into question their methodology as it allegedly took them multiple tries to get the fire to start and they never did a similar test with a galley fire due to exploding batteries to compare the two.

If there is anything good that's come out of this horrible tragedy, it's that – starting the day after the fire – there's a heightened awareness of fire safety throughout the diving fleet worldwide as well as a heightened awareness of looking at where escape hatches lead and realizing that when you have a stairway that leads into an area and an escape hatch the leads into the same area, the escape hatch is not really providing an alternate route.

This isn't over yet as Boylan is appealing. So expect this to drag out for a while. Whether or not a new trial is granted remains to be seen but for now, this is where everything stands.

GET YOUR GEAR CHECKED OUT

As the diving season heats up in earnest (and the water heats up too), it's time for you to get your gear checked out. Whether that's just a bench check or a full annual service, Robert Stark is our man to handle all of that. We've even got a dedicated repair line number, which is 310/947-8523.

Robert can handle just about any brand of gear and our turn-around time is quick too. We generally get things done in a week and sometimes even more quickly than that. And since we keep a vast array of the most-needed parts in stock, we won't have to tell you that we're waiting for a special parts order while your stuff sits on a hanger.

Even if you think your gear is in tip-top shape, if you haven't used it for a while, get it checked out first. It's life-support gear after all, and it's YOUR life that it's supporting. Give Robert a call and make sure everything is as it should be before your next dive.

YAP IS CALLING YOU

Why? First of all, you'll have all of your friends asking, "Where in the heck is Yap," and you'll be able to tell them. Plus you'll be able to point out that you flew into the only airport in the world where the airport code – in this case YAP – and the name of the place you're visiting are the same. And thirdly, you'll be able to experience a culture where stones are still used as legal currency.

And did we say the diving is amazing????? (That's the best reason.)

We're going back to Yap this fall. If you've followed our travels over the years, you already know that this is one of our absolute favorite places in the world. You've got sharks, Mandarinfish, Eagle Rays,

turtles, cuttlefish, and Manta Rays just to name a few. While Yap initially became famous for close Manta Ray encounters – they will literally pass inches away from your face and eyeball you as they go by – it's a lot more than that.

Over the course of our 10 dive days there (generally 3 dives/day), we'll explore the reefs of Yap, cruise through the tunnels of Yap Caverns, sit in amazement as Mantas dance around our heads, and have one hell of a good time. Plus, we'll be staying at Manta Ray Bay Resort, probably the nicest dive-dedicated resort that we frequent around the world. One of the unique features of the place is a huge sailing ship called the *Mnuw*, which serves as the restaurant. We'll have breakfast each morn-

ing on the lower level – they make some of the best bacon I've ever tasted – then go out and dive all day, and cap off the evening with dinner on the top deck of the ship, while dive videos or other entertainment plays out on the big screen – 8x16 feet – that hangs towards the front of the boat.

Yap's got an awful lot to offer as well as being off the beaten path – the dive sites aren't crowded – and we'd love to have you join us. We're still putting together the final details for everything but if this is something that might interest you, shoot us an e-mail or give us a call. The travel dates will be September 9 leaving out of LAX, and returning on September 22. It's the trip of a lifetime and one that will create lasting memories.

PICTURE PAGE - Ch-Day & Eve 2024

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2024)



Chatting with rescue folks at the Chamber dock



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Getting briefed on going inside the Chamber



Gathering under the Blue Whale



The view from the podium



Feeding frenzy at the raffle table