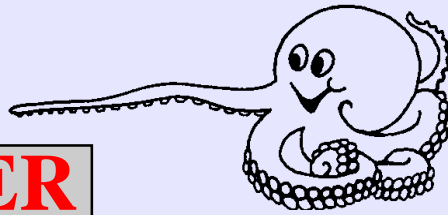


THE **REEF** SEEKER



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April 1, 2008

TSA AT THE CATALINA DIVE PARK

The Department of Homeland Security announced today that, due to an increased concern about scuba terrorism, the TSA will now be in place at the Avalon Underwater Park to monitor divers going in and out of the water.

A second set of stairs has been built (one for going down and one for coming up) and the TSA has installed airport-type security screening devices at the head of the stairs through which all divers will have to pass. In addition, there will be an x-ray machine set up (like at the airport) through which all hand-carried items (fins, dive lights, masks, etc.) must be passed and then reclaimed on the other side.

In a small victory for divers, the TSA was made to understand that dive computers are NOT like laptops and do NOT need to be unscrewed from the regulator first stage and out in a separate bin to be screened. Also, the TSA has exempted tanks and weights from being screened and those can be worn through the screening station as they apparently won't set off the metal detectors.

However, similar to the airports, TSA is demanding that all footwear be removed which means all divers will have to take off their booties, pass them through the x-ray machine, and

then put them back on before they continue down the stairs to make their entry.

Although it has been pointed out to the TSA that the stairs can get fairly crowded, they estimate that their inspection will add no more than 3-5 minutes to the entry process. They have also stated that they will be posting tips for divers along with day-by-day estimated entry delays on their website www.tsa.gov.

CATALINA BUFFALO SWIM

Most people know that there is a herd of buffalo that roam the interior of Catalina. Many people know that the buffalo were brought over in 1924 for a movie shoot and then were left there to freely roam the island. But very few people know about the annual Catalina Island Buffalo Swim.

This is how the Catalina Island Conservancy (charged with looking after the herd) annually bathes the buffalo. The buffalo wade in at the Isthmus and are herded around the water which gets them really clean and they're good to go for another year.

Normally, the Catalina Conservancy Divers has the task of helping but this year, their divers are not available. So the Conservancy has put out a call to divers who are willing to help out. You'll get a free ride on the

Catalina Express from San Pedro to the Isthmus. And then you'll be directed to the buffalo entry area (you'll fill out some waivers on the way over) where you'll enter the water and then they'll guide the buffalo in.

The dive entails herding the buffalo around the harbor (all boat traffic will be stopped) and occasionally giving them a scrub (especially legs and hooves) with brushes that will be provided. Also, because the buffalo are buoyant, occasionally they get into water too deep and start to float. So another aspect of the job is to push against the buffalo while kicking and get them back into shallower water where they can stand. (Sometimes this takes two or three divers.)

The whole thing takes about an hour and once you're done, lunch will be provided (ironically, they'll be serving Buffalo Burgers), and you'll even have an opportunity to do another dive in the Harbor before the ride back to San Pedro.

A specific date is not set yet because it will be based on the divers available on a given day, but they'd like to do this in the next two or three weeks.

If you're interested, give the Conservancy a call at 310/510-4022 (which is actually the number for Gerry Smith, who's the Dive Safety Office for the WMSC at the Isthmus and who will be overseeing the dive). Have fun!!!

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Apr. 3	Fish I.D.	May 8	Photo Workshop
9	Night Diving (Squid)	10	Beach Diving/Nav
12	Beach Diving/Nav	14	Night Diving
17	Tables & computers	17	CPR/Oxygen/1st Aid
19	CPR/Oxygen/1st Aid	24	Practical Navigation
24	Digital UW Photog.	June 5	Fish I.D.
May 1	Fish I.D.	11	Night Diving

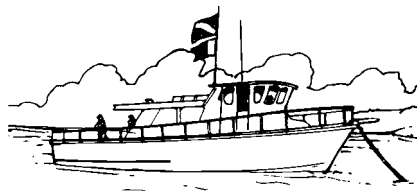
QUEEN MARY TO BE TURNED AROUND

The City of Long Beach today announced plans to turn the Queen Mary around . . . literally. The plan is to flip the vessel 180° so that it points out to sea. The Queen Mary Foundation has long lobbied for this but it was only recently that permission was granted. The plan is to knock down the brick seawall that surrounds the Queen and then a tug will yank the nose out 90°. After that, another tug will start pulling the stern of the ship down towards where the nose used to be. Then the first tug will push the nose into where the tail used to be. It's estimated the whole process will take the better part of the day. (And once the QM's been turned, the seawall will be rebuilt.)

Operators of the Queen are very enthusiastic that this will help improve business and visitors. They've even come up with a new marketing slogan: "See a side of the Queen Mary you've never seen before." When it was pointed out to them that the "new" side of the Queen has always been visible, their reply simply was, "We've already had cards printed up so that's what we're going with."

Originally, they were going to try to do this move today, but the possibility of rain later in the day has forced them to wait until the weekend. To

get the exact schedule for the move, give them a call at 562/435-3511.



CRYSTAL RIVER AGGRESSOR

The Aggressor Fleet has announced they are moving one of their boats to Crystal River to start diving with the Manatees. The new boat is being brought over from Fiji - where there are two Aggressors right now - and will be christened the *Sea Cow Aggressor*. Because Manatee season is just about over, the new boat will start operations in the Crystal

River area in December of this year.

One major concern was where to dock the boat, but Aggressor Fleet says they've solved that problem and have secured dock space a couple of miles upriver from the main manatee areas. Unfortunately, given the "No Wake" policy in effect when the manatees are around, it means that the journey from the dock to King Springs will take about 10 hours.

But the Aggressor Fleet says that will be ample time to give their guests a very thorough briefing about the manatees and the dos and don'ts of Manatee encounters. The 5-day itinerary will include spending a full day exploring all that King's Cavern has to offer, another full day fully exploring Three Sister's (on that day, the *Sea Cow Aggressor* will have the whole place exclusively since the boat's about the width of the Three Sisters canal so no other boats will be able to get by and access the springs), another day doing some exploratory diving within King's Bay, and then two days of "Diver's Choice" where the passengers will choose where to go. With almost a dozen dive sites in King's Bay the choices are . . . well, almost a dozen.

Aggressor is now taking reservations for the *Sea Cow Aggressor* and welcomes your phone calls.

DIVING VACATIONS

May 17-25 • Bonaire

July 11-20 • Yap

August 10-23 • Indonesia

GREAT WHITES EAT VEGGIES

With all the fuss last week about Great Whites being sighted off of Huntington Beach, we should bring some important research to light for you. It seems that Great Whites may actually be reluctant carnivores.

Researchers in Australia have discovered that, when given the opportunity, Great Whites actually prefer a head of lettuce over people.

The first test diver went down with a head of Iceberg lettuce but was promptly eaten by a 12-foot Great White. The next diver went down with a head of Romaine lettuce and was also promptly eaten. But the third diver went down with a head of Butter lettuce and the Great White gingerly took the lettuce from the diver's hand. (It seems they are picky eaters.) The experiment was repeated again with the same results. The first two divers were eaten but the third one was not.

After that, five divers were sent down with Butter lettuce and all five survived. The shark (a different one each time) came up, took the lettuce, and swam away. The divers then exited the water.

For the final part of the experiment, the diver fed the shark the Butter lettuce but this time stayed in the water after the shark swam away. This time, the shark came back five minutes later and ate the diver. The experiment was repeated again with the same results. So an alternate theory is being developed that the sharks may simply view the lettuce as their starter course and will come back for the main diver course.

The study is on-going and if you'd like to volunteer to help out, we can put you in touch with the researchers.

UPCOMING BOAT DIVES

Sun	Apr. 6	<i>Great Escape</i>	San Clemente (NW Harbor)	\$150/160
Sat	19	<i>Sea Bass</i>	<i>Palawan/Avalon/Domin.</i>	130/140
Sun	May 4	<i>Great Escape</i>	Farnsworth/Catalina back	140/150
Wed	7	<i>All boats</i>	Chamber Day Benefit Dive	\$90
Sun	18	<i>Magician</i>	•• Oil Rigs (ltd load) ••	135/145
Sat	31	<i>Sea Bass</i>	<i>Star of SctlnD/Palos Verdes</i>	140/150
Sun	June 15	<i>Cee Ray</i>	Catalina (Italian Gardens)	130/140
Sat	28	<i>Great Escape</i>	Santa Barbara Island	150/160

Prices are listed as 14-day advanced purchase/regular. Food/air included all trips. All diving to be done on compressed air only - no nitrox. Fuel surcharge may apply.

PADI WILL NOW CERTIFY AT BIRTH

PADI has announced that they are lowering the certification age to time of birth. A statement from PADI says, "A pre-born child has just spent nine months in amniotic fluid. If that's not confined water, we don't know what is." Once out of the womb (and out of the neonatal unit), the children will be issued the brand new PADI "Baby Diver" card. Babies who are born after the expected delivery date, because they will have spent more time in the womb, will be eligible for the PADI "Advanced Baby Diver" card.

"We think this will be a great boon to the industry," says PADI. "Not only will the Baby Diver certification, which doesn't require a written test or an instructor, make pregnancy even more exciting and fulfilling, but we think it will actually encourage more people to become pregnant so they can start enjoying this fabulous sport with their children at the earliest possible moment."

BTW, there is no requirement for the parents to be certified as PADI divers for the new child to be eligible. As long as one parent is certified from any recognized agency, PADI says the baby will qualify for the card.

"After all," concludes the statement, "diving truly is in their DNA."

SAN ONOFRE TOWER DIVE

Reef Seekers is very proud to be able to offer you a very exclusive dive inside the cooling towers at the San Onofre nuclear plant in San Clemente.

Each year, the cooling towers are inspected from the inside and we've arranged to take along 10 lucky divers to join in on the nuclear fun. We will get a chance to fully explore Tower 1 and then - probably the coolest part of all - we will get to make the transit from Tower 1 through the connecting tube and come up in Tower 2. (You do not need to be cave-certified to make this transit and dive. Open Water is just fine.) Best of all, participants will receive a unique glow-in-the-dark (get it???) specialty card pronouncing them a "Nuclear Diver".

Cost of the dive is \$100 and that includes the dive, your specialty card, and radiation decontamination following the dive. (Follow-up medical care is NOT included in the \$100.) If you're interested in making a once-in-lifetime dive, then give us a call at 310/652-4990 and let's get you signed up.

NAUI DEPTH LIMITER

NAUI has addressed the concern of divers exceeding their training depths by coming up with what they're calling "The Depth Limiter." As most of you know, after a basic Open Water class, you're qualified to go to 60 feet. An advanced class gets you down to 100 feet. And the recreational depth is 130 feet. But many divers, especially those with only an Open Water card, exceed their qualified depth. Enter "The Depth Limiter."

What it is essentially is a large float ball and a tether. The float ball is about a cubic foot in diameter (64 pounds of buoyant lift - impossible to sink), is filled with air, and has a line on it that corresponds to a diver's maximum qualified depth. There's also an ingenious reel built into the

float ball so that it plays out line as needed and takes up slack as needed. The Open Water Depth Limiter has a line that's 60 feet long, making it impossible for an Open Water diver to descend deeper than that. The "Advanced" version has a 100-foot line and the "U.S Navy Recreational Diver" version has a 130-foot line.

All of them come in a "California version" which includes a kelp-cutter on the float ball so as not to get entangled. The California ones are also made out of recycled materials so as to be more friendly to the environment.

NAUI says that the "Depth Limiters" are ready for shipping now and invites stores, instructors, and even individual divers to place their orders. NAUI can be reached at 800/553-6284.

HOW COULD IT ALL BE TRUE????

We really love this time of the year. Specifically, we love today, the first of April because it's . . . APRIL FOOL'S DAY!!!

So if you're new to the Reef Seekers family, we have to clue you in: None of what you just read is true (except for the class and boat schedules). It's a long-standing tradition at Reef Seekers that our April edition is our April Fools edition and it's meant as a fun way to pull your leg.

So we hope we got you on one or two of the articles. In the beginning, it was easier to spring this on an unsuspecting public. Now it's a little tougher but that's part of the challenge. We hope you enjoyed reading it as much as we enjoyed writing it.

PICTURE PAGE - Special photos

(SOAK THIS PAGE IN HOT WATER FOR 3 MINUTES AND THE IMAGES WILL APPEAR)



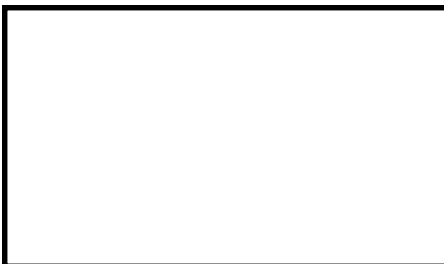
Whale Shark & Manta Ray colliding



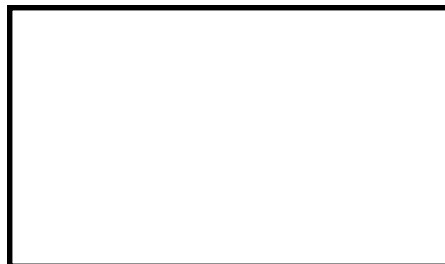
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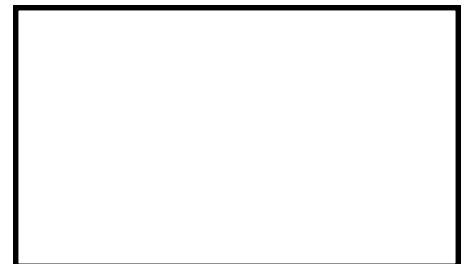
Two Frogfish mating



Juvy garibaldi inside diver's mask



Orca attacking a Humpback Whale



Eel swallowing a sea lion