

THE REEF SEEKER



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\$128,168. My oh my . . .

This year's Chamber Day has been nothing short of amazing. Despite a lousy economy and all the other factors that should have pointed to a down year, we've set new records on numerous levels. The Challenge was the biggest it's ever been, we sold out Chamber Evening for the second year in row, we sold lots of raffle tickets, and the support from the diving community for our Chamber has been simply gratifying.

And we even put it to use for real on Chamber Day as we had one of the participants suffer from a bends hit. But everything went by the book as he reported right away what was going on, our divemasters put him on oxygen immediately, the captain radioed Baywatch, they came out to do an assessment, and he was whisked off to the Chamber about the time the last group was arriving

on the island.

We're happy to tell you that he was treated and had full resolution. But it underscores why we do this event and why we need our Chamber.

So many thanks to everyone who participated. We'll spend the next month or so doing an audit of our numbers (as well as allowing for some post-event contributions) but here's how the numbers break down as of May 7 to give us our grand total:

- Chamber Day boats (229 divers) - \$20,610
- Flying Dutchman (96 divers) - \$8,640
- Daytime raffle ticket sales - \$3,575
- Merchandise sold at Chamber - \$5,885
- On-line & daytime Blind Bids - \$327
- Chamber Evening (469 paid, 31 comp) - \$42,210
- Chamber Eve food costs (subtract this number) - (\$25,500)
- Chamber Evening raffle ticket sales - \$7,495
- Merchandise sold at Ch-Eve - \$2,625
- Ch-Eve Blind Bids - \$2,781
- Chamber Challenge - \$51,520
- GRAND TOTAL (net) - \$120,168**

SUMMER BOATS

As we get into the "summer season" between Memorial Day and Labor Day, the pace of diving picks up a bit, especially with respect to booking our boats. So just a quick reminder that the earlier you can book, the better off you'll be. Now this doesn't mean you can't snag a spot at the last minute, but sooner is always better. (And we do get late cancellations, so it's always good to put your name on our waiting list if we're fully booked.)

Also remember that with Reef Seekers, you save \$10 with our Early Purchase price when you pay for the boat two weeks or more ahead of time, another reason to book ahead. You can also save an additional 10% by buying a Reef Saver card (\$50) which is good for a full year from the date of purchase.

Also remember that if you have any last-minute problems (gotta cancel, you get lost on the way to the boat, you're running late) on the day of the dive, my cell phone number is printed at the bottom of the receipts as well as on our website and on our boat sked. Whether I'm on the trip or not, call me on that number and we'll try to get your issues resolved.

We look forward to seeing you this summer. Remember that a full copy of our boat sked, suitable for hanging on the refrigerator, can be downloaded from our website.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

June 4	Fish I.D.	July 10	Photo Workshop
11	Night Diving	12	Beach Diving/Nav
14	Beach Diving/Nav	17	Tables & Computers
19	Rescue	19	CPR/1st Aid/Oxygen
19	NAUI Advanced	24	Digital UW Photog.
July 3	Fish I.D.	Aug. 7	Fish I.D.
9	Night Diving	9	Beach Diving/Nav

TAKE A WIND-BREAKER

You should make a lightweight windbreaker part of your “standard” dive gear. Whether it’s diving in SoCal or at a warm-water location, it’s easy to get chilled. And even when the water is 80°+, you’re still losing body heat throughout the dive. A lightweight windbreaker is easy to pack and will help you after the dive regain body heat lost &/or prevent you from getting further chilled from the breeze of a moving boat. If you don’t already have one, find one and add it today.

BACKUP COMPUTERS

We get asked a lot to give advice about backup computers. First of all, it’s a good idea to have one since nothing’s infallible and computers do fail on occasion. It’s not a big deal if it’s your last dive of the day on a Catalina trip but you might feel differently if it’s your first day of diving Cocos. NOW what do you do???

When a computer fails, you have three options: (1) Switch to your backup, (2) Switch to tables, (3) Sit out for 24 hours so you totally outgas and then go to tables or another (working) computer.

No one ever wants to do #3 even though it’s a prudent course of action. And we won’t get into the dis-

cussion of why you’d want to jeopardize your health or the trip for others by not sitting out if #1 and/or #2 aren’t options.

#2 is really only an option rarely. If you were planning on diving your computer and it fails during a dive, there’s a good chance you’ve already exceeded table limits. And if you’ve already done multiple dives, especially if you’re using your computer as a way to multi-level dive, then there’s no way you’ll be able to safely convert your dive to tables.

The best idea is #1. And if you have a back-up, there are three more options to consider.

Option A is to have a backup that’s exactly what you are diving with as your main computer. This way, both computers read exactly the same and are using the exact same algorithm. It’s a piece of cake to switch from the failed computer to the backup since

they’ll both be showing the same info in terms of time left at depth.

Option B is to use a computer that uses the same algorithm as your main computer. For instance, most of the computers made by Pelagic (for Oceanic, Sherwood, Genesis, Aeries, and others) use the same algorithm. So you could probably stay within that “family” for your back-up since both computers should read pretty close to each other.

Option C is to use a computer that’s different from what you currently use. The issue here is that if the computers read significantly differently, you’ve got to make the more conservative computer your main computer. The reason is that you don’t want to be in a situation where your main computer is within no-deco limits but your backup is screaming for a deco stop. If your main goes down in that scenario, your backup will be useless since it will already be in violation mode. It’s the same as not diving with a backup at all. Making the more conservative one your main avoids that problem.

If you’re going to dive with a computer, you need to plan what you’ll do if the computer fails. Whatever choice you make, you should make it with a full awareness of the pros and cons of a particular course of action.

DIVING VACATIONS

July 11-20 • Yap

Aug. 30 - Sept. 12 • Indonesia

October 11-18 • Sea of Cortez



THE GEORGIA AQUARIUM

On our return from Bonaire, we had to layover in Atlanta to connect with our LA flight, so we decided to make it an overnight layover so that we could visit the Georgia Aquarium in downtown Atlanta, which boasts of having the largest exhibit in the world, which houses FOUR Whale Sharks.

We were there on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend and the place was packed. We'd purchased our tickets ahead of time on-line so we avoided the day-of-purchase line. Interestingly, you go through an airport-style security search on the way in.

Once inside the central hall, you've got five different galleries to choose from. We started with Ocean Voyager, their largest exhibit (6.3 million gallons of water and roughly the size of a football field) and the home to the Whale Sharks.

When you enter the exhibit, one of the first things you do is go through along acrylic tunnel that really gives you a great view of everything. While going through here, there's a good chance that at least one of the Whale Sharks will lazily swim over your head. You may also get a glimpse of a Great Hammerhead, Bowmouth Ray, Queensland Grouper, or any of the other 50,000 animals that inhabit the exhibit.

Impressive as the tunnel is, the most impressive part (to me) was their main viewing window. It's 63 feet

UPCOMING BOAT DIVES

Sun	June 15	<i>Cee Ray</i>	Catalina (Italian Gardens)	\$130/140
Sat	28	<i>Great Escape</i>	Santa Barbara Island	150/160
Sun	July 13	<i>Great Escape</i>	Farnsworth/Catalina back	140/150
Sat	26	<i>Great Escape</i>	San Clemente (backside)	150/160
Sun	Aug. 10	<i>Magician</i>	•• Oil Rigs (adv. dive) ••	135/145
Sat	23	<i>Great Escape</i>	Santa Barbara Island	150/160
Sat	Sept. 6	<i>Magician</i>	Catalina (West End)	130/140
Sun	21	<i>Magician</i>	<i>Olympic wreck/Catalina</i>	130/140

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.

long and 27 feet high and gives you an unparalleled view into the exhibit. The window and the view are big enough that at one time (we spent a lot of time just watching through this window) we could see all four Whale Sharks at once AND the Great Hammerhead. Pretty impressive.

What's also interesting is that at this acrylic window (which is about two feet thick) a number of their Queensland Groupers gather and just float and stare at the Aquarium visitors. Really makes you wonder who's watching whom.

Next we made our way over the Cold Water Quest area because we wanted to see the Beluga Whales. That was also fairly impressive but not nearly as so as the Ocean Voyager. They've got three Belugas on display and the male is quite curious about people and spends a lot of time in the front viewing window looking at people.

Once you get outside of these two areas, the rest is pretty much your typical aquarium. One thing I couldn't help but noticing (since I volunteer at the Aquarium of the Pacific) was that they needed to do a better job wiping their acrylic from the inside and scrubbing their artificial coral and other parts of the exhibit that showed algae growth. But I was also very pleased

to see that in a number of exhibits they've got a mix of live coral and repli-coral together and that was a nice innovation.

Overall, it was certainly a pleasant way to spend the day and worth the extra time we spent in Atlanta. If you've got an opportunity to visit the place, it's certainly something we think you'll enjoy. (And take a look at page 4 for some more of the pictures from the Aquarium.)

BONAIRE REPORT

We had a great time last month in Bonaire. We enjoyed very good weather, excellent water conditions, and saw a lot of cool critters including even finding (admittedly accidentally) a red Frogfish on the Buddy Dive house reef that they didn't know was there previously.

We got in a total of 23 dives over the course of the week, 11 boat dives and a dozen shore dives. The whole place seemed "fishier" than usual to us, which is a good thing. As always, our friends at Buddy Dive took very good care of us.

You can read the full report and see the pictures by visiting our website home page and clicking on the links.



PLAN TO ATTEND THE SCUBA SHOW

Make plans to attend the annual Scuba Show the weekend of June 21-22 at the Long Beach Convention Center. Essentially, it's a consumer-oriented show that features the entire dive industry under one roof.

There are also numerous seminars and workshops you can attend. (There's an extra fee for these.) I'll be participating in three of them. On Saturday morning at 10AM, I'll be giving "How to Buy Dive Gear" which is full of useful tips and tricks for

those of you in the market to shop.

That same day, at 4PM, we'll give the always-well-attended "How Divers Die Panel" which will feature the LA County Coroner, the Chamber, and myself (I'm a Forensic Consultant for the Coroner in scuba fatalities) discussing actual cases that have happened in the last year, outlining what happened, detailing what was attempted to save the person's life, what we found when we examined the equipment and looked into the circumstances of the accident more closely, and what the Coroner's final determination was. We also take questions from the audience.

On Sunday we've got a great double-whammy for you. I attended a talk by Marty Snyderman years ago called "Looking for Mr. Big", about diving with big animals. It inspired me to

(with Marty's permission) create "Looking for Mr. Small" which talks about hunting for tiny guys. For the first time ever, we're going back-to-back. Marty's doing "Mr. Big" at 2PM and I'm doing "Mr. Small" at 3PM.

And on top of all of that, there's the Casino party Saturday night from 6-11PM which is not only a lot of fun but this year will honor Chamber Director Karl Huggins with the California Scuba Service Award. Plus there will be raffles and drawings for tons of prizes. Admission is \$25 and includes \$500 in gambling chips.

The Scuba Show is always a fun-filled and jam-packed weekend and we hope to see you there. (And you can always slide across the street to the Aquarium of the Pacific for a little break.)

PICTURE PAGE - The Georgia Aquarium

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2008)



Three Whale Sharks and a Hammerhead



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Whale Sharks passing each other



The male Beluga checks out the crowd



The Great Hammerhead cruises the main window



Part of the view through the main window