

2011 NABS Club Of The Year

LABUE NEWS

Los Angeles Black Underwater Explorers

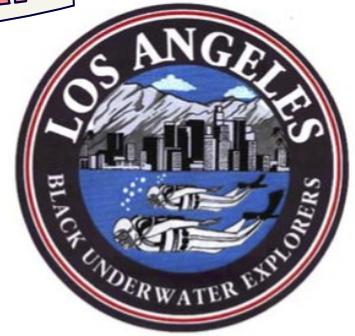


PHOTO OF THE MONTH

VOLUME 20, ISSUE 12

DECEMBER 2015



Photographer: Stephen Scruggs
Camera: Panasonic Lumix DMC-ZS20
Location: San Miguel De Allende, Mexico
Subject: Matador and Bull

DECEMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETING CHANGE

We will not be holding our regular December Membership Meeting on December 8th at the Natural History Museum. Instead, we will be closing out 2015 with our Annual LABUE Holiday Dinner to be held at the Brownstone Bistro on Sunday December 6th. We hope to see you for a fabulous evening of great dining, prizes galore, and friendly LABUE fellowship. Don't miss our January 2016 Membership Meeting to be held on Tuesday January 12th at the Natural History Museum for a preview of planned 2016 dive events and activities. Join our LABUE Meetup Group dive community at www.Meetup.com/LABUEDIVERS/ to always be up-to-date on LABUE dives and activities.

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Dedicated to Expanding the Knowledge and Enjoyment of Scuba Diving among African Americans

LA FIESTA BRAVA

BY: STEPHEN SCRUGGS

The 2015 LABUE Club Cruise was a mix of great diving, pampered living and fine dining accompanied by old friends gathered from around the country. San Juan, P.R. proved to be a great location to begin and end another successful club trip.

In my case the end of one adventure was the beginning of another as I immediately departed San Juan for a small town in Mexico's central highlands called San Miguel De Allende. Located one hundred sixty-five miles from Mexico City and with no local airport, I was forced to fly into Leon from LAX followed by a one and a half hour road trip which added to the allure of this historic city. Considered to be the "prettiest town in Mexico", it is made up of buildings erected over two hundred years ago on narrow cobblestone streets. By law, the exteriors remain unchanged so you enter hotel

villas, art galleries, restaurants and clothing boutiques through wooden doors that belong in museums. My hotel was built in the 1600's and had a view overlooking the city that explained why artists and photographers from around the world are prowling at sunrise and sunset each day in search of the 'perfect light'.

The timing of the LABUE club trip and this trip to San Miguel De Allende coincided with the Mexican 'Night of the Dead' (Dia de Muertos) festivities which added even more color and allure to my visit. Just as I arrived, the town began its weeklong preparations for the celebration which actually takes place over three days, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Dia de Muertos is observed as a national holiday in Mexico somewhat similar to our Halloween here in the United States. The quiet town center

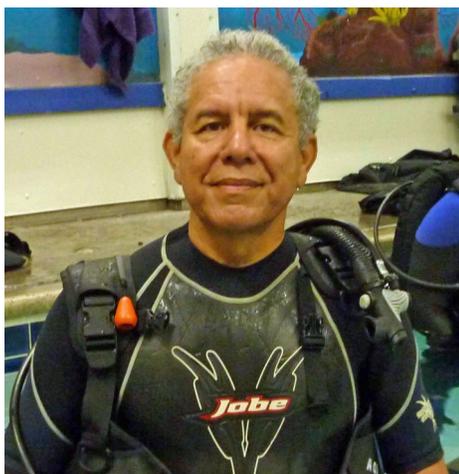
gradually grew in population from a few dozen people sitting in the quiet park when I arrived to a mass of thousands during the span of my visit. The culture of honoring the dead with colorful festivities is common in Mexico and the pageantry combined with the art and passion of the friendly people is an experience that will stay with me forever. Little did I know there was even more to come.

Amid all the ancient festivities, I saw what I thought was an antique poster for a bullfight. But the date for the bull fight read for that weekend! Up to now the only bullfight I've ever seen included Tyrone Power and Ava Gardner in a 1953 B&W movie, but the real thing has always been on my bucket list. I couldn't get to my concierge fast enough and after a little broken Spanish I was able to get a front row seat

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY: RICHARD RICE



It was truly an amazing LABUE Caribbean Diving and Cruise Ship Experience. On October 17th, 45 LABUE Members and friends gathered in San Juan, Puerto Rico for LABUE's 2015 Warm Water Dive Vacation. One of the largest LABUE trips in many years, it lived up to its title, "Best of the Caribbean" Warm Water Dive Vacation and Royal Caribbean International Cruise as we enjoyed 8 days/7 nights aboard Royal Caribbean's luxurious

Adventure of the Seas. We combined a cruise ship vacation with excellent diving at each of the ships five ports of call including St. Croix (USVI), St. Maarten, Antigua, St. Lucia, and Barbados.

Accommodations aboard the Adventure of the Seas were excellent with superb dining, entertainment featuring Las Vegas headliners, casino gambling, full service spa, and much more. In addition to plenty of available shipboard activities, participants enjoyed ample shopping opportunities on shore as well as island touring, snorkeling, beach horseback riding, zip lining and off road vehicle tours. This trip proved to be a great vacation bargain for everyone. In addition to the discounted stateroom pricing and economical dive package offered, participants were pleasantly surprised when LABUE Trip Coordinator, Randy Tillery, announced generous cabin credits of up to \$565 for each stateroom. These cabin credits were available for use to purchase

such shipboard extras as alcoholic drinks, spa treatments, tours, and excursions. They were also surprised with the professional group and individual photographs that each participant received as a gift from LABUE.

Notwithstanding the luxurious cruise ship accommodations and amenities, our goal was that this would be a serious SCUBA diving vacation. Weather and dive conditions were excellent throughout the trip as LABUE divers were able to experience a sample of 10 of the best dive sites in the Caribbean. Randy's dive coordinators including Eric Sheppard, Lori Atwater, Steve Scruggs, and Pam McField were assigned to research and coordinate directly with local island dive operators to arrange diving at the best dive sites on each of the islands we visited. As it turned out the best dive sites were not necessarily the closest to the cruise ship port or the ones promoted as a Royal Caribbean excursion. On St Croix, we traveled across the island to

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Christiansted which offered the best diving. On St Lucia, we spent over an hour on a long boat ride to the Pitons to experience the best dive sites. Our dives offered a diverse selection of dive sites including tropical reefs, wreck dives, walls and sea mounts, with numerous shark and turtle encounters. Highlights included diving Carlisle Bay in Barbados offering six easily accessible wrecks, including a Canadian freighter sunk by a German U-Boat during WWII; and an exciting unexpected "shark dive" in St Maarten providing a great photo/video opportunity. Many thanks to Randy and his team for a well researched, well planned, well executed, and very enjoyable diving and cruising vacation. Work is already underway to select and plan next year's warm water dive vacation.



As 2015 comes to a close I want to thank all of our members and friends for making this another successful year for LABUE through your participation and support. We are currently working on the planning for 2016's dive activities and events and welcome your recommendations and suggestions. We also need your continued help to maintain LABUE as one of the premier SCUBA diving clubs in Southern California. In addition to sharing the sport of SCUBA diving with others, we need help on all of our standing committees and your participation is the best way for you to have a direct impact on the current and future direction and success of the club. A list of the LABUE Committees and Chairperson Contact information is included in each LABUE News issue.

In addition, LABUE News Editor Debra Ewing is always looking for interesting stories and informative articles for publication in the LABUE News. You are invited to share your stories, knowledge, and experiences with us at labue@sbcglobal.net . We encourage you to support your dedicated LABUE Officers and Board of Directors with your active participation in LABUE. If you are interested in lending your labor, experience, or organizational skills to LABUE on any of our committees, your participation would be more than welcomed. If you would like to recommend an activity or event that would benefit the community, our members, or help fulfill our 2016 mission, please share your ideas it with me or one of the Board members. We value your recommendations. Give me a call or send me an email (labue@sbcglobal.net) to share your ideas and thoughts on how to make LABUE a better dive club and to let me know how you can help us in these efforts.

LA FIESTA BRAVA

Continued from page 2

to my first bullfight. And now bullfighting is no longer on my bucket list.

Bullfighting is not for the faint of heart. To put it bluntly, they provoke the bull to exhaustion with a red cape. At the same time they constantly stab the bull until it gets weak from blood loss. Then when the head tilts down from exhaustion at the perfect angle the matador thrusts a sword

through its heart. If you can get past the seemingly meaningless cruelty to the bull followed by its tortured blood drenched death and share in the local passion of the spectacle of bravery between a man and beast, you'll come back.

Don't forget to try the homemade sausage, mescal and grasshoppers with a Cuban cigar.

You need the cigar to catch the grasshoppers.

MEMBER'S CORNER:

A POEM

BY: STEPHEN SCRUGGS

Christmas Paradox

Ski-clad feet on snowcapped peaks,

Christmastime is here.

Sunburned feet on sandy beach,

Christmas time is near.

Blown off feet and cries of pain from soles we never hear;

While war torn victims line the roads and orphans scream in fear.

Happy shoppers crowd the stores, sore feet from one last sale.

While dying soldiers cry in pain in one last mournful wail

To deaf ears all around the world,

"Christmas time is here".



LABUE's 6TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY DINNER

LABUE will hold its sixth annual Holiday Dinner this year on Sunday, December 6, 2015 at Brownstone Bistro, located at 5047 West Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA. This affair has become the signature year end event for the dive club members, promising an evening of fun, food and fellowship. The tickets remain an inflation-beating \$30 per plate with a buffet of Soul/Caribbean cuisine to die for, plus salad and beverages.

The highlight of the evening will be the door prize give-away. LABUE collects a variety of desirable door prizes from a number of donors that include club members, dive shops and friends. It is not unusual for lucky recipients to leave the affair with gifts valued more than the ticket price. This promises to be another great opportunity for members and friends to gather at the beginning of the yuletide season to enjoy the companionship and camaraderie that sets this dive club apart from all the rest. Tickets go on sale on November 10, first-come, first served. It would be wise to order tickets right away, as there will only be tickets for sixty (60) diners and this affair always sells out. For additional information, contact me at doncosta1@msn.com.



BOAT DIVING?

If you decide to sign up for a boat dive and you want a LABUE dive buddy, please contact DonCosta Seawell at 909-593-1877 or doncosta1@msn.com with your trip details and he will convey that information to the club so that anyone who desires to join you will be aware.

2015 LABUE PHOTO CONTEST

BY: STEPHEN SCRUGGS

LABUE is now accepting entries for the 7th Annual LABUE Photo Contest. Voting for your favorite photos will again be conducted on-line for 2015 and will begin on Tuesday, December 1st. This year we are adding a 'Cellphone' category to the original 'Sealife', 'Diver', and 'Surface' categories. 'Sealife' incorporates all life native to underwater. 'Diver' shots are all photographs taken underwater where a diver or divers are the primary or secondary focus. 'Surface' photographs are all photographs taken above water. 'Cellphone' photographs are any scenes including selfies, captured with your cellphones presumably above water. Last year an incredible underwater photograph was taken outside the glass at the Long Beach Aquarium with a cellphone which inspired this new category. Photographers may submit up to three entries per category for on-line voting.

Because it is sometimes difficult to choose from among the many excellent photos submitted, members will be allowed to vote for their three favorite photos in each category. We will count the votes and the highest number of votes is first place, the next highest second place, and the next third place. We will award prize raffle tickets to the first, second and third place winners in each photo category. The number of tickets an individual receives will be based on how the individual placed. The person coming in first place will receive five raffle tickets, the person coming in second place will receive three raffle tickets, and the person coming in third place will receive one ticket. Some of the valuable raffle prizes available for the winners to choose from last year include a professional digital photo equipment backpack, LABUE apparel, Oceans coffee table book and a digital photo frame. All winning photographs will be displayed on the LABUE website and in a LABUE News feature article on the contest. In addition, every-

one submitting at least one photograph for the contest will receive one ticket for a special prize raffle.

The LABUE Photo Contest is open to members and non-members; however, photographs submitted by non-members must be taken at LABUE sponsored events, dive activities, or dive vacations. Photos submitted by members are not limited to those taken at LABUE events or activities. All submitted photos must be the property of the person submitting the photo. All photographs submitted must be in a JPEG photo format and may be edited, such as cropping and color correction with the use of digital photo editing programs; however, they may not be manipulated, such as by adding or deleting subject matter, or by digitally correcting specific flaws in photographs by the use of image healing tools using a photo editing program. Any photographs which do not fall within the guidelines presented will not be included in the voting.

Show off your photographic skills for a chance at winning some great prizes by submitting your best photos to scruggs2424@bellsouth.net before midnight December 1st. Voting will begin on January 1st 2016. Thanks for supporting LABUE.

HAVE YOU CHECKED OUT LABUE ON FACEBOOK LATELY?

Check us out at

www.facebook.com/LABUEDIVERS and you might be surprised. LABUE Facebook Administrator Stacy Wade and LABUE members have been busy posting making LABUE's Facebook page an exciting source of amazing dive related videos, beautiful photos, dive destination reviews, informative articles, dive equipment evaluations, and helpful SCUBA diving tips. Check it out, you won't be disappointed. Feel free to post your comments.



CHECK OUT THE LABUE STORE

**Need
Christmas
gift ideas?**



Look great on the boat or beach with official LABUE apparel including
T-shirts, Polo Shirts, and Baseball Caps.

T-shirts and Baseball Caps are in stock and are available in most sizes at \$20 each.

Check out the LABUE Store at www.labue.org to place your
order, or you may purchase items at the monthly membership meeting.

NEWSLETTER ADS

LABUE is offering newsletter ads for nominal prices. The price structure is as follows:

- \$15 for a quarter page ad (per month);
- \$20 for a half page ad (per month);
- \$30 for a full page ad (per month).

If you're interested in purchasing an ad, please contact Debora Ewing at (310) 284-4556.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Reminder: Please e-mail your photos for the "Photo of the Month" contest. You just may see your photo on the cover of an upcoming edition of the LABUE News! Please e-mail photos for consideration to dewing@proskauer.com.



UPCOMING EVENTS 2015

- December 6, 2015 -- Holiday Dinner
- January 12, 2016 -- LABUE General Membership Meeting - 7:00 PM
- January 26, 2016 -- LABUE Board Meeting
- February 9, 2016 -- LABUE General Membership Meeting - 7:00 PM
- February 23, 2016 -- LABUE Board Meeting



BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEES

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Richard Rice
(323) 299-3798

Vice President

Tina Houston
(213) 359-2131

Treasurer

DonCosta Seawell
(909) 593-1877

Secretary

Patricia Williams
(619) 459-0944

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(310) 387-8193

Steve Scruggs
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Joe Windolph
(818) 209-2504

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Membership
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(213) 359-2131

Ways & Means
Debora Ewing
(310) 284-4556

Beach Dive
Joe Windolph
(818) 209-2504

Boat Dive
DonCosta Seawell
(909) 593-1877

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(213) 359-2131

Dive Training & Safety
George Linares (Interim)

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Francois Desamours
(703) 463-6857

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Steve Scruggs
(310) 795-0851

Program Committee
Keenon Adamson

Technical Dive Committee
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Youth Committee
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(818) 209-2504

Newsletter Staff:
Richard Rice - Publisher
Debora Ewing - Editor
(310) 284-4556
Sharlene Johnson -
Production Manager
Staff Writers -
Steve Scruggs
Dangil Jones

Meetings

The LABUE meetings are held the second Tuesday of every Month at 7:00 PM in the Times Mirror Room at the Natural History Museum in Los Angeles.

NEW MEETING LOCATION!

Due to construction in the museum, we will be meeting in the Education Classroom on the 2nd floor. See the attached map for directions from the parking lot.

- Members should park at the bottom of the ramp leading to our below ground level of the car park.
- There is a green wall at the bottom of the ramp. On the right side of the wall is a door. Go through the door. The outside area of our cafeteria will be on the right.
- Continue straight ahead. Walk by the glass entrance pavilion on the ground level, and turn right at the far edge of the pavilion. There is a ground level door going into the museum. Go in.
- The hallway has 2 elevators on the left. Take either one to the 2nd floor.
- Turn right after you get out of the elevator.
- Turn right at the T-intersection. The Dino lab is on the left.
- Go through the double doors into the Education department and walk straight ahead.
- The door to the Education Classroom will be on your left.



Contact Us:

PO Box 90069, Los Angeles, CA 90009
Phone/Fax: (323) 299-3798
Email: info@labue.org
Web Site: www.labue.org

In consideration to the many LABUE members who are unable to download large files on their computer, we will be limiting the number of photographs included in our newsletter. To accommodate our many excellent photographers, we will begin posting additional photographs on the LABUE website for your viewing pleasure.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

For the Year 2016

General Information:

Name: _____ Birthdate: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Fax: _____ Referred By: _____

E-Mail: _____

Emergency Contact Name and Phone Number: _____

Certification Information:

Year First Certified: _____ No. of Dives: _____

Date of Last Dive: _____ Warm Water Beach Boat

Certification Agency: _____

Diving Preferences: Beach Dives Boat Dives Warm Water Dives

Membership Category:

Amount: \$30.00 for Individual Membership New Renewal

\$45.00 for Family Membership New Renewal

\$300.00 for Lifetime Individual \$450.00 for Lifetime Family

Please make checks payable to: "Los Angeles Black Underwater Explorers" or "LABUE"

WAIVER

I _____, hereby apply for membership in the Los Angeles Black Underwater Explorers (LABUE) and agree to abide by all club rules. I acknowledge that I will be voluntarily participating in LABUE events with full knowledge of the potential risks of scuba diving and diving related activities. In consideration of your acceptance of this application and my membership in LABUE, I agree to assume all risks of bodily injury, death or property damage, arising out of or in connection with my participation in LABUE activities. I also agree to release, indemnify and hold harmless LABUE and its members and officers from any and all liability arising out of or in connection with my participation in LABUE activities. I further agree that this release and indemnification is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by the laws of the State of California. I have carefully read this release and fully understand its contents. I sign this release of my own free will and with full knowledge of its significance.

Signature: _____ Date: _____