

LABUE NEWS

Los Angeles Black Underwater Explorers



VOLUME 15, ISSUE 2
FEBRUARY 2010

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Photographer: Quinal Johnson
Camera: Olympus Stylus 1030 SW, without housing, good up to 35 feet
Film: Digital
Location: NABS trip to Bonaire Nov - 2009
Title: "Turtle"

CHAMBER EVENING

BY SHARLENE JOHNSON

Every year Ken Curtis heads up a massive fundraising event to support the Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber. The day and evening is packed with activities to raise money to supplement the operations of the Chamber. LABUE has supported the Chamber Evening function for several years. The affair, held at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach features a catered dinner, nighttime admission to the aquarium and its exhibits, an extensive raffle, and an opportunity to socialize with friends and dive buddies. Yearly, LABUE members travel to many exotic locations to dive. We depend on the local

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

THE PHILIPPINES

BY RANDY TILLERY

For my wife (Cheryl) and I, the Philippine experience began with our disembark into the Manila airport with the sign, "Welcome to Manila". Subsequent to the 13 hour flight, we were both excited because our adventure had begun. I remember standing in the terminal with Bob Simmons (both of us over 6 feet tall) and easily overlooked the general population who were all under 5 foot 9 inches. (That's men and women). I felt so...tall for the first time. After navigating the airport our group was met by our guide who directed us from there. The two and a half hour bus ride to the next leg of our venture was pleasant and easy. The luxury bus provided for panoramic viewing of the city of Manila and also

"The luxury bus provided for panoramic viewing of the city of Manila and also comfortable sleeping."



comfortable sleeping. (Just don't sit next to the toilet!) When we arrived at the coastline for our third and final leg of transportation to the island, the ocean was a beautiful and welcome sight. The uniqueness of the boat (think Hawaii 5-0) and the splendor of the islands distracted me from the hour long boat ride to Puerto Galera.

Upon our arrival to the Atlantis resort, I remember walking as a group down a stretch of the beach. The natives and tourists looked at us with a welcoming but curious spirit. It was obvious, "LABUE was in the house".

During our orientation at the resort, all of us received a complimentary

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BENT POETS' SOCIETY*

Poems of love by Steve Scruggs



Shy Love

Silent thoughts that draw me near.
Unspoken words I'll never hear
speak of love that burns within.
A voice that fails me once again.
Dying love that never lived.
A giving heart that's yet to give.
Where she is
I long to go.
Who she is
I long to know.

Lonely Heart

The secret held within her heart is yet to be revealed.
The love I hold for her alone is yet for her to feel.
Love lost in distant time gone by leave wounds as yet to heal.
Two hearts in muted silence stand alone forever still.

***Notice to Members:** "The Bent Poet Society" column is open to the entire membership. If you would like to have your poetry considered for publication in an upcoming issue of the *LABUE News*, please e-mail the poem or poems to the Editor at dewing@proskauer.com



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY RICHARD RICE



As I write this message, I am still coming to terms with the heartbreaking images of the devastating January earthquake in Haiti. The tragic loss of life and massive destruction are beyond belief for an island nation that has a long history of poverty and suffering.

News report images have been horrific. In

addition to the images of injury and death, photos of the destruction of the once-impressive gleaming white, once-impressive, Presidential Palace in Port-au-Prince were particularly disturbing to me. The Presidential Palace was my first enduring image of Haiti as I peered out the window of the plane, landing in Port-au-

Prince with Bob Simmons in 1971 while on our way to vacation in Jamaica. At the time, I was a young man with little international travel experience and only vaguely aware of the poverty and turmoil that existed in Haiti under the longstanding repressive political regime of that era. In fact, I was unaware and generally

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THE PHILIPPINES

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neck & shoulder massage along with a special fruit "elixir" to welcome us to the Atlantis Resort. I would describe the hotel as a quaint, adobe-style resort which was cozy, comfortable, exotic, and only steps from the beach. The staff had learned everyone's name and face by the end of the second day. That was impressive. The choices of foods were varied and plentiful. Aside from the regular buffets during breakfast, lunch and dinner, they also provided fixed menus and daily specials that were cooked to order. The fresh fruits, fish, and endless Mongolian beef was needless to say delicious and filling. On several occasions, we bought seafood from the nearby town and they cooked it for us with no questions asked except for, "How do you want it cooked?" That's what I'm "talking" about.

The dive operations were fun, organized and timely conducted. There were three dives a day if you so chose. Admittedly, Cheryl and I started at three and then cut back to two a day. Most of us used 3mm dive suits and/or shorties. The water felt like 75 degrees. The visibility was around 30-40 feet. As we were previously told, the attractions of diving in the Philippines were the macro sized marine life. I saw so many nudibranchs and coral gardens of varying colors, it was beautiful. I learned a lot about macro photography also. Unless you have the right lighting system for your underwater camera, you won't be able to reproduce the extraordinary colors that are there. In addition to the little stuff, I saw an uncountable variety of clownfish and some huge giant clams. Have you ever seen the film that covers

their open mouths, up close? It was interesting. The divemasters provided us with thorough pre-dive briefings and allowed plenty of time for questions before each dive. Cheryl and I were teamed up with Eric Shepard, Pam McField and Tina Houston for our dives. We had a lot of laughs and shared some great underwater experiences. The whole dive experience was wonderful and educational.

Aside from the scuba diving, a group of us went on a tour to the town of Puerto Galera and into the jungles beyond. For those who have never seen it, Puerto Galera looks a little like Rosarito, Mexico. As a part of the tour, we were transported by a small taxi/bus. Then for another segment, we traveled by oxen and wooden cart. (rocky experience) We ventured far into a jungle of thick vegetation and lush tropical trees. Villages were made up of huts and shacks and the children didn't wear shoes. Villagers had to carry water and food for miles back to their homes. (I'm exaggerating) We brought cookies and treats with us for the kids. I do believe the children were appreciative. A very humbling experience.

A surefire hit with everyone on the trip were the inexpensive massages you could get either at the resort or just outside of it. Costing a mere 15 to 30 dollars per 90 minute message, well let me tell you, people were getting messages every day and sometimes twice a day. Sooo relaxing.

Another highlight from the trip was celebrating Clifton Williams' and Rhonda Willis' birthdays. We threw-down in the resort's dining area. Like the saying goes, "There ain't

no party like a west coast party" and as usual, LABUE turned it out! I was told by the Atlantis resort staff that they had never seen so skillful and creative dancing of such epic proportion. Or something like that. It was a lot of fun.

Many of you know, due to adverse weather conditions we had to depart earlier than scheduled however, I thought the trip was great. I think my wife thought it was great and we look forward to diving in Asia again.



COZUMEL UPDATE

BY BOB SIMMONS
323 292-8960

Happy New Year to everyone!!!

Deposits for our upcoming club trip to Cozumel, Mexico are coming in at a consistent pace. We have now reached the minimum number of individuals required to secure the package prices originally quoted. In fact, the prices could be further reduced (leading to refunds to participants) as we get additional deposits. Everyone will be staying at the Fiesta Americana Hotel and will enjoy the many amenities of this excellent hotel. Be sure to visit the hotel's website: www.fiestaamericanahotel.com for a complete listing of the hotel's features. About half of the 15 rooms being held for our trip have been reserved. That means that there are still rooms remaining for those of you interested in joining us for another in a long line of successful LABUE trips.

From April 21-28, LABUE will be enjoying this world class dive destination with its spectacular walls, outstanding reefs, wide variety of sea life and warm, beautiful sparkling waters with visibility frequently exceeding 100' on a typical day.

It is no wonder that so many divers

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"Aside from scuba diving, a group of us went on a tour to the town of Puerto Galera and into the jungles beyond."

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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unconcerned about the conditions and lives of people in most parts of the world that I would eventually visit in the years ahead of me. In later years, I enjoyed relaxing and diving in Haiti while on a cruise ship vacation, now aware of and concerned about the continuing political, social, and economic problems faced by Haiti, the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere.

As I traveled more and grew older, I became more sensitive to the lives of those around me while enjoying the comfort of resort hotels and villas in these tropical locations. I eventually made it a point to learn more about the history, politics, and ongoing challenges of people who live in these places that I enjoy so much. In doing so, it became impossible for me to ignore their lives and struggles.

A month after returning from an exciting sailing trip and diving in Tonga and Fiji in 1992, I read in the LA Times that a typhoon had hit Fiji causing massive destruction that included some of the small islands and villages we had visited, disrupting the lives of many of the new island friends I had met just a month before.

While on a sailing and diving vacation in the Southern Caribbean, we enjoyed visiting the small island of Montserrat. In 1997, I learned that the island's volcano violently erupted, resulting in many deaths and destroying the capital city of Plymouth, burying it in volcanic ash, and forcing two thirds of the islands population to evacuate and permanently relocate abroad. As I flew over Montserrat in 2007 on my way to Antigua, I could see that the volcano was still very active and that much of the island was barren and only sparsely populated. Large por-

tions of Montserrat remain uninhabitable. The lives of Montserrat's people have been changed forever.

LABUE members are fortunate to be able to travel on dive vacations to some of the most beautiful and exotic destinations in the world. In doing so, we are sometimes witness to the difficult lives of the local people who befriend us, do their best to make us feel welcome, and work to make our dive vacations enjoyable. We have seen terrible poverty in places such as Jamaica, Mexico, Belize, Dominica, and the Philippines. We have become aware of the tragic history and current plight of the Aborigines in Australia, the Carib Indians in Dominica, the Garifuna in Belize, and the Negritos in the Philippines.

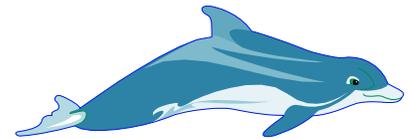
LABUE members have found that we can still enjoy LABUE dive vacations while making our trips educational, enlightening, and more meaningful by making personal connections with the local people we meet and helping them when we can.

LABUE members contribute to local economies with our purchases from local vendors, artists, and craftsmen; such as we have done in the Caribbean and as we did in Australia by steering LABUE members to the only Aborigine-owned art and crafts gallery we could find in Cairns. LABUE organized to donate school supplies to the local village during our 2004 LABUE dive trip to Fiji. LABUE members always makes it a point to give generous tips to dive operator local staff and hotel workers wherever we go, in hopes of making their harsh lives a little easier.

When tragedy strikes in places such as in Haiti, we cannot turn our backs. I am encouraging all LABUE members to stay informed and provide any support they can to the

people of Haiti. In future LABUE Newsletter issues, we will try to let ABUE members know how they can help by providing information on Haitian earthquake relief organizations, and by identifying other ways we can help in this international effort. Our thoughts and prayers should remain with the people of Haiti in the months and years to come.

Give me a call or send me an email (ricere2004@yahoo.com) to share your thoughts and ideas.



MEMBER'S CORNER:

WHO KNEW

BY BETTYE AND GEORGE LINARES

Before either of us knew one another existed, we both have had a love for the ocean and California beaches. We've come to celebrate this appreciation by becoming certified in the 1990s and taking it further on to an instruction level (George). Now the best reward of this celebration is training someone else who also has a love for the sea and seeing them become more confident in their diving skills. Since becoming a "team" in 1999, we have enjoyed some wonderful diving vacations together and with LABUE: Cozumel, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Grand Cayman, Curacao, Bonaire, Dominica and Barbados. We look forward to even more dive trips ahead.



COZUMEL UPDATE

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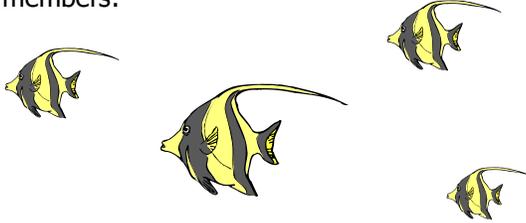
return time after time to this exciting and very affordable dive destination. Many of our group will also be diving the Cenotes on our mid-week off day and will experience exciting cavern diving.

The \$798 package rate includes 7 nights double occupancy at The Fiesta Americana Hotel, 5 days of 2 tank dives, unlimited hotel shore diving, airport transfers, and taxes. Airfare is not included. Send in your registration and \$400 non-refundable deposit today and be a part of another great LABUE club vacation.

LIFETIME MEMBERS

LABUE would like to recognize the following lifetime members:

- Quinal Johnson
- Sonny Hill
- Jay Morgan
- Lori Morrish
- Christopher Ricks



CHAMBER EVENING

Continued from front page

hyperbaric chamber in case we have a dive emergency. There are divers and community members at those locations that support their chambers. This is our opportunity to support our chamber in return. This year Chamber Evening will be held on Wednesday, May 5, 2010. The ticket cost is expected to average around \$95, which includes a sit-down dinner with desert, 2 non-alcoholic beverage coupons, raffle tickets, and full admission to all of the aquarium attractions. Please e-mail me for additional information and to make your reservation at prclyn@sbcglobal.net.

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.

Directions

The Natural History Museum is located in Exposition Park, at 900 Exposition Boulevard between Vermont Avenue and Figueroa Street.

Due to Metro line work on Exposition Blvd., and museum construction on the Exposition side of the Museum, the Museum offers some helpful tips for driving to minimize your inconvenience:

From the 110 (Harbor) Freeway, take the Martin Luther King Boulevard exit and head west towards Vermont Avenue. Turn right (north) on Menlo Avenue. Make a left into Exposition Park Lot 3.

Please visit the Museum website for more information at www.nhm.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS 2010

- February 6 -- Beach Dive at White's Point, San Pedro—2PM dive brief
- February 9 -- LABUE's Meeting of the General Membership at the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History
- February 23 -- LABUE's Meeting of the Board of Directors and Directors-at-Large (place to be determined)
- March 7 -- Beach Dive at Fisherman's Cove, Laguna Beach (time TBD)

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HOW ARE WE DOING? We would love to hear your comments, critiques or suggestions. Please e-mail Debora Ewing at the following e-mail address and your voice will be heard: dewing@proskauer.com

PO BOX 90069, LOS ANGELES, CA 90009
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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

For the Year _____

General Information

Name: _____ Birthdate: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____
Fax: _____ E-Mail: _____
Referred By: _____
Emergency Contact Name: _____ Phone No. _____

Certification Information:

Year First Certified: _____ No. of Dives _____ Date of Last Dive: _____ Warm Water Beach Boat
Agency Certification

Diving Preferences: Beach Dives Boat Dives Warm Water Dives
Amount: \$ 30.00 Individual Membership New Renewal
\$ 45.00 Family Membership New Renewal
\$ 300.00 Lifetime Individual
\$ 450.00 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 dangers 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, defend and hold harmless LABUE and their members and officers, from any 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 with full knowledge of its significance.

Signature: _____ Date: _____