

LABUE NEWS

Los Angeles Black Underwater Explorers

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ANOTHER GREAT YEAR !!!



Soon 2008 will be history and all that will be left are the memories. Despite these tough financial times which are forcing members to make very difficult choices, the regular club programs continued as usual. The **Beach Dive Program** was once again the flagship of regular diving, as dives were planned every month, rain or shine. Debora Ewing, chairperson of the Beach Dive committee comments that with members having less discretionary income these days, beach diving represents an economical way to enjoy diving and not break the bank in the process. The **Discover Scuba Program** had another banner year. Through the combined efforts of many club members and the generosity of Pacific Wilderness, Discover Scuba continued to reach out to new potential divers. Once again, due to high demand, two sessions were again scheduled in 2008. George and Bettye Linares deserve much of the credit for making the program so successful and deserve special recognition for their efforts. Also many club members (too numerous to name here) have regularly contributed their time both in and out of the water to help with the logistics. New this year, LABUE participated in the Compton Air Fair, an annual event designed to expose community residents to sporting activities not usually associated with minority individuals. In addition to the Black Aviators Association and 4-Seasons West Ski and Snow Board Club, LABUE set up an attractive display and was very involved in discussing scuba diving to several interested attendees. Our club trip to Belize was another success both from a diving and a social standpoint. Next year's trip to The Philippines will certainly continue the trend of visiting exciting dive locations. When all is said and done, LABUE is proud of its accomplishments in 2008 and looks forward to an even better 2009.

President's Message By Bob Simmons

It is that time of year again when everyone reflects back on 2008 and takes a look at what happened. This past year will certainly be remembered for the exciting and historical presidential campaign and election we all just experienced. The electricity was truly in the air more than I can ever remember. Prior to 2008, I would never have envisioned waiting almost two hours to vote and not complaining about it. On the other hand, the economy has been unforgiving on so many people. It is hard to talk about scuba diving when so many people have lost their jobs and are concerned about far more basic activities. This past year will truly be remembered and defined by these two huge events. Through it all, though, LABUE has continued to function and offer members an escape from the realities of day to day living. Even though boat dive prices have exploded, the club was fortunate to fill up both of its Charters this year. The trip to Be-

lize was both fun and memorable. As 2009 approaches, we all have a lot to look forward to and a lot to be thankful for. What is important for us to **recognize** how much we should actually be thankful for. Everyone's situation is different but, no matter how tough things may seem, there is always someone, somewhere who would gladly change places with you. I wish all of you a great Holiday season and thank you for your support this past year. Be safe and have a very **MERRY CHRISTMAS** and a **HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!**

Bob Simmons



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

Beach Dives by Debora Ewing

The next beach dive will take place at Redondo Beach in Veterans Park on Sunday, January 4, 2009, at 8:00 a.m. The Redondo Beach dive site is for all skill levels. There are restrooms and showers onsite and plenty of metered parking (quarters only). The dive master will be George Linares and he plans to give the dive briefing promptly at 8:00 a.m. This site is excellent for practicing underwater navigation and for the more advanced divers there is a submarine canyon begging to be explored. After the diving the group usually goes to a local eatery for breakfast or lunch. The Beach Dive program has become very successful and is always well attended. Be a part of the first dive in 2009. If you're interested in joining the us for a fun morning of diving, please contact me at (909) 240-7022.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<u>President</u> Robert Simmons (323) 292-8960	<u>Vice President</u> Francois Desamours (703) 722-2142
<u>Treasurer</u> Richard Rice (323) 299-3798	<u>Secretary</u> Debora Ewing (310) 284-4556
Sharlene Johnson (310) 915-3931	DonCosta Seawell (909) 953-1877

COMMITTEES

<u>Membership</u> Bettye Linares (661) 946-1516	<u>Ways & Means</u> Debora Ewing (310) 284-4556
<u>Beach Dive</u> Debora Ewing (310) 284-4556	<u>Boat Dive</u> Shannon Tanner (818) 992-7902
<u>Dive Training & Safety</u>	<u>Publicity & Internet</u> Francois Desamours (703) 722-2142

Phone: (323) 292-8960
 Fax: (310) 337-1542
 Email: info@labue.org
 Web Site: www.labue.org

Next Meeting

The next LABUE General Membership Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 9, 2008, at the Museum of Natural History on Exposition Blvd across from USC. This will be a special Holiday social gathering with the regular agenda being replaced with gift exchanges, door prizes, mingling and good food. The highlight of the evening will be the Steal-A-Gift activity (see the adjacent article). In this fun challenge, one soon finds that it is not who laughs first that always has the last laugh. In addition, several door prizes will also be given away free during the evening to lucky attendees. A special food fare has been ordered from Simply Wholesome Restaurant to make sure that everyone has tasty tidbits to enjoy during the festivities. This 'meeting' is always a lot of fun and reminds us all of how much we enjoy each other's company. On this occasion, the club members are the stars of the show. The fun will begin at 7:00pm.

The Philippines

Plans are well underway for LABUE's 2009 dive trip to The Philippine Islands. From October 24-31, LABUE members and friends will enjoy diving in one of the world's great dive destinations. The Atlantis Puerto Galera Resort is an all-inclusive resort set directly on a reef featuring an outstanding array of sea life. Most divers have seen the amazingly colorful photos of rarely viewed sea animals but have never had the opportunity of actually seeing these critters up close and personal. Diving The Philippines guarantees that sightings of a wide variety of both large and small species will happen on every dive. Each dive will offer something very different and unusual. The water will be warm and clear with outstanding visibility. Since the dive sites are close to the resort, the boats return to the Atlantis for their surface intervals, offering greater flexibility in deciding which dives to schedule. The food is excellent and each meal offers a variety of choices. The resort also has a top level spa and is the center of a host of non-diving related activities. The package includes transfers from the airport in Manila, all meals and 4 dives per day. Airfare from the departing US city is not included in the price, which starts at \$1350 per diver, double occupancy. A non-refundable deposit of \$400 will secure a reservation for what is a fantastic opportunity.

Additionally, for those interested in exploring this part of the world, a post trip visit to Hong Kong, China is also being arranged. This optional excursion will take advantage of the group's stopover in Hong Kong to maximize the exposure to this very exciting city with its very different culture. Contact Bob Simmons at 323 292-8960 for additional information and to make trip reservations.

Steal A Gift

Last year the club had a 'Steal A Gift' activity during its Christmas meeting. It was so much fun and so well received, that it has been decided to repeat everything this year. The 'Steal A Gift' will again be held at the club meeting in December. Basically, all participants are asked to bring a gift costing in the \$25-\$30 price range. One by one, the gifts are selected and opened and then each participant is allowed to 'steal' a desired gift currently being held by someone else. Several rounds of 'stealing' are conducted before the final round. The gift each participant has in his possession at the conclusion of the game is his to keep. This a fun game and the more participants there are, the more fun everyone has. Get your gift, wrap it, and bring it to the December meeting.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

SPOTLIGHT

By Debora Ewing

INTERVIEW OF CHARLES HEATH

1. **What Influenced you to get into diving?** The first time I went on a vacation to the Grand Cayman Island with my mom I was 18 years old. I went out on a boat to go snorkeling and found myself to be one of two snorkelers on the boat; the others were scuba divers. From the moment I watched them descend into a cavern and disappear I was intrigued.
2. **What do you enjoy most about LABUE?** The camaraderie. **How so?** The level of excitement felt by those going on the trips. We enjoy each other's company not only while diving but we also play dominoes, card games, chess and I also enjoy the laughs we share.
3. **Is there anything you would like LABUE to offer more of?** I would really like to see the formal dinner dance return; or perhaps another themed dance. **Would you be willing to help put the event on?** Absolutely!
4. **What is your most memorable dive?** When I saw the giant eel in Cabo San Lucas. This moray eel was about 30 feet long.
5. **What is your occupation away from diving?** Health Services Information Technology which is Hospital Systems. **How did you get into this field?** I was working as an analyst administrating our health plan overseeing the private partners that were contracted with the primary care services. In working with the IT folks on reports was a entry into that shop.
6. **If you could leave California tomorrow to live anywhere in the world, where would that place be?** I would go back to Seattle.
7. **What other hobbies do you enjoy?** Motorcycle riding, snowboarding, sailing and working out.
8. **What famous person do people tell you that you favor most?** Kareem Abdul Jabar.
9. **What is your favorite food?** Sushi.
10. **Where were you born?** Seattle, Washington.
11. **Tell me something that LABUE's membership would be surprised to know about you.** I am an artist. I have the natural ability to draw quite well.

