

LABUE NEWS

Los Angeles Black Underwater Explorers

January 2007

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AUSTRALIA LIVE ABOARD 2007

Lucky LABUE members are making plans to be a part of the most ambitious and promising club dive trip in its 11 year history. The club has chartered the **entire** Spirit of Freedom Live Aboard vessel for a 5 day-4 night adventure to the Great Barrier Reef and the Coral Sea, two of the world's greatest diving icons in Australia. The trip officially opened on December 11 and 16 members have submitted deposits to date. Anyone interested in hearing what all the excitement is about should plan to attend the next General Club Meeting on Tuesday, January 9. Ernie Arellano, owner of Scuba Travel Ventures and an expert in dive travel to Australia and the South Pacific, will be the speaker. His topic will be LABUE's upcoming trip aboard the Spirit of Freedom Live Aboard from October 25-29, 2007.

Ernie will offer visual aids illustrating the many facets of the trip and just why it figures to be the dive trip of a lifetime. He will also be available to answer questions about the boat and the many spectacular dive sights LABUE will visit. Since so much time is spent on the vessel, Ernie will devote time to clearly conveying what makes the Spirit so special and why it will be a pleasure to enjoy when not diving. He can comment on the types of cabins, the food, the dive deck setup and the lounge areas available for LABUE's exclusive use. Anyone who has dived with LABUE on any of the past club charters knows how much fun everyone has with each other, especially when the club has the entire boat. This live aboard to such an exotic location will multiply the excitement and fun many times over. In addition, some members will be taking part in pre- and post-trips to Fiji and sightseeing other parts of Australia.

The meeting will be held at the Museum of Natural History on Exposition Blvd across from USC and will begin at 7pm. Plan now to attend and see what an Australian Live Aboard is all about.



President's Message

Happy New Year. I hope that 2007 brings joy, happiness and prosperity to you and your families.

As everyone knows by now, our 2007 annual club trip will be to the Great Barrier Reef and Coral Sea off the coast of Australia. We have chartered the entire Spirit of Freedom luxury live aboard from October 25-29 and will have 4 days of thrilling diving! Aggressive divers will be able to get in 16 dives. Several articles in this issue of LABUE news have been dedicated to providing information regarding the trip to interested members. Because we will be traveling such a long distance, many participants will be adding extra days to make the trip really special. A few members will be stopping off in **Fiji** prior to continuing on to Australia, taking advantage of the fact that our package allows us to add 3 days of world class diving in Fiji without an increase in airfare!

The 4 nights at the hotel in Fiji will be extra. Some members will also be taking a few extra days exploring Australia itself. From kangaroos and Kuala Bears to the Aboriginal population, our trip will offer an opportunity to experience a culture very different from our own. All extensions will efficiently use our downtime without increasing the airfare.

Participation in either of these add-ons is **strictly optional** and not a requirement of being on the live aboard. If you want to join us, don't hesitate because space is running out. More info to come...

Bob Simmons



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

Beach Dive by Debora Ewing

On Sunday, February 4 LABUE will dive Wood's Cove (Laguna). I plan to give the dive briefing at 8:00 a.m. Last year the conditions were so good that some of the divers went back the following week to dive the same site, myself included. This site features a very good underwater terrain with lots of life. From Coast Highway turn toward the beach on Diamond Street. Parking is very limited. There are no restroom facilities or showers. With beach diving you never know what to expect. However, Woods Cove has consistently been an enjoyable site through the years and I'm looking forward to this year's dive. I'm hoping you can join me. If you plan to attend, please call me at (909) 240-7022 so that I can add your name to the list of divers. I will send out reminder e-mails of the dive next month.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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COMMITTEES

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Boat Dive Activity by Steve Scruggs

Happy New Year from the LABUE Boat Dive Committee. It's that time of year when we are reminded of our main reason for being a member of LABUE and that is to provide us with opportunities to participate in the sport of SCUBA diving. Practice leads to proficiency insuring sharper skills and safer and more enjoyable dives trips. Whether you are a local cold-water diver or a warm-water traveler, regular dives are essential to enjoying the sport safely.

Since I retired a couple of months ago, I have move to Knoxville, Tennessee and am no longer on the Board or Chairman of the Boat Dive Committee. Shannon Tanner replaced me on the Board and is also the new LABUE Boat Dive Committee Chairperson. The 2007 boat dive schedule will be published by February and filled with opportunities to grab a buddy and dive. The first dive will be the annual club charter Easter Egg dive on March 24th onboard the Bottom Scratcher dive boat out of Queen's Wharf in Long Beach with our friends at Pacific Wilderness Dive Shop in San Pedro. And yes, I'll see you there.



GRAND CAYMAN 2006



UTILA, HONDURAS 2002

Live Aboard Pricing

The prices for the live aboard portion of the club trip to Australia have been established. The Spirit of Freedom has 9 quality cabins which are each designed to house 2 individuals. There are 2 additional cabins which require 4 individuals each and are configured in a bunk style format. These 2 cabins are not available. Participants will be allowed to select their cabin in the same order in which their deposits were received. A list of those members whom have submitted deposits to date is provided in another article in this newsletter. It is recommended that all attendees review: www.Spiritoffreedom.com.au, the website for the Spirit of Freedom. The following prices are based on double occupancy and include a commemorative Trip T-Shirt and a \$40 donation to LABUE. They are also discounted to reflect the fact that we have already exceeded the 10 travelers required for the initial group discount. Should the group reach 20 travelers, there will be another deduction. The 1 Ocean View (OV) deluxe cabin is priced at \$1715 per person. The 2 OV Std cabins are priced at \$1550 per person. The 6 DBL/Twin cabins are priced at \$1383 per person. These prices are for the boat only and do not include gratuities, country departure taxes, marine park fee, dive equipment, Nitrox, and incidental expenses. A \$600 non refundable deposit is required to confirm a reservation on the boat. As with all LABUE trips, members have the option of making their own air arrangements. For those who request LABUE to make their air arrangements, the basic rate from LAX to Cairns Australia is currently approximately \$1500 per person including all taxes and fees. Changes in the price of oil could cause these prices to change, at the discretion of Air Pacific Airline. LABUE is finalizing the arrangements for a pre trip to Fiji and a post trip within Australia, with no increase in airfare. The only required portion of the trip is the live aboard. Pre and post trips are entirely optional. Additional information concerning the add-ons will be available soon. Attendees must sign the Travel Agreement which also contains additional details.

Calendar of Events

Australia Reservation Lists

The following individuals have submitted deposits for the 2007 annual club trip on the Spirit Of Freedom Live Aboard to Australia (in order of priority):

- Bob Simmons
- Artie Williams
- Debora Ewing
- Charles Heath
- Francois Desamours
- Eric Shepard
- Bob Dansby
- David Robinson
- Johannes Kepler
- Richard Rice
- Sharlene Johnson
- Randy Tillery
- Don Costa Seawell
- Aklia Chin
- Kenneth Trapp
- Clifton Williams

There is still time and space for a few more members to sign up.

JANUARY

- 9 7:00 PM – General Meeting
- 23 6:30 PM – Board Meeting

January 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

FEBRUARY

- 4 Beach Dive
- 13 7:00 PM – General Meeting
- 27 6:30 PM – Board Meeting

February 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

March 2007

MARCH

- 3 Beach Dive
- 13 7:00PM--General Meeting
- 24 Easter Egg Charter Dive
- 27 6:30PM-Board Meeting

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Steal A Gift Success

The recent Steal A Gift game held at our December Christmas meeting was a tremendous success. Thanks to all who participated. A special thanks goes out to Daphne King for donating a beautiful picnic basket which was given as a door prize. Debora Ewing, Sharlene Johnson and Shannon Tanner also deserve recognition for putting on a first class event which was a lot of fun. The delicious food was provided by Simply Wholesale in Los Angeles on Slauson Ave.



Highlights of Australia

Since LABUE's live aboard adventure on the Spirit of Freedom will be different from anything the club has ever attempted in the past, it is a good idea to let everyone know what to expect. The departure date from LAX will vary depending on optional pre-trips or personal preferences. Several divers will be going to Fiji for 4 nights which will allow for 3 full days of diving in some of the best sites on Viti Levu. Everyone will arrive in Cairns, Australia on October 24 and overnight at a hotel of their choice (recommendations to follow).

The actual trip will begin on October 25 with a short flight from Cairns to Lizard Island where everyone will board the 120' boat. This flight, included in the price of the boat, has only recently become a part of the regular itinerary because of its very scenic nature and because it allows more time for diving. The Spirit will depart Lizard Island at 8:30am and head out to the Great Barrier Reef. There will be two familiarization dives at primo sites on the Great Barrier Reef before the day ends. The Great Barrier Reef is legendary in diving lore and there are still plenty of excellent choices for outstanding diving. The boat will then travel overnight to the magnificent reefs in The Coral Sea, consistently ranked at the top of anyone's list of world class dive sites. Two different reef systems consisting of multitudes of truly beautiful dive sites will be visited over the next three days. The exact sites will be determined daily based on local conditions. This flexibility helps to insure that everyone has a tremendous experience. While divers will be on their own schedule, it is typically reasonable to get in 16 dives in astoundingly clear waters. Optional dive guides will be available as requested. Sites will vary from 3000' walls to magical coral gardens emerging from the ocean's depths. The fish life will range from the largest pelagics to the smallest of critters. One can expect to see all of the major species of sea life indigenous to the South Pacific in a dramatic setting.

At 120', the Spirit of Freedom is Australia's largest live-aboard dive vessel, featuring three decks of spacious comfort including sun deck, lounge and bar, dining saloon, and huge dive deck. Equipped with electronic stabilizers, silent generators, and fully air-conditioned throughout, the Spirit offers smooth and comfortable cruising. All cabins are comfortable and contain private baths. This boat is noted for its excellent cuisine and service. The goal of the crew is to spoil the guests with outstanding service. The Spirit will return to Cairns at 8:30am on October 29 and everyone will go their separate ways, again depending on any post trips. All in all, it will be a grand experience of a once in a lifetime nature.

No Solicitation at Club Functions

When the club was first beginning to expand, many growing pains were experienced. As our meetings became more well attended, it became a natural for members and non-members alike to solicit fellow members for a variety of activities. It got to the point where the potential for members to feel harassed or annoyed became evident. To keep the meetings true to their purpose and to not have members and guests feeling as if they were going to be 'hit' on to buy something or support a non-club event, the Board decided to discontinue the practice of allowing any sort of solicitation of any product, activity or service without the prior approval of the Board. The selling of non-club related raffle tickets is included in this club policy. Flyers promoting non-club activities similarly require Board approval prior to their distribution. LABUE definitely to support the business of members. However, to keep everything fair, an ad program was created to offer an opportunity for anyone to purchase an ad in this newsletter to promote a private activity or business. Please adhere to this policy as it has worked well in the past.

Renewal Time

It is once again time to renew all memberships in LABUE (lifetime members are, of course, already renewed). The dues has remained unchanged throughout the years and is \$30 for an individual membership and \$45 for a family membership. First time members joining after October 1, 2006, receive a one-time courtesy renewal for 2007. As in previous years, the first 50 members to renew will receive \$10 LABUE Buck certificates, good towards the purchase of club merchandise, boat dives and other club functions. Over the years, the club has been able to reduce its expenses in a way that has allowed the dues amount to remain constant. In order for the club to continue to offer a high level of services, programs and products, it is essential for everyone to renew. Membership dues represents the largest source of club revenue and ensures LABUE's financial viability. Take a moment and renew today.

Catalina Chamber Donation

LABUE received a very gracious letter from Miller Huggins, director of the Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber, thanking the club for its very generous \$500 donation. The Chamber receives about 50% of its funding from the LA County and relies on contributions from supporters to make up the difference in its budget. Every diver in the region relies on the Chamber and LABUE's Board felt it appropriate that the club make a visible contribution as tangible evidence of our support for this vital facility. Congratulations and thank you to all who contributed towards the club goal.

Regular Newsletter

Now that LABUE has its own 'legal' version of Microsoft Publisher, the regular publication of the monthly newsletter will resume. Look for the newsletter to be published a couple of days prior to the monthly General Membership Meeting.

Reminders:

- ** **General Membership Meeting—1/09/07**
- ** **Woods Cove Beach Dive—2/04/07**
- ** **Charter Boat Dive—3/24/07**