

LABUE NEWS

Los Angeles Black Underwater Explorers

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BELIZE CLUB TRIP A SUCCESS



The 12th annual club dive trip to Belize was another in a long line of successes. Although racked by a hurricane a few years ago, the underwater world showed little signs of the damage experienced on land. Everyone arrived in San Pedro Town on Ambergris Caye on the afternoon of April 16, gathered around the pool and had a late afternoon briefing on what to expect for the next 8 days.

Because the dive sights were very close to the hotel (with the notable exception of The Blue Hole which was an all day trip), the group was able to return to the dive shop for all safety intervals...an unusually relaxing touch. Diving in Belize can be exceptional in that it has all of the things divers are looking for. Most obvious on this trip were the large number of sharks present on the majority of the dives. Nurse, reef, lemon, and gray sharks were regularly seen. Another frequent visitor were spotted eagle rays. More than once, a diver could be seen 'breaking formation' to try to get that elusive photograph of these beautiful fish. Turtles, lobsters, eels and schooling fish were all present throughout the trip.

The hotel had been completely refurbished since the club's last trip in 2001 and was more than adequate. San Pedro Town was as charming as ever. A notable change, however, was the pavement present on the three main streets. The old sand streets are history. The food, of course, was excellent and very inexpensive.

When not diving, most of the group gathered around the pool for dominoes and chess. Since most LABUE trips are in April, watching the NBA playoffs offered another option. All in all everyone had a good time in Belize and with each other. Next year's trip will be another adventure to another exotic location. Don't miss out on the fun in 2009.

President's Message by Bob Simmons

Many years ago, Bettye Linares came up with what has become a LABUE tradition, the annual **Father's Day Dive and Picnic**. In this event, the Beach Dive Committee, chaired by Debora Ewing, stages its regular monthly beach dive at a location conducive to both diving and picnicking. Following the morning dives, everyone gets together for an afternoon of picnicking and fun. This year's event will take place on Father's Day, June 15, at Big Corona in Newport Beach. What makes this event so special is that everyone in the family can participate and have a good time. Typically, the beach dives are for the beach divers and shore support team, with little thought given to the other members of the families of the divers involved. With the addition of a picnic, everyone can be involved and have a very enjoyable day.

The diving begins at 8:30am and the picnic follows immediately.

Things are very informal and everyone brings whatever they care to eat. There is usually a game or two of dominoes going on along with a serious game of chess and other board games. The most fun, though, is simply getting together with friends and having lots of fun. The setting on a grassy bluff overlooking the ocean cannot be beat. The event formally concludes around 3pm although several folks generally remain until later in the afternoon. Bettye deserves much of the credit for coming up with this winning idea years ago. She or Debora may be contacted for more information.



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

Beach Dive by Debora Ewing

Big Corona (Newport Beach) – This dive will take place on Sunday, June 15 at 8:30 a.m.. The dive master will be George Linares who also happens to be an instructor. This dive site is good for all skill levels. Once again I must mention that beach dives offer an opportunity for newer divers to improve their skills. The Beach Dive Committee tries to make ensure that there are usually other divers available who are willing to help those who are willing to help themselves. The parking fee is approximately \$10.00 per vehicle. This site has showers and restrooms and happens to be the site of our annual Fathers' Day Dive/Picnic. Bring your lunch and after the diving we will picnic from noon until about 3:00 p.m. This is the perfect outing for you to bring your family and friends. If you're interested in signing up for this beach dive, contact me at 310-284-4556 or 909-240-7022.

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Boat Dives

LABUE recently participated in what has become an annual dive event...The Easter Egg Dive. In this event, LABUE shares a charter dive with Pacific Wilderness aboard The Bottom Scratcher the Saturday before Easter. The highlight of the event is the scattering of golf balls (Easter Eggs) into the ocean. Divers then are awarded prizes for each ball retrieved. This dive is always a lot of fun. LABUE divers found their share of 'eggs' and everyone had a great time.

In an effort to help keep divers informed, LABUE has begun a program of spreading the word to interested divers whenever other divers go out on a boat dive. Many times, it seems that most divers are not aware of when other club divers are going out on a boat. The concept is simple. Whenever a diver signs up for a particular dive and notifies the club, LABUE will notify everyone also interested in boat dives. In this way, it is hoped that more divers will get in the water with fellow club members. The program can only be as successful as you, the members, make it. Remember to notify any Board member whenever you are going out on a boat and the club will take care of the rest.

General Membership Meeting

This is a reminder that our next General Membership Meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 13, 2008, at the Museum of Natural History located in Exposition Park across from USC.

This meeting will focus on LABUE's most recent dive vacation to Belize and next year's travel plans. A multimedia presentation will be presented which will illustrate the highlights of this year's trip to Belize. Featuring both video as well as still photos, members and non-members alike, whether trip attendees or not, are sure to enjoy the sights and sounds of diving in Ambergris Caye off the coast of San Pedro Town. In addition, a further update of next year's destination will be provided.

The greatest benefit of our General Membership Meetings is the camaraderie which happens whenever we get together. Plan now to come on out and see your old friends and meet new ones. I look forward to seeing everyone on Tuesday. The meeting begins at 7:00pm.

New Board Member

DonCosta Seawell was recently appointed to LABUE's Board of Directors. He will fulfill the unexpired portion of a vacated position and will stand for reelection in November. Don first experienced diving via a Discover Scuba Program when he was 18 years old. Over the past few years he has greatly accelerated the amount of time he spends diving and is currently a Dive Master. He has been very active in the club and his enthusiasm for diving is infectious. He is a welcome addition to the Board.

Scuba Show

The annual Scuba Show will take place on June 21-22, 2008 at the Long Beach Convention Center. Billed as 'The Diving Event of the Year,' this show is the largest dive expo in the U.S. There are more than 76,000 sq. ft. of exhibits featuring the latest in dive gear. Travel Pros and Dive Experts are also in attendance to help with dive trip planning. Door Prizes, seminars and a Saturday night Casino Party round out the festivities. The exhibit planners are currently looking for volunteers to monitor the seminar rooms. Those interested should call 310 792-2333. Volunteers are admitted free to the Show.

Discover Scuba A Success

For several years running, LABUE has sponsored a Discover Scuba Program in which applicants are given exposure to the elements of scuba diving and are even allowed to try out the gear and actually perform a dive in a controlled swimming pool environment under the strict supervision of instructor George Linares. These sessions have been very successful and the latest event was no exception. Several LABUE members were on hand to support George and ensure that the participants had a safe and enjoyable time. Discover Scuba is a great way to give folks an introduction to diving and has lead to many folks becoming certified divers. Inform your friends and let them know that LABUE has this program and, if they are interested, you can let them know of the next event when it is announced. Thanks to George and Bettye for keeping this program alive and well...

MEMORIES OF BELIZE — 2008



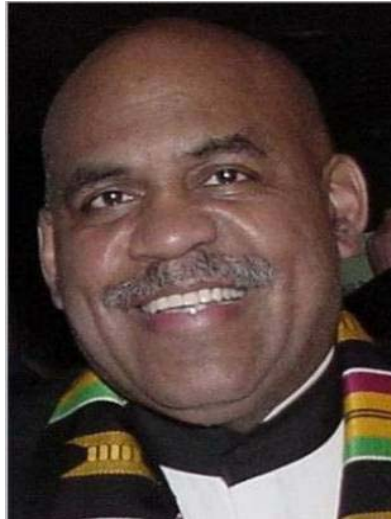
SPOTLIGHT

By Debora Ewing

INTERVIEW OF DonCosta Seawell

DonCosta Seawell has been a LABUE member for only a few years. However, he has brought an energy level and commitment to the club which has become infectious. He is the chairperson of the Boat Dive Committee and was recently appointed to the Board of Directors to fulfill an unexpired term.

1. **What influenced you most to you get into diving?** It is something I've always wanted to do since I took Discover Scuba at about age 18.
2. **What do you enjoy most about LABUE?** The fellowship. I really like the down-to-earth, friendly people in the club, who are serious about diving, yet know how to have fun.
3. **Is there anything you would like to LABUE offer more of?** Boat dives, which is why I got on that Committee.
4. **What is your occupation away from diving? How did you get into this field?** Thirty years ago did you foresee yourself doing what you currently do for a living? I'm a Senior Contract Administrator. I got into it while waiting to pass the California Attorneys' Bar Exam. I never did pass; I was licensed in Washington State. Contract Administration drew upon my legal skills and training. Thirty years ago I thought I'd still be practicing law or sitting on a judicial Bench.
5. **If you had the chance to change anything about your life to date, what would that change be?** I would have started Scuba diving many years earlier and perhaps have become an instructor.
6. **What is the most interesting thing about your life that you believe most people would be surprised to know?** I was a Civil Rights activist while in college at Norfolk State.
7. **What dive trip would you most like to participate in?** A trip to Indonesia, Palau, Turks & Caicos, and a return to French Polynesia.
8. **What other hobbies do you enjoy?** Chess, Basketball, Acting, Flight Simulators.

**Reminders:**

- ** **General Membership Meeting—5/13/08**
 ** **Father's Day Dive and Picnic—6/15/08**
 ** **Scuba Show—6/21-22/08**