

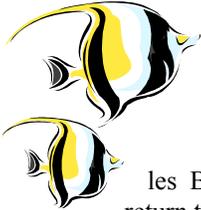
LABUE NEWS

Los Angeles Black Underwater Explorers

NOVEMBER 2004

"1999 NABS Club of the Year"

Volume 9 Issue 11



LABUE GOES TO THE BVI'S

Once again, the Los Angeles Black Underwater Explorers will return to the island of Tortola in the British Virgin Islands for its annual club trip in 2005. The dates are from April 20-April 28, 2005. This trip will mark the second time LABUE has visited the island and for good reason. The diving is **f-a-n-t-a-s-t-i-c!!!**

The BVI's have long been recognized as one of the premier dive locations in the world. The reefs are plentiful and spectacular. The variety of fish is enormous. And, of course, the wreck of the RMS Rhone is located a short boat ride away from the Hotel. The Rhone is considered the finest wreck dive in the Caribbean and is the most dived and photographed wreck in the world. It sank in a hurricane in 1867 and has been a diving Mecca ever since scuba diving came into being. LABUE will be housed at the recently renovated Prospect Reef Resort, located a short walk from town. This ocean front resort features a nautilus fitness center, swimming pool, Jacuzzi, tennis courts and other amenities, including an on site dive operation. The resort also features restaurants, sailing, hiking, nature trails, horseback riding and mountain biking. The famous island of St. Thomas in the US Virgin Islands, with its gorgeous beaches and renown shopping, is but a 30 minute ferry ride away.

The package will include air from Los Angeles, transportation from the airport in Tortola, 7 nights lodging and 5 days of double tank diving. Extra diving is available at the low club rate. The package price will vary depending on the hotel option selected, but will generally begin from \$1550 (pp double occupancy). Changes in air rates may cause the package rate to change. A \$400 deposit is required to secure a reservation and there are additional terms and conditions as defined in the trip application. This will be another great LABUE trip. Contact Donna at (310) 337-1541 for more information and to make reservations.



President's Message

As the year winds down, it is time to start thinking about 2005 and to begin planning next year's activities and events. It is also the ideal time to give everyone a chance to become more involved. LABUE is a very structured organization and has a strong committee system. Virtually all of our activities take shape in various committees. Joining one of our committees is a good way to get more involved in LABUE. Our club bylaws identify and define the roles of the following committees (chairpersons): Beach Dive (Debora Ewing), Boat Dive (Steve Scruggs), Fundraising (Debora Ewing), Membership (Bettye Linares), Publicity and Internet (Francois Desamours), Dive Training & Safety (George Linares), Technical Diving (Quinal Johnson) and Youth. Currently the Youth committee is inactive and the Technical Diving committee is more commonly referred to as the Adventure-

Technical-Specialty committee, which more accurately reflects the expanded dive opportunities this committee creates. In addition, ad hoc committees are created from time to time for specific, limited assignments.

These committees are the heart and soul of our club. At the start of the new year, all committees are reappointed. Typically, most members simply renew their commitment and remain on the same committees. However, there are openings on all committees and new members are encouraged to contact me or the committee chairperson if they are interested in learning more about a particular committee. LABUE has become very successful because of the work of many volunteers. Now is your opportunity to help take us to an even higher level.

Bob Simmons

Beach Diving by Debora Ewing

The Beach Dive Committee recently held its annual meeting during which the committee members planned LABUE's 2005 Beach Dive Calendar. The schedule was later approved by the Board. The membership should be on the lookout for continued monthly beach dives, a weekend diving/camping trip, and a fun filled weekend in San Diego. Most of our beach dives are held on the first Saturday or Sunday of the month. Scheduled dives are located in the calendar section of your monthly newsletter. If you're interested in participating on any given dive, please contact me at (213) 229-5190 to sign up. The 2005 Beach Dive Committee members are as follows: Bettye and George Linares, Quinal Johnson, Johnnie Davis, Sharlene Johnson, Pam McField, Darryl Gross and myself. The Beach Dive Committee looks forward to seeing you at the next beach dive.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Robert Simmons (323) 292-8960	Vice President Donna Wilson (310) 337-1541
Treasurer Richard Rice (323) 299-3798	Secretary Debora Ewing (213) 229-5190
Denise Barker (562) 423-4974	George Linares (661) 941-1516
Steve Scruggs (310) 876-1260	

COMMITTEES

Membership Bettye Linares (661) 946-1516	Fundraising Debora Ewing (213) 229-5190
Beach Dive Debora Ewing (213) 229-5190	Boat Dive Steve Scruggs (310) 876-1260
Dive Training & Safety George Linares (661) 946-1516	Publicity & Internet Francois Desamours (310) 412-8128
Technical Dive Quinal Johnson	
Phone: (323) 292-8960 Fax: (310) 337-1542 Email: info@labue.org Web Site: www.labue.org	

VINAKA FIJI by Steve Scruggs

Word had spread throughout the island of Vanua Levu that we were coming. The Koro Sun Resort set up their rarely used buffet tables and put away their menus for the occasion. An extra dive boat had been rushed into service. *The special guests from America had arrived!!!*

The Fijian staff and local villagers opened their doors and their hearts to us as tourists... and we left as friends. And if you doubted their sincerity, the tears in their eyes when they waved goodbye said it all.

On how many vacations have you been where the staff didn't expect tips and they cried when you left? If that happened in America, I'd back slowly away and call the police. Their love could be felt every morning as they prepared each individual omelet and every evening over an exquisite dinner prepared with a gourmet flare and served with a wide grin from an island princess adorned with a fresh flower behind her ear. From the second day we arrived they addressed us by first name and by the third day you felt that surely you had met somewhere before.

It was all enough to make you forget that we were there to dive. The diving can best be described by my experience while observing a large school of fish when I noticed that I was actually looking at over a dozen different species of fish all congregating in one school. In all my years of diving I've never seen as large a variety of fish in one area. And the colorful soft coral proved to be all I had come to expect of Fiji, only not as many dives as I would have liked. Nevertheless, I have no problem giving Colin and his young dive shop crew an "A" for effort as they not only handled their dive shop's inaugural group of divers, but probably the largest group they may ever have after having opened up for business mere weeks before we arrived. As spoiled Americans, we can sometimes be a handful.

We brought gifts of educational supplies to their warm and grateful villagers and they gave us so much more in return. Their children serenaded us at our final night's dinner and the villagers invited us to worship with them on their Sabbath. They embraced us and made us feel at home. Each of us experienced a personal connection that went far beyond previous trips with over-commercialized Hawaiian Luaus or cold Mexican Fiestas. **They were our friends!!!**

*Sad the morrow will dawn upon my sorrow;
O, forget not, when you're far away,
Precious moments beside dear Suva.
O'er the ocean your island home is calling.
...Fijian farewell song*





Calendar of Events

NOVEMBER

- 06** Beach Dive—Shaw's Cove
09 7:00 PM – General Meeting
23 6:30 PM – Board Meeting

DECEMBER

- 05** Beach Dive—Redondo
14 7:00 PM – General Meeting and Holiday Celebration



Happy Thanksgiving

Next Meeting

The next regular General Membership Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 9. George Linares, instructor and chairperson of the Dive Safety and Training Committee, will lead an interactive discussion on several short topics. He will also again use the popular Q&A format to give everyone an opportunity to get involved in the discussion. This is also an excellent time to ask George any questions you may have about typical diving experiences. In the past, such topics as buoyancy control, diver skills, breathing control, fish identification and other subjects fundamental to becoming a better diver have been on the agenda of this meeting.

The meeting will be held in the Times Mirror Conference Room at the Museum of Natural History in Exposition Park on Exposition Blvd between Vermont and Figueroa. Parking is available in the Staff Parking lot immediately adjacent to the two large dinosaurs in front of the building. The meeting will begin at 7 pm. As always, Bettye Linares and the membership committee will coordinate the refreshments. Plan now to attend.

Holiday Gift Exchange

Back by popular demand, the Holiday Gift Exchange will again take place at the December club meeting. The idea is easy...simply purchase a dive related item(s) in the \$15-20 range, stuff them in a stocking and bring it to the meeting. Santa Bettye Linares has worked out a fun process for exchanging stockings among members. While participation is not mandatory, everyone planning to attend the meeting is encouraged to join in the fun. Imagine the excitement shared with buddies when you've just received something you've always wanted - plus you get to decorate your home or office using your holiday 'gift' stocking.

Plan to shop at either Pacific Wilderness or Reef Seekers Dive Co, the two dive shop sponsors of our club, for that special item your buddy would appreciate receiving. What better way to celebrate this year's end - than to share something special with your buddies whom you've shared camaraderie with throughout the year.

Fundraising Committee

The Fundraising Committee is currently studying fundraising proposals to recommend to the Board for 2005. Each year, the annual expenses required to operate LABUE exceed the revenue generated from the members' dues collected. This committee has the responsibility of analyzing revenue-making ideas. If anyone has any thoughts in this regard please contact Debora Ewing, Chairperson, at (213) 229-5190.

Club Elections

As prescribed by LABUE's Bylaws, the biannual club elections will be held at the November 9, 2005 General Membership Meeting. All Club Officer and Board positions will be elected for the upcoming two year period. The Nominating Committee, chaired by James Wiley, will present the slate of candidates and conduct the elections. Nominations will not be accepted from the floor and eligible members must be present to vote.

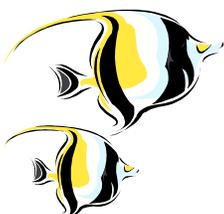
LABUE DIVE AND CAMP WEEKEND

By Richard Rice

Twenty-five hearty members and friends participated in LABUE’s first *Dive and Camp Weekend* held October 15–17 at Refugio State Park & Beach. Quinal (“*Mr. Campman*”) Johnson, the Beach Dive Committee’s chairman for this sold-out event, planned a schedule for the weekend that offered tasty food, a theater performance, mountain hiking treks, off-road vehicle adventures, campfire storytelling, as well as diving and hunting activities. Members created a *LABUE Village*, complete with tents, cooking facilities, and a roaring campfire. After setting up camp, we all headed to the nearby Circle Bar-B Ranch for a delicious BBQ dinner and an evening of delightful theater featuring local actors performing their version of *A Christmas Carol*. The Saturday morning dive was canceled due to deteriorating ocean conditions and worsening weather. Undaunted, LABUE members spent an active afternoon hiking, off road vehicle sightseeing, shopping, kayaking, and relaxing at the campsite as rain clouds began to build. Members expertly prepared their own culinary specialties for a spectacular potluck feast around the campfire. When it started to rain, we all crammed into Q’s tent for a entertaining evening of jokes and storytelling that lasted until the early a.m. hours as the rain continued throughout the night. We awakened, dry, warm, and cozy in our tents, greeted by the fragrant aroma of fresh bacon, sausage, eggs, and pancakes being cooked by the Beach Dive Committee, who treated everyone to a complete breakfast before we broke camp and packed up our camping gear for our journey home. In spite of the rainy weather and inhospitable ocean, participants enjoyed a great weekend and all agreed that *Dive and Camp Weekend* should continue as an annual LABUE event; confident that this experience has shown us that with the proper preparation and training, LABUE members can easily adapt to overcome any challenge of nature while having a rewarding and enjoyable time with good friends.



**Los Angeles Black
Underwater Explorers
10736 Jefferson Blvd., #428
Culver City, CA 90230**



<u>Reminders:</u>	<p>** <i>General Membership Meeting—11/9/04</i></p> <p>** <i>Club Elections—11/9/04</i></p> <p>** <i>Committee Volunteers Needed—1/1/05</i></p>
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