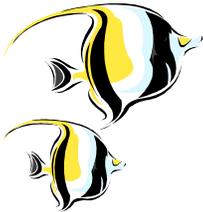


LABUE NEWS

Los Angeles Black Underwater Explorers

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MAKE IT COZUMEL...AGAIN

As announced to the membership last month, LABUE will be returning to the diver's paradise of Cozumel, Mexico, for the 2010 club trip scheduled from April 21-28. It has been 10 years since the club last visited the island. Cozumel is considered one of the top dive sites in the world and legitimately boasts of its outstanding dive opportunities. Members will offered lodging between The Fiesta Americana and the Cozumel Palace. The Fiesta Americana was much enjoyed by the club in 1999, remains one of the top hotels on the island and is very diver friendly. The rate for this option will be \$798 pp/double occupancy and includes 5-days of 2 tank dives, unlimited shore dives, roundtrip airport transfers and taxes. Additional dives are available for \$35muc per dive. A second option, the top rated Cozumel Palace, is offered for those individuals seeking a more upscale resort. The rate for this option will be \$1469pp/double occupancy This all-inclusive resort, located on the edge of town offers all meals and beverages, including premium brand alcohol, assorted activites, round trip airport transfers and taxes. The Cozumel Palace does not offer diving on site but Aldora Divers, located a few blocks away is the recommended dive operation. The above rate includes 5-days of 2 tank dives using Aldora Divers. Members staying at the Cozumel Palace will have the option of using the dive operation at the Fiesta Americana at a lower daily rate. Airfare is not included in either option.

Cozumel offers spectacular diving and weather during April and the club anticipates another fantastic trip. Cozumel is very popular this time of year and rooms are available on a first come first served basis. Participants do not have to select a hotel option at this time. More information about the two hotel options will be (see Cozumel Options on page 2)



President's Message by Bob Simmons

Twenty six of us recently returned from a two week odyssey to China and The Philippines. We spent the first week diving on Midoro Island in Puerto Galera, Philippines and had a great time. The diving was good and very different from what we are generally used to seeing. The difference was the variety of sea life we saw, particularly the large number of small 'macro' critters. While we had relatively unusual (for us) sightings of lion fish, coral snakes, stone fish, scorpion fish, turtles, etc. along with many other different types of colorful fish, it seemed that every dive we would encounter at least two or three different types of nudibranchs and colorful flat worms of various species. A true highlight was the spotting of several pygmy sea horses and an electric clam. Without question the service we received at the Atlantis Resort was top notch. The Philipino people were extremely friendly and accommodating and did everything they could to satisfy our requests. The staff knew most of us by our

first names by the end of the first day. That same friendliness was always present wherever we went. Following the diving, we went different ways visiting cities such as Manila, Tokyo, and Taipei. Most of us spent the next week visiting Hong Kong and Macau...a very rewarding experience. Immersed in a culture so dramatic from ours was a once in a lifetime opportunity. Clifton and Rhonda had a birthday party they will always remember. In a few short months we will be off to Cozumel, where more thrills await us. I invite all of you to join us in April and really see what LABUE is all about.



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

Cozumel Options (cont.)

made available to everyone within two weeks. At that time, participants will be asked to select an option and the deposit will be applied appropriately. As always, a \$400 non-refundable deposit will secure a reservation. The deposit may be mailed to LABUE, PO Box 90069, LA, 90009. Single person occupancy rates as well as non diver rates are available upon request. Pricing for an all inclusive meal and beverage option for the Fiesta Americana is also available upon request.

Diving with a large number of fellow club members and friends is a special opportunity. Cozumel represents an opportunity to combine first class diving with first class camaraderie. Don't miss out...

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President Robert Simmons (323) 292-8960	Vice President Francois Desamours (310) 412-8128
Treasurer Richard Rice (323) 299-3798	Secretary Debora Ewing (310) 284-4556
Sharlene Johnson (310) 915-3931	DonCosta Seawell (909) 593-1877

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Beach Dive by Debora Ewing

Casino Point (Catalina Island). On Saturday, November 21, 2009 LABUE will have it's yearly Casino Point dive. Each year several club divers gather at Casino Point for a day of diving and fun. Even though many of us have dived Casino Point several times, each dive seems different because of the variety of sea life which inhabits this area. The lush kelp beds, which appear different on each trip, are another big draw. The combination of the sea life and the sunlight filtering through the kelp creates a beautiful diving environment. The awesome nature of the dive probably explains why this dive is usually the most well attended dive of the year. The other big plus of this event is the social interaction which follows LABUE members wherever they go. We simply enjoy being with each other. Most of us will plan to do at least two dives. Following the diving, lunch will take place at Antonios Pizzeria next door to the ice cream shop. This year, the San Pedro and Long Beach Queen Mary Catalina Express ports are both closed for the winter. Most of you will probably leave out of downtown Long Beach. The Dana Point terminal is also open. Sharlene Johnson will give the dive briefing at approximately 9:30 a.m. If you plan to join the group, make sure you let me know so that if there are any changes I know to contact you. My phone number is (909) 240-7022. As always, I look forward to seeing you there!

Special Club Elections

The club elections scheduled for November 2008 have been rescheduled for November 10, 2009. The term for those elected will be for one year. The regular elections scheduled for November 2010 will be held as per the club By-Laws. Johnnie Davis is the nominating committee chairperson and will conduct the elections. The following is the slate of candidates: President, Richard Rice; Vice President, Tina Houston; Secretary, Debora Ewing, Board Members at large (vote for three), Bob Simmons, Sharlene Johnson, DonCosta Seawell.

Next Meeting

The next club General Membership Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 10, 2009, at the Museum of Natural History located on Exposition Blvd across from USC. As always, the meetings are a great place to catch up on club activities and renew old acquaintances. They are always fun and informative. In addition, the special elections of officers will be held at this meeting (see article on this page). Door prizes will be awarded to lucky attendees and, of course, there will be refreshments. The meeting will begin at 7:00pm. See you there.





SPOTLIGHT

By Debora Ewing

INTERVIEW OF BOB SIMMONS

Since first being elected President of LABUE in 1996, Bob has overseen the club's development into a first class organization. As he has decided to not run for re-election as president, I took this opportunity to ask him about his current feelings on his tenure.

1. Where were you born?

I am a local boy, having been born and raised L.A.

2. We all know you obviously went to UCLA. What did you like most and least about your college career?

I received my BS degree in Engineering from UCLA and followed it up with a MS degree from Loyola Marymount. A few years later I enrolled in UCLA's Anderson School of Management and received a MBA in General Management. Without question, my most memorable college experience was playing basketball with All Americans Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Lucious Allen on the freshman team which defeated the varsity in my first college game and the first game ever played in Pauley Pavilion. The varsity had been the National Champions the previous two years and we were justifiably proud of our accomplishment. My b-ball friends at Dorsey had reminded me the Saturday afternoon of the game that they would all be watching the game on TV later that evening... and to think about that if I ever got to the free throw line with the camera in my face. It so happened that I was fouled at the end of the game and had two free throws. I made them both. I could not wait to go back to Dorsey's gym to see everyone the next afternoon. The thing I liked least about college was all the studying required to obtain my engineering degree...it did not come easy for me but it was worth it in the end.

3. What influenced you to get into diving?

Richard Rice, my lifelong friend and college roommate at UCLA first introduced me to diving in 1971 in a backyard pool. I made my first 'real dive' in Hawaii in 1973 and liked the experience. I have been diving off and on ever since, although I did not become a certified diver until 1993. Prior to being certified, I always took resort classes which allowed me to dive at that particular resort. Diving while not being certified was not smart but I did not know that at the time.

4. When you're not diving, what do you like to do?

My current hobbies include photography with both still and video editing since 1973, tennis since 1962, bicycle riding (30-45 miles at a time), piano playing (just started taking lessons in 2006), reading an occasional novel, walking (6 miles at a time), chess, backgammon, daily exercising or 'working out' as they say and world wide traveling.

5. If you could do anything you wanted, whenever you wanted to, what would you do?

I have been blessed enough to have been retired from my '8 to 5' since 1998. Since that time I have been pretty much able to do whatever I wanted. However, if I had to pick something, I guess I would like to spend even more time traveling abroad and really getting to know more about planet earth. I have visited Africa twice, the first time for 2 1/2 months. On such a long trip, I really had a chance to truly experience the culture of the many different types of people I encountered. I would like to take more extended trips like that one. I hope to spend 4-6 months traveling around the world in the next year or two. I am really looking forward to that opportunity.

6. If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?

I have thought about that question for 30 years and I have concluded that 'I love L.A.'

7. What famous person do people tell you that you favor most?

Down through the years, I have been frequently mistaken for Andrew Young, especially abroad. Once, in Barbados, I feel I actually received superior service because the staff at the Sandy Lane Hotel thought I was Andy Young but did not want anyone to know. Now that Andrew Young is getting (and looking) older, I no longer like that comparison.

8. What would you like to see LABUE do more of?

I would like to see our club reach out to the local community more than we do now. We currently participate in a few activities when invited. Although I never took the time to prioritize these types of activities, I believe that we should be far more proactive in broadening the awareness of scuba diving among minorities, especially young people. The more people we touch and expose to something different, the more chance we potentially have to make a difference in their lives.

9. Why are you not running for Re-Election as President?

I have been doing this job for almost half a career and have generally enjoyed it. However, nothing stays the same and change must happen. I would rather step down as President now and be very involved in an orderly transition rather than see our club experience a crisis because a void is suddenly created and there is no one prepared to step up. By leaving now, I will be available during this transition process and can help things run smoothly at the same time.

10. Looking back over your 13 years in office, how would you summarize your feelings?

First of all, let me say that I am not falling off the face of the earth. I still plan to be involved on the Board and in our club for the foreseeable future. Having said that, I feel good about what we have accomplished. Whenever outsiders or visitors attend our meetings or witness us dive or do anything, they all comment on how professional we are and how impressed they are with our approach. I think that is a tribute to our Boards over the years and to our membership as well. No one person can take credit for all of that. We have grown as a group and we should continue to grow as a group, putting aside our personal preferences in favor of those of the majority of our membership. I believe that our success has been based on the fundamental concept of offering ac

tivities which the entire group can support and enjoy. Even though I might personally do something differently or personally travel in a different manner if I were planning something for myself, I have tried to keep our Board focused on the membership as a whole and not base our decisions on our personal preferences. I have always felt that we are a middle class dive club first and should offer activities that appeal to middle class divers, because that is what we do. If we ever get away from that concept, we could be in real trouble. I believe that Board members are here to serve the club's interests as a whole, not have the club serve the Board members personal interests, especially as they relate to non-diving. Change in Board personnel is inevitable but it is important that future leaders of our organization keep the practical interests of our membership in mind. I feel good about the progress our club has made and look forward to even better things from future club leaders.

11. Any last comments?

I think that LABUE will continue to grow and impact more people in the future. I feel good that I have been fortunate enough to work with great Boards over the years and proud to have had a role in helping us get to where we are and wherever we may eventually go.



MACAU, CHINA 2009

Reminders:

- ** **General Membership Meeting—11/10/09**
- ** **Casino Point—11/21/09**
- ** **Cozumel—4/21-28/2010**