

# LABUE NEWS

Los Angeles Black Underwater Explorers

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## *IT'S COZUMEL...ONE MORE TIME!!!*

After much debate, the Board is announcing that next year's club trip will be to Cozumel Mexico in the Yucatan Peninsula. Last time we went to Cozumel in 1999, 32 LABUE members had a great time, both in and out of the water.

We will again be based at the Fiesta Americana Hotel, located a few miles outside of the town of San Miguel and thereby much closer to the dive sites. The basic package will include 8 days and 7 nights lodging, 5 days of 2-tank diving, transfers and hotel taxes. Additional diving (including night dives), single person supplement rates, and a meal plan option are also available for additional fees. LABUE will confirm 15 rooms initially and will add to that number as needed.

Cozumel has long been regarded as one of the premier dive spots in the world. The warm water, excellent visibility frequently exceeding 100', a wide variety of sea life and spectacular coral formations combined with very reasonable prices have made this locale a favorite repeat spot for all divers. The Fiesta American Resort is located closer to the dive sites than most hotels which means less travel time and yet it is convenient to town where a variety of restaurants and entertainment are available. The resort itself features an on-site restaurant, swimming pool, and regular entertainment.

The exact club member prices and travel dates, which will be in mid to late April 2010, will be announced at the General Club Meeting on October 13. As usual, a \$400 non-refundable deposit will confirm a reservation. Cozumel is always fun and the diving can't be beat in the Caribbean. Combine rock bottom prices with the camaraderie which happens whenever club members get together and you have a sure winner. Again, sign ups begin on Tuesday...



### President's Message by Bob Simmons

Now is the time for members to come forward with new ideas or suggestions which you would like to see our club incorporate into our activities for 2010. Each year, the Board takes a look at where we are and tries to plan for the coming year accordingly. When we first started our club, we did not have much history to base our decisions upon. However, after 13 years, we can look back on many experiences and judge which ones seem to go over well and which ones did not. Complicating things these past two years has been the overall state of the economy. Our members are not different from the rest of the country in that we have all had to make difficult financial related decisions. Maybe we seem to be okay at the moment but with the uncertainty surrounding us, it seems prudent to not take unnecessary chances. Diving is a fun sport but it is an expensive sport and it definitely comes under the heading of discretionary

spending. Our Board is trying to balance the line between two extremes and come up with practical activities which most members can comfortably afford. To that end, we welcome any suggestions. For example, 26 of us will be traveling to the Philippines and China in a couple of weeks. In an effort to offset that major expenditure, we have scheduled Cozumel for next year. Cozumel is great diving and yet very inexpensive. Our club tries to offer something for all divers, maybe not all of the time, but often enough so that we can all enjoy our sport...comfortably. If you think of something, give us a shout out...



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

**Next Meeting**

The next General Membership Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 13, 2009, at the Museum of Natural History located on Exposition Blvd across from USC. This particular 'Halloween' meeting will feature a pumpkin decorating contest in which participants will be able to show off their creative skills in decorating the most interesting pumpkin. The pumpkins and basic decorating supplies will be provided by the club. While there will not be any pumpkin carving, everyone is encouraged to bring their own decorations and tools to make their pumpkin special. The best dressed pumpkin will awarded a prize. Door prizes will also be awarded to lucky attendees and, of course, there will be special themed refreshments. The meeting will begin at 7:00pm. See you there. Remember to enter the Museum off Menlo Ave during the current construction period.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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**Beach Dive** by Sharlene Johnson

On November 1, 2009, LABUE will host its inaugural underwater pumpkin carving contest at El Matador Beach in Malibu, California. LABUE will supply pumpkins and carving kits to divers who wish to join the contest. This will be a fun and challenging event. First, you usually wear thick neoprene gloves, so your manual dexterity is reduced. Also, pumpkins are completely full of air, and one of the carve-off rules is that the pumpkin can't have any cuts in it before you descend, so you must have a plan to get your buoyant pumpkin underwater. The time of the dive briefing will take place at 1:00 p.m., where the rules will be reviewed and pumpkins and carving kits will be handed out. Divers will be given thirty minutes to gear up, plan their carving, and meet at the beach. We will enter the water at the same time and descend as a group. The contest will be held in a location between 15' - 25' depth. Participants can work solo or as buddy pairs. You must remove and secure the lid, muck out the innards, then carve your pumpkin. After they've finished carving, divers will exit the water with their pumpkins for the judging. Photographs will be taken and displayed at the November club meeting on November 10, 2009.

**Compton Air Fair**

For the past several years, the Black Aviators club based in Compton has held an air fair designed to expose the youth in the community to something that many of them never see...Black pilots flying their own private airplanes. This year LABUE was invited to join with the aviators and other groups to broaden the exposure. Bob Simmons, Richard Rice and Debora Ewing, hosted the club booth and offered the largely unknown world of scuba diving to several interested attendees of the fair. One of the club goals is to expose more of the youth in the community to scuba diving and participation in this fair not only went toward satisfying this goal but was very rewarding, both for the attendees and for the club members who attended. A highlight of the day was the opportunity to chat with members of the original Tuskegee Airmen. These true legends of World War II are becoming fewer and fewer and it was an honor to listen to some of their stories. LABUE plans to make participation in this fair an annual event in an effort to expose more youth to a whole new world.

**Special Club Elections**

The club elections scheduled last November had to be postponed. They have been re-scheduled for November 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. The Nominating Committee, consisting of Bob Simmons and Johnnie Davis, will develop a slate of candidates. There will be several vacancies on the Board, including the positions of President and Vice President. Members interested in running for one of the club offices should review the By-Laws for the required qualifications. This election is an opportunity for interested members to get involved in the decision making process of the club. Please contact Bob Simmons, 323 292-8960 for additional information.



**SPOTLIGHT**  
By Debora Ewing

**INTERVIEW OF FRANCOIS DESAMOURS**

1. **Where were you born?** Brooklyn, New York
2. **Where do you live now?** Chantilly, VA
3. **What Influenced you to get into diving?** While on honeymoon in Tahiti, took a resort class and off the deep end I went! I absolutely loved the scenery and adventure of it all. I was bitten!
4. **What is your most memorable dive?** Was diving once somewhere off Catalina with Bob Simmons...and we both had opposite directions on how to get back to the boat! Just kidding! Actually, it was our dives in the Tortola, British Virgin Islands. All dives are just wonderful. But then again, I remember one in particular where I saw a shark above me. So I pulled out my knife...ready for battle with that jagged tooth monster. Then I realized it was just Bob Simmons!
5. **As the outgoing Vice President of the Board, what did you enjoy most about your Board position?** Hanging out at Bob's! Ok...ok...I'll get serious. I mostly enjoyed interacting with all the people on the club. The board and club is full of "good" folks to socialized with...that's what I (and my wife Lisa) have missed the most!
6. **What college or colleges have you attended?** US Air Force Academy; Air Force Institute of Technology; Anderson School of Management at UCLA
7. **What is your occupation away from diving?** Satellite Systems Engineer; Aerospace Business Development Manager
8. **How did you get into this field?** I thought I was going to be an Astronaut! I love space stuff...satellite, rockets, etc. In another life, I used to be called a space cadet and it-fitted me like a glove!
9. **What other hobbies do you enjoy?** Salsa dancing...wanna dance? But nowadays, I'm mostly changing diapers.
10. **How do you stay so fit?** I don't...I just thanks to my parents for my genes.

11. **What famous person do people tell you that you favor most?** Dikembe Mutombo; Ron DeVoe of the former “Bell Biv DeVoe” and “New Edition” group. Lastly, Barack Obama!

12. **Tell me something that LABUE’s membership would be surprised to know about you?** In 1992, I was ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the country in men’s Epee in the sport of Fencing. As such, I did not make the Olympic team...they took the top 3 and one alternate.



**Reminders:**

- \*\* ***General Membership Meeting—10/13/09***
- \*\* ***Underwater Pumpkin Carving—11/01/09***
- \*\* ***Philippines/China—10/24/09***