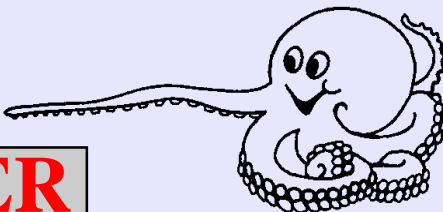
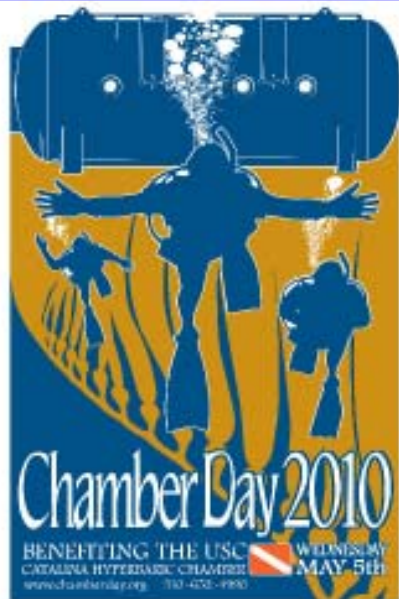


THE REEF SEEKER



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March - 2010



CHAMBER DAY & EVE 2010

It's that time of the year again when we band together for the benefit of our Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber. (Chamber Day is a fundraiser for our Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber, and is the largest single-day scuba charity event in the United States.) Last year we raised over \$120,000 and we know - especially as the economy continues to sputter along - that that's going to be tough to top this year. (One good note - no price increase. Both Chamber Day and Chamber Evening each have a base price of \$90.) Full details are at the Chamber Day website (www.chamberday.org) but here's some of what's happening:

CHAMBER DAY 2010

The daytime event is known as "Chamber Day" and it will run as it has in the past. (And don't forget the date: Wednesday, May 5.)

SoCal's finest dive boats donate their services for the day. They are (in alphabetical order): *Bottom Scratcher*, *Cee Ray* (the official Reef Seekers boat), *Island Clipper*, *Magician*, *Pacific Star*, *Psalty V*, *Sand Dollar*, *Sea Bass*, *Second Stage*, *Sundiver*, *Sundiver Express*, and *Sundiver II*. Here's the way it works. (For those who can't take the day off, there's always the *Flying Dutchman*. More on that later.)

For your donation of \$90 for the day (all of the proceeds go to the Chamber) we invite you to choose the boat you want to go on and join us for Chamber Day. Please book early because once a boat fills, it's unavailable. Although we'll hold a reservation for you for 72 hours, after that time, spots can only be guaranteed when they are paid in full. This year, all the boats are again providing food-and-air-included services. This will be covered by a \$30 surcharge making the total tab for Chamber Day \$120.

In general, the boats will leave their respective docks at 7AM and head for Catalina. (Some boats may allow you to board the night before and sleep on board.) You'll

get a commemorative Chamber Day 2010 T-shirt and five daytime raffle tickets (you can buy more tickets on your boat or at the Chamber). During the day, you should make two dives at Catalina.

Sometime during the day, your boat will stop at our Catalina Chamber in Big Fisherman's Cove. Everyone will disembark for a 75-minute overview of Chamber operations. L.A. County Lifeguards will explain their job, rescue helicopters and crews from the US Coast Guard and LA County Sheriff's Department will be on hand, and the Chamber crew will show you the Chamber itself, including taking you inside for a 1-foot deep dive.

Most of the boats will arrive back at their docks between 5:00 and 5:30PM. We will try to radio all the boats on the way back to tell them their raffle winners. All raffle prizes will then be available in front of the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach at our drive-up raffle prize pick-up table. But we can't do any of this unless you sign up for the event. Call 310/652-4990 or go to our secure server at www.chamberday.org. Come alone or, better yet, come with a friend. But please do come.

And if you can't do the daytime event (or if you do the daytime event and want to cap it off with a fabulous evening) . . .



CHAMBER EVE 2010

We realize that not everyone can take a day off, so that's why we have Chamber Evening. What makes this event unique is that we have the ENTIRE Aquarium of the Pacific . . . just for us.

The Chamber Day Committee and the Aquarium of the Pacific invite you to enjoy an evening of food, fish, and fun. Chamber Evening is also on Wednesday, May 5. It starts at 7:00PM and wraps up around 10:30PM. Because the Aquarium realizes the vital role our Chamber plays in the overall safety of the SoCal dive community, and because they realize what a valuable contribution the roughly 150 volunteer divers make to the smooth running of the Aquarium, they waive their normal facility fee and host this event for us at no charge. (We'll still be paying for catering, but that's outside of the Aquarium's control.)

The cost of the evening is still \$90 per person. (Those who do both the daytime and evening events will receive an extra \$20 in raffle tickets as a bonus.) In 2009, for the third year in a row, Chamber

Evening sold out. And because we're limited on the number of people who can attend, the earlier you sign up, the better.

Each table seats 10 people (dinner is a seated, served affair). Most of our tables are sponsored by area dive shops, clubs, and organizations but there will be a couple of "Open" tables this year. You can sign up either directly with a table sponsor, through our website (www.chamberday.org, which also has a complete list of table sponsors), or by calling us at 310/652-4990. Just make sure you let us know where you want to sit so we can make sure you're with your friends and dive buddies.

Doors open at 7:00. Dinner will be around 8:15. During the evening some remarks will be made, raffle prizes will be awarded, and a check will be presented. We should wrap up shortly after 10PM. Then you'll have until about 10:30PM to wander around and take in all the sights. It's always a very special evening, and appropriate for divers and non-divers alike (so you can bring along your non-diving Significant Other and he/she can share the excitement of our sport).

With your ticket to Chamber Evening you will receive five

evening raffle tickets, good for some special prizes we'll have on hand. Plus, there will be the opportunity (along with encouragement and arm-twisting) to buy more raffle tickets while you're there. Raffle prizes will include regulators, BCs, computers, and even a complete gear set. (See the website www.chamberday.org for a complete listing of all prizes and donors.) We'll also have a Blind Bid Silent Auction where you can bid on the prizes but you will not know what others have bid.

During the entire evening, we'll have full access to the Aquarium and it's 12,000+ critters consisting of over 550 species, and representing three major regions of the Pacific. In case you're not aware, the Aquarium of the Pacific is the only public aquarium to focus solely on the Pacific Ocean.

As with Chamber Day, Chamber Eve tickets can be purchased by calling 310/652-4990 or by going to our secure server at www.chamberday.org. Just indicate how many tickets you want, what table you'd like to sit at, and how you want to pay.

Mark the date: Wednesday, May 5. This is one dive party you don't want to miss.

2010 DIVING VACATIONS

May 21-29 • Bonaire

July 9-18 • Yap

August 2-5 • Southern Channel Islands grand tour

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN 2010

For those who can't take the Wednesday off but would still like to be an integral part of Chamber Day, we have the perfect solution - sign up to dive on the *Flying Dutchman*. As you may know from nautical lore, the *Flying Dutchman* was the name of a mythical ship doomed to sail the seas forever and never reach port. In our case, the *Dutchman* is not quite so dire.

For Chamber Day, the *Flying Dutchman* is a mythical boat and our answer for those who want to say they "dove" the event. You won't really be going anywhere, but you'll get all the other benefits of Chamber Day participation. There will be an on-board raffle conducted just like on all the other boats and you'll get a commemorative Chamber Day T-shirt. However, those who dive the *Dutchman* get a special limited-edition *Flying Dutchman* Chamber Day shirt that's not available for purchase any other way. (We literally shred any leftovers after the event.)

Cost for the *Dutchman*, like all the other boats, is \$90 (but you don't have to pay for food & airfills). That donation includes your T-shirt, on-board raffle ticket, and five Chamber Day raffle tickets. It's a great way to be intimately involved with the event if you can't get away for the day. For each of the past three years we've had over 100 people "dive" the *Dutchman*, and we'd sure like to hit that mark again this year.

To sign up for the *Dutchman*, either go on-line to "www.chamberday.org" or call 310/652-4990.

UPCOMING BOAT & SHORE DIVES

Wed	Mar. 3	Redondo	••• Squid Dive •••	N/C
Wed	24	Redondo	••• Squid Dive •••	N/C
Sun	28	AOP	Diver's Day	FREE!!!
Sat	Apr. 3	<i>Great Escape</i>	Farnsworth/Cat backside	\$130/135
Sun	18	<i>Cat. Exp. (SP)</i>	Avalon Underwater Park	95/100
Sat	24	<i>Great Escape</i>	San Clemente (Pyramid)	150/155
Wed	28	Redondo	••• Night Dive •••	5/10
Wed	May 5	<i>Cee Ray</i>	Chamber Day 2010	\$90

Prices are listed as 14-day advanced purchase/regular. Food/air included all trips. All diving to be done on compressed air only - no nitrox. Fuel surcharge may apply.

THE CHAMBER CHALLENGE 2010

Each year the diving community raises extra funds for the Chamber through the Chamber Challenge. These are funds vital to the operation of our Chamber. Simply put, you make a donation at whatever level is good for you, and then you "Challenge" your friends and associates to match you.

2009 was simply amazing. For the second year in a row, we surpassed \$50,000 in Challenge donations. (Thank you.) Our donors were led by a generous \$5000 donation from Michael Kane. And while we know how tough the economic situation is, we hope you'll dig deep this year, realizing your Chamber suffers through the same economic pinch that you do.

Although contributions of any size are welcome, we have a tiered level of donations as follows:

- Diamond - \$10,000
- Platinum - \$5,000
- Gold - \$1,000
- Silver - \$500
- Bronze - \$100

All Diamond, Platinum, and Gold donors will receive special recognition from our Chamber for their donation. Contributions can come

from individuals, clubs, stores, boats, publications, etc. If the company you work for has a matching grant program, that would also be appreciated.

Donations can be made either through our secure server at www.chamberday.org or by calling 310/652-4990. Cash, check, or credit card will be fine and dandy. So please get on board with the Chamber Challenge and let's see if we can surpass last year's record.

WHY WE DO THIS

We put a lot of time and effort into Chamber Day because we think it's a worthwhile thing to have our Chamber available to us. When a dive accident occurs, getting an injured diver to our Chamber alive means that he/she has an excellent chance of survival and recovery. Having that knowledge while you're performing first aid, administering oxygen, or doing whatever it takes to save someone's life, is a reassuring thought. Our Chamber is simply an invaluable safety net that we don't want to jeopardize losing. Your participation in any or all of the facets of the event will help to insure our Chamber's future.

OTHER NEWS

- As we mentioned in an e-mail, the *Great Escape* has moved and is now berthed back at 22nd Street Landing in San Pedro. The landing is nicer, there's ample parking, a restaurant upstairs, and - best of all - it's about 20-30 minutes closer to the dives sites than the Long Beach landings.
- Effective March 1, new DF&G rules are in effect regarding lobsters. The short version is that you must leave the lobster fully intact until immediately before you are going to consume it. In other words, no more tailing the lobsters and throwing the carapaces back into the ocean.
- Fees for U.S. passports are set to rise on March 12. Renewals will

go from \$75 to \$110, and first-time applicants will pay \$135 instead of the current \$100. The State Department says the new fees are in line with the actual cost of authenticating and producing a passport.

- We're going to try to make "Early Departure" the rule of thumb this year, especially on Farnsworth trips. Rather than leave at 6AM, we'll leave around 4AM which means we should get to Farnsworth at 8AM and that should put us ahead of other dive boats as well as fishing boats. It also means we'll get back to the dock earlier, most likely around 4PM. We'll try this schedule on our April 3 trip and see how you like it.

- You've doubtless heard about the fatality at Sea World in Or-

lando where a trainer was drowned by one of the Orcas. It serves as a reminder to those of us who volunteer at zoos and aquariums that the animals we come into regular close contact with, even though they may still be captive, have not lost their "wild" instincts. So it behooves us to keep that in the back of our minds, because this is NOT quite the same as playing with the family pet. In that same regard, when we're out in the ocean, we should remind ourselves that the animals, no matter how curious or friendly they might seem, are still truly wild, and deserve a measure of our respect and caution, lest we become a statistic.



PICTURE PAGE - Manatees, February, 2010

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2010)



**Taking
an afternoon nap**



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WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM



**Coming down
the channel**



**Chwecking out
a snorkeler**



**Who's
watching whom?**



**Taking a snort
of air**