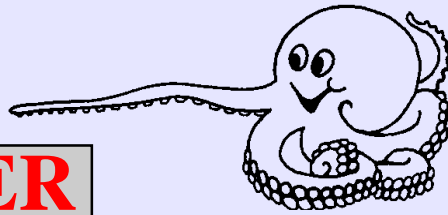


THE REEF SEEKER



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May - 2010



CHAMBER DAY IS THIS WEDNESDAY

Needless to say, things are a bit hectic at Reef Seekers right now, since we act as the co-ordinating store for Chamber Day and Reef Seekers owner Ken Kurtis is Chairman of the event. But things are perking along to their culmination on Wednesday, May 5.

There's still time for you to get involved. As of this writing (Friday night at 8PM) there are still about 20 boats spots available (*Bottom Scratcher & Pacific Star*), and 7 seats left at various tables for Chamber Evening. Of course there's plenty of room on the *Flying Dutchman* and we're always happy to take your donation for the Chamber Challenge.

Chamber Day not only serves as a vital financial safety net for our Chamber, but has also evolved into an important social event for the

SoCal diving community. In fact, one local wag referred to Chamber Eve as "the Scuba Prom" and we think that's an apt description.



More importantly, it's one day a year when we put all the petty jealousies and agency rivalries aside and all come together under one roof for the common good. (Would that we could get this feeling more often.) It's a marvelous event that we're very proud to be part of and we hope to see you either at the island during the day or at the Aquarium during the evening (or both).

As to what the final number will be, well, that's anybody's guess right now. But we can tell you this: Without your help and participation, it won't be as good as it could be. It's not too late. Get involved with Chamber Day/Eve 2010 and help keep your Chamber strong.

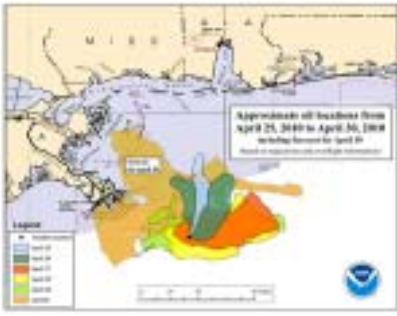


APRIL FOOLED AGAIN

We always enjoy writing the April Fools newsletter but it gets harder and harder to fool you each year. (And heaven forbid there's something important we actually have to tell you. You'll never believe it.)

We understand we managed to get a few people to call to complain about the condos going up on Santa Barbara Island and it seems that everyone really would do the StarTrek dive if it was a real event. And after looking at all of those pictures again, I'm beginning to think the diving-makes-you-bald story may have a ring of truth to it.

Hopefully you enjoyed the mirth-making as much as we did and this will serve as fair warning for next year: Beware of April 1, 2011.



GULF OIL SPILL

By now you're certainly aware of the massive oil spill from that drilling rig that sank in the Gulf of Mexico. FYI, it's waaaay east of where we'll be diving on our Flower Gardens trip in September, so it should not affect that.

What's really troubling is the way the whole thing's been reported to the public by the oil companies. First they said it was "only" 1,000 barrels a day leaking out. Then it was 5,000 barrels a day and today they say it's 25,000 barrels a day, that it may take three months to cap the well, that millions of gallons of oil will have spilled by then, and that this could be a worse disaster than *Exxon Valdez*.

I think one thing that gets to me is how we went from 1,000 barrels a day to 25,000 barrels a day. It's not that the daily spill rate has changed; it's that they've continually under-estimated it. Whether that was a PR effort to make it seem not so bad, I don't know and won't speculate. But you would think that something the industry "experts" would be good at is estimating the consequences of such a spill and how best to deal with it.

Louisiana oyster and shrimp fishermen are literally fearful that as the spill moves in to shore, it will wipe out fishing beds that have been productive for almost a century. And that doesn't even begin

to touch on the seabirds and other ocean-dependent wildlife that will be affected. I heard a report on CBS Radio today that says in New Orleans (like they need more problems), you walk out your door and the air has a faint smell of gasoline.

It also appears that the culprit in all of this may have been a "fail-safe" device that failed. When pressure builds up in a pipe, this device is supposed to slice and seal the pipe before it blows. Apparently it failed miserably to do so and even an effort to do it manually by the rig crew (before they had to abandon) proved unsuccessful.

It all points up to the hard choices we have to make as an energy-gobbling nation. Are the long-term consequences of this kind of a disaster worth the relatively short-term gains we get from extracting the oil? Is the financial disaster going to end up costing us more than the oil would have produced? What are we going to do about any of this? Change our habits? Wipe out nature?

There are certainly no easy answers. But perhaps those who have shouted "Drill, baby, drill" to make their political stock rise should now cry out "Spill, baby, spill"

and see how that resonates with the populace. Hopefully we start looking at all of this with a much broader and more global perspective. Because two or three more of these kinds of spills, and we're going to push ourselves to the brink of extinction.



A WEEK IN AUGUST

Have you ever dreamed of diving all the Southern Channel Islands in one fell swoop? Well you can, if you join us for "Tim & Ken's Excellent Adventure" (aka "The Grand Tour") August 2-6 this summer.

The plan is to do a 5-day trip on the *Great Escape* and dive all four of the Southern Channel Islands, and to hit the hot spots for each. We'll run this on the same type of a schedule as we would if we were going to Palau or Fiji or some exotic location. The general plan will be for up to five dives each

2010 DIVING VACATIONS

May 21-29 • Bonaire

July 9-18 • Yap

August 2-6 - So Channel Isllds

day. Two in the morning, two in the afternoon, and one night (or dusk) dive. That will allow plenty of time to dive, rest, eat, and sleep.

We'll board the boat Sunday evening and do paperwork, orientation, and the like. We'll get a good night's sleep at the dock, and then we'll cast off around 7AM Monday morning. First stop will be the wreck of the *Olympic*, then on to Catalina to hunt for Black Sea Bass, dive Ship Rock, and whatever else strikes our fancy.

Day Two will be at Santa Barbara (lots of sea lions), Day Three will be at San Nicolas Island with ample time spent at Begg Rock, Day Four will find us at San Clemente, and Day Five will find us starting with a pair of dives at Farnsworth Banks, and then a final dive along Catalina's backside (maybe even the elusive Land's End) before we motor back to port.

Trip cost is \$1249 and that includes a \$100/person tip for the crew. If you're a Reef Saver or member of an affiliated dive club, you'll qualify for a \$25 discount. And if you'd like to reserve a stateroom (a bit more room and some privacy) tack on \$50/person (\$10/day just like on our single-day trips).

The other great thing about this trip is: LIMITED LOAD. We will take no more than 20 paying divers so there will be plenty of room on the deck, in the galley, and down in the bunks. (The boat can hold 34.) We'll have four Reef Seekers divemaster/instructors on board plus a planned crew of six, so if you need some help, we'll be there to give it. And we plan on offering NAUI & PADI Advanced classes for those interested, as well as

UPCOMING BOAT & SHORE DIVES

Wed	May 5	<i>Cee Ray</i>	Chamber Day benefit dive	\$90
Wed	19	Redondo	Night dive	5/10
Sat	June 5	Redondo	Redondo Canyon (day dive)	5/10
Sun	13	<i>Cat. Express</i>	Avalon Underwater Park	95/100
Wed	16	Redondo	Night dive	5/10
Sat	26	<i>Great Escape</i>	Santa Barbara Island	145/150
Wed	July 7	Redondo	Night dive	5/10
Sun	25	<i>Cat. Express</i>	Avalon Underwater Park	95/100

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.

maybe one or two other specialty classes.

The trip's already starting to fill so if you're interested, this is a good time to get your name on our list and secure your spot. It's going to be a great trip and you don't want to be sitting around in August with sweat dripping down your brow saying to yourself, "I could have gone diving this week . . ."

BE A RESPONSIBLE DIVER

Too often we hear divers say, "Well, that wasn't MY Fault." This might be uttered after they've experienced any of a host of small problems.

I urge you to take some responsibility for your own actions. You are responsible for yourself and no one can be more responsible for your safety than you.

Too often we hear divers making excuses or simply denying any involvement in their own predicament. In the work I do as a defense consultant in legal cases, we hear it all the time. The diver had nothing to do with the accident/malady/predicament and it must be some-

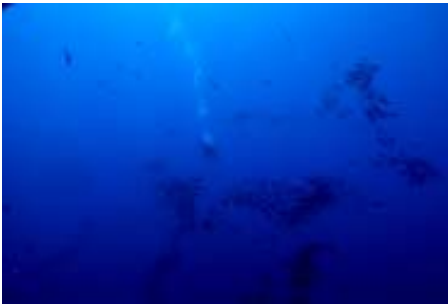
one else's fault (usually someone with insurance).

Let's face it: Nobody likes to have problems. But in diving, inattention can sometimes have very serious, and even fatal, consequences. Not good.

So we'd ask you to think about responsibility and the role it plays in your diving. That doesn't mean you won't make mistakes. No big deal. But learn from them and don't repeat them. Here are a couple of things you can do to become more responsible (and hopefully you do these already):

1. Listen to the briefing.
2. Enter the water with a dive plan in place.
3. Ask questions when you don't understand.
4. If you feel something's wrong on a dive, stop.
5. If you can't correct the problem or shake the feeling, abort the dive.
6. Don't dive in conditions beyond your comfort zone.
7. Don't hesitate to ask for help - in or out of the water - when you need it.

Simple things like this can yield big results and will increase your enjoyment of this wonderful sport that we love so much.



STUPIDITY KILLS

I recently completed an informal analysis of 5 years worth of fatality statistics from D.A.N. I've put it all into a PowerPoint presentation that I've given at a few dive clubs. (Note to those of you who book speakers - I'm happy to do it for whomever asks.)

The most amazing thing that emerges from this study is that (by

my classification) 70% of the 266 fatalities I looked at I classified as "Bad Diving" which was a nice way of saying "Stupid Divers." That's 186 people who died by making easily avoidable mistakes. The most glaring dumb thing divers did to get themselves into fatal situations was also the easiest to prevent - running out of air.

But what was very depressing (and revealing) about the statistics was that 2/3 of these deaths were absolutely not only unnecessary but also relatively preventable. For out-of-air, it's as simple as watching your gauge and ending the dive on the surface with at least 300-500psi in your tank. In other instances, it's as seemingly simple as not diving in areas above your training and experience (like

caves), and not diving in conditions beyond your abilities (fast currents).

And, as an instructor, the frustrating thing is that if we could teach 100% of you to dive smarter, we could eliminate 70% of the annual fatalities. That's significant.

So I implore and encourage you to stop and think about what you do and simply dive smarter. The life you save could literally be your own.



PICTURE PAGE - Previous Ch-Day logos

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2010)



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(#1)



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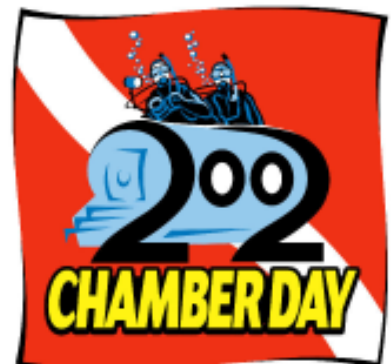
1995
(#7)



1998
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2000
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2002
(#14)