

THE REEF SEEKER



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March - 2009



CHAMBER DAY 2009

Happy Birthday to the Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber!!!

This October, our Chamber turns 35. So we thought it would be appropriate this year to turn Chamber Day into a Chamber Birthday Bash. And we're happy to say that registration is now open for the 21st annual Chamber Day, to be held on Wednesday, May 6, 2009. (In case you're not aware of it, Chamber Day is a fund-raiser for our Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber, and is the largest single-day scuba charity event in the United States.)

As you may or may not know, the Catalina Chamber is dedicated strictly to the treatment of diving accidents on a 24/7/365 basis. Although we hope you'll never need it, having the Chamber available gives divers a vital safety net in the event something should go wrong with your dive. Although there is a grant from LA County, and the Chamber gets income from some

outside activities, Chamber Day provides a significant portion (close to 50%) of the Chamber's annual budget.

The great thing about this event is that ALL the monies raised goes to the Chamber. No administrative fees are deducted, the boats donate their services, the manufacturers donate gear, the Aquarium of the Pacific donates their facility, hundreds of volunteers donate their time, and you (hopefully) donate your money. Last year we raised over \$120,000 and we know - especially with the economy - that that's going to be tough to top this year. Here's what's happening:

- The main event is Chamber Day, with two dives at Catalina plus a walking tour of the Chamber. Cost for this is \$90 (plus \$30 for food & airfills) which gets you the diving, the tour, a t-shirt, and five raffle tickets.

- For those who can't take a day off but would still like to participate we have the *Flying Dutchman*, a mythical boat but a big part of Chamber Day as it's the perfect place for those who can't do the event. Those who choose to "dive" the *Dutchman* get a special limited-edition t-shirt (available ONLY to those who sign up for the *Dutchman*) as well as raffle tickets.

- There's also the Chamber Challenge, where the diving community is "challenged" to raise extra funds

for our Chamber, through specific donations (usually \$100, but also \$500 and \$1000), which then hopefully challenge your friends to match your generosity.

- And this year - as part of the Challenge - we're including the "Chamber Birthday Cake" where you can sponsor a candle which will not only help our Chamber, but which will also get you invited to a special Chamber Birthday Party that will include cake and a chamber dive to 165'. (More on that in a moment.)

- We've got plenty of tickets for the daytime raffle (you need not be present to win) whether you're going on a boat or just want a chance at winning some fabulous prizes.

- Chamber Evening is the cap to everything and is co-sponsored by the Aquarium of the Pacific. It features full access to the Aquarium, a sit-down dinner in the Great Hall (underneath the life-sized model of a Blue Whale), some awards, a separate raffle, and the presentation of the final check to Karl Huggins, Director of the Chamber.

Full information on the event can be found at "www.chamberday.org." You can even sign up via the web and our secure server, or by calling 310/652-4990.

But no matter how you do it, we really hope you'll get involved with Chamber Day & Chamber Evening this year.

CHAMBER EVE 2009

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

The Aquarium & the Chamber Day Committee invite you for an evening of food, fish, and fun, also on Wednesday, May 6, from 7:00-10:30PM. 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 for this event and host this event for us at no charge.

Cost of the evening is \$90 per person. (Those who do both the daytime and evening events will receive an extra \$20 in raffle tickets as a bonus for doing both events.) In 2008, for the second year in a row, the event sold out. And because we're limited in the number of people we can have attend (we cap this at 500), the earlier you sign up, the better.

Each table holds 10 people (dinner is a sit-down, served affair). All of our tables are sponsored by area shops, clubs, and organizations. You sign up either directly with a table sponsor, through our website (www.chamberday.org), or by calling 310/652-4990. Make sure you let us know where you want to sit.

Doors will open at 7:00. Dinner will be around 8:15. We've got some remarks to be made, raffle prizes to be awarded, and we'll all sing "Happy Birthday" to the Chamber. (Yes, there will be cake.) 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 receive 5 raffle tickets, good for some special prizes we'll have on hand for the evening. Plus, there will be opportunity (and encouragement and arm-twisting) to buy more raffle tickets while you're there. Total value of the evening raffle prizes will approach \$10,000 and includes 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 don't know what others have bid (hopefully encouraging you to bid high so yours will be the winning bid).

During the entire evening, we'll have access to the full Aquarium and it's 12,000+ critters consisting of over 550 species, representing three major regions of the Pacific. In case you didn't know, the Aquarium of the Pacific is the only Aquarium to focus solely on the Pacific Ocean. And, it's also the only Aquarium in the United States

to have, all under one roof . . . a Napoleon Wrasse (in the 350,000 gallon Tropical Reef exhibit), Cownose Rays, Bonnethead Sharks, Sea Dragons, sea lions, sea otters, and lots of SoCal dive volunteers (who will be on hand to answer any questions you might have). You can also wander out to Shark Lagoon to take a gander at some of the sharks you CAN touch, and some which you can't.

As with Chamber Day, Chamber Evening 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. It's as simple as that.

Mark the date -Wednesday, May 6, and make plans to join us. This is one dive party you definitely don't want to miss.



DIVING VACATIONS

May 15-23

Buddy Dive • Bonaire

October 11-18

Don Jose • Sea of Cortez



THE CHAMBER BIRTHDAY CAKE

Since our Chamber's turning 35 this year, we thought we ought to have a party and celebrate. And you're invited to participate. Here's what we've got in mind:

We've got the cake but we need the candles. (What's a cake without candles?) And that's where you come in, because each candle costs \$1000. So when you make a \$1000 donation, you not only sponsor a candle, but you'll get your name on that candle on the virtual birthday cake that will be on our website, as well as on a plaque that will be mounted out at our Chamber after the event. (You can also get a half-candle for \$500 and you'll be matched with another \$500 half-candle sponsor for that particular candle.) Want to give more than \$1000? Then you'll get a candle for each multiple of \$1000 that you donate.

Best of all, you'll not only raise needed funds for our Chamber, but you'll be invited to our special private Chamber Birthday Bash at the Chamber facilities in Big Fisherman's Cove, which will take place Sunday, October 4.

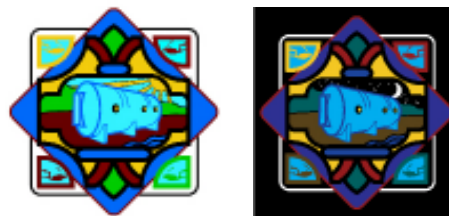
You'll get transportation to and from the island, a private tour of the Chamber facilities, and lunch with birthday cake for dessert. (And yes, we'll sing "Happy Birthday.") Those who donate \$1000 or more

UPCOMING BOAT DIVES				
Sun	Mar. 8	<i>Great Escape</i>	Santa Barbara Island	\$160/175
Sat	21	<i>Great Escape</i>	Catalina (Shp Rck/Egle Rf)	140/155
Sun	Apr. 5	<i>Great Escape</i>	San Clemente (NW Harbor)	165/180
Sat	18	<i>Sea Bass</i>	<i>Palawan/Avalon/Dminatr</i>	140/155
Sun	May 3	<i>Great Escape</i>	Farnsworth/Cat. backside	150/165
Wed	6	All boats	Chamber Day Benefit	\$90
Sat	16	<i>Sea Bass</i>	••• Oil Rigs •••	145/160
Sun	31	<i>Sea Bass</i>	<i>Star Scotland/Palos Verdes</i>	150/165

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.

will also be invited to do a 165-foot dive in the Chamber itself. (A medical waiver will be required of anyone doing this.)

But what a great way to celebrate our Chamber's 35th birthday and have a good time doing it too. We've only got 35 candles on the cake and once they're gone, they're gone. So be sure to sign up and sponsor your candle today.



BUY T-SHIRTS AHEAD OF TIME

For the first time ever, you can buy extra t-shirts ahead of time on-line through our secure server. You can choose from either our daytime shirt or our Chamber Evening shirt. In the past, the Evening shirt was only available at the evening event but now you can get one of your very own.

You can also choose between having the shirt shipped to you (an extra \$5) or you can pick it up on May 6, either at the Chamber or at

the Aquarium of the Pacific. There's no extra charge for pick-up.

But be sure to get your shirt today and wear it with pride knowing your donations help keep our Chamber strong.



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. During any dive accident, while we are performing first aid, or administering oxygen, or doing whatever it takes, knowing that getting our diver to our Chamber alive means that he/she has an excellent chance of survival and full recovery, is not only a reassuring thought for the rescue personnel, but also helps us focus and intensify our efforts. Our Chamber is simply an invaluable safety net that we don't want to jeopardize losing. And your participation in any or all of the events will help insure its safe future.



AVALON CLEANUP

We had a great time (along with almost 400 other divers) at the 287th annual Avalon Underwater Cleanup. Conditions were much better this year than they were last year and lots of good stuff came up. Perhaps most interesting was when James Abbott was showing a bottle that he'd retrieved when out popped an octopus. he slithered around the bottle and on to James' hand before he was returned

to the safety of the ocean.

Over 2 TONS of trash was brought up and about \$18,000 was raised, which is split between Catalina Conservancy Divers and the Chamber. Best of all, a good time was had by all.

OTHER TIDBITS

- We've moved our March 8 trip to Santa Barbara to the *Great Escape*. You should also note that - because of Daylight Savings Time starting on the 8th - that we're leaving an hour earlier and will depart at 12:30AM.
- Did you hear about the octopus at the Santa Monica Aquarium out on the pier? Apparently he was able to get a tentacle around a

valve which basically released 200 gallons on water from his exhibit and flooded the Aquarium. They're inquisitive and smart creatures and can squeeze body parts (and sometimes themselves through amazingly small openings.

- A psychedelic-looking frogfish, found by dive instructors last year off of Ambon Island in Indonesia, has been classified as a new species, heretofore unknown. It just goes to show that it pays to pay attention and you never know what you'll find out there in the great blue sea.
- The MLPA process comes to our area March 3 & 4 with public sessions in Long Beach that include a chance for you to comment or present proposals. For full details, go to <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa>.

PICTURE PAGE - Chamber Days/Eves past

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2009)



Coast Guard helicopter



P.O. Box 11634
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WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM



Baywatch explaining what they do



Mike Madden at the Chamber controls



Merchandise table



Aquarium ready to receive guests