

2011 NABS Club of the Year

LABUE NEWS

Los Angeles Black Underwater Explorers



WELCOME TO THE LOS ANGELES BLACK UNDERWATER EXPLORERS

This year, LABUE celebrates its 20th year serving the Southern California community with a primary mission dedicated to expanding the knowledge and enjoyment of SCUBA diving among African Americans. Founded in the summer of 1992 by Desmond Morris and a few of his coworkers after attending the inaugural National Association of Black SCUBA Divers (NABS) Dive Summit in 1991; LABUE has grown from an informal club of friends interested primarily in beach dives, to a demographically diverse, well organized dive club offering a variety of SCUBA diving activities, social events, community outreach opportunities, youth involvement, and dive training programs. Beginning in 1996, under the leadership of Bob Simmons, LABUE developed into a more formal organization establishing club bylaws, incorporating financial controls and accountability, and creating a committee structure which addressed member interests in beach diving, boat diving, and technical diving. It was during this time that LABUE also established monthly membership and Board of Directors meetings, and began publishing the LABUE News newsletter.

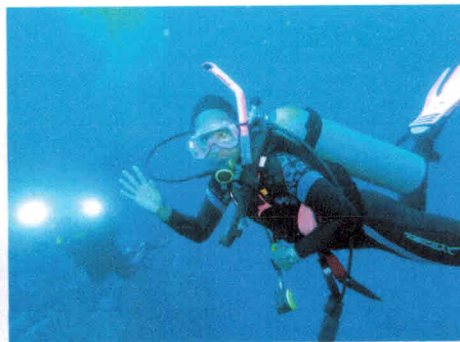
Dedicated to Expanding the Knowledge and Enjoyment of Scuba Diving among African Americans

Welcome to the Los Angeles Black Underwater Explorers (continued from Page 1)

Since 1997, LABUE members have enjoyed annual club sponsored warm water dive vacations that have included some of the world's most popular dive destinations including Jamaica, British Virgin Islands, Cozumel, Bonaire, Curacao, Hawaii, Utila (Honduras), Belize, Fiji, Dominica, Grand Cayman, Australia, and the Philippines. The backbone of LABUE's dive activities has always been regularly scheduled local boat dives and beach dives along the Southern California coast, including annual Catalina Island Weekend dive getaways and Dive-Camping Weekends. LABUE and its members have had a longstanding association with NABS, with members actively participating in NABS meetings and enjoying NABS Summits since LABUE's inception. LABUE was selected as NABS Club of the Year in 1999, the same year that LABUE established its Discover SCUBA Program designed to introduce our community to the sport of SCUBA diving. During these years, LABUE membership grew from a handful of dedicated divers to well over one hundred paid members.

LABUE has always been a social organization, with members and friends enjoying regular summer fundraisers and Holiday Gala events. Our past Fish Frys and Jamaica Fest, Hawaiian Luau, and Juke Joint "themed" fundraising events were always well attended and successful. For over ten years LABUE has supported the local SCUBA diving community as a sponsor of the annual Chamber Day/Evening fundraising event at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, benefiting the Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber. Ongoing community outreach involvement has included participation in many local underwater harbor cleanups, as well as regular active participation in community events such as the Compton Air Fair, and the Be The Match bone marrow donor organization. In 2005, LABUE made a major move, permanently changing its monthly membership meeting location from private homes to the California Museum of Natural History at Exposition Park.

With a change in leadership beginning in 2010, new LABUE President Richard Rice is concentrating on addressing the impact of demographic changes and a recovering US economy on the declining membership and growth of LABUE. In addition to continuing successful club activities of the past, LABUE is now focusing on making critical changes necessary to ensure its future success through outreach to the next generation of SCUBA divers who will be responsible for running LABUE in the future. LABUE is also focusing on addressing immediate member needs, expanding benefits to members, and encouraging more direct member participation in running the club. In 2010, LABUE secured official sponsorship from the Museum of Natural History, eliminating our meeting room costs and welcoming on board our Museum Sponsor, Leslie Harris. Leslie is a respected sea life expert and a Museum of Natural History sea life curator, bringing a valuable resource and source of knowledge to the club. We have greatly expanded the content of the LABUE News, the LABUE website (www.labue.org) and establishing the LABUE Facebook page (www.facebook.com/LABUEDIVERS) in 2011. These changes have been well received and have gained national recognition within the SCUBA diving community for their content and quality. We have revised the LABUE bylaws to include safe diving practices and expand LABUE committees and to encourage and facilitate member participation in LABUE leadership roles. LABUE members continue to look forward to and enjoy our ongoing events and dive activities including our scheduled monthly beach dives, our annual warm water dive vacations, Catalina Dive Weekend, Dive-Camp Weekend, our popular annual LABUE Photo Contest, and Holiday events. Our members are also encouraged by our revamped Youth Program along with our ongoing Discover SCUBA Program which will help to ensure that we succeed in educating and inspiring the next generation of youth to consider SCUBA diving as a lifelong sport or career.



LABUE MEMBERSHIP

As with other similar recreational organizations across the country, LABUE has been dealing with the challenges of recruiting new members and member retention in light of changing age demographics and a recovering US economy. From an annual membership ranging from 80-100 through the mid 2000s, our active membership slowly declined to less than 30 by 2009. Beginning in 2010, the new LABUE Board made it a goal to focus on member recruitment and to create membership value by providing tangible benefits exceeding the actual cost of membership. In addition to continuing successful club activities of the past, we have made the critical changes necessary to ensure LABUE's future success through outreach to the next generation of scuba divers who will be responsible for running LABUE in the future. We have expanded our website presence and embraced social media tools such as Facebook to attract and appeal to younger divers. LABUE is also focusing on addressing immediate member needs, encouraging more direct member participation in running the club and influencing LABUE's future direction.

Annual LABUE membership dues are \$30 for single and \$45 for a family membership. Lifetime membership is \$300. New members and members renewing their membership during the 1st quarter of each year receive \$10 in *LABUE Bucks* good for credit towards LABUE merchandise, dive trips, and other activities. All members receive our monthly newsletter, the *LABUE News*, and are provided with access to the member's only section of our website that features special content. Paid members attending our 2011 Holiday Dinner last December received gift certificates good for their 2012 club membership dues. For 2012, LABUE is providing a training incentive to encourage dive safety and to train more members in the use of our DAN O2 Rescue Pak which is available to members for all beach dive activities. 2012 paid members will receive a \$40 rebate for completing their O2 Provider certification from any recognized certification agency. We have also made special arrangements with one of our club's dive instructors to offer a 2-day CPR/First Aid/O2 Provider NAUI certification/re-certification for only \$80 (with the \$40 member rebate the total member cost is only \$40!). Our monthly membership meetings held at the California Natural History Museum provide a variety of interesting and informative programs on dive related topics including dive equipment, dive safety, marine life, travel, and ocean ecology. The meetings provide an opportunity for members, their guests, and the general public to get together to learn, socialize, and enjoy the delicious refreshments provided as part of our meetings. Funded by our membership dues, annual fundraising activities, and gift donations, LABUE awards over \$3500 in dive equipment, travel, entertainment, and dining door prizes at our annual Holiday Dinner, as well as over \$600 annually in door prizes awarded at our monthly Membership Meetings.

The new membership practices and incentives discussed above have been successful. Meeting attendance and participation in club activities has been increasing. We have already exceeded our 2012 membership goal with over 50 paid members.



BEACH DIVING

With dozens of diver friendly beaches within easy driving distance of Los Angeles, beach diving is still a popular alternative for active divers in LABUE. The LABUE Beach Diving Committee schedules monthly beach dive events along the coasts of Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, and Ventura Counties. Beach diving has become even more attractive with the cost of gas nearly doubling the cost of a dive boat over the past twenty years. Visibility on most beach dives can average over twenty feet with a wide assortment of sea life to be enjoyed on an outing that usually consists of two dives. LABUE beach divers are normally supported by a dive master and an experienced shore support team offering exit assistance if needed, DAN O2 Rescue Pak, first aid kit, cell phone and ample training to handle any emergency.



BOAT DIVING

Boat diving is an enjoyable part of the Southern California SCUBA diving scene. With the relatively nearby islands of Catalina, San Clemente, San Nicholas, Santa Barbara, and the Channel Islands in Ventura County; divers have access to some of the most pristine dive sites on the West Coast, available only by boat. LABUE members have always regularly booked spots on the many dive boats operating in Los Angeles, San Diego, and Ventura Counties. In the past, the LABUE Boat Dive Committee coordinated purchase of available spots on local dive boats for our members. Until 2006, LABUE annually chartered entire dive charter boats for up to 35 participating LABUE divers, and shared purchase of half boats with local dive shops. This provided a significant benefit for our members. By chartering whole or partial dive boats, LABUE was able to offer member prices for charter dive boats at wholesale, \$30 - \$40 below retail pricing; and was able to profit by selling unsold spots to non-members at normal retail prices.

The local dive boat charter industry has suffered from the downturn in the US economy over the last several years. Most dive boat operators have seen a significant decline in customers, have reduced their scheduled trips, and increased their prices due to the rise in fuel prices. Our practice of paying in advance for an entire dive charter boat and trying to sell the spots at wholesale prices has proven to be financially risky and LABUE has suspended this practice. Recognizing that many members are still interested in local boat dives, LABUE's Boat Diving Committee has provided a website notification feature allowing members looking for dive buddies to join them on upcoming local boat dives to post notices on our website or on Facebook. We will continue to annually reevaluate our boat dive policy and may reinstitute whole and partial boat charters in the future as our membership increases and as the US economy improves.



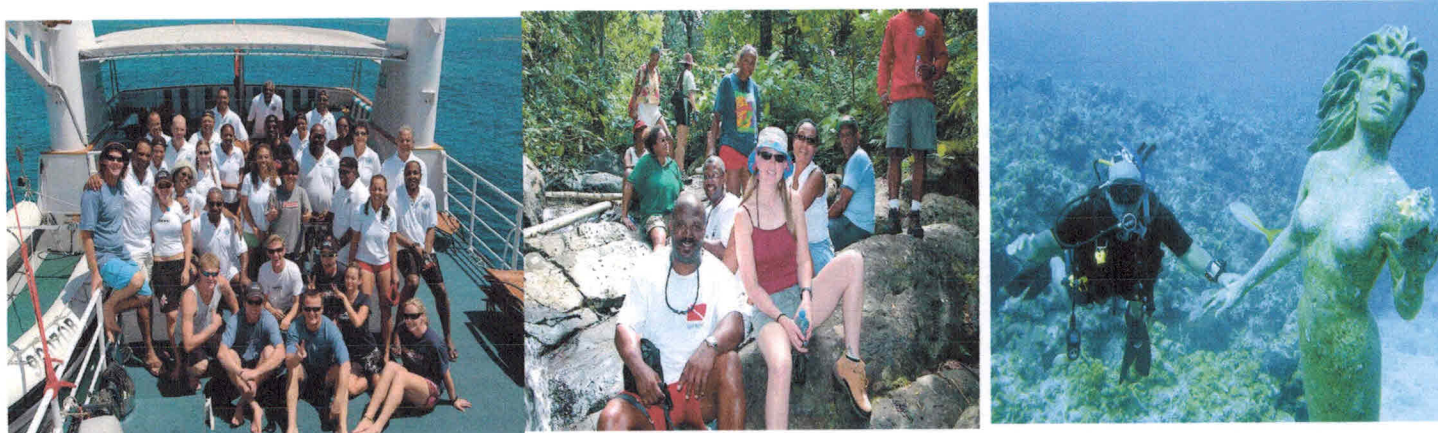
DISCOVER SCUBA

LABUE's Discover SCUBA Program offers the public a the chance to experience the sport of SCUBA diving. An instructor and assistants, all LABUE volunteers, guide participants through a classroom session followed by the opportunity to try out SCUBA equipment on an optional shallow dive in a swimming pool under close supervision. The cost to participants is only \$15 and includes both classroom and pool sessions, SCUBA equipment, and refreshments. Discover SCUBA has proved so successful that a second session was added each year to accommodate the demand. Spring and Fall Discover SCUBA sessions are scheduled each year. Participants are referred by LABUE members and in response to LABUE advertisements published in community newspapers and our website. Discover SCUBA helps us meet our goal of expanding the knowledge and enjoyment of SCUBA diving among African Americans.



LABUE DIVE VACATIONS

LABUE has a long history of sponsoring exciting annual warm water dive vacations to some of the best destinations around the world, at a reasonable price. Since 1997, LABUE members have enjoyed annual club sponsored warm water dive vacations that have included some of the world's most popular dive destinations including Jamaica, British Virgin Islands, Cozumel, Hawaii, Utila (Honduras), Belize, Fiji, Dominica, Grand Cayman, Australia, and the Philippines. Our 2012 trip was successfully completed May 5th -15th to Bonaire and Curacao. We will be traveling to Malaysia for our 2013 trip and to the South Pacific islands of Palau and Truk in 2014. Planned and managed by our Trip Planning Committee, our goal is to offer dive vacations that provide the best value. Recognizing the dive travel choices available to our members, we have been successful in offering great trips at a cost lower than individual members can find on their own from dive ships, travel agents, or on the internet. As part of our trip planning philosophy, all group discounts, rebates, free rooms, and other group booking incentives are passed on to LABUE and the trip participants as savings to reduce the overall trip costs. LABUE Planning Committee members and LABUE officers, including those that may also be travel professionals, receive no commissions, discounts, or other compensation for their work in planning LABUE dive vacations, resulting in the best trip for the lowest cost. LABUE dive vacations are open to non-members as well as LABUE members and their guests. There are no non-member fees charged for members of NABS dive clubs wishing to participate in a LABUE dive vacation.



LABUE YOUTH PROGRAM

The mission and goal of the LABUE Youth Program is to **educate and inspire** young people to take an interest and pursue learning about marine sciences and important marine issues such as the ongoing global ecological challenges; and to develop an interest in aquatic hobbies such as SCUBA diving. This program relies on LABUE member volunteers. LABUE has incorporated available *Oceans for Youth Foundation* (www.oceansforyouth.org) resources providing a structured written guide that helps volunteers use their personal dive knowledge and experiences to develop interesting educational and inspirational presentations for young people. It also provides a DVD containing more than a dozen short marine life videos that can be incorporated with the volunteer's personal knowledge and experiences, photographs, and videos to make a complete and interesting presentation. The target audiences for these presentations include primary and secondary schools, youth organizations, churches, and presentations at public events. LABUE volunteers can also invite interested youth and adults to participate in our regularly scheduled Discover SCUBA events to further enhance their interest. For youth with interested and involved responsible parents or guardians willing to join them in becoming certified, they are welcome to participate as LABUE members in our dive activities; otherwise, their in-water activities with LABUE will be limited to Discover SCUBA. LABUE's Youth Committee responsibilities also include researching and identifying other available programs designed for youth participations. It is intended that LABUE's role in these programs will be as an advocate and resource center. LABUE will provide public information and support by advertising in general public media, our website, and the LABUE newsletter.



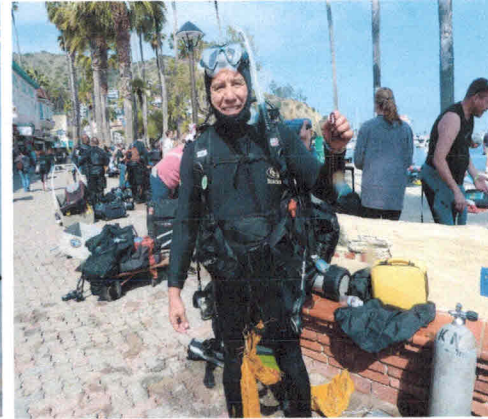
BE THE ONE RUN

Each Fall at Shoreline Village in Long Beach, LABUE members, family, and friends join "Team LABUE" to participate in the Be The One Run. The goal of this annual event is to raise money and encourage bone marrow donors supporting the *Be The Match Registry* (www.marow.org), uniting communities nationwide to help patients with diseases like leukemia, lymphoma, and sickle cell. The event features a 5K run/walk option for both adults and youth; and offers chip timing for those runners interested in a competitive experience. The 1K fun run or walk is for adults or youth and for children ages five and younger a short Tot Trot is offered. November 2011, Team LABUE exceeded our modest contribution goal of \$500 by raising over \$1700 to benefit the *Be The Match Registry*. LABUE's participation in this event is in memory of our longtime member and friend Charles Heath who passed away in 2010 of leukemia.



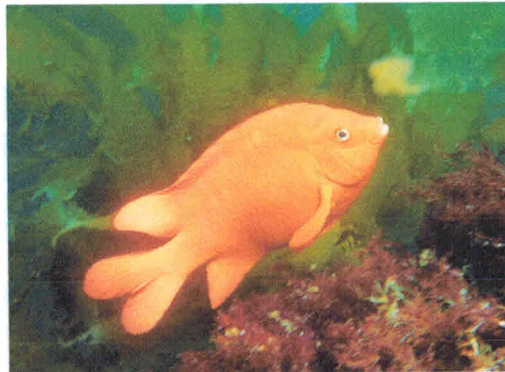
AVALON HARBOR UNDERWATER CLEANUP

Each February, clear cold waters always greet LABUE divers and many other fellow Southern California divers for the Annual Avalon Harbor Cleanup held on Catalina Island. Proceeds from this event benefit the *Catalina Conservancy*, *Divers Given Fund for Ocean Conservation*, and the *Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber*. Over the years, this event has grown to become one of the most popular dive events in Southern California and is the only time diving is permitted in the harbor, providing a unique opportunity for SCUBA divers. Last February, LABUE divers were joined by over 400 others in this annual event. After registration, divers begin entering the water at 9am after being assigned to one of 3 locations, the Green Pier, 20 Steps, and Casino Point. A wide variety of trash, debris, and lost equipment is pulled from the water and put on display topside. Awards are given in several categories for unusual items recovered by the divers. In addition to over \$4000 in raffle prizes awarded, goodie bags are handed out to all participants that include T-shirts, knit dive caps, and discounts coupons for various activities including Catalina Eco-Tours.



CASINO POINT-CATALINA ISLAND WEEKEND

Near perfect California beach dive conditions always welcome LABUE divers to Catalina Island's Casino Point underwater park. In spite of sand and silt kicked up by the numerous divers enjoying the site, visibility usually averages well over thirty feet. Casino Point offers an abundance of interesting sea life including bat rays, horned sharks, lobster, giant sheep crab, and colorful red anemone; as well as the usual assortment of Garibaldi, halibut, sheephead, and seniorita fish. Divers also get to explore the park's several sunken boats that serve as a habitat for many of these creatures. After completing dives and packing gear LABUE members gather for a casual lunch and welcome libations at a favorite Catalina restaurant, Antonio's, before returning to Long Beach on the Catalina Express completing a rewarding dive day in Southern California.



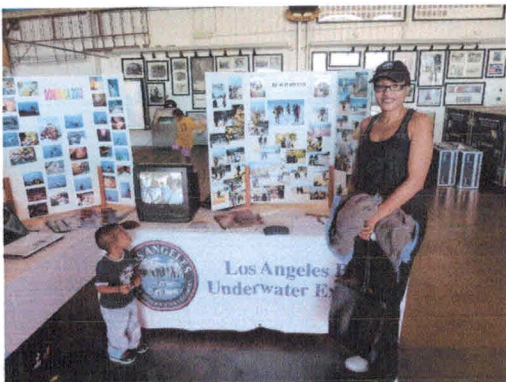
LABUE DIVE-CAMP WEEKEND

Every Fall LABUE members pack their camping gear along with their dive gear and take a short drive up the coast to experience some unique camaraderie around the campfire. Tents and sleeping bags, delicious pot-luck dinners, beach dives, dinner theater, ghost stories, and fellowship. In addition to the unique ocean and hiking opportunities, this October's scheduled event at Sycamore Canyon will allow campers to experience the annual Monarch butterfly migration and breathtaking vistas that many world tourists travel miles to see.



ANNUAL COMPTON AIR FAIR

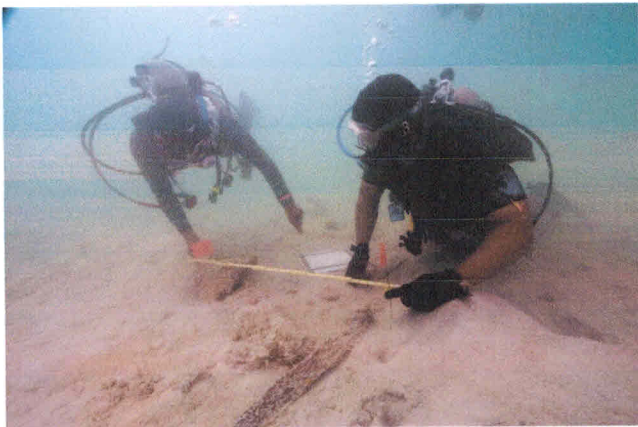
Each year LABUE participates in the annual Compton Air Fair at the Woodley Airport in Compton with an interactive LABUE SCUBA diving display. This worthwhile community event is sponsored by the California Black Aviation Association (CBAA). Daryl Cullins is the current president of the CBAA and is also a founding member of LABUE. The pioneering Tuskegee Airmen are always on hand at the Air Fair providing a valuable historical perspective to the event. The Air Fair also features exciting exhibitions including aerobatic flights, sky diving, musical and dancing entertainment, and displays such as Boeing's flight simulator and robot demonstration. Events such as the Compton Air Fair provide an important community outreach opportunity for LABUE.



THE SEARCH FOR SUNKEN SLAVE SHIPS

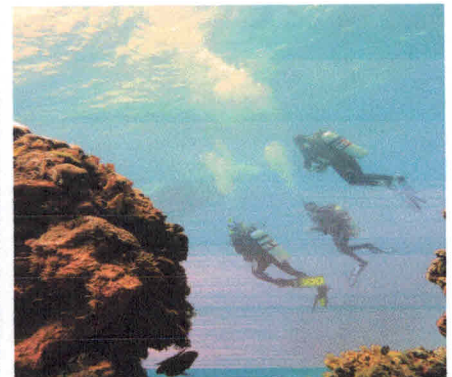
There is currently nothing more exciting for LABUE members than the new-found interest in searching for and documenting sunken slave ships, both locally and around the world. LABUE members are involved in this effort through Diving with a Purpose (DWP). This program provides divers with underwater archeological skills necessary to gather data used by trained archeologists to identify ancient ships, including those used in the slave trade. These skills include trilateration mapping and creation of in-situ drawings used to accurately document ship wreck sites. As part of DWP's activities, LABUE divers have been involved in the search for the Spanish slave ship Guerrero which sank in the waters off Florida's Key Biscayne National Park in 1827. The Guerrero, originally researched by Florida historian Gail Swanson, was also the subject of Karuna Eberl's documentary film, "The Guerrero Project", which tells its story. For the past eight years divers have been training and diving in the Key Biscayne waters in hope of identifying the Guerrero from among the more than 100 sunken ships in this location.

On the other side of the world, a PBS documentary film entitled 'Secrets of the Dead- Slave Ship Mutiny' tells the intriguing story of a 1766 slave ship called the Meermin that sank off the coast of South Africa in route from Madagascar in 1766; and of the current efforts to locate its remains. LABUE and its members are aware, involved and stand ready to support and participate in the search for sunken slave ships around the world.



LABUE AND THE WORLD

Website technology has helped put www.labue.org into the fast lane of the information super highway and brought the world to LABUE's doorstep. Now LABUE's new Facebook page, www.facebook.com/labuedivers, will enhance all the informational benefits of its website and its monthly newsletter by making LABUE even more accessible to the world. And what is the world finding out about LABUE? LABUE is a dive club that is constantly looking for ways to introduce the sport of SCUBA diving to those who may otherwise miss the opportunity. LABUE is a dive club that is constantly trying to connect to its members, nonmembers, divers and non-divers by offering more than just diving. LABUE offers a lifestyle of adventures with old friends and new friends who dive, sail, bowl, travel, ski, bike, skate, party and just basically enjoy life and open the door for others to come in.



JOIN LABUE NOW:

P.O. BOX 90069, LOS ANGELES, CA 90009
(323) 299-3798 (Phone and Fax)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

For the Year _____

General Information:

Name: _____ Birthdate: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____
Fax: _____ E-Mail: _____
Referred By: _____
Emergency Contact Name: _____

Certification Information:

Year First Certified: _____ No. of Dives _____ Date of Last Dive: _____ o Warm Water o Beach o Boat

Agency Certification

Diving Preferences: o Beach Dives o Boat Dives o Warm Water Dives

Amount: \$30.00 o Individual Membership o New o Renewal

\$45.00 o Family Membership o New o Renewal

\$300.00 o Lifetime Individual

\$450.00 o Lifetime Family

Please make checks payable to: "Los Angeles Black Underwater Explorers" or "LABUE"

WAIVER

I _____, hereby apply for membership in the Los Angeles Black Underwater Explorers (LABUE) and agree to abide by all club rules, I acknowledge that I will be voluntarily participating in LABUE events with full knowledge of the potential dangers of scuba diving and diving related activities. In consideration of your acceptance of this application and my membership in LABUE, I agree to assume all risks of bodily injury, death or property damage, arising out of or in connection with my participation in LABUE activities. I also agree to release, indemnify and hold harmless LABUE and their members and officers from any liability arising out of or in connection with my participation in LABUE activities. I further agree that this release and indemnification is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by the laws of the State of California. I have carefully read this release and fully understand its contents. I sign this release of my own free will and with full knowledge of its significance.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

LOS ANGELES
BLACK UNDERWATER EXPLORERS

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