

Channel Islands Divers



NEXT CLUB MEETING:

March 18th, 2026
Black Bear Diner
2401 East Harbor Blvd.,
Ventura 93003

Socializing and Dinner: 6:00 PM
Meeting: 6:30 PM

*Special early start at
5:00 for Easter egg
decorating!*

BOTTOM TIMES

By Club President Delbert Stewart



Greetings and salutations, amigos!

Spring is just around the corner, and daylight-saving time has returned. Those 7:00 pm sunsets are a gift! It means something special — the chance to finish a day's work and still chase the ocean before nightfall.

I am counting the days until my dentist gives me the green light to get back in the water. I miss the cold plunge of the Pacific. There is something about that first rush of cold water that washes the day away: stress, noise, deadlines — all of it dissolving in a single breath.

One of my favorite moments is arriving at the shore just as the sun begins to sink. Floating quietly on the surface, absorbing the beauty of the life around me while watching the last light shimmer across the water. The ocean turns gold for a moment, and it almost feels like you are dancing on the surface with the sun as it slowly slips beneath the horizon.

Then you descend. The world softens. Colors fade away while your torch leads the way. The reef begins its quiet night shift — fish weaving through the kelp, lobsters emerging from their tiny homes, and there is always that little funny-shaped crab that seems to come out to greet me.

No surface thoughts to wrestle with during this time; just my breath. Bubbles rising.

And when the dive is done, you surface to the night sky. The moon welcomes you back, and you release that uncontrollable smile of peace.

What a dive.

Diving has a way of pulling you out of your own head and back into the moment. Just you, the ocean, and the fish going about their mysterious business.

With spring arriving, it is the perfect time to get back in the water with your fellow CID dive tribe. We have some great events coming up, including our **Underwater Easter Egg Hunt at Carpinteria State Beach on March 28**. Also tied to this event is the easter egg decorating contest which will take place at this month's general meeting. **Doors open at 5pm** for this fun treat.

This year our dive master Dan Perdue is leading the event, and I am super excited to see what he has in store for us. It will be his first event as Dive Coordinator, so please come out and support him and the club.

This is a free club event, complete with the classics — burgers and hot dogs on the grill — and of course the highlight of the day: the underwater egg hunt! What prizes are tied to which eggs... well, that is for you to discover.

Bring your friends and family. Just be sure to RSVP so we can get a good **headcount** and buy enough food to feed you all. **Please bring a side dish to share! Last names A-M, bring appetizer or side dish; N-Z bring dessert.** The club will provide water, but if you'd like something else, bring it!

More than anything, this is about welcoming spring and kicking off another great year of diving together. If you are new to the club, bring your bestie... easy-peasy.

I hope to see many of you out there having fun, getting wet, and starting the season off right.

This month's club meeting also brings something special. Our very own webmaster **Laura Forsyth** and her partner in crime **Eric Taylor** will be sharing highlights from their epic adventure in Tanzania.

It is not their first time presenting to the club, and their talks are among my personal favorites — always plenty of incredible photos backed by a great narrative, along with their charismatic and humorous storytelling. It is the perfect evening to pair with **dinner** and friends.

For the weekend of July 18, we've planned a trip to **La Bufadora, Baja California**, about three hours south of San Diego near Punta Banda. This quaint little village just south of Ensenada is famous for its blowhole, but the real treat for us is the diving. A short panga ride takes divers out to explore big walls,

colorful reefs, and plenty of fish. The plan is to drive down Friday, dive Saturday, and then some may head home Sunday while others — like myself — may stretch the adventure and return Monday.

I have not dived this area yet, but I have heard great things and it sounds like it is definitely worth the trip. Mark your calendars. The trip agenda will be posted in **April's newsletter**. Baja diving, good food, ocean views, and the CID dive tribe... sounds like a pretty great weekend to me.

We are also looking to add another event to the calendar, the return of our traditional Veterans Day **weekend trip to Catalina Island**, complete with many of the classic activities you have all come to enjoy over the years. All I need from you right now is to read the short article included in this newsletter and let me know if you are interested in joining the trip. I am trying to get an early headcount so we can begin reserving rooms. The last time we organized this trip, the group-rate rooms sold out so the sooner I hear from you, the better.

I am looking forward to diving with you all!

Join us this Wednesday, March 18: 5:00 pm Easter egg decorating contest; 6:00 pm dinner/socializing, and 6:30 pm club meeting.



MARCH PRESENTATION

Laura Forsyth & Eric Taylor Safari in Tanzania on Land and Undersea



In October 2025, CID members Laura & Eric set off on a month-long safari of a lifetime in East Africa. Laura insists that Eric got completely carried away with the itinerary, while Eric maintains he relinquished some of his more adventurous plans. With expert guidance from Francisca Jah of the African and Oriental Travel Company, the trip blended ocean and lake diving with wildlife safaris and visits to some of the country's most historic and culturally significant places. We dove in the Indian Ocean around Zanzibar and Mafia Island, then headed inland to snorkel and dive in Lake Tanganyika—one of the world's largest freshwater lakes and home to an incredible variety of endemic cichlid species.

Along the way, we visited four of Tanzania's national parks, went hunting with the Hadzabe people (one of the last remaining hunter-gatherer tribes), traveled to Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika—the endpoint of the slave trading route in East Africa, and the site where Stanley famously met Livingstone. We went chimpanzee trekking from primatologist Jane Goodall's camp in Gombe, where she conducted her groundbreaking chimpanzee research, and wandered the crowded roads of Dar es Salaam and Stone Town.

Presenter Bios

Eric and Laura endeavor to be semiretired and are determined to pack in as much adventure travel as possible. Devoted divers, Eric first certified at UC Davis in the 1970s and has 1000s of (unlogged) dives; Laura, initially trained in 1986, recertified in 2015 with about 250 dives so far. For many years, they dove primarily on Grand Turk Island in the Turks and Caicos, where they have a cottage. Recently, they decided to rent out the cottage in order to dive some of the rest of the (warm water) world. Laura maintains a small psychology practice, and Eric consults part-time in real estate development. A life-long aquarist, Eric once kept a tank devoted solely to Tanganyikan cichlids, so seeing these fish in their natural habitat was a dream come true.



MARCH 18TH EGGSTRA-SPECIAL EGG COLORING CONTEST

**Come early {5:00} to our March club meeting to decorate
eggs for our egg-stream underwater egg hunt!**

There will be prizes for your creative egg décor – no yolk!!!



**The Bunny Dives
Again!**

EGG
DECORATING
Mar 18th, 5 PM
before the
meeting

CID's 2nd EGGstravaganza Easter Egg Hunt & BBQ

Carpinteria State Beach 🐡 Sat March 28th 🐰 8:00-2
8:00 Gear up, 11:30 BBQ

The Board will grill burgers & dogs, members and guests are invited
to bring sides, snacks & desserts. Everyone welcome!

Bunny ears strongly encouraged!

Attendance = points towards the next Participation prize drawing!

Member Reports, Local Dives, Special Events

Member Dive Reports



The Baja Baleeners!

Baleen whales, scuba, fishing with generalized exploring and relaxing – hard to beat that!!

L-R: Steve Peterson; Melanie Kemmann; Brandi Sisting; Eric Taylor; Cindy Doyon; Don Sisting; Mike Doyon.

Several club members took advantage of a general invitation from Brandi, Don, and Steve to join them on a Baja

adventure this February. As of March 6, Don and Steve are still down there being Baja beach bums.

The adventure started in the Target parking lot in Moorpark February 19 at 5:30 am. Driving south to our first camp took until the afternoon of the 20th, via an overnight stop in San Felipe. We awoke on the 21st ready to go see and play with Grey Whales in the Ojo de Liebre lagoon outside of Guerrero Negro. We did this for two days, with the second day giving us the opportunity to touch, pet and some even kissed the whales along the side of the boat.

Don, Brandi, Melanie and I next when over the mountains to Loreto on the Gulf of California side where Don got Brandi on a plane back to the US and Melanie and I went for several scuba dives over two days on sites north and south of Loreto. We got an additional bonus following several Blue Whales offshore of Isla Carmen. The diving was classic mid-peninsula Baja diving with innumerable fish, sea lions and the northern limits of hard corals. After Loreto, Don, Melanie and I went back to the Pacific side to a beach camp Steve had set up near Ascuncion. At this point we were all on “Baja Time”, slowing down and enjoying the day as it unfolded. We fished by dinghy, saw Grey Whales on their return trip north and chatted up the local lobster fishermen, with great results.

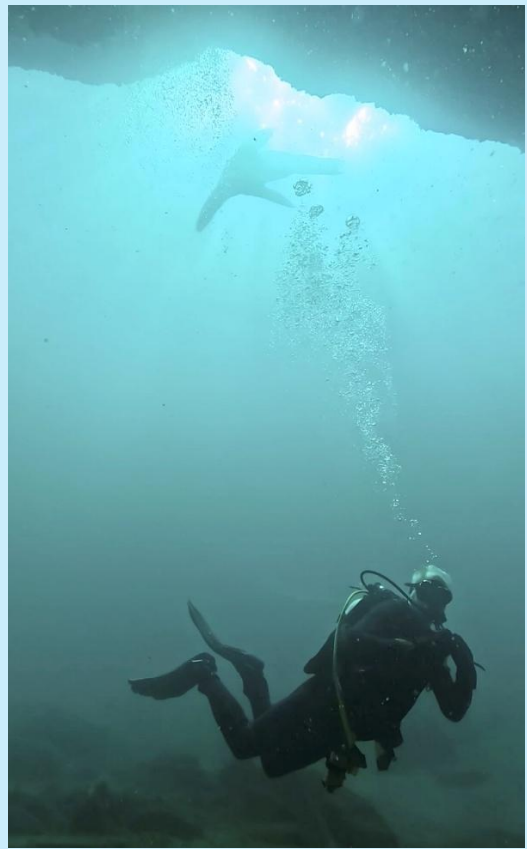
Trip summary provided by Eric Taylor



Gray whale petting!



Don, Eric & Melanie enjoying the local action.



Adventure Travels: Exploring Thailand

By Storm Thurston-Keller

PADI's motto, "Seek Adventure, Save the Ocean," resonates with every diver for different reasons—challenge, skill-building, or a pure love for the deep. I began my journey for all those reasons, but while exploring world-class sites in Thailand's Andaman Sea, I discovered a deeper calling: becoming an ocean ambassador.

The trip was born from a conversation aboard the *Spectre*, a local dive boat. Ken Kollwitz, a veteran of the Channel Islands Dive Club, was planning a new expedition combining a live aboard dive trip with land-based exploration through his company, Channel Islands Dive Adventures (CID sponsor). Having organized trips from the Red Sea to Fiji, Ken poured his expertise into this itinerary. My friend Remy Gridley and I didn't hesitate to sign up. Other CID members also joined the trip, including Ken's wife Tessie, Laura Forsyth, Norm Jordanhazy, Dana Werner, Burt Elliott, and Rebecca (Remy) Birchfield. Past members Ray & Cheire Busard and Jan Kaufman also joined in.

Our adventure began in Phuket with an immersive tour of the Phang Nga Province. We explored the stunning King's Temple and the giant Buddha in the "lost valley" of the Mountain of Hummingbirds. Soon, we traded land for sea, boarding the *M/V Smiling Seahorse* for an eight-day liveaboard journey. Traversing the Andaman Sea from south to north, we explored four national marine parks: Surin, Similan, Koh Lanta and Tarutao.



Life on board followed the perfect rhythm: Eat, Dive, Sleep, Repeat. In over 22 dive sites, we encountered a kaleidoscope of life, including sea turtles, octopuses, peacock mantis shrimp, and swirling schools of barracuda. The pinnacle was *Richelieu Rock*, globally ranked as a top ten site, where "symphonies" of jacks and barracuda orbited us in a breathtaking display of the ocean's vitality.

Graphic courtesy of the M/V Smiling Seahorse

Beyond the scenery, the *Smiling Seahorse* crew taught me the true meaning of responsible diving. Conservation wasn't just a buzzword; it was integrated into every meal and briefing. From reef-friendly products and minimal food waste to PADI AWARE coral-reef education, I realized that being an ambassador happens both in and out of the water. It's in the sunscreen we choose, the gear we repair instead of replace, and the used dive boots we donate to a new owner.

The journey concluded with a final inland trek through the Ranong Province and the lush jungles of Khao Sok National Park. We swapped our fins for hiking boots and bamboo rafts, spotting civets and Great Hornbills by day and learning indigenous survival techniques by a campfire at night. Gliding down the river on a traditional raft, watching mangrove snakes coil in the trees, it was the perfect end to a transformative trip.

I returned home with more than just memories; I returned with a mission. Whether I'm at depth with fellow club members or on land, I carry a newfound commitment to protecting the blue heart of our planet. Blue seas and happy diving!

The Smiling Seahorse is highly recommended; check them out here:

<https://www.thesmilingseahorse.com/>



Ken



Storm, Laura & Griffin

Catalina Veterans Day Club Weekend Trip

November 7-9, 2026

Our club has a tradition of spending the weekend around the Veterans Day holiday on Catalina Island, staying at the Pavilion Hotel in Avalon right along the waterfront. It's an amazing venue, with a fire pit for cozy socializing, continental breaky, evening wine & cheese social hour, and a community room for our Saturday potluck dinner. They even offer luggage service from the ferry terminal! We had to skip last year because the Pavilion Hotel was being renovated, but it is now open again! So... who wants to head back to our little island paradise this year?



CATALINA TRIP AT A GLANCE

Estimated Cost: \$231/night per person total, including tax

Cost Includes: Round-trip Catalina Express tickets from Long Beach

Parking Not Included: Mainland parking at ferry terminal is \$25/day. There *might* be cheaper spots, but a ride-share or taxi would then be needed to reach the ferry terminal.

Minimum group needed: 10

If we can get at least 10 people interested, we may be able to negotiate a group rate at the Pavilion. Before we start jumping through those hoops, I would like to get a sense of how many people are interested. So please email me back ASAP

In the past, we were able to get a group discount of about \$112 per room, and hopefully we can do that again. However, the hotel might now be owned by a different company, so that discount is not guaranteed this year.

Current package rates (without any group discount):

- **\$462.61 per room per night** – taxes included (two occupants per room)
- Includes **two round-trip Catalina Express tickets** (about \$100 value each)

Hotel Details

- Check-in: 4:00 PM – 10:00 PM (we will ask about early check-in)
- Check-out: 11:00 AM

Epic Agenda – Would you expect anything less?

Saturday

Early morning: Catalina Express from Long Beach to Avalon Harbor

Late morning/early afternoon: Explore the island or **dive with club members at Casino Point**

6:30 PM: Potluck Dinner at the Pavilion Hotel (bring a dish to share or buy something on the island)

Sunday

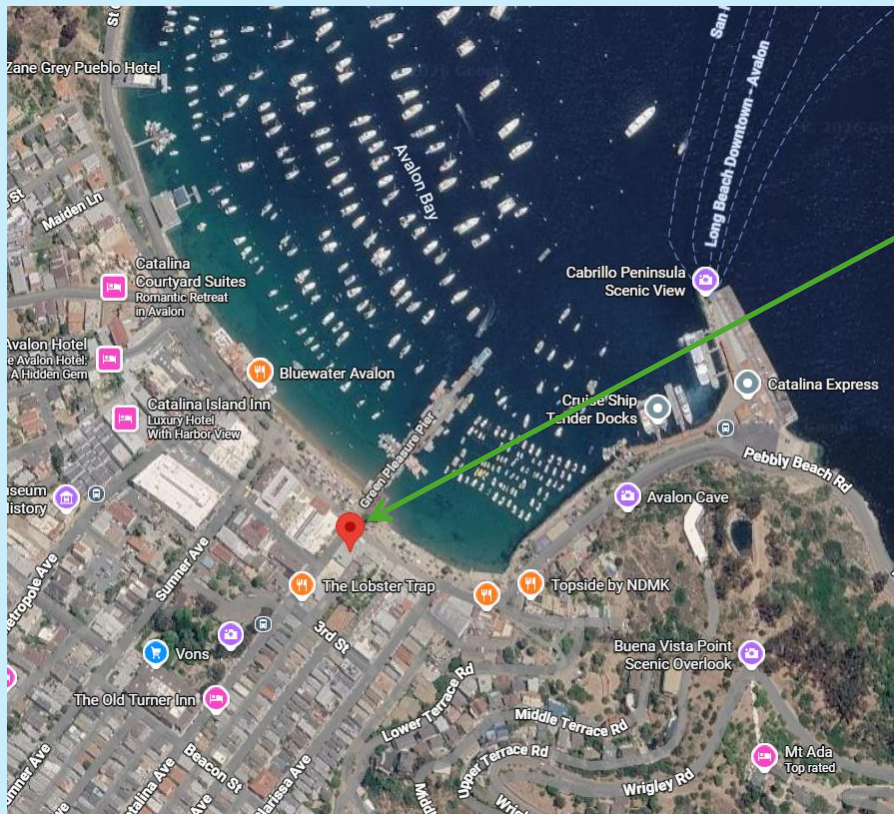
8:00 AM – 2:00 PM: Boat dive aboard the Scuba Cat (two-tank dive – \$185)

or enjoy island activities such as guided tours, submarine rides, kayaking, hiking the botanical gardens, or zip lining. Cut-throat miniature golf, anyone?

Monday

7:00 AM: More diving at Casino Point

11:00 AM: Check out of the hotel and enjoy the island on your own. Catalina Express back to Long Beach at the time of your choosing.



Pavilion Hotel

If you are interested in joining us, please let Del know ASAP

<https://www.visitcatalinaisland.com/pavilion-hotel>

BONAIRE LIONFISH HUNTING



During their recent trip to Bonaire, Mike & Teresa Cunningham took a lionfish hunting class to learn how to safely remove this non-native fish from the environment.

Lionfish are native to the Indo-Pacific but have spread far & wide to other warm-water habitats where they are an invasive, destructive species. As a top predator, lionfish can out-compete native fish for food and space, as well as prey on native species including parrotfish. Parrotfish are essential for a healthy reef ecosystem because they help control excessive algal growth.



Photo source: Wikipedia

FEBRUARY RAFFLE WINNERS

Prizes sponsored by SC Diving



Dana Werner and new dive hood.



Viktoria Burmann with XS Scuba Compact Console Retractor.



Jackie Pinson with her new Tusa snorkel.



Stormy Thurston-Keller with her new diver parka – with CID club logo!!

MARCH RAFFLE PRIZES



Relaxgiant Scuba
Tank Holder



Sponsored By



Dive Light



Dive Knife



XS Scuba Deluxe
Zipper Boots

RAFFLE

1. **Regular:** Buy tickets at the meeting and those are the tickets we draw.
2. **Progressive:** This drawing is pulled from all the raffle tickets you've bought over the Quarter.
3. **Participation:** Points are given for your participation in our club activities (attending meetings, going on club events, posting to our Facebook page, and contributing to the newsletter).

RAFFLE SCHEDULE

January	<i>Progressive</i>
February	Participation
March	Regular
April	<i>Progressive</i>
May	Participation
June	Regular
July	<i>Progressive</i>
August	Participation
September	Regular
October	<i>Progressive</i>
November	Participation
December	No drawing in December

Teaser Alert: The April Progressive Raffle prize will be an Insta360 X3 Camera Dive Kit, sponsored by UltraLight Camera Solutions/Channel Islands Dive Adventures (*thank you, Ken Kollwitz!!*)



CLUB CALENDAR

MARCH	APRIL	MAY
14: Shore dive TBA 18: Club Meeting, regular raffle drawing Speaker: Laura Forsyth & Eric Talor; Tanzania Travels 24: Board Meeting 28: Underwater Easter egg hunt, Carpinteria State Beach Park	11: Shore dive TBA 15: Club Meeting, progressive raffle drawing Speaker: Darvil McBride; Tips from a World Champion; Sport Trends & How to Hunt Smart 18: Beach dive, Point Dume 21: Board Meeting	9: Shore dive TBA 20: Club Meeting, participation raffle drawing, Speaker: TBA 23: Spectre boat dive; no beach dive 26: Board Meeting 30-31: Long Beach Scuba Show; beach diving at Veterans Park.
JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
13: Shore dive, TBA 17: Club Meeting, regular raffle drawing, Speaker: TBA 20: Beach dive, TBA 23: Board Meeting	11: Shore dive, TBA 15: Club Meeting, progressive raffle drawing, Speaker: TBA 18: La Bufadora, Baja 21: Board Meeting	8: Shore dive, TBA 19: Club Meeting, participation raffle drawing, Speaker: TBA 22: Avalon, Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber 25: Board Meeting

Upcoming Events

Date	Location	Description
28-Mar	Carpinteria State Beach	Easter egg hunt/dive, BBQ, and camping
11-Apr	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
18-Apr	Point Dume	Club dive with beach clean-up
9-May	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
23-May	Spectre boat dive	Sign up now open!! 
30-May	Veterans Park/Scuba Show	Morning dive at Veterans Park
31-May	Veterans Park/Scuba Show	Morning dive at Veterans Park
13-Jun	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
20-Jun	Deer Creek	Club dive with beach clean-up
11-Jul	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
18-Jul	Ensenada/La Bufadora	Small boats take divers to drop off near the blow hole. Supper sleepy little village. Great food. Camping nearby.
8-Aug	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
22-Aug	Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber	Dive to 165 feet; tour the USC Catalina Hyperbaric Chamber
12-Sep	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
12-Sep	Refugio State Beach Park	Yearly club BBQ, dive (and potentially camping) weekend
10-Oct	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
17-Oct 	Cozumel	Trip abroad; still room for more!
24-Oct	Point Lobos	Weekend trip to Monterey
31-Oct	Underwater Pumpkin carving	Sponsored by SC diving, location TBD
14-Nov	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
21-Nov	Santa Cruz trip	Club boat owners meet at Scorpion Cove for a group day of diving and hiking. Members who cannot fit on boats will travel via Island Packers.
12-Dec	Check Facebook	Club sponsor SC Diving will guide this dive.
19-Dec	Laguna Beach	Road trip for the last dive of the year

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP: 98

Thank you to all renewing members!!

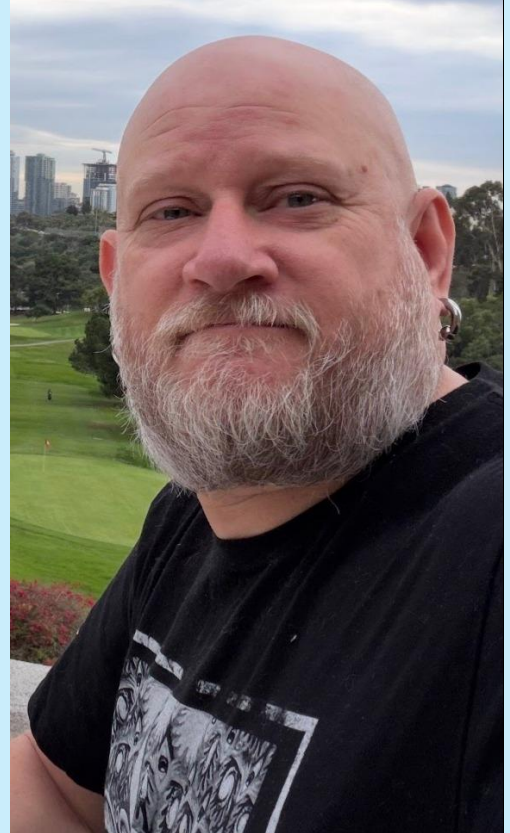
Welcome to our five newest members!!



Shirley Irwin



Brenden Irwin



Chuck Torres



Kelly Sherwood



Madeline Buresh

Please see our website for member benefits

<https://www.channelislandsdivers.org/membership>

Membership Policy: Club policy is to drop members from the roster
THREE MONTHS AFTER MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION

Membership Prices: Renewing Membership: Single = \$30; Family = \$45

New Membership: Single = \$40; Family = \$55

Please mail renewals to: CID Membership, P.O Box 5801, Ventura, CA 93005

Renew by Zelle: cidtreasurer92@gmail.com



Board of Directors

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100 percent *human*
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SPONSORS CORNER

Our sponsors generously offer discounts to our members! You *must* show your membership card to reap this benefit. See Rob Johnson, our Membership Coordinator, to receive your very own card.



Websites:

- <https://www.rec2tecscuba.com/>
- <https://www.scdiving.com/>
- <https://islandpackers.com/>
- <https://scubasolutionsca.com/>
- <https://channelislandsdiveadventures.com/>
- <http://ulcs.com>
- <https://maverickunderseadivers.com/>