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SCUBA & H₂O

A D V E N T U R E



Festive Fiji



**Growing
Divers in NY**
Harbor School



**Orange
Beach, Alabama**
"Vitamin Sea" Reefs



**Diving
the Ozarks**
Local Missouri

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We encourage readers to participate in determining the content of this publication by giving us their opinions on the types of articles they would like to see. We invite letters to the editor, manuscripts and photographs related to diving or dive-related business. Send us your stories and photos!



On the Cover:

Diver explores the tropical waters of Fiji and enjoys the many photo opportunities. Check out the full story about the many dive sites of Fiji on page 30.

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DEMA 2014

This year the 2014 DEMA Show was held in Las Vegas. As usual, dive shop owners and employees, charter boat and liveboard representatives, resort owners, travel agencies, and dive gear manufacturers all converged at the Las Vegas Convention Center right next to the new Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino. The DEMA Show is not open to the general public, but if you are a divemaster or above then we highly recommend that you attend the show. Once again there were plenty of workshops to attend. The DEMA board sponsored many seminars and DEMA members and leading dive certification agencies offered a plethora of other seminars. For five days attendees had the opportunity to find out more about certain travel destinations, new dive gear and related products, regulator repair, plus attend dive agency functions, and emergency and safety seminars.

Meanwhile on the main DEMA show floor, dive related products were introduced to attendees and in some cases, the items on display wouldn't even be on sale to the general public for some months to come, so we all got an up close and personal sneak peak on some of next year's new products. For some attendees, the new Hero 4 video camera was the top item, for others it was the new shark proof wet suit by radiator, for others it was the water repellent EarShield by Dive 1st Aid, but that makes perfect sense if your biggest challenge to diving is by preventing swimmer's ear infection, which can end a dive trip prematurely and in pain.

We collectively took over 60 videos at DEMA, and DNN readers can view these videos on Youtube by searching Dive New Network DEMA 2014 or see our entire 550 plus dive related videos on Youtube under Mike Hughes Scuba.

All these activities make the show fun to peruse, but what makes DEMA such a one of a kind is the ability to visit with friends and acquaintances on an annual basis. Not only does this bring back fond memories, but also it keeps us up to date with our diving friends and buddies from around the world. You know, we always have a great time attending the DEMA Show and even though it just ended a week ago, we are already looking forward to the 2015 show to be held in about 11 months in Orlando. Hope to see you there!

Santa (Mike Hughes) 😊





Ponquogue Bridge



Divers pose for a final group shot

Long Island Divers Association Sponsors Harbor School Students on a Special Long Island Scuba Dive

Article & Photos by Michael Salvatore and Christopher Weaver (Eco-Photo Explorers)

What a difference a year makes!

With Sunday, September 28 boasting a bright, sunny sky, warm summer-like weather and perfect diving conditions at Shinnecock Inlet's Ponquogue Bridge on Long Island, 25 students from the New York City Harbor School were able to enjoy an underwater experience each of them will long remember. This was the second consecutive year that the Long Island Divers Association (LIDA) has hosted this special group of student divers, and this year's conditions were vastly improved over last year's blustery winds and limited underwater visibility.

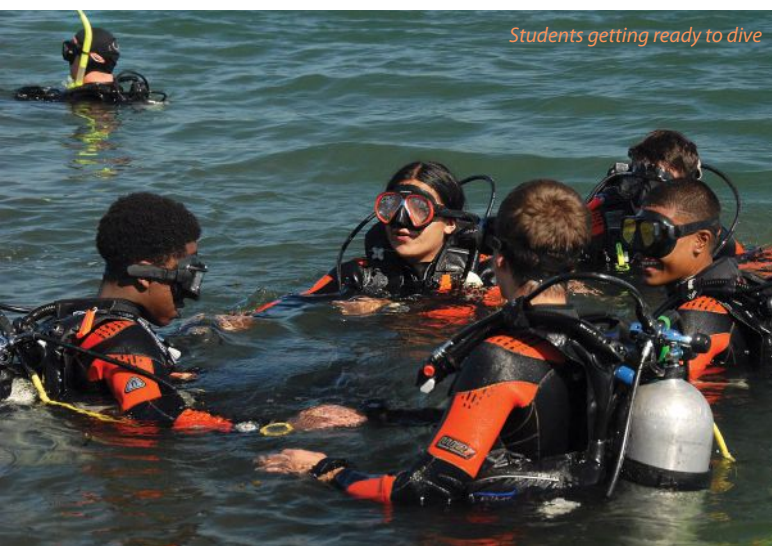
The Urban Assembly New York Harbor School is a public high school located on Governors Island In New York City. The school provides over 430 students, the majority of whom are classified as economically disadvantaged, with four years of college preparatory education, with a strong emphasis on maritime careers. Freshmen at the school can choose from six available career education paths, including such diverse and exciting disciplines as aquaculture, marine biology research, marine robotics and scientific diving. Tenth-grade scientific diving students are given the opportunity to train as certified SCUBA divers.

The school has been operating for 12 years. Historically, more than 70% of the students entering Harbor School are performing below grade level in either math or reading before starting at the school. In 2012 alone, 97% of Harbor

School graduates were accepted to college, going on to top colleges and universities, including Cornell, Fordham, Middlebury, Penn State, SUNY Maritime and Syracuse. Many have also gone on to work in the maritime industry as licensed boat captains, SCUBA divers, ocean engineers, marine technicians or marine biologists.

While at the school, the student divers spend much of their underwater time exploring and studying the waters of New York Harbor and Governor's Island. The dive at Ponquogue Bridge, known as one of Long Island's premier dive locations, gave the students a chance to experience different diving conditions, with better visibility and more marine life than they typically encounter at Governor's Island.

This year, the dive conditions exceeded everyone's expectations. Descending below the old Ponquogue Bridge at a carefully determined period of slack water, the student divers encountered clear water and a plethora of local marine life. Spider Crabs, Blue Claw Crabs, Sea Robins, Flounder and various types of shellfish captured their attention and were the subject of their excited chatter upon completing the dive. On this day, some delightful guests of the marine world even made an appearance. Each year, the warm water currents of the Gulf Stream sweep tropical fish from the southern waters of the Atlantic and Caribbean and bring them to our shores during the months of September and October. As a result, the Harbor School divers were surprised and thrilled to see



Students getting ready to dive



Harbor School students participate in a post dive beach clean up



Students searching for marine life

Butterflyfish, Angelfish and other tropical species right here in the waters of Long Island.

While the students were excited by the dive, the LIDA divers came away impressed with the enthusiasm, respect for the marine world and diving skills exhibited by the students. Each student carefully tended to his or her own equipment, and all students were quite adept in the sometimes-challenging conditions at the Ponquoque Bridge.

LIDA was instrumental in helping to provide transportation from the city for the students and arranged to have a full complement of experienced local divers on site to accompany the kids on their dives, helping them learn the dive site and ensuring their safety in the water. All the attendees were then treated to a full barbeque before breaking for the day.

The idea for this unique sponsorship came from a chance meeting between Barry Lipsky, President of LIDA, and Joe Gessert, a faculty member of the school, during a beach cleanup event on Coney Island shortly before Hurricane Sandy struck the area in 2012. After learning more about the mission of the Harbor School, Lipsky and LIDA launched this event in 2013. Building on the success of the first dive in 2013, LIDA and the Harbor School and have worked tirelessly to secure the location, date and logistics for a repeat in 2014.

The over-arching theme of this year's event was that of giving back. Many of the LIDA members who volunteered their time to provide guidance and mentoring to the students both in and out of the water possess the wisdom of experience garnered over years of diving these waters. The

LONG ISLAND DIVERS ASSOCIATION

LIDA is a not-for-profit regional organization dedicated to the promotion of local diving and is staffed completely by volunteers.



Captain Mike's Diving
City Island, NY
718-885-1588
www.captainmikesdiving.com



QC Scuba
Wantagh, NY
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www.qcscuba.com



RV Garloo
Captree Boat Basin, Long Island
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www.garlooent.com



Swim and Scuba
Rockville Centre, NY
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www.swimandscuba.com



www.lidaonline.com





Student divers ready to dive

opportunity to give back to the students and to help inspire a new generation of divers was a powerful reason for scores of divers to join the event. Similarly, the Harbor School faculty encouraged the students to conduct a beach clean up after the barbecue, a meaningful way for the students themselves to give something back on this special day.

The sponsored dive is emblematic of the work of LIDA, a not-for-profit organization with a mission of advocating for divers interests on Long Island. Providing students from the Harbor School with access to one of the best dive sites in the entire region is the driving force behind this unique sponsorship event. Because of economic limitations, the students of the Harbor School rarely have access to diving outside of the waters close to New York City. The dive at the Ponquogue Bridge exposed them to a new and very different diving experience, which will help further fuel their interest in pursuing careers in the maritime industry.

And, as evidenced by the broad smiles and excited conversations after the dive, the Ponquogue Bridge dive with the Harbor School proved one more thing: giving back can, indeed, be fun! ■



Divers exiting the water

Urban Assembly New York Harbor School
newyorkharborschool.org

Long Island Diving Association (LIDA)
lidaonline.com

Eco-Photo Explorers
ecophotoexplorers.com

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