

From Montauk to Breezy Point Brooklyn – LIDA’s GOT IT COVERED! Long Island Dive Association’s Annual Film Festival Inspires

Gary Lehman

A Community of Divers in NY/NJ Metro, Plus Divers’ Rights and Access to Local Diving? LIDA Is On It!

Hat’s Off to Barry Lipsky and the whole Long Island Divers Association leadership team -- again this year – for an inspiring, informative, fun, and energizing Film Festival! LIDA has been serving the greater New York/New Jersey/Connecticut dive community for 30 years. One of the greatly-anticipated annual lifecycle landmark events in the Northeast, the LIDA Film Festival lets us divers get together, dreaming about and then making plans for diving adventures, enjoying each other’s company, meeting our local vendors and travel partners from across the globe, and – supporting the important initiatives of the Long Island Dive Association. I have to say that each year, the mid-winter freeze and post-holiday “blahs” are melted away in eager anticipation of the LIDA Film Festival – a welcome oasis for all of us given the routine and ‘rough and tumble’ of everyday life. The LIDA team assembles great speakers and presentations which are dedicated to different aspects of the sport we love, and are a big part of our lives together.



The LIDA Film Festival themes are consistent - marine environmental advocacy encouraging us to meet the many environmental challenges head on, the beauty and adventure of being together with our Earth’s sea life, learning about our neighbors and experiencing human diversity and cultures in faraway dive destinations, and this year, a personal triumph over adversity. Diving all over the world at the furthest reaches are highlighted – and also, diving the richly-historic and diversity of marine life right here in our greater NY/NJ metropolitan area! And as always, breathtaking photography animates the evening. (I do believe that many of us will be raiding our ‘rainy day’ stashes and secret ‘slush funds’ for more dive gear and photography equipment, as a direct result of that darned LIDA Film Festival!). And what that great after party! Rekindling friendships, making plans for the new diving year, vigorously attacking the fabulous food, playfully elbowing out our friends and neighbors on the line, and... the tense and rapt attention paid by all



during the 50/50 and raffle for the terrific grand prize drawings for the terrific travel prizes and great merchandise! (After all, diving is gear-intensive, and we all always need more gear, right?!)

The LIDA Film Festival provides an opportunity for all the local area dive clubs to get together and interact. All the local Long Island clubs were there,

as well as twenty-five participants from The Scuba Sports Club in Westchester (as well as additional divers from other Westchester dive clubs), and a similar number from NYC Sea Gypsies. In fact, a special shout out for NYC Sea Gypsies, because several members of that Club gave presentations at LIDA!

The evening started with Mike Salvarezza and Chris Weaver's images of migrating Alaskan salmon (which was a teaser for the presentations to follow, and succeeded in triggering intense interest to get to Alaska to dive the rivers and ocean for salmon - and salmon sharks! Oh great, yet another bucket list item...). LIDA Executive VP Michael Salvarezza then welcomed the group to the 2019 Film Festival, and we stood in honor during our National Anthem stirringly rendered by Paul Lipsky. President Barry Lipsky thanked the many sponsors for the evening, including our host Hofstra University, and stated the LIDA mission: advocate for the rights of divers all over and in particular in the greater NY/NJ/CT region; and extend access to the reach and range of many dive locations right here in our region. Working with state, local and municipal governments, Barry and team have succeeded in securing access to and saving dive sites.

The LIDA team used a special tactic to save the Old Ponquogue Bridge, which was slated for demolition. Divers photographed and videotaped the vibrant sea life which flourishes under the bridge, and showed the municipal government staff of Southampton the marine diversity right here. This was an effective argument: the local government officials were totally unaware of the bio hotspot right there under their cars, under that bridge! (Divers nationally, take heed. Hopefully that same strategy will prevail in other situations across the country). Anyone who has dived Old Ponquogue Bridge in Shinnecock Inlet and Secret Beach in Greenport knows how great these sites are, and owes a debt to Barry and team for securing access to them for divers. And another shout out to LIDA for its work in creating local dive locations in the form of artificial reefs from obsolete subway cars, and even portions of the recently demolished Tappan Zee Bridge across the Hudson (which will be recycled for use as reefs and habitat for all manner of sea life in our coastal waters). LIDA has also supported the greater metro community, in particular providing diving mentoring for high schoolers in The New York Harbor School, and for legions of Boy Scouts lucky to be able to learn from and dive with LIDA diving mentors.



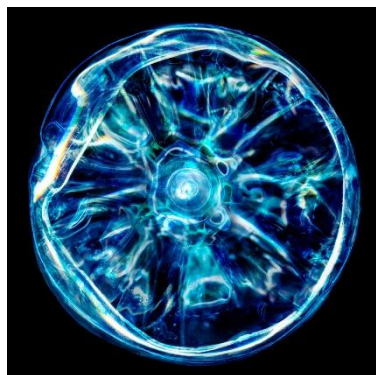
White Sharks of Guadalupe!

The first film presentation was by Pete Venutsous, *Guadalupe: Above and Below*. The star of this presentation were the white sharks which congregate during certain times of the year off the Mexican island of Guadalupe, about 250 miles southwest of California's San Diego. Pete gave some history about the island, which was interesting and is an aspect overlooked by other coverage. Pete also described what life was like on the live aboard and diving with white sharks. Why do different white shark populations migrate to/from Guadalupe? It is theorized that the reasons are around both mating and making predations on the elephant seals which migrate to the island. It is one thing to see these animals on TV, with photos and video footage taken by some anonymous TV production team... *but these images were taken by our friend Pete!* Many of us were wondering if he was outside of the cage getting these video images, and if he really was that close (and some would say that nuts!). Stunning and brilliant job Pete, for bringing us up close and personal to these graceful, magnificent –and let's also admit fearsome - animals in

a highly personal and immersive way. You really brought us right up alongside them. Another bucket list item. But until we individually can make that happen, we now have been just about as close as possible to these sharks without actually getting wet! Unfortunately, Pete was not able to attend the evening due to illness, but there is little doubt that he heard the thunderous applause from the appreciative crowd in Hempstead, Long Island!

Plastisphere

From the majesty of Guadalupe's white sharks to the ocean's shrouding asphyxiation by plastics, which are degrading phytoplankton in our oceans...which is a grave concern since phytoplankton absorb greenhouse gasses and produce oxygen through photosynthesis. **Plastisphere** was the presentation



given by photographer/artist Kristen Regan. Who can forget this line from the 1967 film *The Graduate* with a very young Dustin Hoffman... <setting: A late middle age gentleman and family friend puts his arm around Ben (Dustin Hoffman) on the subject of new graduate Ben's future...>

"Ben, I want to say one word to you. Just one word: Plastics." Oh, how we all wish we could turn the clock back to 1967... We might have had the vision to chart a different course in the creation and use of plastics worldwide to avert the growing catastrophe. There is no question that plastics have made a transformational, positive contribution in many aspects of human life.



Photo by Christopher Mazz

But the downside is that it is estimated that eight million tons of plastics are just dumped into the world's oceans each year. Kristen as an artist/photographer creates beautiful images, and simultaneously seeks to effect environmental awareness and positive change through her images. Her carefully-crafted photographs of melted plastic water bottles are captivating and beautiful, astonishingly resembling microbial life forms – but her images are (and are intended to be) sinister in their implications. Let us all follow Kristen's lead and admonition to forgo the use of plastic straws, soaps with microbeads, and single-use water bottles, doing what we can to reduce the scourge of plastics in the ocean.

We have all seen the heartbreaking photos of turtles horribly deformed after being caught in six-pack holders, straws coming out of turtles' noses, sperm whales and other marine mammals dead from years of consuming plastics which they thought was food, and dead albatrosses whose carcasses are survived by the plastic trash which they consumed and which killed them. But there is another terrible scourge brought on by plastics. Kristen --through her captivating photos of melted plastic single-use bottles – fervently wants to bring to light that 1) plastics break down (eventually), leaching toxins into the oceans and 2) microorganisms grow on floating plastics, and plankton consume these – introducing plastics compounds into phytoplankton, which a) produce anywhere between fifty and seventy percent of the oxygen we breathe and b) are thus introduced into the food chain. Who wants to eat plastic?? Well, guess what... we are... and we will be eating more and more of it.

But before we here in the US take *all* the blame for plastics in the oceans, consider that the evidence (based on examination of the floating plastics 'gyres') indicates that the culprit nations are apparently those which have not yet developed effective recycling policies or environmentally-oriented mindshare. Analysis of plastic trash in the oceans apparently show that the trash comes largely from ten rivers, according to a study at Leipzig University in Germany - eight of the rivers are located in Asia: the Yangtze; Indus; Yellow; Hai He; Ganges; Pearl; Amur; Mekong; and two in Africa – the Nile and the Niger. (Read more:

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/news/environment/90-percent-of-plastics-polluting-our-oceans-come-from-10-rivers/article/524230#ixzz5gHyRYKzi>) and <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/acs.est.7b02368?journalCode=esthag>

That said, Kristen urges us to use refillable water bottles, eschew straws and balloons be mindful about plastics in the ocean. All of us divers who have seen the plastic bottles and trash on the ocean floor certainly concur with that. Thanks Kirsten for helping advance the message about the multiple threats of plastics in our oceans.

Michael and the Amazing Technicolor NY Bight!

Detractors will say that northeast waters are to be avoided. The waters here are cold; with low visibility; there are entanglement risks; there is limited sea life and whatever life exists is mundane and not particularly inspiring to look at; and neither is the muddy sludge on the bottom, devoid of colorful coral.

We don't know who they might have been diving with, but it sure wasn't Michael Rothschild and his friends from NYC Sea Gypsies! OK, the water is colder. But with

drysuits or adequate gear in wetsuits, all but the coldest months are diveable in many/most locations. The Scuba Sports Club of Westchester NY just dove Dutch Springs after all, where the water was 37F! Visibility is bad? Well, sometimes – but that might also be result in some cases of the plankton-rich environment which is fueling a rebirth of biodiversity in the NY Bight, bringing back menhaden, bigger fish, and whales right off NYC! And, with 500+ years of population growth in northeastern littoral areas and commercial shipping resulting from the opening of the North American continent and trading with the Old World in Europe, the northeast depths are filled with history - replete with hundreds of known wrecks (and thousands more still unknown/undiscovered...). Colorful corals? nudibranchs? PLENTY, we just need to look in the right places. And historic shipwrecks? No greater place in the world to find/explore those! Plenty to choose from in the NY Bight (which stretches from Montauk NY at the eastern end of Long Island down along a southwesterly line to Cape May, New Jersey). And the Northshore of Long Island similarly has many dive sites. Long Island Sound and the Massachusetts and Connecticut ocean bottoms feature thousands of shipwrecks, resulting from accidents and victims of warfare while plying back and forth between NYC and New England!

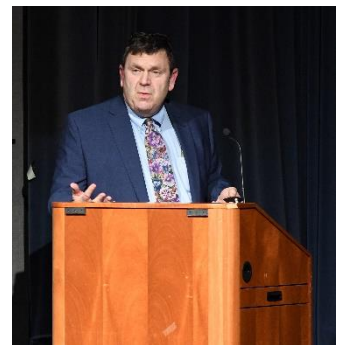


In his presentation, Michael toured us around the *Tolten*, a Chilean steamer carrying nitrates which was hit by two torpedoes from German submarine *U404* in March 1942 during WWII,

sinking quickly and taking 27 of 28 crew members with her. After that we toured *Resor*, an oil tanker sunk by two torpedoes from *U578* in February 1942. Crowds gathered on the beach at Asbury Park NJ to watch the roiling flames. Of the crew of 41, only two survived. In addition to offering some inward thoughts and personal reflection on the tragedy of the loss of life, our attention turned to the wonderful sea life including nudibranchs, lobsters, pollock, fluke, flounder, crabs, crustaceans of every description, eels, mossbunker, blackfish, sea robins and the like. All sounds terrific! So now we can ask the question...who is ready for some northeast diving with Michael and team ???

The Age of Aquarius -- Dr. David Charash with Fabien Cousteau !

Dr. Charash has been a consistent and revered leader in diving life here in the northeast for many years. Many of us year to year have attended his presentations, learning from his “barotrauma and risk factors” presentations, his emergency medicine and dive medicine lectures, his “fitness to dive” talks, his “children and diving” presentations, and we’ve seen him work his magic with his trusted otoscope! He is always there for us with dive medicine advice and counsel. And he is a trusted DAN Referral Physician. Under Dr. Charash’s care, we are good to go, with confidence and knowledge to back it up! (And more than a few of us have cornered him after his presentations, hitting him up with our personal medication questions. Admit it, we do it! He is always good-natured about it, and provides a valued medical path forward for us.) His incisive medical advisement is greatly enhanced and of great value for us – precisely because he is ‘one of us’. He loves diving; he gets it; he has been there - and he understands. He is an instructor in Dive Medicine for our Armed Services and also serves the tech/wreck/commercial and scientific diver community - and in addition, is a healer for all those who need specialized hyperbaric-based medical services, under David’s direction of his team of hyperbaric specialists.



Dr. Charash had the opportunity to work with Fabien Cousteau, grandson of legendary Jacques-Yves Cousteau (one of the founders of scuba diving and the world environmental movement). As a result of that work, Fabien Cousteau invited Dr Charash to join him as a VIP diver on an



Underwater Scientific Expedition, Mission 31. Mission 31 was a 31-day underwater expedition aboard the subsurface (on the bottom at 63') Aquarius laboratory nine miles off Islamorada in the Florida Keys. The mission objectives were to 1) conduct a variety of experiments related to global climate change and pollution effects on reefs and human

physiological and psychological effects of extended undersea habitation and lack of exposure to the sun; and 2) reach out to school kids K through 12th grade -- all over the world, via the Internet and Skype, with objective to raise awareness about the wonders, mysteries, and environmental challenges faced by the world’s oceans. After all, says Cousteau, we have to engage the kids now because our generation will exit stage left at some point, and today’s kids are tomorrow’s leaders! As a result of Fabien Cousteau's invitation, Dr Charash was able to be



a part of Mission 31 history! David's presentation at LIDA detailed his experience while aboard and diving outside Aquarius, and his review of the ongoing experiments in the laboratory. We were all very proud of and happy for Dr. Charash that he was connected to the Cousteau legacy and he was thus part of the mission to pass along the wonder of the oceans and marine advocacy to the next generation of divers!

Papua New Guinea Adventure with Larry and Olga!



Larry Cohen and Olga Torrey went to Papua New Guinea for a once-in-a-lifetime dive and cultural adventure. We all benefit from their trip, because we go there with them via their wonderful photography and narrative, presented to us at the LIDA Film Festival! Truthfully, we expected photographic excellence, based on our familiarity with their work. Larry and Olga are frequent presenters of their adventures and underwater photography seminars/tips/techniques at various venues throughout the



northeast. Larry and Olga explained that they accomplished their amazing photo safari in PNG after enduring and overcoming prodigious logistical nightmares; it must have been “off the Richter scale” difficult to get all their photography and dive gear there safely, given the aggressive (and strictly enforced) weight limitations for the “puddle jumper” aircraft getting to the remote Papua New Guinea locations.

The photography presented at the Film Festival were superb. Larry and Olga are artistically and technically at the pinnacle of their art. Every photo presented was perfect. (Granted, there is no doubt that Larry and Olga hit the delete button on their less-than-perfect photos. All photographers, topside and especially underwater photographers, do that). But what is breathtaking here is the *quantity and range* of photography situations and the consistent excellence of them all (the “keepers”).

We have big animals; we have small animals. We have macro. Sweeping underwater landscapes. Brilliant colors. Perfect exposures, perfect compositions. Lifeforms and scientific-level photo documentation. That little yellow fish against a dark green background in compositional counterpoint to an orange fish on the other side of the frame. Razor sharp photos. Perfect blend of low power strobe light, combining with ambient light to preserve natural color relationships and exposure luminosity; Larry and Olga are using the right lenses and carefully-considered ISO, shutter speed and aperture combinations to “paint with light” their masterful images. Not only static landscapes, but also animated motion in the fish (and the shark’s tail). We can “feel” the wash of the shark’s tail on our face and torso. The macro photos – perfectly administered lighting preserving texture and detail, with exactly the right depth of field to keep the subject in focus and have a diffused soft background, thus isolating/highlighting the subject. Honestly, anyone who has ever attempted underwater photography knows how difficult it really is to accomplish at this

level. Not only do you have to worry about all the above, but then there is the minor matter of how much air you have left; currents moving you and your gear around; buoyancy; is your dive buddy ok; where the heck is the boat; and is there any sea life around here about which we need to be concerned...

Olga's people photos in particular projected a warmth and emotional connection to the people of PNG – the human family - with hearts and souls, and a shared connection between the people and the photographer. This was not a 'cruise ship tourist taking pictures of weird-looking natives'. This was Olga and her friends, sharing their world with her because she connected with them as fellow travelers-in-life. Larry and Olga's topside wildlife and flora photos– all just stop-in-your-tracks.

Their photos will be a baseline in years to come about the expansive biodiversity in this region. Let us just hope that the baseline comparison in ten to twenty years will show no degradation.

Larry and Olga NAILED IT. There is no team anywhere which does what they do, helping northeast photographers improve their photography. There is no team with the expertise, drive to excellence, artistic vision -- and human connection -- to heart and soul, who could bring home these results! Thank you for the presentation; we love you guys!

A Lost A-6 Intruder, What Peter Hunt Found, and His Triumph Of Will

Peter Hunt: ...multiple dives on *Andrea Doria*, history major from Brown University, A-6 Intruder combat pilot, Desert Storm war hero, scuba diver with over 1,000 dives worldwide--- and suffering Parkinson's disease – and -- he had an inspiring message for us at LIDA this year. First a little about the A-6 for context. The aircraft carrier-based Grumman A-6 was ancient. It replaced the propeller-driven A-1 Skyraider which was used in the Korean war. Twin-engine, all-weather A-6's were first flown in combat in the Vietnam war in 1966. It was the mainstay of US carrier strikes for thirty years, and was used extensively in Desert Storm. Thus, some A-6 airframes were older than their pilots during Desert Storm. The F-14 Tomcat and F-18 Hornet are faster and deadlier in air to air combat, but the Intruder is still tops in range and its truly massive bomb payload (a B52 carries 50-500lb bombs and an A-6 can carry 28-500lb bombs); even today the Navy doesn't have a better alternative (though the A-6 has been retired). The basic aircraft design was so versatile that the A-6 was used in many configurations: ground attack with missiles and bombs, night and all-weather attacks, close in support of friendly troops, anti-aircraft suppression, aerial refueling tanker, and there was an anti-radar attack/electronic counter-measures model called the Prowler, used to jam enemy electronics and radar. The A-6 was also the first choice of aircraft to strike with laser-guided bombs. And it was a tough aircraft. In 1998 on a low-level training mission in Italy, an A-6 accidentally struck and severed a cable car cable; the A-6 was damaged - but incredibly still managed to return to its base.



So, now let's meet Peter Hunt! He has led an amazing life. Peter graduated from Brown University with a history degree; while in college he crewed on the *Wahoo* (one of the dive boats which brought divers out to dive on the *Andrea Doria*; he himself dived the *Andrea Doria* several times in the early 1980's. Then Hunt joined the Navy, qualifying after rigorous training (where most of his class washed out) to become an A-6 pilot. Peter served in the Navy for ten years. During Desert Storm he flew combat missions of the types described above, being catapulted from his aircraft carrier in his A-6 into pitch blackness, just moments after Desert Storm commenced. He earned the US Navy's Distinguished Flying Cross and three Air Medals for his meritorious service during Desert Storm. After retiring from the Navy, Hunt became a commercial pilot for United Airlines.



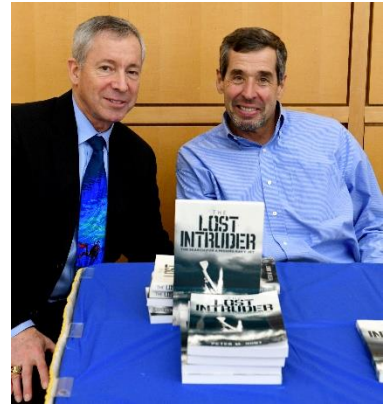
But he felt a calling. A calling to return, after twenty years, to the *Andrea Doria*. This was no trivial matter for a person approaching forty years of age. There would be many certifications and intensive training required. But there were different priorities – of career and family! So, Peter, what is it going to be? *Andrea Doria*, family, or career? Some weighted average?

In the end, it was all of the above – and more. After a year of training for the dive which divers refer to know as “The Everest of Diving”, Peter’s 2001 expedition to *Andrea Doria* was blown out. He accepted it and knew that he would never personally see *Andrea Doria* again...and Peter let go. Along the lines of Ecclesiastes 3:1 “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven”. It had been the focus of his life the past year in an attempt to “go home”. But we can’t go home again. The ship had changed; he had changed. It was now just exactly what it was -- a rusting wreck from a tragedy, and starting to implode. And Peter came to understand that he truly had a new home... his wife and children. Furthermore... *Life is What Happens Between Your Other Plans...*(John Lennon). At the age of 43, in 2005 Hunt was diagnosed with early stage Parkinsons Disease. This is an incurable debilitating neurological disorder which progressively degrades all movements and physical activity.

Remember for a moment that Peter Hunt used to land A-6 Intruder aircraft on pitching, rolling aircraft carrier decks, sometimes at night and in high winds and foul weather. This could be a fairly tricky business, and not for the weak-kneed... If you mess up the approach to the ship’s flight deck, there could be a very bad outcome. Come in too low (or if the ship pitches up unexpectedly at the wrong time), then you just might fly your plane right into the back of the ship. Too high, and your aircraft’s tail hook might miss all the arresting hooks, and your aircraft might not have enough power to fly off to try again-- then you and your aircraft might fall off the front of the flight deck - and be chewed into tiny pieces by the ship’s propellers after it passes over you. Considering Peter Hunt’s absolutely heroic personal, physical, diving, academic and military achievements – requiring him to be at the pinnacle of health, alertness and vitality -- the diagnosis of Parkinsons offers the specter of a stunning and terminal life reversal. But not for Peter.

In 1989 an A-6 Intruder crashed into the waters off Whidbey Island, Washington near Peter’s home. Navy logs indicated that Hunt had flown this exact, individual aircraft; he thus had a personal connection to it. The US Navy mounted a fancy full-force search for the crashed aircraft,

to no avail. For 25 years, Peter mused casually about, maybe sometime, mounting a search for it. We know already that Peter has a penchant for replaying his past; and the obsession with finding A-6 "510" grew steadily in direct relation to Peter's advancing Parkinsons. By 2013, his decision was made – he would succeed where the Navy had failed, and he would find that A-6 while he still could; while his body could still be sufficiently relied upon the answer his brain's commands. He was going to have one more triumph while he still could. He couldn't get back to *Andrea Doria*, but he was going to close the loop on his life and find 'his' A-6. Not that finding it would be easy; while he had a boat, he had no sonar, no means to survey the bottom where the aircraft might be, no metal detector, no reward awaiting him for the location of the aircraft, a kid in college and another about to start college, he could not undertake a big financial investment to find it. Nevertheless, like Admiral Farragut at the Battle of Mobile Bay during the Civil War, Peter's take was "damn the torpedoes <Parkinsons>, full speed ahead!" The complex search commenced in 2014 and concluded successfully with the location of "510" on October 17, 2015.



Peter earned a Distinguished Flying Cross for his intrepidity in combat, successfully executing his bombing runs against enemy target in Desert Storm without regard for his own safety, and in the face of overwhelming enemy anti-aircraft groundfire. And on October 17, 2015 he connected the points in his life's history, closed the loop and thus came to terms with his incurable Parkinsons. He was not going quietly into that good night. He has earned a Distinguished LIFE Cross and

In his presentation to LIDA, he offered us the following:
"Life is a challenge, an exploration of self. Accept your disease, not the symptoms. Press on, satisfied to simply "be". Trust in the process of life; it's all okay.

Bravo Zulu Peter – for your well-earned, well-deserved, heartfelt, and vigorous standing ovation.

Where in the World are Michael and Chris? Try the Maldives, Tonight!

Northeast divers are indebted to the dynamic duo of Mike Salvarezza and Chris Weaver! They are leadership members of the Long Island Dive Association, and – reflected in the steady stream of inspiring diving reports and presentations -- they are bedrock members of the northeast scuba dive community... and beyond! Every year, our community is treated to their presentations on faraway places and their pulse-quickening adventures. The team presented at LIDA Film Festival and at the Chicago Dive and Travel show, and will also be presenting at *Boston Sea Rovers* and at *Beneath The Sea*. Visiting their website will show the reach and range of their incredible world-wide expeditions



<http://ecophotoexplorers.com/> (EPE). We are lucky to have this unique team geographically close to us here in the northeast, so we can stay in touch and readily see their presentations. And it is not only their presentations, but consider also the breadth and frequency of their articles, published in *Dive News Network* (Scuba & H2O Adventures Magazine), *National Geographic Adventure* and so many others worldwide.

EPE's presentation at LIDA FF 2019 was about their liveaboard sojourn to the south atolls of the Maldives. EPE has presented previously about other parts of the Maldives, but tonight was about the southern atolls. Chris and Mike related their experiences diving through coral passes, reefs, walls and pinnacles, and negotiating the occasionally-tricky currents. The sea life included dolphins; pilot whales; nurse sharks; and all the usual cast of colorful characters such as butterflyfish, angelfish, anthias, hawkfish, moprals eels, emperor fish, Spanish dancers, eagle rays, mantas and soldierfish among many others. Chris and Mike show their experience and knowledge of marine life when describing how the rush of water into and out of the reef passages are activity hotspots, where pelagics hang out to make predations on the smaller fish, which are themselves feeding on the tinier sea life introduced by the rush and flow of water. Meanwhile of course the whitetips and gray reef sharks were patrolling looking for opportunities!

EPE's mission statement is to "help promote public interest in protecting the underwater environment through knowledge and awareness using underwater photography. Photography, [multimedia presentations](#), lectures and freelance writing are all utilized to achieve this goal". And HOW! They have contributed their time and energy to a number of environmental advocacy groups as well as educational organizations, in support of the environment and connection to marine careers and littoral environment restoration. Their CV (curriculum vitae) of published articles is expansive! You can *never* say you are bored if you are near a keyboard to access the EPE website to gain inspiration! So, if you have a busy schedule and can't quite wedge in some diving trips, you can always head over to Ecophotoexplorers and check out overseas dive destinations such as Iceland (diving between the European and North American tectonic plates!); explore WWII shipwrecks in the Philippines; Alaska; Antarctic diving; the Maldives; Greenland; Australia's Great Barrier Reef; remote and inaccessible locations in Norway; Russia's High Arctic; Indonesia... just wow (and that is just a sampling!)

There is another aspect to EPE which doesn't get enough of the spotlight - the important role Chris and Mike play in promoting local northeast diving, as well as inland and coastal diving all over the USA. What's more, some of their adventures are history-based -- and terrestrial! With the awareness created by their presentations and articles, EPE advances the sport of scuba diving, showing how adventure diving is accessible to everyone -- without having to rappel down 30' sheer cliffs of rock and mud 100 miles north of Trondheim, Norway, or brave frigid water in Alaska. EPE has published articles on Florida diving; *megalodon* tooth diving; diving the German submarine U-853 off Block Island

(Rhode Island); Gulf of Mexico oil rig diving; Caribbean diving; diving with seals of Gloucester Massachusetts; diving Lake Superior; shark diving off Montauk, Long Island; diving the *USS Albatross* and *Resolute* off New Jersey; North Carolina diving; ice diving in the northeast; diving Bonne Terre Mine in Missouri, and the list goes on. But EPE doesn't stop there! EPE wrote about the partnership between LIDA and the NYC Harbor School, in which kids from challenged backgrounds attend NYC Harbor School, master scuba diving under the mentorship of LIDA members, and learn all manner of vocational and technical skills which will serve them well in the NYC/NJ harbor jobs market. And who can forget EPE's captivating presentation at *Boston Sea Rovers* about "The Notorious Story of the *Golden Venture*" which documented the human trafficking and exploitation of Chinese laborers brought from China and Africa to NYC harbor aboard the *Golden Venture*; the ship hit a sandbar in NY harbor, and the Chinese undocumented workers were either released, granted asylum or in some cases deported. The ship itself eventually was sunk as an artificial reef off Florida, with a new name *United Caribbean*. The wreck hosts a vibrant community of fish who share that space. Let the *United Caribbean* always keep the tragedy of human trafficking in our mindset, so that this abuse can be confronted and defeated.

EPE is to be commended for a high-energy continuous lineup of presentations to local public venues such as libraries, churches, synagogues, and historical societies. Presentations include "Route 25: Long Island's Route 66"; Exploring Long Island Shipwrecks; The War Years: Long Island's History in Armed Conflict; Long Island's Haunted Lighthouses, Long Island's shipwrecks and lighthouses - and many other topics sometimes not even related to scuba diving, but all reflecting Mike and Chris's interest in the history of - and their civic commitment to - their home turf of Long Island, NY. Where do these gentlemen get all their energy?!

Mike Salvarezza and Chris Weaver of EPE are a unique and great team -- thank you for all that you do for LIDA, and for northeast divers, and for all divers everywhere -- shining



your dive lights forward to marine environmental awareness/advocacy, adventure, and connecting all of us together.

Till Next Year!

We look forward to next year's Long Island Divers Association Film Festival, and anticipate an inspiring lineup as well as a fun evening

together again. Every wish for success to all at LIDA, thanks again for pulling together this Film Festival, and have fun and safe diving. Till Next Year: 10/4 !

