

Los Angeles Fathomiers

Brief History

Fifty years ago the Fathomiers diving club was organized as one of the few free-diving clubs in the entire greater Los Angeles area. The sport of underwater spearfishing while holding ones breath was at that time in its infancy, although right at the beginning of being discovered. Other well known clubs in existence at the time, or organized soon afterwards, have not survived the trials of time...leaving only the LA Fathomiers and LB Neptunes as currently the only two remaining free-diving clubs in the area.

The Fathomiers club, now proudly claims a good number of distinguished individuals from those other prestigious clubs...*Big John Carroll, John Modugno, Bill Ernst, Joe Hunsinger, Mason Yerkes, and others.*

Ed Gulley and Al Schuck, adventurous guys from the Silver Lake and Echo Park area had been closely associated with the “Kelptomaniacs” diving club from out in the valley. However, they decided that they should organize their own club within their own area. More than anyone else it was Ed and Al who were the true architects of the Fathomiers. They came up with the idea, gave it the name and brought it into existence and held the first official meeting at Al’s home, March 1957. Ten individuals, close friends, and high-school buddies, at that meeting then became the original “Charter Members” of the new diving club near downtown Los Angeles. No macho image was required, only selective individuals with the passion of diving and the desire to belong. Being a small close-knit group they just seemed to get along and hold more respect for each other. The honor system was good enough then. Little did they know, from that small group with its humble beginnings the club would evolve into such a large organization and become one of the premier diving clubs in the entire country? Ed and Al are both gone now, but, how proud they would be to see their little club today.

It didn’t take long, with the likes of George Boss and Ken Pitcher, along with a few others, to come along and stimulate interest in competitive spearfishing, which to this day is one of the main emphases of the club. There are so many renowned Fathomiers who have contributed immeasurably to competitive freediving spearfishing that we cannot possibly mention them all in our short time here. We know who you are!

As for “Game” fishing....a look at the all-time record holders for selected species of fish speared you will see a considerable number of Fathomiers’ names there too!

While we may boast having numerous world class underwater athletes in the organization the most important criteria in being a member is still the sincere desire to belong and be a part of the genuine camaraderie enjoyed by all the members.

To us few remaining old timers in the club we cannot be more proud than to have been a part of the incredible changes over the years.

Whether it is underwater hunting or merely exploring, those of us fortunate enough to indulge in “freediving” form a unique bond. We have a clear appreciation of the ocean and its inhabitants by enjoying it first hand.

Bob Sellers
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