

Los Angeles Fathomiers

FREEDIVING – SPEARFISHING – COMPETITION
SINCE 1957

IN MEMORY OF OUR FRIEND- CLINT ALAN KOBERSTEIN 1973-2006

In 2000, we were introduced to a young, very experienced diver, new to spearfishing, who was very excited to have found a club to learn and dive with. He joined us in our exploits and adventures, and became a member of the Fathomiers in March, 2001. He became a very active member, a piece of the very fiber and backbone of the club. Clint brought a can-do attitude, and an "I can do it for you, too." attitude to all, he loved to help his friends in any way he could. As Clint gained experience, he took his time to impart his knowledge of everything he knew to anyone who needed his assistance.

In due time, Clint expanded his horizons, capturing many great fish, moving up to the pinnacle fish of the sport— trophy sized tuna and seabass. He became President of the Fathomiers in 2004. Clint had become a model diver, showing himself to be a good sport— no matter if he was spearing a bigger fish than his friends, or getting towed back in his boat....again.... Always eager to go at it again, as soon as he got the chance.

In 2006, with the creation of the Ed Gulley memorial for the top competition diver, Clint decided to become serious about his competition diving. He started with a shot! And led the points chase for over half the year, closely followed by his nemesis. Only after a couple of miscues did the points lead slip from his grasp, and yet he was undeterred, enjoying the chase!

On the eve of Nov. 7th, Clint went for a dive in the evening for lobster. He did not come home. These are stories about our friend, told to you in our words. Some of these were sent from people he knew from school, and in the Navy. When they found out about Clint, they FOUND us, just to share their thoughts with us. A tribute to the depth of friendship everyone shared with Clint. We hope you enjoy our stories and pictures the way we enjoyed and cherished every minute we shared with Clint.

I enjoyed putting this newsletter together, yet the whole time with a twinge of deep sorrow. This newsletter is dedicated to Clint's wife Tina, and his daughter. Paul Romanowski

My memories of Clint—Ernie Shultz

His smile made people feel at ease in his presence. He always gave a helping hand when needed. He would say, " Sure, Yes, you can come along, I can fix that, I'll do it, need any help? etc etc. These were the words I often heard from Clint. When he moved to Camarillo, it brought us closer together. Diving on his boat was special for me. I felt safe with him around. For two over years Clint would invite me to drive with him to the club meetings. The one and a half to two hr drive allowed us to talk about diving adventures and life in general. I grew to love him. I now miss him on a daily basis. Ernie Schultz



Our trip to Cortez...

I have a picture with Clint, I know no one has seen this pic, (from Puerto Vallarta) I have a lot of stories with Clint and I remember the last trip we made to Cortez bank for two days. And the next morning Clint wake me and Richard up and say " Hi guys, good morning- the breakfast is ready." We woke up and we were SO happy to see a full breakfast with fruits salads and orange juice; and Clint smiling like always.

I loved Clint very much, and I miss him so badly, every day.
Erez Abayov.



No words can express how much Clint affected all of the people he was close to.

The first time I met Clint I could tell he was stand up guy, laughing and joking around, telling fish stories, and you could tell he was completely stoked on our sport. I was pretty new when I came into the club, and he offered to take me diving whenever I was up his way. A couple weeks later I just a few minutes away from his house so I called him up and he invited me over. I didn't have any dive gear with me, but he had plenty of spare stuff and he got me suited up and we went to grab some bugs in almost zero vis. Clint was Hardcore. Afterwards we sat down and had a few Zimas, one thing I'll always remember, because that was the only time I'd ever had one of those. He had a copy of Terry's bluewater hunting book on his coffee table, and he went thru it with me for a few hours, teaching me about all different kinds of fish techniques, and techniques for diver better and deeper. A few weeks later a few guys were heading up to Point Dume to get together and dive for fun, so Clint called and invited me. Clint took me out to the boilers and showed me a few of his favorite spots out there, and gave me a few tips. I was getting down to 60 feet pretty comfortably, and Clint was right above me every time I came up. I remember him showing me this sandy area outside that was LOADED with sand bass, and we got a few really big ones. Afterwards he showed me about his modifications he did to his Picasso guns, which I immediately made to my guns. Clint was a guy who always had his shit (stuff) together, always organized and thinking ahead for himself and others.

We have had too many great experiences together to count, one of the best lasting memories I have of Clint was being there when he landed his monster YFT, and him being there when I landed mine. We were soo happy for each other, and more hugs and high fives took place in those few minutes than I knew were possible.

I will miss you forever buddy and I think about you everyday.
Brandon Wahlers.



Clint was a good-hearted, generous person. He would always offer his help to others, give hunting tips or boat rides to new members. He was my friend, and I will truly miss him.

Ritchie Ota.

I remember Clint in the beginning as a quiet person. What I didn't know, was that he was very outspoken, passionate, and a dedicated man. He took everything seriously. Last year, I saw him work, and put time to prepare for each club dive. He and Richard were trading 1st place each club dive. One memory I can't forget was one club dive at Trancas. That morning, the surf was pounding and everyone wanted to cancel the dive except Clint! We were all laughing because he was calling us all "chicken!" No one wanted to get ready... Clint says "I'll show you how easy it is to get in." ... It was hilarious watching him trying to get thru the big surf. Finally, he made it. We all look at each other and says "Sh_t! The meet is on! So, all of us "Chicken" dove anyway. Later that afternoon, we found out that he scouted the day before that's why he didn't want to move or cancel the meet.

A few years back, two of our members got hurt. He approached me and suggested we organize a little donation going to help them out. We collected a good sum of money and it was much appreciated. This is the kind of a person he was. CARING AND A BIG HEART!!

Thanks Clint. Fil Labastida



From Rene Rojas-

I was lucky to get to know Clint, to enjoy having been on my boat with him. I remember a wonderful trip we spent with our wives, diving last year just watching a pack of Black seabass, and relaxing. I really enjoyed our trip in the 2006 Neptunes Blue water meet on his boat. It was a tremendous loss to our club, and to all his friends when we lost Clint.



And here's what really sticks in my memory about Clint. We were roommates in La Paz in 2002. Clint was talking in his sleep. About spearfishing! It was an obsession to him! He would ask, while asleep: "hand me another gun!", or "get me a larger float". Who knows what behemoths he was fighting in his dreams!

I will always remember him.

Stathis Kostopoulos



The golden Boy

I've drug my feet writing anything about Clint as I've written a personal letter to his family and his "farewell" for Hawaii Skin Diver. So it seems I've said all that needs to be said but maybe you can never say too much about a young man like this. I'll try to say something I haven't said.

Clint was indeed a special person. I think he touched many of us if not all he met. He was a good looking energetic "kid" who had the California Surfer "Golden Boy" looks and a beautiful wife to complete the package. When men discuss other men they don't normally talk about a "ready magical smile" or a "twinkle" in his eye but I've now heard several mention this particular glow Clint had in his eyes. If you look closely you can even see it in his photos.

As you know, or others have probably said in this article, he was an accomplished diver and could probably be referred to as a "professional" diver, diving for the Navy for a number of years. I have been diving for close to 50 years and when I invited him on a trip to La Paz we were in the water together about 15 minutes and he increased my best depth by at least 15 feet. Where many divers will get no WSB in a life time Clint was known to bring in three a day. (Malibu photo)

We had a bit of a "disagreement" once in that he shot a trophy Roosterfish and I saw it as a way to get the Fathomiers name in Skin Diver Magazine. He on the other hand was "embarrassed" by shooting it and made it clear if he had known what it was he wouldn't have pulled the trigger. There was no way he wanted to be known as a guy who shoots inedible fish for "fun". He insisted I leave the fish out of the article and I knew there really was no "story" and it wouldn't get published without it. Finally against his personal ethics he allowed me to print it. I think those Fathomier La Paz stories had a lot to do with making us a known and respected club and one of them wouldn't have been possible without Clint.

At the end of his Presidential term it was Banquet time and like most I don't think he had much experience addressing a crowd that large. There are about 35 awards to give, some jokes to tell to liven things up, and of course an attempt is made to say something personal or nice about each of the divers. The "script" for this is about a half inch thick and is pretty "scary"

looking. On that night there was also a “joke award” where we gave the wife of a first generation diver a plaque for “putting up with him” for sixty years. None of us knew if she’d take as it was intended or take a swing at whoever presented it. I volunteered to do it but being the President Clint knew it was his “duty” and did it along with the entire program doing an outstanding job. If he was nervous he sure didn’t show it. He did a great job!! I might also add he got a kiss from “the abandon divers wife” as well.

We became good friends with the basis being our effort to make the club as good as we could. He was very proud of the club, of being the President, and doing what he could to make it better. There was never a doubt that Clint was a “real man” who commanded respect and readily gave it. He was certainly a young man that any parent would be proud to call his son. I am probably twice his age so he let me get away with my habit of calling him “Clinty”... When I called him that he would look at me with a grin and that twinkle in his eye as if to say...”only you buddy, only you!!”

We’ll miss Clinty much and think of him often. He enriched our lives and we’re all better people for knowing him.

Be Safe...Larry Carter



*Fathomiers All time record roosterfish! 42lb.
Clint Koberstein*



From the Kobersteins

Merle & I and Clint's brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews and daughter want to thank everyone for all your support during our time of great need. Some days are good some are bad. We'll never get over missing our little boy, because in our hearts he will always be our little boy and a beautiful young man and gentleman. Please look after Tina. We are in contact with her everyday and are very worried about her. Thank You All and May God look after each and everyone of you.
Darleen (Clint's Mom)





Clint– 8th grade graduation!

My name is Amy (Russell) Summers. I graduated from Princeton Community High School with Clint in 1992. I recently found out about his death, and was stunned. Although I didn't know Clint very well, he always seemed like a nice guy. Due to our upcoming 15 year class reunion, I started a class website. <http://pchs1992.home.insightbb.com>

Wanting to add a memorial page for Clint, I ran across the Fathomiers website and your tribute to him. I know that I couldn't have written anything that could come close to your tribute. I hope that you don't mind that I used it for the website, and included your name and a link to the Fathomiers site. (Clint's memorial page - <http://pchs1992.home.insightbb.com/clintkoberstein.html>)

I would like to take up a collection at our reunion this summer to get something for his wife and child/children, but don't know anything about his family. I'm sure that his brother, Cliff, would have that information, but I haven't seen him in years and have lost contact with him also.

Again, I'm so sorry for your loss.



A sentence or two about Clint; By Skip Hellen

Occasionally we meet a person who is very special. Someone who has the will to venture into nature where most only dream, the courage to risk their life in defense of their country, the openness and honesty to accumulate many friends, the moral compass to stand for high principles, the leadership skills to motivate and the integrity to command respect. Clint possessed all the wonderful qualities above and many more for which many envy. He was a gift for those who knew him, the world will be less without him, and he will be missed.

Clint to the rescue....

It was a cold winter afternoon; we had gone out diving on Balta's boat along with his cousin Jack, Clint and my self. The day was gloomy, windy and the water temperature was in the low 50's. We went to one of Balta's favorite spots, the LA Break Wall where we dove for a while. The surge was mildly strong and diving the dirty water with 4-6 feet of visibility was a challenge. For Clint it was not a problem just happy to be out diving again. Later on the day we decided to go back to dry land, we gotten ready and changed into warm clothes, I tried hard to pull the anchor and to our surprised it was stuck in the bottom. We continue trying to release it several times and used everything in the book even tried to yank it with the power of the twin engines but to our astonishment we had no chance. Someone had to go down and pull it out! We decided to pull straws out a hat, the shortest one will have to dive and release the anchor manually. Jack's name came out, unfortunately he is not much of a deep diver and we knew he was not going to be able to dive to the 45-foot bottom. Clint volunteered, he quickly undressed and said "I don't need no wetsuit" and jumped in only with his plain cotton white underwear, fins and mask in the cold child 50 F. water, two minutes later, he came out and told us "GOD DAMN IT! Pull that damn anchor."

There has been many times when Clint got us out of trouble, Clint was always ready to confront and resolve it, no matter how big was the challenge he was prepared to take on the job and get it done.

Clint we will never forget you-Erik Banados



Clint to the rescue- for REAL!!!

I have so many great memories of Clint and I together, working on the boat, our gear, breaking down in the boat..... Clint and I shared many of the same feelings about life, work, family; it has made it that much harder to let go of such a good friend.

We dove the backside of Catalina a few years back, and we really just hammered the big fish; it was AWESOME!!! Clint and I shot several big yellowtail, the fish were EVERYWHERE. At the end of the day, I started to feel weak, sick. Clint watched me, and as my condition got worse, he decided to get me back home, as fast as he could. I was very ill, short of breath, very weak. I am a good bit bigger than Clint, but when we got to the dock, he literally put himself under me, and hauled me to the truck. I could barely move. He got me home, and then to the hospital. I had to have surgery on my heart. I just can't describe what it meant to me to have Clint there to help me when I needed someone most. He used all his strength, and everything in his power to make sure I was OK. I have never felt the same about a dive partner since that day. I'm really grateful, Buddy. Thank you for everything.

Bob Coyle.



Clint, Ernie, Bob and I pulled out the kayaks on a perfect fall day to try our hand for wsb at county line. The ocean was perfectly flat, but for the first three hours we dove in near darkness due to a major bloom. Visibility was near zero until just after noon when the tide shifted and the top 20 ft became perfectly clear. Clint and I were slowly kayaking towards the up current corner of the kelp bed when three nice sized wsb swam under Clint's kayak. We separated by about 40 yards and it didn't take long for the school to pass in front of me. I dove down about 15 feet, but the school was just out of range. I had only been in LA for 9 months or so and I was not familiar with wsb, but these were large fish. The school proceeded in Clint's direction and about 1 minute later I heard his gun fire, and then I heard Clint bellow out a victory yell. I slowly swam in his direction, but he must have stoned it clean because on his second dive the fish was in his hands at the surface. This fish appeared to be longer than Clint in the water, and I just about soiled my wetsuit. Over the next two hours Bob nailed two nice fish when finally it was my turn. I was slowly creeping through the kelp when I came upon a fish in about 12 ft of water that appeared to be sleeping. My first WSB was a gift from the ocean with an execution style shot to the back of the gill plate. The fish managed to get tangled at 50 ft, but he was dead when I got there.

I will never forget the size of Clint's WSB lying over his legs on his kayak, it was enormous and it ended up weighing in at 52lbs. Bobs two fish were 38 and 42 lbs and mine was the baby at 33 lbs. Clint, Ernie and Bob coached me all day and I realized the Fathomiers was the place for me.

I was just starting to dive with some frequency with Clint when he passed, but I feel a debt of gratitude to Clint. Clint was always supportive of me where he tried to get me involved in the club and gave me advice on everything from Calicos to Yellow fin. The last time I spoke to Clint he told me **"Not to dive into the rocks past my knees,"** and then he borrowed me his Picasso 75 cm so I could take a shot at a Halibut. After meeting Clint's wife, family, friends and work mates I realized Clint had a great life and everyone around him was robbed by his death.

Craig Dockendorf.

(Amazingly, these were Clints' last words. And typical Clint, always helpful, coaching a friend. Editor)



These are some of the pictures I have. The dive with the yellowtails was in Santa Barbara islands with Erez and John Hanson. It was a great day in which Clint taught me how to catch yellowtails. We caught a total of 9 YT and 1 WSB. It was my first ever YT and first big WSB. The gun I was shooting was setup the night before by Clint and it was the first time it was used. The most memorable thing about that day besides the fish was the fact that after we cleaned the fish and got ready to leave for home the boat wouldn't start. Clint (the mechanic of the crew) tried for about an hour to fix with no success. So we had to call it in and wait to be towed. They notified us that the towing boat wouldn't come for another 2 or 3 hours so we all started getting nervous. Clint got out the boat manuals and started reading until he actually found the problem and fixed it. I was amazed. It made me feel so safe and secure for the rest of the trip and any future trips with him, knowing that he could get out of any mechanical issues with his boat. That day we were planning to get back in at around 4pm and we didn't make it until after 8pm. It could be much worse though. It was a small adventure with a happy ending.

Petros Yiannikouros PhD

In the world we live in, if I was to give only one word to describe my beloved friend Clint, it would be “Flawless”.

Eleven pm I receive a phone call from Tina (wife). Her first crying words out of her mouth was, ‘ Richard you need to get here right now, Clint is in the hospital’. At that time I knew something catastrophic had taken place. A huge tingly feeling burst through my body from inside out like a freight train as I suddenly went into an unreal state of time.

Within no time I arrived to the hospital, and there he was. The powerful and Energetic Clint that I know is there lying down so peacefully.

Along with countless positives characteristics that Clint possessed, some of the things that really sticks out every time I think of him was, his amazing personality, his loyalness, his love for the sea, his amazing free diving and spear fishing skills, his steel like body and mind, and his huge loving heart.

Clint’s love for the sea and to his friends was not measurable. He would drive every month 2 to three hours through traffic just to attend the Fathomiers meeting so he can spend some time with his great friends and talk about the sea. He was always so excited to be anywhere near anything that had to do with spear fishing. He drove down almost every weekend so we could go out and spend time out on the water spear fishing together. Every time I tell him what time we are meeting at the boat, he would always show up more than a half an hour early and just waits till I get there. I would show up, and there he would be, we then would always hug each other as we are both so excited to get out to share another adventures day.

Clint is one of the most energetic and enthusiastic guys I have ever met. Every time we wake up super early to go on another adventure, he would be the first one up and his energy level would be at max. I would always look at him with my half awake eyes and ask him, “ Clint, how in the world do you do it”, he would say “ I don’t know, I am just so excited to go, come on lets go, lets go get them”. One great memory I have is when Erez, Clint and myself where on a two day trip to the Island. The very next morning on the second day of the trip, little after sunup, we here Clint calling’ hey come on guys get up, it’s a beautiful day, get out here and eat your breakfast so we can go and shoot ‘em up”. Clint had woken up while we where asleep, grabbed all these different fruits from the ice chest for us, cut them all up in a bowl for each one of us and made a wonderful sandwich to get us started in the day.

Clint is also one of the greatest spear fishermen I know. One of the many stories I have of him was when we where in Catalina Island once, we where hunting Calico Bass with our small guns off a drop off when all of the sudden we started running into big Yellow Tails. Clint went down and started tracking a Yellow, he then got a shot off. All of the sudden the Fish shot straight for the bottom at around eighty feet deep. As the fish is trashing violently on the bottom floor, without getting to relax and breathing up, Clint went right after the fish all the way down to the bottom. While I was watching all this

take place, I see sand flying everywhere off the bottom as Clint is literally on the Bottom fighting with this fish and trying to get control of it. He finally gets a locking grip on the fish, takes out his knife, kills the fish and then swims slowly back up to the surface. I looked at him and I was in such awe of what I just had witnessed.



Clint also has one of the most amazing talents in knowing how to fix things and is very creative. If I had a mechanical or other question, Clint was the first guy I asked on what he thought. He is one of the few guys I know that is there for you no matter what. Every time I needed help fixing the boat or something in that nature, Clint was there to help with out any hesitation. He would drive two hours down to my shop only to help me work on the boat all day and then drives all the way back.

I met Clint a few years ago in the Club meeting. At first without knowing him much, at the meetings Clint kept on asking me to take him out on the boat. That day finally came and I invited him on the boat. We went out for a full day of spear fishing, and only then did I realized how special of a person he is. From that day our friendship and our love for one another grew more and more as we experienced many unforgettable moments out at sea together. After years of knowing one another we became like brothers. We got to the point to where we literally talked on the phone every single day on our way to work as we talked fish stories and other stuff. It was like the Morning boost to get us through the day and to always keep us looking forward to the weekends. Every time I saw his name come up on my phone as my phone rang, I got so excited as I knew there is always some exciting stuff to talk about with him.

Losing my best friend Clint was one of the worst things I have gone through in my life. Clint, I was looking forward to spending many more wonderful years together while continuing to share unforgettable memories with one another, but don't worry brother, the memories you left me and the joy I had with you will last me two lifetime. I was looking forward to us being on the same team as we compete against others, but don't worry, not only you will be on my team as I compete but you will be with me as one forever now.

Clint, I am blessed and lucky to be one of the many you touched in this world as I shared a big part of my life with you. Thank you for everything you have brought to my life. I will never forget your joyful smile and you beautiful green eyes that is full of life.

My pain and tears will one-day ease but my love to you will never fade.

Clint, you are now my Sea Angel and you will be with me in the sea forever.

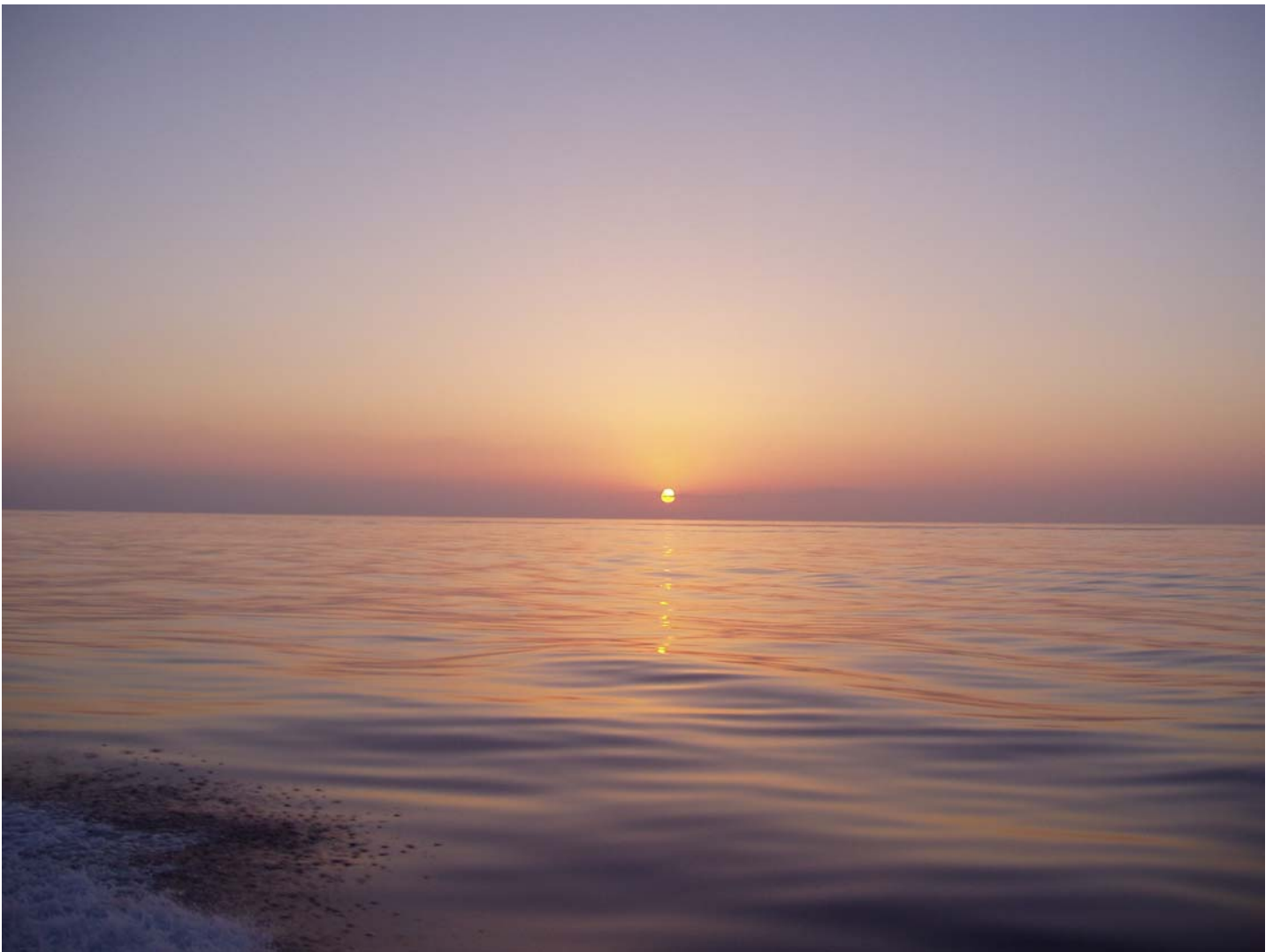
Love, Richard Balta





Saying goodbye is never easy; especially to one who had such a positive impact on everyone he knew. Here we joined Clint's wife, daughter, parents, and sisters in setting him free to roam the ocean he loved so much.





Tranquility

I found this picture of the sunset in Clint's picture file. Of all the pictures he had archived, this was the only sunset I saw. I took it as this was a perfect ending for a perfect day on the ocean. It seemed the perfect way to say we wish you an eternity of Peace, smooth sailing, and safe hunting.