

Minutes of the San Diego Council of Divers
January 3, 2014

President Volker Hoehne called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m. In attendance were:

Volker Hoehne, President
Marc Henning, Vice President
Tom Baker, Treasurer
Maxine Baker, Secretary
Cary Humphries, Director
David Pierces, Director
Scott Anderson, Emeritus President

Since a Treasurer was not named at the Annual Meeting, the Board voted Tom Baker to that position and assigned Maxine Baker as Secretary. This filled all the officer positions.

President Hoehne then kicked off the meeting with a roundtable discussion, getting input from everyone about his/her impressions and experiences with the San Diego Council of Divers (SDCOD). The purpose was to understand the issues and gaps in order to implement an action plan for 2014.

The most consistent impression was that SDCOD was not well-known within the dive community even though its 3 Rs program is among the most successful and educational events throughout the summer.

There was a lengthy discussion about connecting with other organizations whose interests aligned with SDCOD's mission, and it was concluded that SDCOP should serve as a "focal point" on issues of mutual interest centered on marine conservation and protection and open access to all beaches and shorelines from the Mexican border to Orange County.

It was agreed that SDCOD would encourage other organizations to sponsor their own events and that SDCOD would help promote them via our web site, Facebook page and mass mailings. SDCOD would continue to host a select number of events to create/maintain visibility of its brand and educate the public.

President Hoehne said the future of SDCOD lies in the current generation of divers (in their 30s) who are being certified. They have the financial ability to buy gear (thus keeping dive shops in business) and are interested in preserving the marine environment.

Fundraising was discussed, and President Hoehne said he wanted to end 2014 with a \$5,000 surplus. A new logo also was discussed, but due to lack of resources and time, the current "new" one will be used in 2014 while we work on developing a new logo to kick off 2015 and make the SDCOD brand more visible to the public.

The Board voted to hold quarterly Board meetings, instead of open monthly member meetings because of low attendance and the ability to reach SDCOD constituents with information through

electronic means (e.g. SDCOD web site, Facebook and mass mailings). A fifth meeting will be open to the membership to vote on new officers. Communications with the SDCOD membership will be done electronically. Member meetings will be held, as needed.

President Hoehne proposed, and the Board unanimously agreed, on a three-pronged approach in 2014 to maximize SDCOD's brand in the community and its role as the focal point on issues affecting the diving community.

Organizations/groups discussed for which SDCOD should act as focal point on common issues include (but not limited to):

- Local merchants
- Fishermen
- Dive shops
- Dive clubs
- Swimmers
- Snorkelers
- Lifeguards
- Dive boats

Items discussed as "issues" included:

- Access to all beaches
- Diver access to Children's Pool
- Proposed fees for commercial usage of the Shores
- Lack of financial resources to support programs and lobbying
- Impression that divers are not "conservationists"
- Apathy about issues that affect divers
- Lack of visibility of the SDCOD brand within the dive community

President Hoehne summarized the discussion as follows:

Good things about SDCOD:

1. 3 Rs
2. SDCOD's legacy
3. Good mix of consumptive and non-consumptive groups

Things that need improvement:

1. Branding
2. Outreach
3. Seen as too narrowly focused

Following the discussion, President Hoehne and the Board agreed to the following three-pronged action plan for 2014:

#1 FUN

1. 3 Rs June – September
2. Fun dives organized by local dive shops and clubs (including lobster dive and education)

3. Two beach clean-ups

#2 OUTREACH

1. Fish identification “class” at the Birch Aquarium
2. Presentations to clubs, schools, merchant groups, etc., about SDCOD
3. Underwater Photographic Society

#3 ACCESS

1. Children’s Pool
2. Marine Protected Area

The 2014 Action Plan involves the following, with the leads given complete responsibility for their events without Board involvement. The expectation is that the leads will work with other organizations and solicit the support of volunteers, including those within SDCOD, to make their events a success.

1. 3 Rs: Scott Anderson, lead. Mr. Anderson asked that President Hoehne name three individuals who would work closely with him and be trained to take over this popular and successful educational project. A “sticker” with the SDCOD logo will be given to each participant.
2. Children’s Pool: Justin Schlaelafly, lead.
3. Marine Protected Area: Volker Hoehne, lead.
4. Facebook: Volker Hoehne, lead.
5. Web site: TBD (Maxine Baker, interim); Marc Henning to look for new web master
6. Communications: Maxine Baker, lead.
7. Underwater Photographic Society: Tom Baker, lead.
8. Dive Bums: Marc Henning, lead.
9. Fun dives: All with dive shops/clubs
Lobster Dive (Volker Hoehne, lead)
10. Beach Clean-up on Earth Day: David Pierces, lead, with Marc Henning.
11. Revision of By-laws: Maxine Baker, lead.
12. Presentations to dive shops, dive clubs, local merchant organizations, etc.: All (Maxine Baker to create materials/hand-outs)

The expectation is that the leads will reach out to SDCOD members and other groups for volunteers to make the events successful.

President Hoehne committed to creating a 2014 calendar of events by February 1 so that we can start our publicity campaign. Secretary Baker will take the lead to create publicity materials for all events.

The meeting adjourned at 10:32 p.m.