

SeaKeepers rally at Birch Aquarium

May 25, 2007



Forty affluent people who love yachting – and who are passionate in their concern for conserving the world's oceans – met for dinner Monday at the Birch Aquarium.

The hosts were Sue and John Sobrato of San Francisco, and the guests represented the Scripps Institution of Oceanography and the International SeaKeepers Society.

SeaKeepers is a marine conservation agency founded in 1998 by yacht owners who were concerned about the rapidly deteriorating condition of the sea. (About 100 families have donated a minimum of \$50,000 each to fund the organization.)

For two years now, Scripps has been testing the SeaKeepers oceanographic and atmospheric monitoring system – developed originally for use aboard yachts – at Scripps Pier to determine its potential as a near-shore monitoring system. That system could provide oceanographic data to scientists and resource managers around the world.

Monday's dinner was to rally support for the Coastal Monitoring Project.

Tony Haymet, director of Scripps Institution of Oceanography, was there, and so were Lawrance Bailey (he's the senior director of development at Scripps), John Englander (SeaKeepers' CEO), Don Tomlin (SeaKeepers' board chairman) and Mimi and Jim Gilbert (he is president of the SeaKeepers' board).

Some of the others at Monday's dinner were Melissa and Mark Grosvenor, Lee and Frank Goldberg, Lorna and Chris McKellar, Lee Clark and Dr. Jerry Pikolysky, Sharon and Skeets Dunn, Patty and Rick Elkus, Sara and Michael Abraham, and Nancy and Jim Baldwin.

Nigella Hillgarth, director of the Birch Aquarium, joined the party, as did Diane Hoffman, Ken Melville, Eric Terrill, Efrem "Skip" Zimbalist, Nicki and Joe Parisi, Sera and Gary Brill, Phyllis and Alfred Balm, Jay Wade, John Jo Lewis, and Brian Boyer.

UCSD Catering prepared the meal, which began with a salad of diced avocado, jicama, red pepper, radish sprouts, crumbled feta cheese, pine nuts and garden greens. The main course offered grilled medallions of filet mignon with caramelized shallots, and the dessert was strawberries in Grand Marnier with vanilla ice cream and macadamia shortbread.



SANDY HUFFAKER

Frank and Lee Goldberg (left) and Melissa and Mark Grosvenor at the International SeaKeepers Society and Scripps Institution of Oceanography dinner at the Birch Aquarium. The goal was to build support for the Coastal Monitoring Project.