

Tom Ingram

—An Interview With DEMA's Director

Text by Rosemary E Lunn. Photos courtesy of Tom Ingram, Cathy Church, Dan Orr, Alese Pechter, Barb Roy and Peter Symes

The month of November sees the return of the international dive industry trade convention, the DEMA Show, to Orlando, Florida, USA. In a peek-behind-the-scenes conversation with Tom Ingram, Executive Director of DEMA (Diving Equipment and Marketing Association), Rosemary Lunn's interview reveals an engaged, enthusiastic diver who is passionate about our industry and the business of diving.

RL: Where did you learn to dive?

TI: I was born in Florida, and grew up in Miami. I was fortunate enough to have an older brother who became a ready-made and long-time dive buddy.

We got started in diving because my Dad was the manager of a Woolworth store on Miami Beach, and Woolworth's actually sold dive equipment! As a result, Dad was connected to a local dive store, and we got "trained" to dive by one of the instructors there.

In 1965, I was all of 11 and "certification," as such, was "kind of optional" for most divers and operators. At the completion of the "course", we

were presented with a little green paper card that said we were divers, but the course itself was pretty basic, involving mostly "self-study," a couple of short pool sessions and diving off Miami Beach and in a rock quarry. The self-study itself was pretty short too—the book we studied was a thin green how-to guide called *Skin and Scuba Diving*. This was new at the time, and as I recall, featured a lot of Nemrod brand equipment. We also used the first edition of the U.S. Diver's publication, *Let's Go Diving*.

Sometime after receiving our "certifications," we also discovered an early edition of *The New Science of Skin and Scuba Diving*—a much more comprehensive book. After reading that one, we found out how much we really didn't know!

We bought equipment with our life savings (several hundred dollars judiciously saved after mowing neighborhood lawns and doing household chores). I cannot tell you how proud I was of my Mistral single-stage double-hose regulator and how long it took until I could finally afford a Mae-West style vest.

Eventually, I purchased a 1969 model Calypso single hose regulator, the last of the diaphragm first stage versions of that model. Later, I finally bought a tank pressure gauge and a capillary depth gauge. Luckily, in South Florida, wetsuits weren't critical, but I eventually did buy a Parkway

Sharkskin long sleeve jacket some years later.

Living in South Florida, a lot of our early diving was done in some of the local flooded limestone quarries, sink holes and marl pits nearby our house (complete with gators, snakes, and the occasional sunken car or other debris), off the beach in Fort Lauderdale and Dania (I saw my first shark there), and of course, in the Florida Keys.

We dove with several operators out of Key Largo. Later, when we could get a ride, we made the three hour trek to Big Pine Key, where we would rent a 13-foot open Boston Whaler with an outboard and motor. We would take it out to Looe Key Reef, seven miles away from the marina and what seemed like out in the middle of the ocean. Boy, did we get sunburned!

Eventually we bought a 1965 VW bug, folded down the back seat, filled the back to the brim with four scuba tanks and dive gear for two, and started driving to Key Largo and points south almost every weekend.

By far, one of my happiest moments in those early days of middle and high school was buying a camera and underwater housing. Looking back, that first set up wasn't much—an Instamatic Camera and a housing that allowed the use of "flash cubes"—but it took pictures and it was fun. I even took second place in



PETER SYMES





CATHY CHURCH

Tom Ingram diving the Cayman Islands

Tom Ingram at Trinity Caves, Cayman Islands (right); *Reflection*, by Tom Ingram, 1985 (below)

Dave Reidenbach attended—in fact, this is where Dave and I first met.

Over the years, I was fortunate to work in retail, divemastering with six-pack and larger charter dive operations, early liveaboard boats, manufacturing, and of course dive instruction in stores and later in universities.

RL: “Divemastering with six-pack”—care to explain this in “English”, Tom? I don’t think you really said, “I went diving with six cans of beer.”

TI: Well, there was, most certainly, beer... but a six-pack in

American “English” refers to a six-passenger dive boat. I spent a lot of time as a student doing weekend work as a divemaster and dive guide aboard those smaller boats in West Palm Beach, Florida and other places, too, and spent some time on bigger boats as well.

RL: What type of diver are you?

TI: I was involved with university dive programs beginning in the late 1970s through the early 1990s—first as an equipment repair technician and teaching assistant and much later as Department Chair. During that time, I tried (and taught) most everything, from open water to wreck diving,

using nitrox and heliox (heresy in the early 1980s), rebreathers, and I operated the university’s recompression chamber both as an inside tender and outside operator.

I had access to an education in commercial diving at Florida Institute of Technology, so I went through the commercial diving program there, diving in nearly



Ingram preparing for a dive in the mid-1980s



CATHY CHURCH

a school photo contest with a picture of a reef that was published in the school yearbook, using just that point-and-shoot system.

After diving for five or six years using that little green “certification” card, my brother and I decided to take a real scuba course from the local YMCA. The green card was becoming more problematic, as stores and dive operators started checking cards on a regular basis before we could get air or get on the boat. The YMCA course was pretty complete, lasting about six weeks.

Eventually, I found myself becoming an “advanced” diver, a PADI Divemaster in 1974, a NAUI Assistant Instructor in 1974, and a NAUI and PADI Instructor in 1976, as well as a NAUI Instructor Trainer in 1983 and a PADI Course Director in 1988. This was the same program that “Big Wave”

every commercial rig one can imagine. I spent weeks at a time in the Mark V helmet diving in zero viz, in harbors and the like. I also dived the Superlite 17 for a variety of tasks and used other surface supplied equipment, which were state of the art at the time.

As instructors,

we regularly participated in deep and extended decompression diving in those days, and we had our fair share of sneaking into dive sites that were (at least theoretically) off-limits to most. We were involved in shark feeding and diving long before the advent of chain-mail suits, and before it became a commercially viable enterprise.

I was a geologist working in the mining industry before teaching at the universities, and one of my favorite places to dive was in the caves of northern Florida. As an undergraduate at the University of Florida in Gainesville, I even did my senior thesis based on the geology and make-up of the caves and springs and taught diving there to put myself through school.



Tom Ingram shark diving in the Neptune Islands, South Australia (left); Tom Ingram's images of the great white sharks of the Neptune Islands (below)

Ingram

for Scubapro for years, and when I left in 2000, the company made one of these for me (which, unfortunately was not made from the original orange material... but the design and fit were perfect). Along the way, I have always loved my extra-large Scubapro Jet fins and my Apeks and Scubapro regulators, too.

With the difficulties today of travelling with our favorite pieces of equipment, I have come to love my little (and highly transportable) GoPro video camera with twin Sola 1200 video lights. I have always had a passion for underwater photography, and while I love my Sea and Sea housing and Canon DSLR, GoPro cameras are just fun. Video (even as elementary as GoPro video) is still pretty new to me, but I enjoy it.

RL: Favourite dive site?

TI: I'll always answer this question the same way; it depends on what I am looking to do.

I love the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands and Hawaii for the warm water, sea life and clarity. San Diego has great wrecks and kelp and the Channel Islands in California was one of the most beautiful (and coldest) dives I have ever done.

Diving in Australia with Rodney Fox, Carl Roesler

and Geri Murphy was the dream of a lifetime for me and is one of my favorite diving memories. The water was cool, and the visibility was just perfect for the big white sharks to "loom in" out of the distance. Those sharks are amazing animals, and for me, it was an amazing adventure.

Just recently, I really enjoyed diving inland in a series of Texas lakes, while hid-



While teaching, we had our fair share of dives in the muck of the Indian River and in unexplored sinkholes around Florida. I was involved in sinking some of the artificial reefs/wrecks in the Martin County area in the early 80's. In those days, I also worked summers with the Mel Fisher operation, managing the East Coast Shipwreck project, and was fortunate enough to be around during the time when the structure of the *Nuestra Senora de la Atocha* was located down in the Keys. I was always fascinated by history and relished the chance to dive on these shipwrecks.

One of my greatest pleasures was teaching underwater photography at both FIT (Florida Institute of Technology) and Barry University in Miami, which I did for about 15 years. Part of that experi-

ence was teaching commercial diving applications in 'dirty water', and I became pretty good at that. I also photographed my share of catalogs and ads and even had the opportunity to shoot pictures for magazine articles over the years.

These days I dive as often as (and where) I can. I live in San Diego and there's great diving here, although it is different from the dives I did early in my career. Fortunately for me, my travels take me to some fun and interesting places, which have local/inland dive sites, and sometimes to places where I can ocean dive in warm and cold water. I usually try to dive if I am travelling—it gives me a sense of what the local dive operators are doing to teach their students and keep their customers active,

and I consider myself fairly flexible with regard to how and where the dive is conducted. Safety is the main concern, but we have fun no matter what! And since I intend to be around for a while, I have decided that I should stay more or less in shape and be conservative on my dives. But I am still up for a grand adventure where I can find one.

RL: What is your favourite piece of kit?

TI: It has changed over the years and has included photography equipment such as my trusty Nikons III with a 15mm lens

and SubSea 150 Strobe, to my Hans Hass DecoBrain—one of the earlier micro-processing dive computers.

When they first came out, one of my favorite pieces of equipment was my Scubapro Stabilizer Jacket—you know, the orange one that laid flat against your body? When I was weighted properly, this was the most comfortable and easy to use BC I ever owned. I worked



THIS PAGE: Tom Ingram's images of great white sharks and fur seals of the Neptune Islands, South Australia



RL: Who is your dream dive buddy, Tom?

TI: Someone who shares my passion for diving and interest in the site, and who also doesn't mind that I am dragging 50 kilos of photo gear with me on the boat or in the water. If they are willing to help me find subjects to shoot, or willing to watch my back while I am shooting, that's all the better!

RL: Dream dive destination?

TI: I had the opportunity to realize one dream destination when I travelled to Australia and went white shark diving with Rodney, Carl and Geri. In the early 1970s, my brother and I must have seen [the film]

of Jacques Cousteau during which the late Philippe Cousteau visited the deeper wrecks in Truk Lagoon. I know that many of those ships are now in dilapidated condition after being submerged for almost 70 years. I want to see those WWII wrecks before they completely disintegrate.

Really, anywhere in the South Pacific beyond Hawaii would be a great start, especially if there are wrecks of any kind.

RL: Best dive book ever read?

TI: There are way too many good ones out there to pick just one.

Shadow Divers by Robert Kurson is one of the best-written most interesting of the recently published diving-related books.

Blue Meridian—The Search for The Great White Shark by Peter Matthiessen was a book about one of the first expeditions to seek and film the great white

diver, especially for a young teenager at the time, this book presented all the fun and adventure of diving and the activities around diving.

In the 1980s, I picked up a copy of Carl Roessler's book, *Mastering Underwater Photography*. I've tried hard to mimic

ing DiveCaches (underwater geocaches) there. And of course, diving in Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach and the springs in Florida were all favorites when I lived and taught diving there.

RL: Best country visited?

TI: The people I met in Australia were some of the nicest I have ever known. I also have great friends in Cayman and in the Bahamas. From a diving perspective, all these countries are first-rate in their own way.

RL: What motivates you to go diving?

TI: Lots of things come to mind; I love the social aspect of diving, meeting new people and finding out we have diving in common. I am a history buff, especially the American Civil War and WWII. Any chance to dive on submerged historic sites is welcome, even when the sites are cloudy, cold or deep.

Of all the different motivations, the one element that shows up for me again and again regardless of where I am diving

is the desire to take pictures. As I said, video is pretty new to me, and I am enjoying learning on a relatively inexpensive system. But whether I am shooting video or stills, I find myself a bit disappointed if I cannot take some sort of picture while I am visiting a dive site.

RL: You say you are into the Civil War. Did you get the chance to dive the Monitor? And if so what was the dive like?

TI: Unfortunately, I never got the chance to dive the *Monitor*. I did a lot of diving on shipwrecks from the mid-1800s, but none that are as notable as the *Monitor*. I did have an interest in underwater archaeology. I managed to dive and map wreckage near Fort Pierce up in the springs in northern Florida and on some submerged sites in Missouri and Illinois.



Blue Water White Death ten times in the theaters. I swore I was going to dive with sharks and meet Rodney Fox one day. It took 35 years to get there, but thanks to those good friends, I made it!

The other dream destination that comes immediately to mind is Chuuk. I have been fascinated with that site since seeing an episode of *The Undersea World*

shark. It is the book on which the film *Blue Water White Death* was based. Many of the techniques used to film sharks today were developed during this time and for a





Carl's imagery ever since. He is the unquestioned master of the fish portrait.

I have a signed copy of *Sea Salt* by Stan Waterman which I treasure. It was fun to read Stan's take on his own adventures over the years.

I also have a cherished copy of *Silver Seas* by Ernie Brooks, which depicts diving in as beautiful a manner as I can imagine, with all his photographs in glorious black and white.

And finally, although not strictly a diving book, *Jaws* by Peter Benchley, was a real thrill ride. The book was better than the movie, which was by itself amazing for the time.

I understand there are some good

books about the founding of Body Glove and the early days of the Cayman Islands diving scene. I am looking forward to reading those!

RL: What bugs you most about diving?

TI: It's less about diving itself and more about the misinformation put out to the public about diving that bugs me. Sometimes that misinformation comes from expected sources like the media, e.g. "sharks are everywhere" and "diving is a deadly activity", and sometimes it seems to come from within our own industry, e.g. "all the reefs are dead" and "look how deep/far back/long I stayed/

many fish I killed, too bad you aren't as bad-ass as me".

I guess that's an ego thing, but these issues don't do the industry much good, and it seems to me that they often turn potential new divers toward some other activity. The idea of ego is problematic for a lot of reasons, and unfortunately, I have seen it make for instructional and customer service situations that are inappropriate or avoidable.

Then too, misinformation, especially when it comes from within, can have a larger impact, sometimes resulting in legislative or regulatory action detrimental to the industry.

Really, we should be welcoming to

anyone interested in diving. We have to be careful to balance good customer service and the need for access to dive sites with our concerns for the environment. Without taking such a stance, it is probably true that many potential divers are opting out of learning, and we as an industry are suffering as a result.

RL: How would you describe diving to non-divers?

TI: First of all, it's fun and safe for just about anyone who is comfortable in the water and healthy. The equipment is easy to use and light in the water, and with just a little bit of instruction and some basic equipment, people can adapt easily to seeing some of the cool critters and scenery.

I have had the privilege of working with folks such as the Wounded Warriors Project who aren't very mobile on land, typically due to an injury. But those same people can move easily in three dimensions underwater, which means almost

anyone can easily move about underwater.

Diving is unique in that the level of adventure is entirely up to the participant; divers can do as much or as little as they want because there are so many fun ways to enjoy the sport.

For families with kids as young as ten, they can all dive in shallower water and see lots of color and aquatic life. Those who want a different adventure can learn more, use diverse equipment, dive on historic shipwrecks or in natural caverns, or experience night diving. And those who want to take diving to the extreme can, with the proper additional training and equipment.

Diving can be for everyone, and unlike other sports such as snow skiing, the level of expertise doesn't strictly dictate the quality of the experience. Diving has something for almost everyone.

RL: What did you do before you worked for Scubapro?

TI: After Florida Institute of Technology's satellite campus at Jensen Beach shut down all programs (including the Sport Diving Operation Program I headed), I started the Recreational Diving Management Program at Barry University. It was the first four-year degree program in the diving industry.

After more than five years at Barry, I was offered a position as Coordinator of Business Curriculum, teaching business at a community college, and administering various adult education business programs while working with a nearby "business incubator". With graduate degrees in marketing and management and a long history of teaching at the college level, I decided to



Tom Ingram with sea turtle

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Tom Ingram making bubble rings (left)

Tom Ingram with ScubaRadio staff at DEMA 2012



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I also learned to develop SBA loan programs, work with lending institutions, did SBA business consulting and taught business programs at the college itself. At the same time, I was responsible for a non-profit (501c3) organization called Leadership Seminole (LS). Leadership Seminole brought in business up-and-comers in the region, acquainted them with the role of various local and statewide government and private entities and personalities, and generated revenue through business connections and education.

programs and all the technical/regulator service materials. In addition, I coordinated the product catalog, illustrated price list, most of the dealer training and product sales materials issued through the company. I also oversaw the launch of the Scubapro website.

I was there for the development of the Twin Jet Fins, various Scubapro regulators and the purchase of UWATEC. We then launched that brand under the Scubapro name.

In 2000, I was offered a position at Aqua Lung (the U.S. Divers sporting goods division), launching the Aqua Sphere brand with the Seal Mask swim product, and developing a branding effort for the swim products in conjunction with Ironman.

Aqua Sphere was the first division at the company to open a website, and

I had the opportunity to work on the development of the Aqua Lung website launch, too.

After about a year, I went over to the Pro Dive division of Aqua Lung as Marketing Manager, making changes to the Aqua Lung catalog, and launching products such as the Surface Observation Signal marker and developing sales programs for the Suunto brand of computers.

RL: And then you joined DEMA?

TI: I started with DEMA in 2002. It was a great opportunity for me, combining my background in business consulting with the SBA, knowledge of non-profit trade associations, teaching business at the university and community colleges, and involvement with small business in general and the diving industry in particular. The position came open, and I applied for the job. After interviewing with DEMA Board members John

Cronin (PADI) and Werner Kurn (Ocean Enterprises), I went directly there from Aqua Lung.

Initially, I was hired as DEMA's "General Manager", but my title changed to Executive Director shortly after my arrival and has remained the same ever since.

RL: Tom, you have a vision for DEMA. What is it?

TI: My vision is really to accomplish the strategy and goals of the volunteer DEMA Board. DEMA is a trade association, so the focus is obviously making business better for the diving industry where possible.

Fortunately, the DEMA Board has been gracious enough to allow me to have volunteer involvement with several operations in the Association Community, both here in California and throughout the United States. That volunteer time has allowed me to learn more about associations and the changes occurring in the association market.

During my time at DEMA, I have been on the board of directors for the International Scuba Diving Hall of Fame. I have also been Chair of the Board and a board member for the California Society of Association Executives (CalSAE). This is the third larg-

take the position.

I truly enjoyed that time, and I still kept my hand in diving by teaching courses at the college. I also got more involved in the local business community, using the time to go to various retail and manufacturing businesses and teach a variety of business topics, from Statistical Process Control and Manufacturing Standards, to financial management for small businesses, and various management and marketing topics.

A few years later I was recruited to run a Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) in the Orlando area. I became a Certified Business Analyst and worked with more than 200 local small businesses annually (including just about any business you can imagine—from diaper services to Bed and Breakfasts, and even a few dive stores).

LS operated directly under the guidance of a volunteer board of directors, similar to DEMA, although DEMA is a trade association and a different tax structure. Leadership Seminole still exists today.

While at the SBDC, I received a call from a former FIT student who was working at Scubapro, and after an interview, I was offered a position teaching diving retailers more about business. The Retail Education Manager position was in Wisconsin (brrr!) but I took the job and moved from Central Florida to the Racine/Milwaukee area where I lived for three years. In 1998, several of us from the Wisconsin office moved the Scubapro operation to San Diego area.

Eventually I became Product Manager and then Director of Technical Marketing for Scubapro. I was responsible for creating the in-house technician training



BARB ROY

Tom Ingram speaking at DEMA 2006



Participants enter the DEMA Show in Las Vegas last year (right); Tom Ingram and the DEMA Board opening the 2012 DEMA Show (below)

est Society of Association Executives in the United States. I served as a volunteer and speaker for the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) and for the International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE). I was also speaker for the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA).

Considering today's business "culture" and observing trends in the association community, it is clear to me that the need for associations is strong, but it is changing. For example, associations once provided one of the few opportunities for conversation, collaboration and collective action among members of a given business community. The need for these actions remains, but the means by which these needs are satisfied is different, by using social media and other channels.

Interestingly, the need for face-to-face contact is actually greater than ever, but "face-to-face" is being viewed differently by today's business person. Today, associations and their face-to-face meetings are part of a "participatory culture"—one in which many adults are online and expect information to be easily shared

with each other. This "culture" incorporates traditional face-to-face contact and much more.

Interestingly, it appears that face-to-face meetings are actually preferred by business people who want the opportunity to interact with veterans of an industry, as well as be involved with personal contact to form networks. Costs and other issues have had an impact on business' ability to attend face-to-face meetings, but the preference is still there. As a result, any face-to-face interaction must be more personal than ever.

With these major shifts in the business culture in mind, DEMA has been moving in a direction that should help everyone in the industry. Joining DEMA is one of the best investments a diving business can make and among the most important benefits that DEMA currently provides and will continue to in the future are:

Research – DEMA should be the place where industry participants (members and non-members) turn to understand all aspects of the marketplace. In fact, DEMA has more research projects in the works today than ever before. Some of



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that will be readily shared with the industry, and some will be available to members only.

Membership Specific Services – DEMA is already providing access to services such as workers compensation insurance packages, health insurance, and shipping services because the DEMA Membership serves as a "class". This status allows DEMA to negotiate discounted benefits and spread risks to lessen costs.

Legislative Services – This is one of the most important services provided to DEMA members and the industry. It includes lobbying, monitoring of bills, and informing the members of changes in legislation impacting the industry—whether it is environmental, business or other topics. This is an essential service of any legitimate trade association and with a lifelong interest in politics and legislation, this is an area of interest and activity for me personally.

Becoming the "Hub" of Information and Engagement – Even though the five stakeholder groups that make up the industry and Association are often at (conflicting) odds with each other, DEMA is one of the few "neutral" territories for the diving industry. As such, there is an opportunity to use the trade association as a place to do more than just talk about a topic. DEMA can serve as a place for working through issues that have a real impact. Of course, this is not a simple task for a non-profit trade association in the United States due to the structure of anti-trust laws, but DEMA still represents the best place where such discussions can and should take place.

PR Events – Items that reach into the mainstream media can help keep diving visible to the general public and should continue to be utilized. Wounded Warriors and the Be-A-Diver pool have been good examples of getting media attention, as are efforts to get input from

celebrities to bring attention to important causes. One of the most recent examples of this is DEMA connecting with the VH1 "Band You Oughta Know", Youngblood Hawke, to develop a following of a younger audience and also bring forth the issue of trying to stop shark finning.

Business Education – Of course this is an area in which I have a keen and long-term interest. While DEMA has some great programs put on by really good presenters (especially at DEMA Show), we also recognize that one of the most important things we need to do is educate each other by learning from other successful members of the industry. DEMA does a pretty good job of education at the retail level, but there is more, especially with other stakeholder groups, that could be done.

Standard-Setting – DEMA is already involved in this area, investigating the



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profile



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Tom Ingram (left) presenting a marketing seminar at the DEMA Show in 2010; Tom Ingram testifies before the U.S. Senate in 2010 on the potential economic impacts of Ocean Acidification on the Recreational Diving Industry (below)

Ingram

ent if they are to survive. The buying public, often through social media, make demands on every business, and they must address these demands to be viable in the long run.

Face-to Face Meetings/ Events/Shows – While these will be different than they have been in the past, and will require a fresh approach, they are vitally important. In fact, all social media should direct the participants to this impor-

Show is one of the most important opportunities for businesses to collaborate and learn.

RL: If you had a magic wand and could change one thing in DEMA, what would it be and why?

TI: I have always thought that having opinions and help from outside the DEMA Board of Directors (in the form of volunteers on committees) could give the board and staff more options for ideas. We actually did accomplish this over the last two years, including changing the structure of committees by developing written objectives and work plans. The result is that DEMA is able to accomplish so much more than we have been able to do in the past, stretching resources and generating new and fresh ideas that make a difference. The current Board of Directors is to be thanked for taking that chance!

DEMA has sometimes (often?) been accused of being a “good old boys club” (at some point that might have been deserved). That has never been the reality in my time with DEMA. I wish others in the industry could see how hard the members of the board and staff actually work to avoid that, while conducting DEMA business. Someone will likely accuse me of “sucking up” for that comment. I invite those people to serve on a committee or run for the board so they can see what really happens at board meetings.

RL: And has your input come out as you would have wished?

TI: I'd like to think DEMA has been helpful in getting more real business training and marketing data

out there and dispelling myths about such things as the classic diver dropout rate (it is NOT, by the way, 80%). I think we have had an impact on business through the trade show, and with fairly exacting standards for who may attend, I believe we have made the show about business, networking and education again.

I was fortunate enough to work with some industry notables such as Drew Richardson and Dudley Crosson in the early days at the universities, and of course, since being at DEMA I have had the chance to meet and work with some of my own heroes: Neal Watson, Zale Parry, David Doubilet, Bob Hollis, Carl Roessler, Rodney Fox, Al Hornsby, Valerie and Ron Taylor, Geri Murphy and

Stan Waterman.

I am proud of all my former diving students and colleagues, and count among them Tanya Burnett (noted underwater photographer), Sharon Kegeles (Women Diver's Hall of Fame and now at Barry University), Don Barthelme (Santa Barbara Maritime Museum), Guy Miller (formerly of Scubapro), Rob Pasqual (also of Scubapro) and many others.

Those university programs were designed to turn out people with a passion for diving and running a diving business. It's great to see former students like John Harman in Maryland and Rob MacDonald in West Palm Beach own and operate diving businesses today. That's what it was all about. ■

need for setting manufacturing and other standards in the United States through proper accrediting channels such as the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). Such standard setting could help the industry and should be an area in which the trade association should participate.

Money-Saving Benefits for Advertising and Other Promotions

– Since 2007 DEMA has been involved in trying to create templates that reduce the cost of advertising for members to reach potential customers. DEMA will continue to promote such ads, along with simple program ideas that keep divers active and encourage the fun of diving to consumers. As a trade association, most of this is necessarily conducted through our members, but DEMA does and will continue to provide access to inexpensive ads and programs, as long as industry members use them.

Transparency – DEMA has always had information available to



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those who really wanted it, but making this information more obvious must be the normal way DEMA does business. In fact, in my opinion, all companies—associations and all diving business included—must be transpar-

tant aspect of networking and participatory culture (face-to-face meetings are the original “social media”). These are the best form of promotion of the industry that DEMA can organize and provide, and the DEMA



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Tom Ingram introducing the 2012 DEMA Reaching Out Awards

