



LEATHERBACK TURTLE NEWS ^(C)



Volume 4 Issue 3

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www.leatherbackturtles.org

Dec 15, 2010

FOUNDERS COMMENTS



WOW! Where does the time go? It seems as just the day before this we finished issue # 2 for 2010. Now the year is gone and an exciting 2011 beckons.

This issue will bring you current as to events as 2010 closes, including a terrific SURPRISE Grant Award which is badly needed and was a terrific surprise.

DEMA 2010 went quite well (see article). Many visitors to our space made the dynamics of the Volunteers active everyday. When the dust settled we savored some neat surprises.

S.O.L.O. had some fun in September during a visit to Amphibico in Montreal. Thanks to the help of key staff (Gloria and Susan) and Ron Hand's wife, Pam, we were able to make a neat surprise for Ron. Really caught him off guard. (see article).

Occasionally, we include articles which do not at 1st glance seem to bear on the Leatherback survival issues. They do have direct relevance as the Leatherback is at top of the symbiotic pyramid of sea creatures. Any damage to one part affects all others.

Spaces are open for Expedition # 2 in 2011 (July 15 to August 8, ex Sorong). Trip #1 is sold out. If you wish to join us, please contact us. Trip # 2 may well be the last Expedition, except for charters. So, if you want to see and sit beside a giant Leatherback, dive the fabled Raja Ampat islands and get a 100% tax write off, this may be your last chance.

Happy Holidays. Please remember to support us in 2011.

Larry McKenna

A TERRIFIC SURPRISE!



Just before Christmas, S.O.L.O. received word from the ERM Foundation that we had been selected to receive a Grant from them to further our conservation activities; specifically to counter the feral pig predations on the Leatherback nesting beaches in Papua, Indonesia. Excitement ran like a lightning bolt though the Foundation offices. We are STILL excited!

The funds are badly needed to employ Papuan Aboriginal village men and women to construct the bamboo grids and stake them over the nests to keep the wild pigs and dogs away. Preliminary tests show this unique method is totally GREEN --- and it works. Local and government customs and rules prohibit any employment, including guns and poisons to control or attempt to eliminate the feral pigs and dogs. Our development of a completely GREEN solution won instant approvals by all the rule makers.

A very neat aspect of ERM's way of supporting deserving environmental activities is to encourage employees to voluntarily contribute time and funds to projects which CAN make a difference. In effect, **this Grant award is from all the ERM, USA employees.** Thank you...THANK YOU for your corporate AND personal support.

ERM is a leading global provider of environmental, health and safety, risk, and social consulting services. There are about 3,600 staff located in 130 offices in 40 Nations. The ERM foot print supports environment remediation on a Global front.

WE NEVER KNOW

I was shopping in the local LOEWS hardware center a few days ago. When I was checking out, the cashier looked at my long sleeve Leatherback shirt I was wearing (the one with babies crawling up and down the sleeves) and asked me about what we do or try to accomplish. After I explained little bit; she took my hands in both of hers, looked squarely into my eyes and said.

"God Bless you and your Foundation for all the work you do to save US from problems if the Leatherback turtle disappears. Bless You, Sir!"

Humbling; very. This came at me out of the blue.

URGENT ENVIRONMENT ALERT

OF WILD PIG/DOG PREDATION ON LEATHERBACK TURTLE NESTING BEACHES

Synopsis: The survival of the Pacific Leatherback Sea Turtle is exposed to a seemingly “unsolvable conundrum” which, if not quickly addressed can destroy the returning generations OF Leatherback turtles, before they can swim free in the seas and grow to return to mate and to nest. This event, in conjunction with the continuing slaughter of the adult Leatherbacks by the Asian longline boats will eliminate the species by removing regeneration activities. This cause and effect is NOT a result of any “Natural Order” or balance in our environment.

The feral pigs and dogs populations, which live in the jungles behind the Leatherback nesting beaches, are so far out of control because those in charge refuse to address the severity of this issue. A number of years ago, a few domestic pigs and dogs owned by the villagers escaped into the jungles. The populations have expanded because there are no predators to keep them under control. Neither animal is native to the Indonesian jungles. A wild pig or a dog can annually produce two liters of up to 12 piglets/pups. The villagers allow “domestic” pigs to wander in the jungles in hopes of getting fatter, faster. Dogs are allowed to breed without any control.

In CY 2009, the dogs and pigs destroyed approximately 20 percent of the healthy Leatherback nests (those above the tidal damage line). At approximately 100 eggs per nest, that loss approximates 25,000 hatchlings lost to feral pig and dog predations. **The CY 2010 data indicates**

that approximately 60 percent of the nests will be destroyed; maybe more. This loss of hatchlings before the eggs can hatch can, if not curtailed, be MORE destructive to the species than the slaughter of the adults by the Asian long line boats, which continues to be a constant danger to species survival. The combination of nest destruction and at sea killings is the most serious combination of species elimination. Unfortunately, all who have knowledge and could make a huge difference of this highly dynamic and real time disaster continue to stick their collective heads into the sand and do nothing; pretending there is not a problem. (“ostrichized”).



**Feral Pig Destroying
Leatherback Nest of Eggs**



Village Pigs Left to Wander Out of Control

One may think a solution could be simple: Shoot the pigs and dogs; put a bounty on snouts; poison the critters; dig pig traps on the habitual pig trails and catch/destroy them. However in those jungles for each “simple” solution there is opposition from environmentalists/local villagers/local government agencies/and the Indonesian Army and Police. All the while, as a different “Rome Burns”, the piggies keep on reproducing to fatten up on rich Leatherback eggs.

We (S.O.L.O.) have developed a simple, GREEN and a workable solution copied and modified from use in Papua New Guinea (see photos below).

We have initiated a trial effort on the beaches. We have instructed the villagers on ways to construct and set bamboo strip grids in place these over the center of a marked Leatherback turtle nest. Anchored deep into the sand, pig or a dog should be prevented from digging up the nest. The hatchlings can scamper under and over the grid to freedom and stumble to the seas. The grids are made from jungle bamboo with no associated costs except labor. They can be reusable, post hatching for other new laid nests and into the next year.



**Village Made Pig Preventer Grids - Photos:
Scubazoo (www.scubazoo.com)
(The predation issue is serious on all turtle nesting beaches. In N. Queensland, Aus. along a 600km cost, **90 per cent** of the turtle eggs have been destroyed.)**

Presently, this is a small, test project. The villagers can construct the grids, place them over a nest and in so doing obtain a “hands on” step toward the S.O.L.O. objective of helping them become self-sufficient in the husbanding of this critical environmental resource. The initial dozen of these grids were made for S.O.L.O. by the villagers we assist. If this test project is successful, S.O.L.O. will employ the village men to place and to relocate the grids and maintain the integrity of the hatching process.

The ultimate solution, given that the feral animals cannot be killed, is to relocate ALL of the nests as rapidly as possible into sturdy corrals, which the pigs and dogs cannot access. Village guards will be placed on duty at night to either kill or drive away marauding animals and human poachers. S.O.L.O. is confident we CAN roll back the feral predation by employing the grids now and begin a 100 percent relocation effort in to 2011 nesting season. This is a straightforward application of village efforts to protect THEIR natural assets (the Leatherbacks) and to become gainfully employed in the process.

BUT (and this is a huge **BUT**) S.O.L.O. does NOT have the funds to accomplish this. We require \$65,000 to achieve this for the 2011- nesting season. Subsequent seasons will cost less. Can YOU help us?? This challenge, where correctable, is NOW critical to the survival of this species. – We Know HOW to fix this!!!!

Please contact us (info-saveourleatherbacks@earthlink.net) We DO need help to proceed. Please donate ANY amount and help us locate corporate or entertainment sponsors. **IF we act now, we CAN prevent this. We ask that ALL who read this ALERT donate to the Foundation so we may fix this serious problem.**

RAJA AMPAT, INDONESIA, November 16, 2010 --/WORLD-WIRE/--

Misool Eco Resort, <http://www.misoolecoresort.com>, and Shark Savers, <http://www.sharksavers.org>, announced today that a Shark Sanctuary has been declared for the entire 17,760 square miles of Raja Ampat, Indonesia. Bupati Drs Marcus Wanma, the Regent of Raja Ampat, made this historic declaration, demonstrating leadership in marine conservation.

The Raja Ampat Shark Sanctuary provides full protection for sharks, manta rays, mobulas, dugongs, and **TURTLES**. Also prohibited are highly destructive practices including reef bombing and the aquarium fish trade. The Shark Sanctuary is the first of its kind in Indonesia, the largest island archipelago in the world.

The Shark Sanctuary declaration is in direct response to a campaign mounted by Shark Savers, an international shark conservation organization, in partnership with Misool Eco Resort (MER). The campaign won the support of over 8,500 divers and conservationists, with hundreds of tourism and diving companies and NGOs from around the world. S.O.L.O. supports these actions!

“This new Shark Sanctuary owes its creation to thousands of ocean advocates who expressed the urgent need to protect sharks, mantas, and other marine life,” stated Michael Skoletsky, Executive Director of Shark Savers. “Divers experience the oceans from the inside and are increasingly taking responsibility for ocean and shark conservation. Underwater ecotourism is a vital tool to counter the rampant exploitation of the world’s remaining sharks and bio-rich marine ecosystems.”



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRUBUTION

Kingwood, TX, November 25, 2010

S.O.L.O. RELEASES A VINTAGE AUSTRALIAN SHIRAZ AS A POINT OF DONATION.

Larry McKenna, Founding Director of Save Our Leatherbacks Operation (S.O.L.O.) announced today the release of a long awaited special release of a vintage Australian Shiraz wine. The labeling was completed today on the initial ten cases. “We are ready to accept orders for this great taste in a new manner of seeking donations to allow S.O.L.O. to continue its critical efforts on the remote Papuan beaches in far away Indonesia.

This Shiraz will sell for USD\$12.50 per bottle in case lots of 12 bottles + shipping costs. The taste is absolutely superior. We have been to the winery in South Australia where we sampled this wine when it was released. It is simple and excellent.

The label carries a message of how the donated funds will be used on the remote beaches. This concept of desig-



nating the donation amounts so donors can see where the money is applied was suggested by Cathy Church; a very well known diver and environmentalist. Thanks Cathy. We will continue this on all of our Boutique items listed for sale”.

Donated funds are 100% tax deductible for American citizens or businesses. S.O.L.O. is an IRS Certified 501(c)(3) nonprofit – all volunteer Foundation.

For more information on HOW you may donate or help S.O.L.O., please see:

Web Site: www.leatherbackturtles.org

E-Mail: info-saveourleatherbacks@earthlink.net

info-saveourleatherbacks@earthlink.net

[www.](http://www.earthlink.net)

A PROJECT AWARE REPORT

Project AWARE Actions

A Blog for Divers Conserving Underwater Environments

Posted by: awareap | 23/11/2010

SOLO Group Saves Leatherback Turtles

Their name may be SOLO but they do not work alone. Larry McKenna and his team of volunteers at Save Our Leatherbacks Operation dedicate their lives to saving and maintaining numbers of leatherback turtles in the Pacific region. Though these turtles are the largest of their kind, and the largest of the reptile kind too, they are in serious jeopardy of extinction thanks to wild dogs, pigs, egg poachers, climate change and human activity.

Save Our Leatherbacks Operation aims to help achieve a significant reversal of population decline in the largest Leatherback turtle nesting beaches in the Pacific, Irian Jaya, Indonesia, and increase the number of hatchlings. SOLO, with funding from Project AWARE Foundation, has organized research expeditions to popular nesting beaches and gathered data of factors affecting the turtle nesting and the number of hatchlings produced.

Their work also includes recording sand temperatures at nesting sites and visiting nesting beaches during the day and at night. Thanks to the efforts of the volunteers at SOLO, we may see a rise in numbers of these giant creatures.



A group of volunteers with a leatherback turtle



Leatherback turtles are the largest turtles in existence

Welcome to Our Newest Foundation Advisor

We wish to welcome with humble appreciation Tasha Briggs (see photo) as a Foundation Advisor. Tasha brings a world + sets of experiences to us. She is the founder and owner of Dive Patches, International in Ocala, Florida.



She creates and designs patches, logos, art and lots more in her studio for Fire and Police Depts.; Navy SEALs and the clandestine Services. Her patches are in use by hundreds of dive shops across the Globe.

As a 100% woman owned enterprise, Tasha has and IS surviving this recession by broadening her base of offerings, now including "pin on campaign" buttons. S.O.L.O. is among the 1st of many we hope, for her to order the buttons which will be available at D.E.M.A., Orlando or by special request. Her artistic talents with Photo Shop + After Effects will help us.



“LUCY LEATHERBACK” IS NOW A BOOK

S.O.L.O. reported in an earlier issue about a piano teacher and artist who ventured into creating a comic strip about the plights of the Leatherback Turtle. The cartoons WITH a conservation message 1st appeared in Facebook. Its creator Siu Wai Strohane was contacted with encouragements. The collection of “Lucy Leatherback” art is now a book. Sui Wai also created this cartoon with a strong message.



Copies of the Lucy Leatherback book may be obtained by e-mail to Siu Wai.

It is a definite collectors' item. Pianomama2009@gmail.com

info-saveourleatherbacks@earthlink.net

www.leatherbackturtles.org

REPORT FROM DEMA, 2010

Las Vegas, NV was the location of the Dive Equipment Manufacturers Association (DEMA) in November. Our S.O.L.O. exhibit was well located with a 1st time double space (as will be in Orlando in 2011) to show case all of the donated paintings and art on display for swaps for donations. The professional dive related attendance was estimated at about 15,000 over the four day period. Probably most visited our exhibits; many more than one time. The results were exceptional. We traded sufficient items to more than break even by exhibiting (our constant objective).

We introduced a stunning Leatherback original painting by Nancy Blauers. Nancy is the senior artist for Jimmy Buffet and is an internationally acclaimed museum quality artist who specializes in marine life. The original (NO copies made) is offered for a Donation of \$5,400., including a donated gold color frame.



Bonnie McKenna (l) and Suzanne Hendricks (r) Display Nancy's Art

Nancy's wonderful art would be a terrific addition to any office or home entry way. Contact us for details if interested. A Donation is 100% tax deductible.

We are in the stages of producing a commemorative film about our seven years of conservation activities. A part of the film includes "cameo clips" by friends who help us along the way.

We were able to capture Stan Waterman and Cathy Church as they visited the Exhibit.



Stan Waterman



Cathy Church

Traditionally, at the close of every DEMA, S.O.L.O. celebrates our Volunteers with a dinner at a fine restaurant to say “Thanks for all the hard work in the Exhibit”. This year we were at Mangiano’s of Las Vegas.



From left to right: Ann Spence, P.J. Campagna, Suzanne Hendricks, Larry McKenna, Bonnie McKenna and Lenny Oberg. All helped greatly. [Who will help in Orlando, 2011? Write us now.](#)

OUR YOUNGEST VOLUNTEER



Meet Maia Johnson of Boulder, CO. Maia is going on nine years old. A short time before Christmas, we received a hand written note from Maia with the sum of \$9.00 enclosed. Her note told us that she has decided to do what she can to save the Leatherbacks from extinction. Her donation was from selling lemonade in front

of their home in Boulder. Later she sent a smaller donation which was saved from her allowance.

We were traveling close to Boulder over Christmas and contacted her parents to see if S.O.L.O. could visit her. When we drove up to their home, there was a young lady hanging upside down in a fruit tree waiting for us. That is Maia. She selected the Leatherback Turtle on her own initiative with the solid support of a terrific family; Anita, Brent and her older brother, with plans to start a Leatherback support club at her school. While visiting, Maia and Mom baked a plate of scones with jelly. One was baked in the shape of a Leatherback. Along the way, its nose was bitten. (NO idea as to who did that). Yummmms.



We gathered up Maia’s notes to S.O.L.O. and photos of her selling Lemonade into a matrix which was placed on display at DEMA, 2010 in Las Vegas. Many of the hundreds of visitors who visited our exhibit stopped and asked if Maia was a real person. YES! She is.

If an eight year old can sell, on her own initiative, Lemonade and give up her allowance to help save this giant turtle, the obvious question is: **WHAT CAN AND WILL YOU DO???? COME ON.....WE NEED YOUR HELP TO COMPLETE OUR RESEARCH.**



MAIL A CHECK OR DONATE VIA PAY PAL RIGHT NOW. PLEASE DO NOT SIT ON YOUR HANDS. EXTINCTION IS CLOSER

THAN EVER BEFORE.

S.O.L.O. RECOGNIZES RON HAND, C.E.O. OF AMPHIBICO, AND STAFF

September 24, 2010. Montreal, Canada

Save Our Leatherbacks Operation (S.O.L.O.) founder, Dr. Larry McKenna traveled directly from its conservation activities in remote Papua, Indonesia jungles to Amphibico in Montreal, Canada to conduct a surprise award and recognition ceremony for Ron Hand, C.E.O. and owner of Amphibico. Amphibico creates and markets the world's best underwater camera and video housings. Ron and Amphibico were the first personal and corporate sponsor to this all-volunteer non-profit foundation during its inception in late 2005. Amphibico has remained consistent in its firm support, which has helped S.O.L.O. achieve its stated objectives to find ways to save the giant Leatherback sea turtle from its path to a rapid extinction.



Larry McKenna, S.O.L.O. founder and Ron Hand, C.E.O. and owner of Amphibico, unwrap and display an original Rogest Turtle Painting presented to Ron and the “Amphibic-ans “ to commemorate their constant support to S.O.L.O.

In presenting this original oil turtle painting by Rogest, McKenna commented: “Ron is one of the extremely rare men of our century who keeps his word and maintains honest ethics in his personal and business activities. Simply, Ron keeps his word even when turns in the economy or business might cause many to deny their obligations or promises! Ron and Amphibico spend money, time and energy to honor and support others for achievements and in special conditions. Few, if any, ever return to say... ‘Thanks, Ron’. However today, the tables are turned in a surprise recognition ceremony here, within the Montreal Amphibico facilities. For all of your positive support to save the turtles of our oceans, we who speak for the sea turtles say thank you. These Leatherback turtles live today because of the firm support you provide”. (Rons’ wife, Pam and two women within Amphibico (Gloria and Susan) helped Larry stage the complete surprise to Ron) Each “Amphibic-an” employee was presented a jewelry reproduction of a leatherback turtle designed by Roland St. John (www.bigblue.com) in appreciation of what each employee does in support of Amphibico objectives. This dedicated effort, in turn allows Amphibico to maintain its staunch support of conservation activities for all sea turtles.

For information on all Amphibico products and developments go to www.amphibico.com

(S.O.L.O. is a certified IRS 501(c) (3) non-profit all volunteer charity foundation.

Web site: www.leatherbackturtles.org

Contact: info-saveourleatherbacks@earthlink.net



WIND WHISPERS OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC ©

Location: S 00-34-380; E 130-36-864. Just 34.4 miles south of the equator on a live aboard dive boat in the Raja Ampat islands of Papua, Indonesia. From horizon to horizon, the seas are flat with, at most, a 6 inch wind wave which creates a susurrus of the almost silent breezes in the rigging and around corners of the boat as we ghost along on a glassine sea.

We spend the bulk of July and August drifting through these charming islands, enjoying very friendly villagers and true “World Class” dive experiences which are superior to any other known location. This is not our first time doing this at this time of year. We have been diving in this region since 1998.

As we float along on magic seas which “Whisper” of gentleness and calm in all directions, we usually wonder WHERE are the other dive boats? We are, as usual, on the only quality live aboard within about 1,000 square miles.



SUN RISE IN PAPUA

In the opposite season (November to May), about 15 (mostly foreign flagged) live aboard vessels swarm the waters around these islands and keep the fish in shock or in hiding from constant attack by strobes, high intensity lights, probes and hands, which should not touch either reefs or fishes. Those who travel here to SCUBA dive in this season are missing the best part of the year.

This section of Indonesia has two seasons which are greatly influenced by the trade winds. April to October the winds are from the South. The residual breezes which flow around the land masses create these “Wind Whispers” as the winds from the South are blocked from local sea contact by the Vogelgopff Mountains and the mountains within the Raja Ampats, north of Missol.



CALM SEAS IN EVERY DIRECTION

info-saveourleatherbacks@earthlink.net

www.leatherbackturtles.org

Local rains come as gentle soft mists in mid to late afternoons as a result of convection heating and cooling of the land vs. ocean. Occasionally, scattered thundershowers visit the islands and give the boat a fresh water bath. Wait about 20 minutes and all will be right again, Mate.

In the opposite season, the Northerly winds can create seas often above 20 feet, where no sane person would want to voluntarily endure – but many pay big dollars to be pounded and punished with strong currents, rougher seas to enter and exit and to be uncomfortable aboard even the best found vessel (where most of the dive boats are not in that category). Some divers take trips to the South from Misool to Banda where the reverse wind shielding works. Calmer waters prevail to the South of the “Ampats” in this season.

Why are not more visitors here? Perhaps is it because of the compelling yarns about when to visit as spun by travel agents and dive companies to charter dive trips in the opposite season where they can make more of a profit in other locations and schedule their boats to be here at times when the business between May to October takes them to other profitable locations. They “fill in” at your expense because you do not know how terrific THIS season can be.

Only one live aboard dive company (Owned and managed by Bali Indonesians) maintain boats in the Raja Ampat region of Papua during this “off season” – AND they now offer a land resort quite close to the acclaimed dive spots. Their prices are less than the competition. Their commitment to quality at affordable prices increase the desire to be here during this beautiful and unspoiled period. During these tranquil times, the fishes recover from the shock of too many divers. They do not run and hide. Often we wave to giant mantas and they swim to us. Magic happenings; all when no one else is here.



A RAJA AMPAT SUNSET

As I scan the horizon while writing this note and see nothing but tranquility. Frigates dive on tuna spoils; pods of porpoise leap and chatter in our wake while the “Wind Whispers” in the rigging create a symphony of relaxation. This is diving at its very best.

Nah! Maybe you should not read these musings and just stay away.

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E-mail: larrymckenna@earthlink.net

I can't believe another trip is coming up so fast. At least I'm getting good at traveling light... 70lbs of dive gear and one change of clothes! Seriously, I am really glad that one more series of research trips has been planned for 2011 and I'm looking forward to seeing a full size adult leatherback. If you haven't made a trip yet, there is space on the second trip - sign up NOW. Don't miss this opportunity to see a living dinosaur. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity you should not miss. If you can't make the trip, please help with fundraising. Pass this newsletter along, bring up the topic to anyone you may know that would be interested in restoring the natural balance to our oceans and keeping the jellyfish population in check. In the past couple years I've seen more jellyfish than ever before - even having dives cancelled because of too many in one dive spot. They are getting plentiful and huge and it's affecting the seafood chain. This is as serious a problem as the whale hunting or shark finning but we just don't seem to be able to attract the same amount of attention. Seems like we need a "grass roots" movement for the Leatherbacks - please help get the word out.



Contact Liz with your comments and suggestions on our News Letter activities. travel@followliz.com

LEATHERBACK BOTIQUE OPEN FOR BUSINESS



Our Leatherback Boutique is FULL of unique turtle gifts for all ages. The 22 items range in a Donation cost in a wide range from \$3.00 to \$5,400. As thinking begins for selection of that "VERY SPECIAL GIFT", look no further.

Simply look at our web site: www.leatherbackturtles.org Find this photo on upper right side of the Home Page. Click on it. Then scroll through the wide selection of only found here with S.O.L.O. items. We offer the largest unique turtle art for your gifts and use.

Make your selection; set a method of payment (can use Pay Pal. Instructions are in the pull down... "Donate") and use your Master card or Visa to pay. Checks and bank money orders are also accepted. For items which cost more than \$100., we do require a bank money order or a wire transfer into the S.O.L.O. account, pre shipping.

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Disclaimer: Publisher, Editor and those listed above are NOT liable or responsible for the words or opinions presented in this News Letter. Articles are printed to educate, inform, and develop a forum of information concerning Pacific Leatherback Turtles and what is happening to them. We welcome commentary and articles to be considered for future issues. Each submission will be reviewed for content, objectivity and appropriateness to the goals and objectives of this Foundation. (Our attorneys make us say this)

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