

Barbara Allen

Beneath the Surface of San Diego: A History of Perspectives & Innovations At Depth

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**Oral History Recorded by:
Ashleigh Palinkas
At the Home of Barbara Allen
Leucadia, San Diego, CA**

Ashleigh: Okay. And it is March...20th? Oh my gosh.

Barbara: 21st.

A: It's March 21st. I'm Ashleigh Palinkas. I'm sitting here with Barbara Allen. And let's get started. So Barbara, were you born here in San Diego?

B: I was born up in Los Angeles.

A: So tell me about the first time you came to San Diego.

B: Well, the first time to San Diego was with my parents when I was a teenager. My dad was in a fraternal organization who had a chapter in San Diego. And we would come a couple times a year for athletic events that the fraternity had between chapters. And in conjunction with that we used to go down to Tijuana, Rosarito and Ensenada back when it was real easy to go back and forth as tourists. The first time I came down as a, quote, "diver" was when I was taking the LA County Underwater Instructors class, which was in 1957. And we had, part of it was a weekend checkout dive at Scripps, Scripps Canyon, Scripps Pier. It was a wonderful gathering, starting Friday night. The first year I happened to come down was when the Diving Locker opened. We got to meet everybody associated with the Diving Locker who were mostly all Scripps graduates. The Friday night session was more of a social. And then on Saturday we had a lecture by Jimmy Stewart who had an office at Scripps and after the lecture we got suited up. We went out on the pier. Jimmy explained everything on the way out. When we got out there he pointed out we'd have to go down this ladder, jump in the ocean and do a compass course. Whatever our instructors had figured out they wanted us to do. So one of them was a compass course. And then after that there was another gathering that evening. The next day, oh, we also had to swim around the pier.

A: How was the first time down the ladder?

B: Oh my God, scary as heck. I'd never done that before and you're hanging on for dear life.

A: I'm very familiar. I have to go up and down it almost every day. I just recently conquered that fear and it was paralyzing fear.

B: And then years later when I worked for an ocean research lab we had a boat on that pier. Luckily we could put our tanks in the boat and wouldn't have to go down with our tanks on.

A: Did you have to go down the ladder with the tank on before?!

B: No, but I couldn't imagine having to do that. Anyway, our first weekend in San Diego was a diver. The Sunday session was a canyon dive. So we all met at the La Jolla Shores, went out to the 40 foot level, dropped down, buddy breathed and did some exercises and to me it was just magic. It happened to be, that the day before was victory at sea. And the next day it had cleared up. On the way home from that weekend my roommate and I decided we were going to try to move to San Diego and we did three months later.

A: And you haven't left yet.

B: Well actually I left for 10 years. Left in the 70s. '71 I went up to the Bay Area, worked for a couple of companies. One of them utilized my diving, the Ocean Research Lab at FMC Corporation. I was able to use my diving and photographic ability in a test tank which they were checking sewage distribution by using ping-pong balls and colored dye. So I would be laying on the bottom on my back, shooting up and seeing how the dye circulated and the ping-pong balls.

A: Oh, wow.

B: That was in conjunction with a study we did for the EPA. We went from Imperial Beach to the Delta up by Sacramento checking marinas that had pump-out stations for boats, taking samples and having them analyzed in the lab because at that time EPA was deciding are we going to stop letting people dump at sea? Do they have to be contained? And if so, what chemicals are they going to use? Because some of the chemicals would stop the biological reaction that was beneficial to sewage breaking down.

A: Right.

B: So that was part of my stuff.

A: Cool. So do you remember the very first time you wore a mask in the ocean?

B: Yeah, as a lifeguard we had an annual outing at Catalina at a Boy Scout camp. And they had masks, fins and snorkels that you could check out if you wanted to try it out. So a bunch of us got masks, fins, snorkels, snorkeled out from shore, got into a kelp bed and panicked. Didn't like the feel, didn't like that--

A: Getting stuck in that kelp.

B: It was like how do you get through this stuff? One of the lifeguards, a beach lifeguard says, okay girls - this is my roommate and I - you dive down and you swim. It's like you're in a forest. Well, what do we do when we come up? He says you come up with your hands like this and you spread it apart and then you go back down. Well it took a while. It was okay.

A: How about, how did you feel about what you were seeing? Catalina is not a bad place to...

B: Well, at this Boy Scout camp there really wasn't much right there off shore when you first dive.

A: Where was it on Catalina? Near Two Harbors, or...

B: No. It was between Avalon and Two Harbors and I can't remember the name of the Boy Scout camp, but they had a cook named Francis. Oh my God, could that woman cook. And later on as part of the LA County Underwater Instructors course we also utilized that same camp one year. And Francis was still there. Wonderful lady.

A: So when you first started seeing fish, what were your favorite things to see? I mean, when you kind of began to become a little bit more familiar with, you know, diving around in kelp forests, what were you most excited to see?

B: I love Garibaldi.

A: Me too!

B: They were like little pets, goldfish. And eventually when I got a saltwater aquarium after I was teaching we would run through the checkout you know, skin dive, then a scuba, then you were on your own for the rest of the dive. I would just, and this was usually at the isthmus, I'd take my second tank dive, sit on the water in about 20 feet and turn rocks over and look for little critters for my aquarium. That fascinated me.

A: Yeah.

B: And I got so teed off one time. I brought a little octopus home and he ate half the stuff in my aquarium.

A: They eat everything.

B: I took him back to the beach and let him go.

A: Yeah, get out of here and good riddance! I've got a, I found a little - I mean a tiny octopus doing lobster larvae collection off the pier for a SeaGrant project, you know I was just volunteering as a diver they needed somebody to get in the water and haul

these things up. Found this tiny octopus and thought, oh it is the cutest little thing. And kept him in a little tank, he's been my little project. As I mentioned I volunteer with Ron, I mean Phil, who has Ron's old job, so working a lot in the experimental aquarium as well as going out and doing collections. So he is my little pet. I never thought I would have a pet octopus but it's like a dream come true.

B: Oh, I just thought of somebody else, Dave Leighton. Have you talked to Dave? He's back doing the abalone research in Carlsbad, abalone studies.

A: He's here?

B: Yeah

A: My project committee members Paul Dayton and Theresa Talley have already interviewed him. It was recorded before I started studying at SIO but I'm definitely using his oral history for this project. I've got to see where he is. So, he is doing that. Jim wasn't certain if he was still involved in that, in the abalone stuff.

B: Pretty much, yeah.

A: Okay, so back to the early days. What was your main motive to start diving? Was it because you wanted to teach?

B: No. I had been a lifeguard through high school and college and my goal was to move to Hawaii. As a lifeguard extracurricular I taught water ballet and paddle board ballet at the LA Swim Stadium which was a big pool and we had paddle boards. And I used to travel with that group of girls to the different pools in the LA area. So, my boss my last summer of lifeguarding said you know what, this is before the summer of lifeguarding, he said the city is considering teaching skin and scuba diving and the County puts on this course. If we paid for it, would you like to go? He said I'm going, too. And I said yeah, but I've never scuba dove. What do I have to do? He said you have to do a ditch and recovery and a buddy breathe and he said you can pass the swim test but I will work out with you this weekend and get you through. Well he did. I passed. I went into the class. I forgot your original question.

A: That's alright, let's move forward. So what, you know so, the kelp beds in Catalina was the first time you wore a mask in the water. When was the first time that you dove and let's go forward with when is the first time that you dove just recreationally at your own leisure, were able to look around on scuba just for fun?

B: Oh my gosh. On scuba, scuba was everything to do with the class and learning. I know, but your original question was how did I get into it? Okay, my goal was to go to Hawaii. I figured that was another notch in my belt to get a job in Hawaii.

A: Right.

B: I had researched it. I had a friend over there. I knew a lady named Marianne or Mary Jane Sears was at the Hilton Hawaiian Village and had a water ballet show. I

knew that there was a dive shop, McWayne Marine supply who had classes and sold dive gear. So that's basically why I took the thing, to have something else. Plus, my two year college course was secretarial science so I could run an office. Shorthand typing, bookkeeping, the whole thing. I figured no sweat, I would get a job. What happened was I got there in '57. I went over with Bud Brown who was a surf photographer, introduced me to everyone there for the Makaha championships, right away started looking for work and found out as a territory you had to be a three-month resident. I could not afford to stay three months. So I ended up coming home.

A: But then you ended up in San Diego.

B: Yes, after that checkout dive.

A: Yeah. So once you began diving regularly in San Diego where did you dive the most often?

B: La Jolla Cove. Or the Coronados, if we were doing a boat dive. But normally it was La Jolla Cove. We used to be called the "Grass People". The group I met the first weekend I was here and got introduced to everybody, you bodysurfed Boomer, you dove La Jolla Cove, on a flat day you could dive Boomer. I remember Chuck Nicklin's son, Flip, he could go out and get an abalone at will any time it seems like at Boomer. We had cioppino on the beach from things we caught that same day. The guys would go out and spearfish, bring in a fish, lobster, abalone and cook it right on the grass.

A: Frank showed me a great video. I believe you're in it really quickly. Going by.

B: Yes.

A: You've seen that one?

B: Yeah he sent it.

A: It's so cute. I love that. I thought a good idea for my project would be to get some of my friends together, get all of us and have another Grass People party. The next generation of Grass People! And so what, so what are some of the changes that you noticed in those sites over the years?

B: Well, I was only here from '60 to '71. And there didn't seem to be a lot of change. But, when I came back in '87, the group I hung out with went from La Jolla Cove where they started making parking a limited time down to Hospital Point and most of us had camper vans. There were no toilets, no showers. We all carried water, showered off, had a pee can. And in '87 we snorkeled a lot if we weren't boogie boarding. A lot of us gals and guys boogie boarded. Snorkeling I remember how prolific all the sea life was, fish and mussels and things on the rocks there at low tide. All of a sudden it seems like every year more people came down at low tide and started picking those things. And all of a sudden now it's like a wasteland. So I

didn't notice the change until the 80s when I came back. So, between '71 and '87 I imagine there was a big change as well. But I wasn't aware of it until I got back.

A: Right. What about in the 60s as opposed to when you came back later? Did you notice any changes in the seal or sea lion populations?

B: No. It always seemed that the seals and sea lions always hung out at Shell Beach. The big controversy over Children's Pool is to me is just a shame. Because they were always there on the beach. That's where our classes went out for one of the first dives and we'd come down in the morning and get down, suit up and walked down and the seals would look at us and say oh, they are back, and they'd leave. And they'd go over to Shell Beach and haul out on the rocks. And it was never a problem. To me it was always like, God, there they are.

A: Yeah. Pretty harmless. What's the biggest fish that you've seen, at least in San Diego.

B: Gosh. Actually nothing really really big. I never saw a black sea bass. When I was diving, just following Ron and Vern around one day at La Jolla Cove I think it was yellowtail, not white sea bass, the yellowtail were in and there were some huge ones, but everything looks big under water. I really don't know how big they were. And at the Coronados one day I think Ron [Church] shot a white sea bass that was I don't know, 40, 50 pounds. But shark, I've seen the sharks underwater at the Marine Room, but free swimming big fish? Nothing spectacular as far as what I've seen.

A: So, back in the earlier days did you have any particular concerns about laws or regulations that you felt were too strict or not strict enough?

B: In the 60s there didn't appear to be any. Because I was active in helping at spearfishing meets throughout the state. And there was never any bad press or bad feelings about shooting fish. But in the 80s when I came back there seemed to be a movement to restrict certain areas. I also knew some commercial fishermen who were complaining at the time, they were gill netters, some of them, about how their lives were being impacted by new rules and regulations. But I wasn't a party to it. Just heard the secondhand comments.

A: Right. So my last question here is, could you describe your perfectly ideal San Diego dream dive?

B: Oh.

A: Where would it be and what would you see and who would you be with and you know, what kind of time of year would it be?

B: Well when I worked for Westinghouse Ocean Research Lab we had a study off of Del Mar about maybe 15th St. And we had meter squared transects that we used to go out and check. One of the silly things was counting the stipes of a kelp plant.

A: Oh, I've done it.

B: Oh my God. You're on the bottom and you go, da-da-da, and stick your leg between and do it...well some of those dives were the most beautiful, clear, we were in like 40 to 60 feet of water. And the fish, the little guys were just like were part of the crowd. They got used to us after a while, it seemed. And I just loved it, I could sit on the bottom and get tired and look up and around and they'd come up and look in my mask. One thing happened one time. I, for some reason I pulled my knife out to point at a ray and my dive partner then went like that [indicates] and it was an electric ray and I thought why did he do that? I wonder what it would've felt like. You know anybody who has touched a ray, what the shock value was?

A: I don't know anybody personally but I can't imagine that it's very nice especially if it's magnified by a steel knife.

B: I had a glove on and it was a plastic handle, it was like, come on. And my dive buddy at that time was, gosh, a marine technician who went on to own a marine equipment company for communication. God, that's terrible I can't remember his name. Bob. One of the most fun, easy people to dive with. Another person I got to dive with was Ricky Grigg when he was at Scripps. And I forget if it was on that kelp project or...

A: Was it Bob Shea that you are thinking of?

B: No no no. Bob was a lifeguard who ended up becoming head of the lifeguards, Captain. And I don't think I ever did dive with Bob. No. Oh gosh.

A: I'm just trying to think. I have so many names written down in here, maybe I will come up with it. Did you dive with Frank Leinhaupel at all? If I come up with that Bob I will let you know.

B: No. I don't know that you would have the name. He did some Scripps trips way back in the 50s, 60s. When Westinghouse Ocean Research Lab opened in the mid-60s, he was hired as the marine technician. Good all-around guy.

[Later recalled: Bob Bower, marine technician at SIO and WORL]

A: Yeah. Okay, well, what was, I guess, maybe just switch over to your underwater photography. What would you say was the most, what developments in technology were the most influential on your diving and then also on your photography?

B: Developments in diving would have been going from a double hose regulator to a single hose regulator back in the late 50s. I worked work for Dive and Surf and they had a friend who was working on double hose regulators so you wouldn't get the backflow in your mouth when you were upside-down and backwards. And then being able to switch to a single hose regulator was wonderful, later on. Photography, I got into the [San Diego] Photo Society in the early days, like '61 or so. Because I was a secretary. I was the only gal. I could take notes and they gladly hauled me in,

railroaded me in as secretary. Because everybody in there was so good, I was intimidated. I didn't have a camera, but in '64 they bought either a Calypso, or a Nikonos I. As a club camera. And you could borrow it. So I went on vacation with Ron and Shirley Church, Lynne Chase, who was a LA County scuba instructor, and I went down to Cape San Lucas, borrowed the club camera and took great pictures every day. I'd ask Ron what do I set it at? 125th and 5/6. We had you know, 80°, 80 foot visibility. It was wonderful. After that, I had a friend who got me my own camera. Her husband was overseas in the military and it was also a Nikonos I and years later at a garage sale in Del Mar, I think when I got back from Australia in the 80s, I bought a Nikonos V. And that's all I've ever done. I've never been – oh, and I recently bought a Go Pro. Just for fun. But I was never into the big heavy-duty stuff.

A: Yeah. Me neither.

B: I couldn't afford it. I was still a secretary as a profession, so.

A: Did you take any videos, or just shoot photos?

B: No, just shoot photos.

A: Cool, cool. Oh and also, were you a spear-fisherwoman yourself?

B: No.

A: No spearing.

B: No. I got talked into one pole-spear meet one time and I actually shot, I think, an opaleye and a bass and I felt so bad. Poor little fish.

A: I can imagine. I feel the same way when I catch a surf perch or corbina from the shore. I'm like, I'm sorry!

B: Although my dad was a surf fisherman and corbina was his favorite fish to catch and I still have his poles.

A: Yeah! I fish for them out here, but usually out here all I get is surf perch and I just give them a kiss and let them go, but I camp a lot in Baja where there's not...it's pretty far out there and not a lot going on, so last time I was down there I caught a couple big corbina. We decided to keep them because we ran out of ice like the second day and we were kind of low on food. So we said, alright, let's eat!

[Audio lapse]

-Regarding the Dive Locker:

B: Because that first weekend I was here for the Scripps seminar, San Diego, the diving consultants which were Jimmy Stewart, Connie Limbaugh, Andy Rechnitzer.

A: Wheeler North maybe?

B: Wheeler probably. But it was so informal, just like a bunch of Scripps guys get together and let's do this and Chuck Nicklin had a history of running a business because his parents owned the--

A: The grocery.

B: The grocery. And it was no big deal. My roommate and I went to the beach that day with Ron Church, Vern Fleet, his roommate, in the water met all these wonderful people, said you got to come to a party tonight at Lamar Boren's house, Lamar and Virginia were divorced but the son Gary was throwing a party and we met all these other people. Henry Henson, a black guy. Unusual waterman. Andy Skieff, he would be a great...

A: Fishermen, we are interviewing him as well.

B: Oh good. Well it was like, gosh we've got to move down here. This is wonderful. Then, when we did, it was, everything was intermeshed. And the guys, Vern, Ron, they had another roommate, Sets Fukuno, a little Japanese guy who used to be in the Nisseiki Kelp Tanglers in LA, were into competitive spearfishing. I met Donna Lee. She was another underwater woman. So, Nicklin's wife Gloria, myself, Don Alden's wife Judy, we all helped out at spearfishing meets. We went up to the CenCal Counsel of Diving Clubs gathering and at that time the, I think it's the Mission Inn that Clint Eastwood now owns was just a fairly reasonable place to rent a room. Well there were like six of us in there. My roommate slept in a bathtub in a sleeping bag. We slept on the floor in the living room. There was one bed. It was just that kind of thing. Awesome. Wonderful people.

A: So, and you're from LA, right? You were born in LA?

B: Yes.

A: Would you say when you came down to San Diego there was more of an inviting diving community and that is what attracted you?

B: Okay. In LA I was really fortunate getting right in with the Dive and Surf. And being able to teach classes with Roger Hesslet. Catalina every weekend. Loved kelp diving. And in the meantime I had gone to school and worked as a lifeguard in summers. And through the lifeguard group we had annual outings end of season in Catalina. The first place I ever used mask, fins and snorkel and the kelp got me. It was on the surface and it was icky and yucky. So it was completely different from when I started doing scuba. And learning how to dive under the kelp. But the difference was that was getting on a boat and going to Catalina. I didn't care for climbing down the cliffs at Palos Verdes. I didn't know Laguna and other places that well. So to come to San Diego and be able to jump in the water, first time was at Boomer Beach, right around from the La Jolla Cove. And the next day it calmed down a bit and we snorkeled and everything was right there off the sand on the shore. God. And it still now the Cove is an aquarium because of the tank. It was just

like, gosh. Come down here, we can go diving anytime we want, blah blah blah. And it happened that we both got jobs in La Jolla and could come down at our lunch hour and jump in the water.

A: Yeah. It's a good life. I was actually, I was surprised, I dove in the Cove yesterday, I was actually on the eelgrass that's off Marine Room and then the day before I was in the Cove and I saw giant sea bass on both dives. Can you believe that?

B: How deep were you?

A: Two days in a row and I've never seen one on scuba before. In the eel grass I was 15 feet. In the Cove I was about 55. And you know, I've seen one on Catalina but I was free diving, so I got a good look, then I ran out of air and by the time I got back down he was out of there. But I mean, I just thought that was great, that was so exciting and I got some video of the one yesterday, too.

B: Great. And I've never seen one underwater.

A: Really?

B: No.

A: Because the whole story is, especially talking with divers for this project - although I think you're a little young. A little bit older generation, you know, who really saw populations of the sea bass decline and the broomtail groupers off Boomer, and abalone. I mean, that story is kind of familiar. It's already been told. But there are some, well the Cove being a protected area...I'm hoping that somebody at Scripps is working on doing some surveying. Although those guys, the sea bass, are hard to count. They are hard to put numbers on because they're so elusive. But it does seem like the populations are coming back, albeit slowly. I mean, who knows. The one that I might've seen yesterday might have been a smarty that got away from all of it. All the gill netters and everybody back in the 40s and 50s.

B: What is the age?

A: They live over 100 years, I believe. So that's why if you spear a big one, that is 100 years of fish growth. They are just, well, the big, long-lived, slow-growing fish are the easiest ones to wipe out. They don't really reproduce as often and when they do reproduce their babies take so long to reach maturity so that they are able to reproduce. I think they might be able to live to so that it was 11, 12 years before they can even produce eggs. So...

B: Well when I first moved here in the 60s they were still shooting black sea bass. And the broomtail grouper were getting to be a no-no. So...

A: And then, so then it was in '72 I believe that La Jolla Cove was recognized as an ecological reserve. Then, from then on it just increased until in '99, the Marine Life

Protection Act went into place and the network, the chain of protected areas all up and down the California coast. So that is what made the Cove and everything south of the pier and then straight off of, kind of like, right where, who's memorial is it there?

B: Riley, isn't it?

A: Or Connie Limbaugh's, up on the hill?

B: You mean right at the Cove?

A: Yeah, and now that is all reserve. You can see the yellow buoys that indicate it. Then there's Cabrillo, all the tide pools and everything in Point Loma, that is all reserve. There's one up here, Swamis. But I think in Swami's you can still fish for yellowtail. You can still spear yellowtail and maybe sheephead and other finfish but you can't take a lobster or, I mean, obviously no abalone. I'm actually, I'm going to a conference on Monday in Sacramento which is cool. I'm a San Diego girl. I have to go shopping for something to wear to talk to all these policymakers. But apparently the Scripps program felt that I would be a good representative for California MPAs. So I'll go up there and be nervous for an entire day and talk to them.

B: What is the subject of the conference?

A: It is called Ocean's Day and they're going over various things. First is they are analyzing the success of the protected areas and whether or not they are doing what they were implemented to do. So that is kind of why I was invited. And then they are also looking at starting the conversation about how to manage ocean acidification, if you are familiar with that. So essentially because of carbon dioxide levels rising in the atmosphere the ocean is absorbing a lot of that carbon dioxide, and it's basically acidifying it. So it's raising pH levels. Which hasn't been so much of a problem for anything here that we know of yet, but for coral reefs it's been really damaging. Coral reefs in more equatorial places are, because they are made out of calcium, this higher, more acidic water keeps them from being able to produce their strong calcium skeletons. So they'll bleach out. I am sure you've heard of maybe coral bleaching? If they bleach out, it's because algae can't settle on them, and that's what the herbivore fish like and need, and then the top predators eat those fish, so it is just a big mess. But the thing is, kelp is, I mean kelp can grow up to 10 feet a day. You know, and growth in biology is just processing carbon. So if they're processing carbon and absorbing a lot of this high-carbon water that has got high pH, and is acidic, I guess, it could really damage those. So, in a way they are trying to get ahead of this potential problem that could arise here in temperate latitudes. And see, it's really mostly research that's looking at it so far. So they're bringing up a lot of scientists for that. One of my colleagues is the opposite of me. She's super smarty-pants, a lab scientist and she studies ocean acidification. So she's probably, she was invited up there for her expertise regarding that. They're also going to be talking about, what was it? Sea-level rise. You know, a lot of climate change stuff.

B: And that is this coming weekend?

A: Yeah. Well it's on Monday. So I'm flying out Sunday morning. This is my first conference that I'm being flown to.

B: It's only one day?

A: It's only one day.

B: That's amazing.

A: But it's only California, so it's not big government Washington DC or anything like that. But it should be interesting. It's a free trip. I've never really considered myself being very interested in government or policy, but then again I don't like the idea of you know, San Diegans who love the beach not really having any say in what beach they can go to and which they can't. So maybe I can kind of get an in in that door without having to wear a suit every day.

B: It's interesting because, I've been on the Freedive list, are you familiar with that?

A: The Freedive list? Not the San Diego Freedivers? Them, I'm on their list.

B: The Freedive list is more California...

A: You mean like DiveBums?

B: In a way. DiveBums, though, is just here, just San Diego origin but the Freedive list was started by Mark [Barville]. And it was like a gentleman's, what would you call it? Forum. If you got on SpearBoard and listened or read some of the stuff there, they can get really nasty with each other. And so they had more genteel ways to approach things. They were freedive spear fisherman. They didn't agree with a lot of the areas that were closed.

A: Right.

B: There's a woman I met years ago up in, gosh, it was a dive meet. Brandi Easter. She and her partner came in first women's side. She lives in Eureka or Arcada. What was her name? She will probably be at this conference. A great lady if I can remember her name. But anyway. And then I believe it's the, maybe the Sun Cal Council of diving clubs there's a lady named Carol Rose.

A: Carol Rose, that sounds familiar. But...

B: She is the one who always puts out the notices on MPAs and stuff for that area. Brandi Easter. Write Brandi Easter down in case you run into Brandi, say hello from me.

A: Sure, absolutely.

B: And you can look her up. She's a freedive spearfisherwoman and has entered contests all over. And is a spokesperson. Carol Rose is in the women divers Hall of Fame as well, I believe.

A: R-O-W-E-S?

B: Rose, like the flower.

A: Oh, Rose. Awesome. Yeah, it should be interesting. And the good thing too is that because we are technically UCSD students we are not allowed to directly lobby for anything. Which for me is great because I'm still not sure how I feel about the MPA system. I love what it's protected in the Cove and I think that has a lot of value for recreational use and educational use for divers. And it's been a great thing for me to use observationally, because I'm really interested in kelp forest ecology. So that's kind of the closest we can get to baseline, aside from Catalina and Channel Islands, but when at least La Jolla Cove is right down the street and I can just jump in, and now having a Go Pro and being able to take footage of everything and make these videos has been really really cool. But as far as it actually serving the purpose of conserving fish populations and helping fishermen down the line, I'm not sure how effective that is. It takes time. Fish are long-lived. We need to study it longer.

B: Andy's going to be a good resource on the fishermen side then.

A: Yeah. So I'm interested in talking to him. Also the Saraspes, we're going to be speaking with them.

B: They're very close.

A: So essentially, Paul [Dayton] is working with fishermen and I'm talking to divers. I'll do my share of angling from the beach on a Saturday, but I'm not really, I haven't been spearfishing. I just love freediving to look. I only started scuba diving maybe five, six years ago. But I've been snorkeling, freediving since I was you know, seven, six, five years old.

B: Because of your parents, your folks?

A: Yeah, I'm a full-blooded San Diegan. My Grammie lived in Kensington, south San Diego. My mom grew up down south, she went to Crawford High. And then moved to Mission Beach in the early early days but her favorite beach was always La Jolla Shores. So we went to La Jolla Shores every single weekend, you know, all summer, every summer and throughout the year, every year for my entire life. And then I remember, so then I grew up over in Scripps Ranch and the Scripps Ranch Swim & Racquet Club ran little two, three-week summer camps and I remember I was really little and did "snorkeling camp". So snorkeling camp was essentially just putting a bunch of kids into a minivan and taking them over to the Cove and letting them go free for the day and that was heaven.

B: Let me ask you, did they ever take you to the Marine Room to look at the sharks?

A: Yeah! The Leopard sharks?

B: As a kid?

A: As a kid.

B: Because we were there one day, Karen Strauss and I, we were in kayaks and we had cameras and all of the sudden here comes this whole group of kids, maybe 15 and a leader and you can see them snorkeling and all of a sudden they are going [inaudible] woohoo! It was a hoot.

A: It's so cute. They started doing that too at Birch. The Birch Aquarium every summer now is doing a little snorkel with the leopard sharks tour that you can sign up for and I looked into helping with it...you know what I thought a good project would be? Because I hit the ground running, this program I'm in is one year and it's a Masters degree and kind of the fruition of your degree is your Capstone research project that you're given most of the spring quarter to focus on but I wanted to think of ideas right from the beginning. And I thought it would be interesting to see if people's...if you could do some kind of interviews but have them structured so that you could come up with usable data. Let's say if somebody could rate on a scale of 1 to 10 how much, if they thought sharks were scary or how important it was to conserve our oceans, how they felt about conservation, or anything like that. And if those numbers would change, say, after they snorkeled with the leopard sharks. Because the leopard sharks are kind of like the friendly ambassador for sharks, you know? When you experience swimming with them, you see sharks for what they are as these beautiful animals instead of this Jaws representation of them as scary. I'd love to do that study someday.

Well, Barbara, let's wrap up what's on the record for now. Thank you so much for your time. And congratulations on your recent inauguration into the Women Divers Hall of Fame!

B: Ashleigh, my pleasure. I've got some photos here you can take a look at, too.
