

SPLASH FOR TRASH

Mermaid's Dive Center Makes a "Splash for Trash"

Mermaid's Dive Center celebrated "Splash for Trash," PADI's (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) annual International Clean Up Day in Pattaya on Saturday, September 15th, by taking two boats full of 60 people to undertake a major day-long beach and underwater cleaning on the south side of Koh Sak Island.

The group collected a staggering 1,000 pounds of trash filling 88 large garbage bags. Recovered items included 706 glass bottles, 92 cans, 76 pieces of clothing and shoes, 65 cigarette lighters, and 21 tires, plus piles of rope, fishing lines and fishing nets. There was even a broken-up fiberglass boat and a carpet.

Most of the "splash for cash" participants were interns or instructors at Mermaids Dive Center. But there were also

recreational divers, like Pattaya resident Jim Munday, who said he was surprised at the large amount of trash he found on the dive. "Usually you don't notice all the trash when you're diving. It's amazing what you find when



you're looking for it," he said.

Bangkok resident Mia Evans, who came from Bangkok just to participate in the cleanup effort, agreed. "Next time I go diving I'll take a trash bag with me," she said.

Peter Thorand and four other people from the Taksin Pattaya Rotary Club also came along on the outing. Although most of them remained on the boat, Peter said they came along to show their support for

Mermaid's clean-up efforts. "They need support from other organizations in town," said Peter.

All profits from Saturday's event will be donated to Project AWARE, PADI's

nonprofit foundation that is committed to supporting local environments throughout the world, according to Sheena Wilkins, Mermaid's marketing manager. That includes not only profits from the diving fees, but also donations and money raised from the sale of tickets during the day for a raffle that was held during a party that evening at Shooters Bar in Soi Diamond.

"Mermaid's Dive Center has long been involved in supporting our local community by our monthly beach and underwater clean ups on our near and far islands," says Sheena. "We are dedicated to not only improving these areas for locals but to create a clean image of our islands for tourists coming to Pattaya."

Sheena says Mermaid's keeps records of every piece of trash that is recovered. The records are sent to Project AWARE, which keeps a worldwide data base of recovered trash. Sheena says everyone is welcome to participate in Mermaid's monthly clean-up dives. For more information call Mermaid's Dive Center at 038-232-219 or visit their website at www.mermaiddiver.com.

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