



# by the sea TIMES

local news and thought-provoking world views

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## ATWATER & MCINTEE DIVE FOR OUR REEF

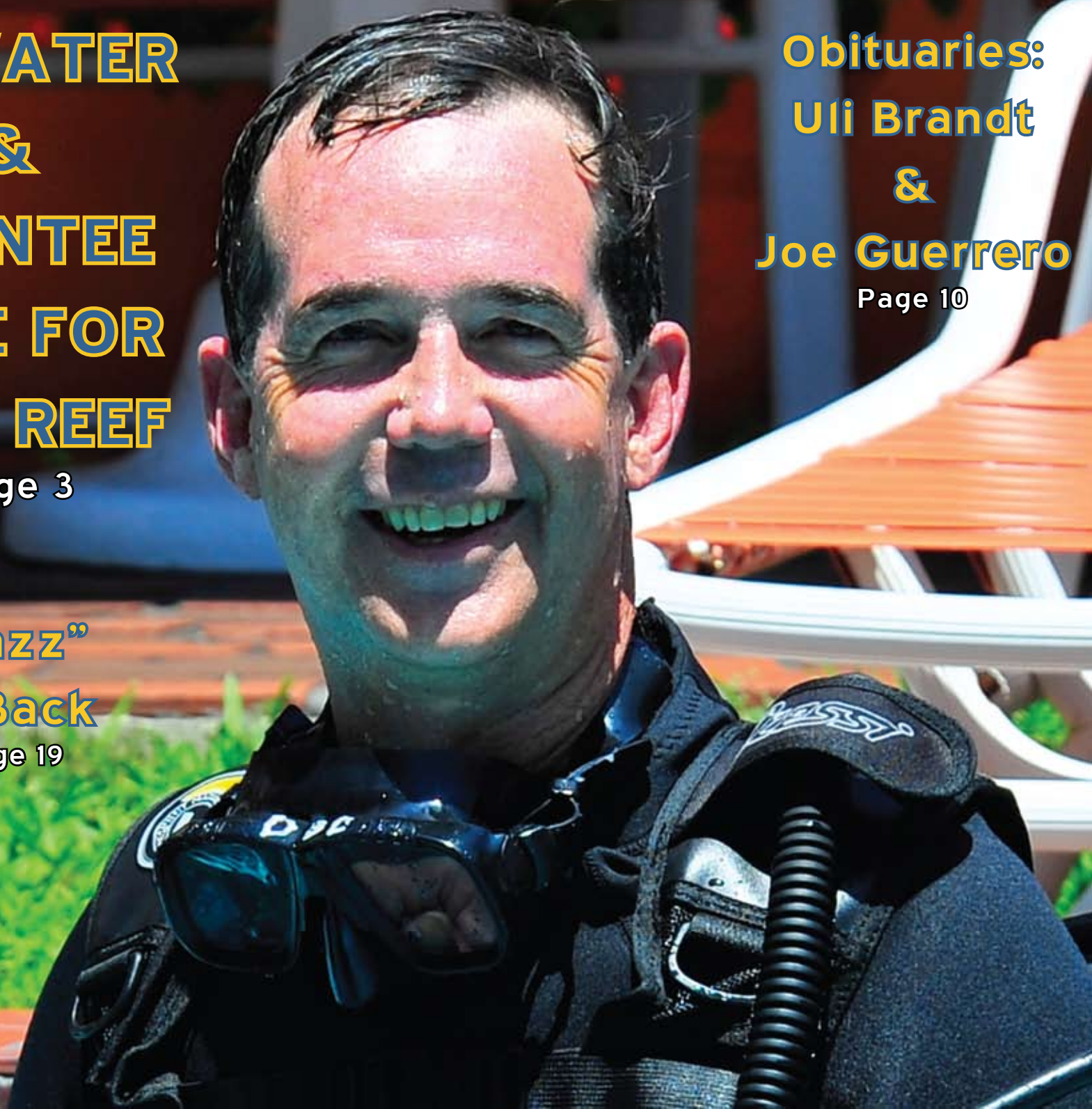
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# Senator Atwater, Vice Mayor McIntee Dive for Our Reef

Staff Writer

On June 1st, 2008 Senator Jeff Atwater made an unannounced visit to our town to work on topics affecting our coast. His arrival was clearly a step taken by Senator Atwater to have a hands-on view in understanding of our coast line. The coordination for this event was set up by Vice Mayor Jerry McIntee, who had met with Atwater previously to discuss some of the problems and wishes of our town. The Vice Mayor and the Senator covered a range of situations; one problem they both agreed on to be paramount to the citizens of town and visitors to our state alike, was the condition of the reefs off our shore and the rest of Florida.

When Vice Mayor McIntee asked Senator Atwater if he knew how to SCUBA dive, or if he was certified to do so and the Senator replied negatively to both, a subsequent four-hour visit here was scheduled. McIntee set up the certification course for Atwater for Sunday, June 1st in the ocean just off our coast. The Vice Mayor contacted diver and underwater photographer, Marc Furth, who agreed to assist the process and photograph the entire endeavor.

The initial training began under the town's own Master Diver Andres Lopez-Munoz, who owns Deep Blue Divers at Commercial and A1A in LBTS. The instruction began for the Senator to be prepared to make the reef dive that day. Senator Atwater and his aide began the certification process initially in the Blue Sea Courtyard swimming pool ( a popular local hotel owned by Marc and Cristie Furth ), giving Atwater his first experience under water with SCUBA gear. The Furths were ideal hosts to make the visitors welcome. Another avid diver, LBTS Commissioner Jim Silverstone also stopped by to greet the Senator and wish him luck.

After success in the pool, the Senator and his aide were pronounced ready for the ocean dive. Louie and Spiro, proprietors of Athena by the Sea, provided parking at their pier lot and a greeting for the Senator upon his arrival. The dive began with the Senator, his aide, Instructor Munoz with his associate, Vice Mayor McIntee with his son, and Marc Furth trailing to take the photos. Senator Atwater spent about an hour in the ocean and made it all the way to the reef located about 300 feet east of the end of the pier.

Both Senator Jeff Atwater and Vice Mayor Jerry McIntee are to be commended for combining a concern for the citizens of our town and the entire state with a hands-on educational event, going the extra mile to make an effort rarely seen in the frenzied world of politics. In the spirit of privacy, By The Sea Times, although aware of the planned event, respected the "low key" atmosphere desired by the divers, to avoid distractions by news reporters and cameras. It was more important for Senator Atwater to get a first-hand impression of the problems affecting our natural treasures, and he has promised to do all in his power to save our reefs and support legitimate ways to do this. Kudos to Senator Atwater, who was willing to go the extra mile!



Master Diver Andres Lopez-Munoz (left) instructs Senator Atwater (right) on how to use the regulator. (Photo/Marc Furth)



Senator Atwater checks out the LBTS reef. (Photo/Marc Furth)

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