

March 2010



Seeing STARS with Rogest

by Ann Paulsen



Larkin STARS students with Rogest

Last week's Rogest Art Clinic at Larkin High School kicked off S.T.A.R.S. first fundraising event of the 2010 season. It was a whirlwind week with Rogest and for the first time in years I was actually happy to see Monday arrive. The day and a half I spent with Rogest (aka Ron Steven) at Larkin High School flew by, and I hardly had a moment to catch my breath. However I wouldn't have traded that experience for

anything. I found myself in charge of pouring paint into the palettes for the kids which was the only job that didn't require great skill or talent. Feeding off the kid's energy I was bursting with excitement and anticipation by day's end.

Rogest arrived bubbly and full of energy, excitement, and enthusiasm that I found contagious enough to turn even the toughest skeptics into believers. A comfortable rapport between all of the 15 students and Rogest was immediately developed as he laid out the rules of the day and claimed that "breaking a rule would result in a dot on the forehead". Rogest explained to the kids how he got into this amazing career which he coined "Dot Madness". This painting icon (Rogest) began life as a mortal recreational diver who has logged more than 5,000 dives. He moved up through the ranks

to Instructor and was also a dive shop owner while living in Australia. Rogest, a celebrity in the diving industry, was inducted into International Scuba Diving Hall of Fame in January 2008

In 1989-90 he attended a workshop for village visitors in a place called Kuranda/Cairns/Australia and it was there that he was introduced to this dot style art. The 4-hour workshop was held in the hot outdoors with the visitors sitting on the ground well within in reach of the biting insects that inhabited the area. Rogest's first work of art was done on a tree bark using different color pastes handmade during the 4-hour workshop. Basically self-taught, he has been painting for 20 years and started off by drinking red wine, painting, and playing music for days at a time. What a life, earning a living doing something you enjoy so much.

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Upcoming Events

March 1st

Kick-off & Fitness

Metrics

March 6th

Skin Diving certification

March 20th

SDI Confined Water

Module 1

April 11—12:00

IL Scuba Council

Underwater

Competition

Kenosha Schools

After a recent visit to our web site, Kenosha City Schools administrators of Wisconsin have requested a formal presentation by S.T.A.R.S. on March 11th. The school system can provide both the access to at-risk candidates and facilities which could support a future program. Providing Kenosha administrators agree to move forward with a 2011 program, Kevin will begin to solicit local dive shops in Wisconsin for volunteers to train and produce a program in the Fall.

Oceanic Deal

At OurWorldUnderwater/Scuba Expo Bill Mitchell of Oceanic Worldwide agreed to significant discount to provide S.T.A.R.S. International with equipment in the coming year. The equipment inventory is being enhanced for 2010 to include Veo 2.0 Nitrox console computers and 6 additional Alpha 8 regulators. Nitrox is planned to be an optional course available to participants and staff members. Checkout www.OceanicWorldwide.com for the complete line of Oceanic equipment.

Rogest Painting Clinic

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Rogest has taken his dots all over the world donating his time and paintings in an effort to educate the rest of the world on how we can collectively save the environment. He has inspired budding artists from exotic places like Curacao, Grand Cayman, Fiji, Singapore, and Belize. S.T.A.R.S. and Larkin were honored with the opportunity to host Rogest. He is one of the most recognized painters in dot art depicting marine life, to create some of the most beautiful and creative works of art. The LHS kids joined Rogest to dot their way to some real masterpieces. I was awestruck at the time consuming effort required to just outline the sketched critters in dots, followed by filling in the remaining outline. The background designs the kids created the first day absolutely blew me a way because

the end product looked nothing like what they first sketched on the canvas. Each of the pieces took on a life of its own with each of the kids inserting a bit of their own personality in their Rogest-like art.

All of the kids working with Rogest were absolute angels giving him their respect and undivided attention. However there was this cute girl who walked by and waved into the classroom which resulted in some bantering between Nick and Rogest on exactly who the girl was waving to as both claimed the wave and smile were directed at them. The time spent with the kids and Rogest for this special event was absolutely priceless and I wish you all could have been there. Larkin High School has some very talented artists in their school which this event highlighted. It was very obvious how impressed and proud the passing staff members and administrators were with the kids work.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to Terri DeDecker who spearheaded this event right down to making sure the kids and staff were fed. In addition, Todd Duty, Ed Pieske, and Kathy Dickerson coordinated the setup and logistics for everything. Tom Bieschke documented the event with a student video camera crew and then interviewed Rogest, Kevin, and

one of the artists and future S.T.A.R.S. participant, Jorge. Tom spent his personal time Thursday evening putting together a video clip that included the stills that were taken from the event and bits of the Rogest interview. Tom is working on creating a finished DVD that will be given to all of the participating kids as a keepsake. Throughout all of the photographs and interviewing, Rogest made it clear that this was about the kids and their significant contribution which was benefiting the S.T.A.R.S. program at Larkin High. The administration and staff at Larkin High School have to be recognized for their tireless efforts to pull this precedent setting event together to support their local S.T.A.R.S. program. In closing I want to extend a huge "Thank You" to Rogest for the time, effort, and inspiration he provided to both the kids and the S.T.A.R.S. program. Rogest humbly explained that he saw some new ideas from the kid's artwork that will spawn future creativity from him.

The closest analogy I have for how I felt during my time with Rogest was a little bit like being swept up into a cyclone of energy, excitement, enthusiasm, and smiles. The day ended Thursday with me literally seeing stars or maybe those were dots with points!



East Coast S.T.A.R.S. Expansion

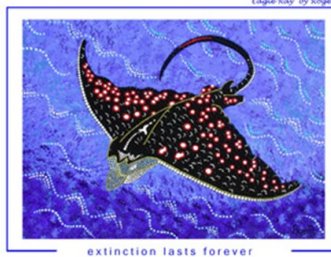
Our updated website did it again. Carlos Arias of Coral Gables Florida, diver, personal trainer, and former U.S. Marine, has signed a Letter of Intent to open the first east coast S.T.A.R.S. operation. Due to some changes in his personal business in the coming month Carlos' first host presentations should be around April. Kevin anticipates a potential trip to Florida to assist Carlos in both his host and volunteer search in the coming months.

BnG Club Update

The Boys N Girls program has been delayed by an unexpected slow response to program applications and some pool heater/boiler issues. As of February 21st, the S.T.A.R.S. directors agreed to scale back expectations for a 2010 program to deliver a new extract of the S.T.A.R.S. program dubbed a "mini-camp". Tentative plans are to run a 6-8 week SDI Open Water training program parallel to both Self Development and Fitness activities this spring. Hopefully this will generate interest in a full blown 2011 program at the King Boys N Girls Club. We also anticipate that this will increase the number of staff volunteers and future candidates.

Florida Key West Community College

Liz Love (recruiter) of FKCC met with S.T.A.R.S. representatives at the OurWorldUnderwater/Scuba Expo to discuss some potential synergies in the coming months. FKCC sits on the island coastline of Key West and sports a protected 30' foot deep salt water lagoon which contains timbers/remnants of the treasure ship Atocha. The lagoon offers a venue for diving and underwater archeology studies on the campus as a portion of any course. The college offers many exciting diving related Associate Degree programs which would enable our graduates to apply their interest in scuba to continuing education, and they have also graciously opened the door for S.T.A.R.S. to use their facility for open water dive training as an alternate domestic venue. We look forward to encouraging our graduates to consider FKCC for their future education. www.fkcc.edu



Omega Aquatics Provides Propulsion

At DEMA in Orlando in November 2009 Sergey and Ronen (co-owners of Omega Aquatics) offered to provide fins from their back stock to accommodate the needs of the 2010 S.T.A.R.S. program. With the additional participants this year S.T.A.R.S. was destined to fall short in the area of BCDs that were previously donated by Omega Aquatics. This year Omega stepped in to offer additional discounted BCDs identical to our current inventory. We plan to give Omega some photos to brag about in the coming weeks with our new participants sporting Omega Flip Fins. www.OmegaAquatics.com.



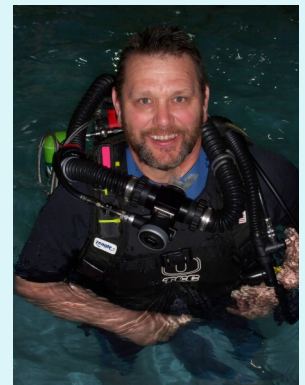
Larkin Parent Orientation

The 2010 S.T.A.R.S. Orientation night brought out all the STARS. Sixteen participants and their parents attended the evening event for a brief overview of the program, staff, and curriculum which began on March 1st. Each of the attendees completed their forms, a survey, a video interview, and had an introduction to activities in the coming weeks. Good luck to all future participants.

In addition, S.T.A.R.S. will incorporate its first ever student Jr. Staff Photographer, Sharice Hewlett, who will start the job on March 8th augmenting staff photographer Lisa Anderson. Welcome Sharice!

Gift of Wheels

Layne Holter's father (Gordon) of eastern Minnesota offered S.T.A.R.S. the coveted gift of "Transportation" in the form of a 1979 1-Ton Chevrolet Step Van (former Frito Lay delivery vehicle). In early February Layne and Kevin made the nearly 5 hour winter trek across Wisconsin with the monstrous vehicle on prayer that it was mechanically sound enough to make the full journey without any breakdown. Now that it is securely stored in Algonquin the plans are to validate the brakes, steering, and drive train then update the interior to add hang bars and tank racks giving us rolling dive equipment shed in the coming weeks. Hopefully we can get some white paint and graphics to spruce the appearance for this summer's use. A special thanks to Layne for reeling this in for us!



Feature Staff Member of the Month

Introducing :Frank Kross

Frank is a carpenter by trade, and has been in construction since he was very young. His father was a WWII Veteran and was a roofing contractor in the Elgin area. Frank started working for his father at a young age and continued in construction throughout his entire life. Frank says his dad taught him the value of hard work. He got interested in diving with his father so they would have something to do together other than work. Then in turn, Frank got his son into diving and they have enjoyed many good times together. Volunteering has been very fulfilling for Frank, and he is sure that although "scuba diving isn't for everyone, helping the S.T.A.R.S. students accomplish their skills while building self confidence in Scuba will help them far beyond high school into college, or even in a future career."

Rogest Photo Gallery



Always become the most positive and optimistic person you know.

Blackbeard's Cruises Donation

At OurWorldUnderwater /Scuba Expo, Beth Oliviera of Blackbeard's gifted S.T.A.R.S. with a one week Bahamas dive cruise certificate to be used for a future fundraising event. Blackbeard's three 65' sailboats ply the waters of the Bahamas offering 3-4 dives per day.