

MAY/JUNE 2011

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**WELCOME SBIA
& ICOMIA**

**LONDON IN THE
LIMELIGHT**

Bright lights, big city...

**MOTHER'S DAY
& FATHER'S DAY
CELEBRATIONS**

Wine and dine with our
mums and dads...



Blue Marbles

An educational campaign to inspire stewardship of our biosphere.

By Abigail Alling

Our view of the planet Earth changed when the Apollo 17 astronauts took a photograph of the earth from space on 7 December, 1972. The photo of our earth, fully illuminated by the sun, depicted a lovely blue orb in an otherwise black cosmic landscape. I realised, in that moment, that we live in a water biosphere with green/brown islands swirling with white clouds.

This image changed my life. It was my first glimpse of our living beautiful biosphere. I was a young girl then and already a keen sailor – the photograph was an affirmation to answer a call for me to head out to sea. It was a journey that later took me to all the world’s oceans, into explorations of the sea as well as the biosphere. It was clear that our oceanic biosphere is our home and that it was mine to explore, to care for and to love.

This knowing, that we all live in one beautiful ocean biosphere, is inspiring. So reasoned Biosphere Foundation’s Director, Dr Wallace J Nichols, who started an educational campaign to create awareness about the oceans using blue marbles. With the rapid information exchange via the Internet and a global network created by world travellers, thousands of blue marbles are now being passed from person to person or placed purposefully around the world. With a smile, J holds up each marble before giving it away and explains that **if you travel out to space, the earth will recede until it looks just like a blue marble. And the future of the earth, like that marble, is in our hands.**



“The photograph of the earth from space changed my life,” said Abigail Alling
PHOTO CREDIT: MARTHA EYERSON



Mark Van Thillo placing the first blue marble in Menjangan Bali

Sailing vessel *Mir* has been threading a series of blue marbles from Malta, its port of origin, to Raffles Marina and now onwards to Menjangan Island in Bali. The idea began in Menjangan when several of *Mir*’s crew participated in a coral reef conservation programme in March 2010. There we contemplated our upcoming voyage from Malta down the Red Sea, across the Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal to the Malacca Straits, South China Sea and Java Sea, to Bali.

Inspired by our recent visit with J in the Anambas Islands (where he was followed by enraptured and delighted children carrying blue marbles), we decided to drop a marble every few hundred miles to mark our journey and take a moment to reflect on all that we had seen and to prepare for what lay ahead.



J Nichols with Anambas school children



Nina Marlana and Grayce Nichols holding a blue marble in Anambas.
PHOTO CREDIT: NEAL OSBORNE

The first part of the voyage (Malta to Raffles Marina) was completed in the summer of 2010. Now, a crew of seven is sailing *Mir* as I write this article in the Java Sea. We left our friends and the safe haven of Raffles Marina on 14 February to arrive at Menjangan Island early March via Jakarta. Once again, we are threading our voyage marked with blue marbles. ☪

Please join our website to read about each leg of the journey www.biosfirindonesia.org/blue-marble.html
For more information, visit www.bluemarbles.org/