



Goes Diving!

by Scott Jones, Communication Specialist

One of the most talked about shows last year was *seaQuest DSV*, produced by Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment. In an effort to enhance the show's appeal even further, it now includes more scuba diving.

To shoot more diving episodes, production of *seaQuest DSV* was moved from Los Angeles, California to Orlando, Florida, U.S.A. The warmer water temperature and added visibility in Florida allows actors and crew members to dive longer than would have been possible in California. Prior to the move, many of the underwater images were computer-generated, and several dive scenes were of a background nature.

According to the show's producer, Oscar L. Costo, diving will become an integral part of the program during its second season. As a result, the show turned to PADI International for technical and diving support, and Northwest Divers in Orlando, a PADI 5 Star IDC, provided dive instruction.

PADI Course Director Donna Askew-Brack of Northwest Divers explained the challenging aspects of certifying a busy film crew – "Everyone's schedule was so hectic, we ended up teaching some crew members at midnight or whenever we could find small breaks in the schedule." Initially, Askew-Brack and her staff certi-



Several new cast members were added for the second season of *seaQuest DSV*. The show's new location will allow the actors to dive more frequently than previous episodes allowed.

fied seven key production staff, including Producer Costo, Director of Photography Stephen McNutt, Propmasters Andy Grant and Kurt Thoresen, and three other production crew members. The cast is also being certified to accommodate the script.

"Scuba diving is a new adventure for most of us. I'm attempting to capture the incredible feeling of being underwater in the program," Costo says. "We're pleased that the show is moving in this direction – putting characters in the water helps humanize it more, which means more viewers will relate."

Costo will direct and produce all the underwater scenes throughout the season's 20 plus episodes. Since receiving his Open Water Diver certification, Costo says he wants to work his way through

Divemaster to increase his scuba diving knowledge.

Askew-Brack says she was impressed with the *seaQuest* crew who were friendly professionals possessing a good sense of humor throughout the course, regardless of the conditions. Several of the show's stars are anxious to start their course immediately, including Kathy Evison (Helmswoman Lonnie Henderson), and Michael Deluise, who plays a new role.

Northwest Divers will continue to certify cast and crew members and provide equipment, logistics, and safety diver support for the series. "The hours spent shooting underwater and the hard work exhibited by the crew and cast will pay off in a great new show," says Bill Brack, owner of Northwest Divers. ♦