



Quote:

Most things in life are moments of pleasure and a lifetime of embarrassment; photography is a moment of embarrassment and a lifetime of pleasure.

~Tony Benn

March Program

Rusting Wrecks and Isotopes

HUPS' March Presentation – Diving the wrecks of Truk & Bikini Lagoons

By Tom Collier, Mike Greuter, Dennis Deavenport

Join us on March 3rd at Bayland Community Center for a photo journal of Dennis' and Tom's recent trip to Chuuk, Micronesia, home of the WWII ghost fleet of Truk Lagoon. The warm tropical waters of Truk Lagoon with its sheltering islands and reefs make it one of most accessible wreck diving locations in the world. The minimal currents within the lagoon make the wreck diving easy and perfect for u/w photography. We dove on 14 different huge WWII wrecks that were obviously losing the battle again – this time with Mother Nature. The sunken hulks are rusting away to oblivion but not before creating beautiful artificial reefs covered in beautiful soft corals and thriving fish populations. We took a ton of pictures – some of which are actually pretty good. Come see the audio/visual presentation sharing our experience with you.



The 2nd part of the program features a historical perspective of the Atomic Tests at Bikini Atoll back in 1946. Mike Greuter traveled to the Marshall Islands to dive and photograph the deep warships that were sunk in Operation Crossroads. During the tests, two atomic bombs, Able and Baker, were used to study how much damage warships would take in a nuclear attack. See the final resting place for the mighty USS Saratoga, the Japanese battleship, Nagato, and 4 other wrecks resting on the bottom of the lagoon. Come and be prepared for an emotional roller-coaster ride that will make you laugh, wonder, and ponder the problems of living in the nuclear age. Mike will also talk to us about the equipment and procedures required to meet the challenges of diving deep wrecks.



This promises to be one of the most interesting, educational, and unique programs presented at HUPS in some time. Don't miss this one.



Her First Night Dive – Shark in the Dark

by Ken Knezick, Island Dreams

It was her first night dive, and Vickie was understandably apprehensive. Her husband had asked me to help her, and as divemaster on Island Dreams' group to CoCo View Resort (Roatan, Honduras) it was my pleasure to be of assistance. "There's nothing to be afraid of," I assured her, "night dives are great. You'll see so many wonderful and unusual things." In the pre-dive briefing we discussed underwater hand signals and the need to illuminate them with our dive lights. I explained that her buddy's eyes and attention would be where his light played on the reef. She could gain her husband's attention simply by flashing her light across his beam. "Well that's a heck of a lot easier than on land," Vickie joked, "but seriously, what about sharks?" Having heard this question many times before, I took pains to assure her that sharks were the last thing a diver needed to worry about. "They're generally afraid of people and will go out of their way to avoid contact with divers. I seriously doubt we are going to see a shark on this dive." Thus comforted, and with a final reminder that it was bad form to shine a dive light in one's buddy's eyes, we did a final gear check and entered the water.

As we swam out to the reef, navigating by moonlight, Vickie held my hand tightly. Feeling her tremble, I squeezed back in reassurance. When we reached the reef and began to play our lights along the corals, sponges, and gorgonians, the beauty of CoCo View Wall shone forth. Against the surrounding blackness, the brilliant colors were strikingly apparent. Azure vase sponges shimmered iridescent against the night and the red sponges, which appear black in daylight, glowed a rich crimson. Large banded coral shrimp waved their claws while tiny red shrimp darted from perch to perch almost faster than our eyes could follow. We came upon a free swimming moray eel, then a large crab who, oblivious to our intrusion, continued to dine upon his algae salad garden. Further along we encountered a small octopus hunting for his dinner. Under the scrutiny of our lights it changed color from turquoise to white to red, and then with a final puff of ink disappeared into a crevice in the reef. By now, Vickie was relaxed, swimming hand in hand with her husband, fascinated with each new wonder as we cruised along the nocturnal reef.

When Vickie's air was down to 1500 psi, we turned around and began to drift with the gentle current back to our entry point. Directing my light towards the surface, I saw that it had begun to rain and was struck with that strange feeling of being glad I was underwater so I wouldn't get wet. As we rounded a huge promontory of coral, I saw motion at the far reaches of my light's beam. Could I believe my own eyes? Yes, something big was moving towards us through the darkness, appearing huge against the blackness of open water. As it swam closer, the clear silhouette of a shark materialized from the gloom, at least six feet long and heading right for us. Experience has taught me to treat sharks as one would a large, strange dog.

The best tact is to meet them head on; running away is just an invitation to be chased. Confronted by this resolve, a shark will most always turn tail and quickly depart the scene. With this concept in mind I swam forward, but as if in a game of chicken, the shark, apparently blinded by our lights, blundered forward, heading straight towards me. With no other choice available, I extended my arm forward, using my dive light as a shield. Just as we were about to collide, the shark turned sharply to its left, and as we looked on in amazement, promptly crashed head first into the reef. Dazed for a moment, it shook its body violently, then turning away from the wall, darted swiftly past us, disappearing into the darkness.

From the massive cloud of bubbles that followed, we must all have exhaled a big sigh of relief together. Turning back to take inventory of my group, I spied Vickie with her body pressed against the reef. Her husband was holding her with both hands to keep her from zooming to the surface, and the look in her eyes was quite something to behold. As my own tension subsided, I thought back to the confidence of my pre-dive briefing and began to laugh uncontrollably, promptly causing my mask to flood. I cleared it, looked over at Vickie's impossibly wide eyes, and flooded it all over again. To compound matters, from all the flooding and clearing, Vickie assumed that I had been injured somehow in the fray. Her training took over, and forgetting her own fear, she swam forward to assist me. What an experience! What a woman! I flooded my mask all over again.

As we swam into the familiar shallows of CoCo View's front yard, a driving rain and whitecaps scudded across the surface. I was reminded of the t.v. commercial which admonished that, "You can't fool mother nature." King Neptune had certainly asserted himself this evening. In addition to a show of the sea's limitless force in wind and wave, we were treated to a face to face nocturnal view of one its most powerful creatures. I certainly hope that Vickie will continue night diving, though she'll have to take many a plunge before encountering another as exciting as this. Beginner's luck aside, she certainly had done well, and came away with what divers cherish most, a heck of a fun story to tell.



How my dive training has helped me to deal with a cancer patient

Submitted by Alicia Grimes

As I am sitting here on my bed writing this article playing caregiver to my husband Greg as he continues on his journey with cancer treatment as well as recovering from a bad case of pneumonia. I am thinking of all of the wonderful times spent with Greg under the sea and how much fun we have had together and will again.

As I think about that, I keep receiving email from friends and family members about what a wonderful job I have been doing with Greg. I thank everyone, but I really think it goes back to the training we receive when we first learn how to dive. Here are just a few rules that I have pulled from my training.

Rule 1:

Never leave your dive buddy. This rule came into play while he was in the hospital on 4 different occasions when I slept, or tried to in a chair. When you are diving you stay with your buddy.

Rule 2:

Be able to communicate under the water. This rule was helpful when Greg was in ICU and he was unable to talk due to a respirator. He would use his hand signals to show me what he needed until he was able to breathe on his own

Rule 3:

Be able to think on your feet rely on yourself. When you are dealing with a cancer patient you have to be able to count on yourself be able to handle any situation that comes into play. When dealing with cancer you will face things you thought you never would. Just like diving every dive presents its own challenges.

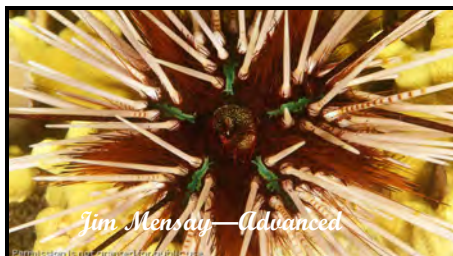
Rule 4:

Always check and recheck your gear. Greg has been on so many different treatments, many that had to be done at home. You need to be able to use all of the gear and learn it on the spot as the other person is counting on you, just like you do with your dive/camera gear.

Rule 5:

Learn from others and how they handle a situation. Just being at MD Anderson you are constantly reminded that you are not alone on this fight. Just like in diving and when diving with a group if you look around you will see so many people dealing with cancer. Some are fearless, some are fearful and many learn to adjust on the fly. How many times as divers have we had to do that as well. Lean to adjust and be patient.

These are just a few examples but what I will say is when you are on this journey, I am glad I have had the training that I have had as it has, and will continue to serve me well. I am sure there will be times in your life when you use your training outside of the water and just like me you are glad you have this in your skill set.



Contest results through February 2014 NOVICE		
1st	Joe Holden	132
2nd	David McCracken	119
3rd	John Scheldt	112
4th	Martin Daniels	107
5th	0	0
INTERMEDIATE		
1st	Bess Bright	141
2nd	Jan Baughman	130
3rd	Debbie Mensay	119
4th	Lance Glowacki	112
5th	0	0
ADVANCED		
1st	Dennis Deavenport	144
2nd	Mike Greuter	122
3rd	Ken Bean	121
4th	Jim Mensay	117
5th	0	0



Should We Widen the Scope?

There has been some discussion in HUPS as to whether or not we should broaden our scope to include nature, as well as underwater photography. When HUPS was founded, of course, underwater photography was in its formative years and neither the equipment nor the techniques translated well to taking photos topside. They really were separate disciplines. Now however, the same cameras are used above and below the water-air interface, and the techniques of composition, lighting, and camera settings are common to both above and below water images. When I first got into underwater photography a decade or so ago, I limited myself to vacation snapshots above water. It was only after a few years concentrating on the underwater world that I started to get serious about nature and wildlife photography that didn't involve salt water – or any water, come to think of it – other than the lake, river, or pond that seemed to attract my photographic subjects.

Now, the majority of my photography is above water, and that just makes sense. We don't live in an environment conducive to underwater photography, as do some of my friends in the Western Australian Underwater Photographic Society, where on Monday you can post an invitation on Facebook to go diving on Wednesday, and have a half dozen or more members show up and come back with images of frogfish yawning, seahorses giving birth, and cardinal fish with eggs in their mouths. But we do, along the coast and in South Texas and the Hill Country, have the opportunity on short notice to get out in the field with hundreds of species of migratory birds and a few mammals. We can travel to the Rockies or Alaska to shoot elk and bear, and if nothing else is going on, trek down to the Waugh Street bridge and challenge yourself to get a nice portrait of a member of one of the State's largest bat colonies.

So let me describe to you, some of the opportunities I have had to explore the world topside. And by the way, what do you think of expanding the horizons of HUPS to, perhaps, the Houston Underwater and Nature Photography Society. We could call it HUNPS for short.

Someone once asked me why I go on nature photography tours. Some would consider me to be a semi-professional photographer, so why would I need to attend. The simple answer is logistics. But it's more than just that, I enjoy meeting new photographers and learning from them as well as the professional leaders. Case in point . . . I met a talented professional photographer, named Cheryl. I had a chance to get to know her, and watch and learn her techniques. She graduated from the famed photography school, Brookings Institute, and her work has been published in numerous magazines and other trade publications, but, most impressively, she has won the prestigious first place award in Nature's Best Magazine contests. And, her work is on display at Getty's Images. So why

is she attending a hummingbird workshop? Her answer, "to learn." A photographer, if he or she is really serious about their work, never stops learning. So really the question to ask, is what value you place on the workshop? And, in my opinion, I think our club trips to dive in exotic locations adds value in companionship, knowledge, and experience because we never stop learning.

Winter in Yellowstone



Winter in Yellowstone



Winter in Yellowstone is a magical time. The steamy clouds drifting from hot springs, geysers and fumaroles becomes

the artist's hand, and its palette a snowy landscape, whipping up mystical creations for anyone to imagine.

Riding on snowmobiles with temperatures in the minus degrees, is exhilarating by far.

We followed in the snowy footprints of the American Bison, shoving their massive heads through deep pockets of snow to reach the rye

grass below. We searched for wolves, foxes, trumpeting swans, bald eagles, and anything else that came along our pathway, cameras dangling from our necks and a camera and tripod strapped on tightly to the back of our snowmobiles. On our way in the early morning hours, we watch the horizon turn blazing yellow as the sun rises and a golden tint reveals the dark-green pines that punctuate snow-clad mountains. Welcome to Yellowstone in the winter.

Our photograph tour guides were John and Barbara Gerlach. Barbara is a certified official Yellowstone National Park snowmobile guide. She kept us





abreast of all the rules and regulation within the park concerning wildlife. For example, you cannot get closer than 25 yards to a bison, and a wolf is 100 yards. But, there were times when the buffalo came to you, or you are held captive by these large mammals . . .

Unfortunately, as is the case most of the time, the weather gods did not shine on us. We had a day or so of sunny weather but mostly it was cloudy and overcast. I thought I would just share a few of the thousands of photos I took of our time in Yellowstone.

Our last day, of course, the sun came out so we trekked outside the park to Two Top Mountain. It's a scenic ride up to the 10,000 feet summit. But, at the higher elevation, a dense fog caught us. The Gerlach's were concerned, if we summited, that visibility might turn to zero so we captured some of the more interesting ghostly shapes at 9,000 feet.





Hummingbirds



Having held a small hummingbird in my hand, feeling his small heartbeat does leave you with a sense of the fragility of life. Just think, these small birds travel far distances with many obstacles in their way . . . It has been recorded that a hummingbird migrated from Florida to Alaska.

I have attended several hummingbird photographic workshops over the years, and in April, I will be off to Costa Rica to photograph more than just hummers . . . reptiles, poison dart frog,

parrots, etc.

This year I attended two hummer workshops, one in Canada and one in Ft. Davis, Texas.

In May of last year, I attended the Gerlach's hummingbird workshop, located at Bull River Guest Ranch, Cranbrook, British Columbia, Canada.



We photographed three species of migrating hummingbirds . . . the Calliope, Rufous and Black-chinned. One of the highlights of the workshop was participating in the banding, weighing, and recording of the hummers we were photographing.

There were six stations setup with a background, three flashes, and flower at each station. To keep the weather out and provide shade, each station had a covered awning or was located on the porch of two of the cabins. You have to have shade to keep the ambient light at a minimum and prevent ghosting.



The first day we got a lesson on station setup, flash setup, and flower wrangling. In the middle of the week, John gave a presentation on exposure. He introduced me to a more in depth analysis of focus stacking. I had used it in a class on water drops but not to the detail that John explained. On his recommendation, I purchased and downloaded Zerene Focus Stacking software. I must say I have been quite impressed with this application.



In every workshop I have attended there is always one element, one behavior, one special image . . . and this workshop was no different. Every photographer wanted to capture the little Calliope's "flare." It's a mating "thing," and the male flares out his purple throat feathers with a distinct buzzing



sound in a display of affection to the female.

Whooping Crane



Rockport, Texas is famous for their whooping cranes. Every year, beginning in late November through early April, these large, wild endangered birds migrate to Aransas Bay Wildlife Refuge. This flock breeds in northern Canada and migrates to Texas to spend the winter in marshes along the Gulf Coast.

usually lays two eggs each year, but she and her mate can raise only one young, scientists figured out that they can remove the extra eggs, hatch them, and raise the "orphan" chicks. This doubles the number of young whoopers that survive each year.

Side Note: To increase species survival because, in the wild, a female whooper



In the past, I have attended Larry Ditto's Whooping Crane workshops, and it seems we always get caught by bad weather . . . its probably because those workshops are in January. Now, I use Kevin Sims boat, the Aransas Bay Boating Tours. Throughout the whooping crane season, he has several shared spots, which makes it advantageous to an individual photographer and/or birder. He lives in Rockport, and knows the area where these magnificent birds dwell.



The whooping crane species is territorial. They stake out their claim to a certain area, and by gosh, don't even think about treading there. I have watched through binoculars the brutality of crossing a crane. Their beaks can produce a strong swift bong to the head of another crane.



I would like to caution against approaching these birds too closely. Though the whooping crane population has bounced back over the last few years, the birds remain highly endangered. As such, disturbing a family unit in any way could prove detrimental. Keep your distance and enjoy these great birds from afar should you decide to go see them.

I wrap up with the following question . . . do we want to see more of nature photography or just limited our club's scope to underwater? I vote to widen the scope since there are so many underwater photographers who shoot topside as well.





2014

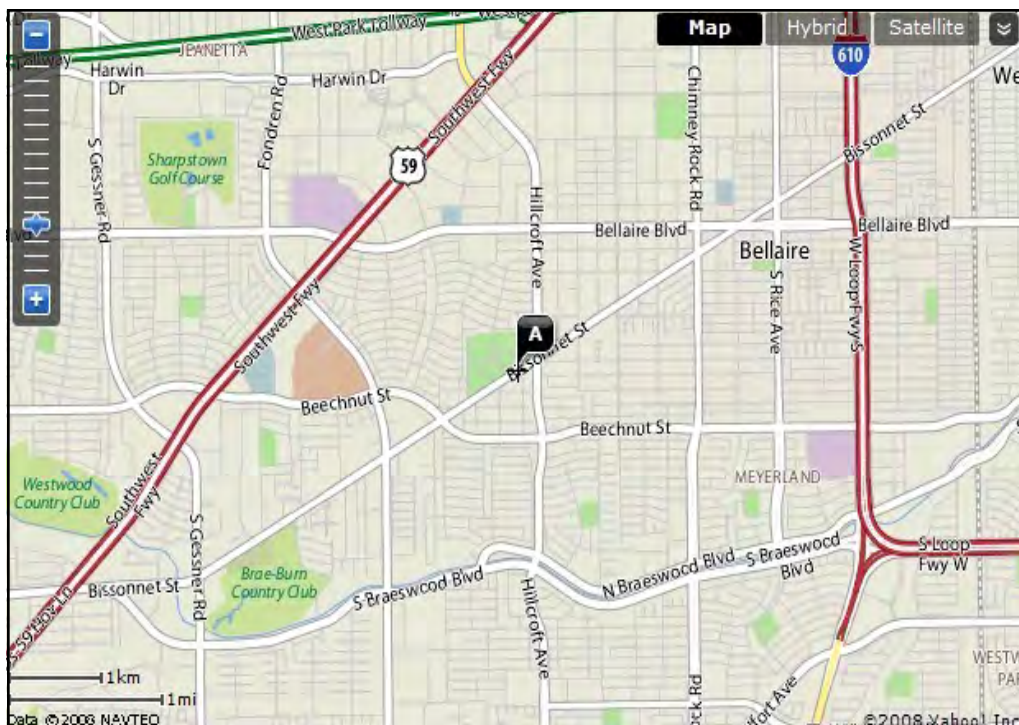
Meetings

Meetings & Presentations

Month	Date	Presenter	Show Title & Synopsis	Contest Topic
January	6th	Jim and Kandace Heimer & Jim and Debbie Mensay	A Night in Alaska	Something that has Spots
February	3rd	HUPS Members	Bonaire Club Trip Extravaganza	Shoot the Face
March	3rd	Tom Collier, Mike Greuter, Dennis Deavenport	Exploring the Wrecks of Truk Lagoon	Things in the sand
April	7th	Trip Participants	Anilao, The Philippines Club Trip	Large swimmers (> 4 feet) - not people
May	5th	HUPS Members	A Night at the Movies	Banded/Stripes
June	2nd	Mike Greuter	Saba & Dominica on the Half –Shell	Big eyes, Tangs, Triggerfish, Boxfish
July	7th			Reef scenes without diver
August	4th			Scorpion fish, Gurnards, Lionfish
September	1st			Pairs or buddies
October	6th			Anemones and relatives, Hydroids, Jellyfish
November	3rd			Single Color focus (Blue,Red,Green,Yellow)
December	1st			Best of HUPS and Creative

*The Houston Underwater Photographic Society meets at
the Bayland Community Center starting at 7:00 PM.
(Social time begins at 6:45)*

*(6400 Bissonnet, near the Hillcroft intersection)
Visitors are always welcome.*



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HUPS on the Web



<http://www.hups.org/>



<http://www.youtube.com/user/HUPSdotORG>



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